

Feature Page

Behind The Beyond

It all began when I was looking for a laugh. Now, I don't know how long you've been here friend, but laughs are hard to find, particularly during final exams. Last spring, during the process of writing several examinations, I went into the Library looking for a laugh. Looking for laughs in the Library is like finding a furnished apartment on University Avenue for ten dollars a month and free transportation to classes. But sometimes during exams, you get desperate. I went into the Library, padded softly across the marble floors (they had a "SILENCE!" campaign on last year, and it was right at its peak then. A friend of mine got suspended from the Library for eight weeks and all his privileges taken away from him for cracking a book in the Library. They took it pretty seriously.) Anyway, I sneaked up to the desk and wrote on a piece of paper, "Have you got anything funny in here?"

The young lady at the desk read my note, looked at me darkly, and wrote back, "What do you have in mind, young man?"

"Books", I said, in a light whisper. "A funny book."

Now I don't know how long you've been here, but let me say that the Library staff are all very sincere people—they aim to please. Anything the student wants, they give him if they got it. (I took Forestry English.) So the lady went into the inner office and conferred with several of her friends; then they called in a few more of the Library assistants—four or five of them were busy as hell ironing out dog-eared pages, but they came too. Finally, they came to a decision. They broke up, and the lady returned to the desk.

"Do you know Leacock?" the young lady asked me.

"What class is he in?" I asked. "Forestry?"

The young lady winced. "No, Leacock writes books. He is supposed to be very funny. Would you like one of his books?"

"Anything for a laugh," I said. "The kind young lady produced one of Mr. Leacock's books and this is really where my story begins. The title was "Behind the Beyond" (I am not sure, but I think it's supposed to be funny right at the start), and it's number is \$19.7L (for Leacock). "How long would you like to have this book?" the lady asked me.

I looked at my watch. "How long before I laugh?"

The lady smiled wryly (a wry smile is one without white flour, but not necessarily with ham) and she stamped the book twice, made me

sign the card, and handed me my laugh. It was mine until May 21st, two weeks.

I am not, evidently, a judge of humor. I read "Behind the Beyond" for two weeks, waiting anxiously for a laugh to set in; but I got nothing, except a very low mark in Chemistry, and that isn't funny. Perhaps, I concluded, I wasn't in shape for Leacock. I decided to take the book home with me on vacation, when, in a lighter mood, I might be more open to humor. To make the story shorter, and it seems necessary, I kept "Behind the Beyond" all summer. I read it from cover to cover, read it backwards and upside down. I tried it with aspirin and coke. I had to take more aspirin.

Meanwhile, the Library, for some reason completely beyond me, missed the book. One day, I had a letter from them. I had Mr. Leacock's "Behind and Beyond", would I mind returning it? I hung on, and decided to read it again. Then came another letter. This was the beginning of a new policy between the Library and me.

"Dear Sir," the letter read, "according to our records you have the book (there should be a comma after "records", as it is an introductory clause) Leacock Behind the Beyond . . . in spite of the utmost precaution, mistakes occasionally occur. If you think an error has been made in your case, please advise us."

Well, I knew where the mistake was, but I couldn't quite bring myself to tell them. Meanwhile, I decided to draft a reply. Then came another letter. This one was very stern. I could see the Library was stiffening in its attitude.

"A charge is made for each day a book is kept overtime. Please . . . avoid further accumulation of fines." This was underlined. By this time, I had decided to surrender. I went to wrap up the book for delivery, and couldn't find it. I began to worry. I lost sleep, and weight. Friends said I had a "hunted look." I became run down, irritable, restless. I consumed quantities of Carter's Pills.

Another note came from the Library. Then another, then once a week. My postman complained. "C'mon," he said, "give 'em back the darned book." I began to drink, but I couldn't forget. The Library wouldn't let me. I went to a psychiatrist. He suggested (1) I buy a new copy of the book and return it (2) move to another address where I couldn't be reached by mail (3) pay him \$15.00.

I moved. Packed all my belongings in a shoe-box and hit the road. For twenty days and twenty-one nights I wandered the streets and highways. I don't know it for a fact, but I think I was followed by

secret agents from the Library staff. I had to move only on rainy nights, but I felt hunted, insecure, and wet as hell.

Finally, I decided to return home and face the music.

When I arrived, the doorstep and porch were littered with pink cards from the Library. I had to hire a man to come and shovel them off my property. It took him six hours, and it cost me \$14.84 for the labor, \$10.00 for the truck, \$4.50 for a hotel room until my home was fit for occupancy.

The day before I returned to college, Rachel, the upstairs maid, found the book in the vacuum cleaner bag. With trembling hands, I packed it in my trunk. The next day I embussed for UNB. I wired the Library: "LEACOCK OVERDUE PRESUMED LOST NOW FOUND SAFE STOP PLEASE NOTIFY NEXT OF KIN."

