

THE PEOPLES JOURNAL

Ida Keeps Going **STRONG**

By Jeffrey Ann Goudie

Ida Grace Lyons turned 102 on September 28, which doubtless makes her one of the oldest individuals in the state.

In a recent interview at Presbyterian Manor where she's lived for a year and a half, Ida appeared remarkably alert and sharp-witted. She isn't emphatic in her notions about why she's lived so long, but she does have a few conjectures. "I've never used very many condiments...I breathe clear to my diaphragm... I breathe clear down to my boots!" And although she admits to not being as straight as she once was, she repeated the advice given her by an 85-year-old woman who "was as straight as a string"--stand with your knees pushed back as far as they'll go.

Ida is blunt about life going on 102. "I don't like it. I'm losing my eyesight and I can't see so well, don't hear so well. When I do hear, I don't always understand." Additionally, she has problems with her equilibrium, and needs support to stand.

Although she concedes that Presbyterian Manor is the nicest nursing home she knows of, she's quick to point out that it's undeniably an institution. She complained of a regulation that mandates she have a bottle of water in her room, though she can go to the tap when she wants a drink. I remarked that I noticed

she had some of her own furniture in her room. She quickly interjected: "And you notice the two beds in the room--just like a hospital....We don't have any carpet on our floor--just like a hospital. Me-tic-u-lous-ly clean just like a hospital."

Ida was born in North Lawrence in 1876, the eldest of seven children. She began her long teaching career at 19 in a one-room schoolhouse at Willow Springs, about nine miles southwest of Lawrence. In 1907 she began teaching in the grade school in Lawrence, switching over to the junior high when it was established in 1916. Seven years later she was appointed to head the junior high's library-study hall, a job she held until her retirement in 1942. Before coming to Presbyterian Manor in February 1977, she lived 28 years--part of the time alone--at 912 Rhode Island.

At 100 years of age, Ida published a small volume of her poems, most written for participation in the Lawrence Writers Workshop. The blue booklet contains one of her most popular poems, "This Old Gal":

This old gal is losing her eyesight
This old gal is losing her hair.
Her mouth is full of dentures,
And she has to walk with care.

This old gal is good no longer.
She can't hear what people say.
And when she's lost all her senses,
She no longer wants to stay.



Ida Grace Lyons at 102

Life is not easy for Ida at 102, but she's still got her wits, and the doctor says she's in excellent health. When our interview was completed I started out of the room to get an aide to help Ida

into her wheelchair. At the door I looked over my shoulder to see Ida up off the couch moving toward her chair by herself. I hurried back, pleasantly surprised again by Ida Lyons.

Diverse Delegates Share Concerns about Nukes

delegates attending was a major statement in itself.

Already, plans are being laid for the second conference next summer. However, the most valuable product of the conference is the report issued to all the delegates. Hundreds of conference hours were put into producing this book. It is filled with information concerning groups around the country, contact people, and most importantly, the conference proposals. These proposals are being considered by local groups across the country. Networking will be established between regional groups who wish to work on the same issues.

Locally, Lawrence Residents for a Radioactive-Free Kansas (RFK) will be considering the proposals at the first meeting in October. Presently all groups in the Sunflower Alliance in Kansas are working toward the events around Karen Silkwood Week, November 11-19, which is being observed across the nation. This is one of three major national actions outlined at the conference. On June 3-4 of next year, there will be international days of protest against nuclear power. This action is originating from Switzerland and is hoped to be observed across Europe and North America.

The third action discussed at the conference was a national march on Washington. It was tentatively scheduled for spring/summer of 1980.

A major division existed at the conference that should be recognized and dealt with. There is a rift between people opposing nuclear power and people opposing nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

This division is further compounded by the fact that most nuclear weapons installations are in the western half of the country. People in the East are not as directly threatened by the nuclear weapons

industry. Because of this, the people in the East see the introduction of nuclear weapons as a further complication in their attempts to teach people about nuclear hazards, without threatening or alienating them. On the other hand, the people of the West feel that in their situations, nuclear weapons facilities simply cannot be separated from the nuclear energy industry.

The division over the inclusion of nuclear weapons is a major one. In the entire conference only one consensus agreement was blocked, and it was over this very issue.

In Lawrence, R.F.K. has taken a stand opposing both of these threats.

What came from the conference was not division, but unity. This unity came not from common perspective--there are many perspectives, as there should be in any major coalition--but from the

inspiration we found in one another. There was something very positive about hundreds of people from all across the country coming together to work on the ending of the nuclear industry's existence.

This conference was the first gathering of all grassroots anti-nuclear groups in the country. The movement is growing and actions are occurring all across the nation. In the week prior to the national conference, over 500 persons were arrested in California while occupying a nuclear power site. While we were at the conference, 12 members of the Bailey Alliance were arrested for a similar action in Illinois.

Eighteen thousand people participated in the Seabrook demonstration this summer where eighteen had stood two years ago. People are awakening to the threats posed by the nuclear industry, and they are beginning to raise up and say no!



"I guess I was living ahead of my times. I revolted against taxes three years ago!"

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Let us not in base subjection
Brood away our fearful life
When with deed and aspiration
We might enter in the strife.

-Karl Marx-