

NAKED CAME POLONSKY:

John A. and I

By JOE POLONSKY

Well, John A. Macdonald Day came and went for another year, and as could be expected, York did not even bother to give us the day off.

How are we supposed to pay our fullest respects to the George Washington of Canadian History, if we don't in some real way feel personally affected by the occasion. For instance just think how it would raise the awareness of the Canadian multitude if, on every John A. Day, every citizen was forced to take a free ride on the CNR, and as would suit the occasion, the CNR would give out free booze in the bar car; a fitting tribute to a great Canadian patriot. And of course, so as not to offend our good friends in Quebec, we would celebrate a birthday of a suitably French Canadian hero; thus, Louis St. Laurent Day. (Are you serious? — ed)

It is fitting, therefore, that in the face of the appropriately apathetic York administration, I devote this little space of mine to my intimate memories of Father John A.

I hate the bastard. It all started back when I was in Grade 7. It was the end-of-the-year speaking contest. The whole junior high school body was at the assembly. The judges were sitting at the back. Their mean age was 82. They had very neutral, stern faces. They thought it only fair that if a speaker should say something funny, not to show any response from smile to guffaw, whereby revealing their biases. Besides which, only one of them had any teeth.

Anyways, the contest had been going on for about an hour, and there were now only two contenders left, myself and this other kid. Now, this other kid was the kind of guy who everybody loved. There's always one in every school. The teachers loved him because he got good marks. The guys loved him because he was a great soccer, basketball, and baseball player. The girls loved him because he was so damn cute. And even the 'toughs' loved him because he was a rebel-type to boot. So, as you have probably gathered by now, he was kind of charismatic.

The topic of his speech was good old John A. It was pretty stirring. "I'll see to it that nothing, 30 below temperatures, waving wheat fields, the snow-capped Rockies, unprogressive Indians, or any other barrier stand in the way of the great Canadian railway. Why, I'll shove that railway into the west myself, if I have to." Actually, it was all pretty phallic for a 12-year-old. But, needless to say, he got a great ovation from the crowd. As a matter of fact one of the judges, an Orangeman, I believe, almost stood up and wept, but fortunately caught himself just in time.

It was a tough act to follow. But I was prepared. Babe Ruth speech in hand, I mounted the stage and approached the podium. As I orated my way through the tales of Ruth, I could sense that the audience was mine. And then I came to the clincher. I told them about how one morning the Babe went to see a dying boy in a hospital. As he left the room, the boy said, "Hey Babe, hit a homer for me". And that afternoon the Babe hit one hell of a home run. And you know what? The boy lived.

Well, the audience was cheering. As a matter of fact, the principal had to quiet them down, because it was embarrassing that one speaker should have got so much more applause than all the others. The speech was such a success that I even incorporated parts of it into my Bar Mitzvah speech a month later.

But audiences do not a speech contest win. The judges spent 15 minutes in deliberation. They slowly climbed up the stairs to the stage. "Number One goes to the young man who gave that magnificently patriotic talk on John A. Macdonald. And Number Two goes to the fine young lady who told us all about the Mayo Clinic. But even though they are the winners you all talked lovely".

I didn't even place. The audience cheered, but I was only lovely. I even lost out to the Mayo Clinic. Later my teacher told me that the main reasons I probably lost were because, for one thing I pronounced the "s" in baseball too harshly. This was of course blatant cultural indoctrination because Jewish people tend to pronounce letters and phrases such as "ing" more harshly than the norm. So, so much for the old melting-pot story. But the real reason she thought I lost was because John A. Macdonald was intellectually more acceptable a topic than a mere baseball player. After all, Babe Ruth, in a junior-high-school-speaking contest?

So it was then and there that I knew I was never to, in the deepest cavern of my heart, honestly idolize our first prime minister. And I shall till the end proclaim to the world that I was gypped out of a first place in the junior high speaking contest.

Babe, I love you.

★ GOOD EATS ★ Pasta

By HARRY STINSON

When cooking any kind of pasta, remember the smaller the cut of the pieces, the less time they take to cook. Boil until tender, not limp, then add some cold water, drain and add some butter, margarine or oil. You can keep it warm for a while, but it's best served immediately.

Lasagna: Brown 1/2 lb. sausage meat, drain excess fat, and add 1/2 clove garlic, 1/2 tablespoon each of parsley and basil, 1/4 tablespoon salt, 1 cup tomatoes, and 6 oz. tomatopaste. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for one half hour (uncovered).

Meanwhile, cook until tender 5 oz. lasagna noodles. Also, squish together in a bowl, 1 1/2 cups cottage cheese, a beaten egg, 1/4 tablespoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, 1 tablespoon parsley, and 1/4 cup parmesan. Layer in a greased pan as follows: noodles, cottage cheese glop, thin slices of mozzarella (about 1/2 lb. total for the dish), and sauce; then repeat. Use any remaining cheese to garnish the top, then bake at 375 for about half an hour (check it). Let it stand a few minutes before serving to five or six people.

Clam sauce: (for any pasta, but preferably spaghetti or fine noodles). Place in a bowl one dozen small-necked clams and their juice, first mutilating the clams into small pieces. Brown 2 cloves garlic in 4 tablespoons hot olive oil, in a saucepan. Add the clam juice, 1 large can strained tomatoes, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer this for 40 minutes, then slip in the clams, turn up the heat and cook for 2 minutes (too long toughens the clams). This should make 4-6 portions (1 lb. spaghetti) and isn't usually served with cheese, although boors may find grated romano good.

Spaghetti Sauce: Brown some hamburger in a frying pan. Drain off the excess fat, and shovel in some fine chopped onions, green pepper, and or red pepper, and mushroom. Fry briefly, then turn the heat down, and turn into a pot.

According to your taste, you now add grated carrot, fine chopped celery, tomatoes, and tomato paste. Season with garlic and oregano, (rather heavily), then dashes of cayenne, chili, salt, parsley, and any particular eccentric essence that sets you drooling. Simmer this concoction for several hours (covered) over low heat, stirring occasionally. If it gets too thick, add some water or tomato juice. Serve with lots of grated cheese (preferably parmesan or romano).

COMIX!