Yesterday, I tiptoed into the Library again. It had been freshly painted, even the young lady behind the desk. She turned pale when I approached the desk. I handed her the book.

"Tell me," she whispered, "did you have time to finish it?" I nodded tearfully.

She peeked at the date inside. I could see she was straggling to maintain her composure. She summoned the Library accountant. Slowly, he began to calculate the fine. I heard a murmur run through the staff-members, who had gathered at the desk the minute Leacock entered the door. I heard snatches of conversation such as: "Well all have a raise . . . we need a new library . . . five hundred thousand . . . plus postage . . ."

The Library accountant rendered my bill. The figures swam before my eyes:

Fine: at 2c per diem	\$269.48
Correspondence: Stationery	261.59
Postage	202.60
Extra held required for correspondence	480.00
Wear and tear on staff	.95
Plus Gov't tax at 8%	127.87

The total came to \$1,393.49. The accountant permitted himself a slight smile. "How would you like to arrange payment, young man?" he asked. Would you like to make a cash settlement now, or will you take our thirty-three fifty installment plan?"

"That book," I said, "it wasn't funny."

"Neither is this," the young man countered.

Well, I paid him. What else could I do? (Confederate money is still good in the Library, but don't count on it from now on.)

I suppose "Behind the Beyond" was a pretty good book. Mr. Leacock is a famous author. Boy, is he! They say the works of great authors live after them. That's what I got. The works, that is.

PERENNIAL FRESHMAN

There never was a Freshman more naive and blundering than I. Barely sixteen, I strutted proudly through the halls of the combined Junior College and High School feeling immeasurably superior to all these high school children pushing aimlessly here and there. I went through a whole year of Psychology lectures and never owned a book, or perhaps opened one. Sneezy in Speech Class, only the imminent prospect of failure unlocked my lips. Owl-eyed, I watched the girls in English and did little else.

I was too small and light for the football team—one hundred pounds is not considered quite enough. For track, I was built too low to the ground; my usual handicap was one hundred yards for the half-mile run. I was too dumb for debate—I mean of course "speechless". The nearest I came to taking part in a debate was after I had acted as time-keeper and cut our boys so short they lost the match. In the ensuing argument and rebuttal with my mates as to why, why, why—I cut them so short, I came out a poor second.

Furthermore, I was too timid and tongue-tied to take part in plays; too young for dates (it's not exactly a date if you have to jump the fence at the football game to sit beside a girl friend in the stands, and she has to walk home alone afterwards); too unmusical to last long in the Glee Club; too proud to mix with the high school; too moral to dance; too opinionated at home to be good company.

Short pants had gone out of fashion long ago in the colleges, but I wore them—well, not all of the time, but some of the time—under the impression that they resembled plus-fours.

In short, I was like all other freshmen in my naive, blundering way, vain about unimportant things, timid, sometimes speechless, sometimes too noisy; a little lazy and uninclined to study. Only of course I

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CAMPUS POLITICS

Among the new students on the campus there is naturally a great variety of political opinion. In the next four years, many of these new students will do a good deal of thinking about politics. In this short article, I will attempt to outline the activities on the campus of the political parties and of other groups which deal with political questions.

Students on the campus have always done a good deal of thinking about politics. The Conservative and Liberal viewpoints have long been predominant and there is now an active CCF movement on the campus. Those familiar with political activities in other colleges will be surprised to learn that there is no organized LPP at U. N. B.

The International Relations Club and the Debating Society inevitably deal with political questions in their activities. The speakers for the I. R. C. have always been scholarly and politically neutral. Last year's president of the I. R. C. was Carlisle Hanson, an energetic CCF'er who might have been expected to lead the society in leftist paths; however, this expectation was not fulfilled as the society's main pre-occupation turned out to be UNO and atomic energy.

The Debating Society at one time used to consider topics like the nationalization of public utilities but in recent years has turned to more serious questions such as the co-eds. Last year the society held a debate with the S. C. M. on a controversial question, that of the Japanese-Canadians.

One of the most promising organizations in the political field is the Political Club which was formed last year, chiefly through the energy and persistence of Pat Byrne. The society held one meeting last year at which it presented three speakers, Hon. F. Squires (Conservative), Health Minister McGrand (Liberal) and J. C. Hanson (CCF). This meeting in very ably and objectively described in the May edition of the Wedge.

The best organized party at U. N. B. (Continued on Page Six)

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FEATURE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Student in Society. Topic of the discussion group directed by Dr. D. Stuart. To take place on Wednesday, Oct. 10 in Hut 10 Alexander College. All Students Welcome.

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