

NAKED CAME POLONSKY:

A Time Odyssey at Queen's

By JOE POLONSKY

The planetary present is very available to us. Why my good father tells of how as a young man in Winnipeg he had to parade over to the Winnipeg Free Press Building to catch the latest score in the World Series. The Winnipeg Free Press fourth inning score now comes to him; but in pictures, with commentary and world series statistics and records pressed in by Tony Kubeck and Kurt Gowdy; not to mention the latest and sharpest in Blades as well.

All and all then, we have become a culture addicted to the present, and all the information and knowledge it stuffs down our throats until we are forced to gag for mercy. Our tiny time capsule mentality wants it all and wants it now. Futures are now and pasts were never. Remember the Six Second War between Israel and the Arabs? It is probably quite a natural instinct to want to be as up on things as possible, with so many things to be up on, just how can one ever get down again?

Well, one good way is never bothering to get up. One sure fire method of avoiding the present is by avoiding the nevertheless quite noticeable presence of the phenomenon known as the 20th century. This weekend I happened to fall upon a space encompassing 19th century time. It is called Queen's University.

Queen's is dedicated to those glorious days of academic esteem when cap and gown meant knowledge and the tarring and feathering of freshmen meant initiation into knowledge. An Oxford accent showed refinement and a good barf on the residence stairs after an evening of drinking indicated a fun night had by all. Young ladies were perfumed and polished and in Archie Bunker's words, "boys were boys and men were men". Or in other words, the Queen's women would sit poised in the stands, while the Queen's jocks would beat the shit out of others on the field, but like knights. The good old days!

But no so for Queen's. These are the good now days. The girl's residence, naturally called Victoria Hall, is a hallmark to virginity; not to mention bitchiness, boredom, misery, and a consummate concern about rape. Understandably, mind you. For the guy's residence is a hallmark to castration; not to mention boorishness, pizza pie fat, misery and a consummate concern about raping. But as the 104 year old dean of women so delicately expressed it; "I am proud of the great tradition of Victoria Hall and all that it stands for. And if one fellow ever walks through these doors with evil intentions, I'll knock his balls off." Now, you must admit those are fighting words coming from a 104 year old spinster who once had an affair with a Sicilian Monk after a sherry too many.

So whatever happened to Woodstock? Long hair? Revolution? Paltry concerns for the High Priests of yesteryear at Queen's. Why Lorne Greene is a member of the Alumni. Would Lorne Greene want his children to stay in a co-ed residence, talk to professors as actual human beings and not doctors of philosophy, and consider at some time smoking an illegal kind of cigarette? That kind of barbarism is for the primitive elements aloft in the culture with no regard for the finer things.

An unfortunate aspect of all this is that it turns into paranoid wrecks those few students who have had a glimpse out of the cave and somehow "just know" that Queen's is simply not providing the kinds of answers which respond to the kinds of questions that modern culture imposes. Queen's legitimizes the jock mentality that has no idea of modern reality and thus makes it respectable not to have consciousness raising experiences by robing jocks in the garments of Academic Tradition. The questioning 18-year-old mind who has spent all these years in front of a tv, lived his or her youth in pending ecological disaster, witnessed several friends freak out on chemicals, and come to see the school system as pathetically obsolete, is frowned upon as "hippie". The unquestioning mind of proms, and "he might see me with my curlers" and "I got to get this book memorized but not understood for my exams" is encouraged and enshrined as "normal".

The 19th century is not the solution to the problems of the 20th. And to take an eager and troubled high school kid and impose a phoney, isolated and idiosyncratic Queen's Tradition upon his psyche and pretend that a static, obsolete, world view is the means to the good life, is to add but another reason why we ring the death bell of the university institution. It is also this kind of conditioning and rape of the imagination which is more decadent and brutal than the rape of a sweet young thing in The Victoria Hall for the sexually repressed, oppressed and depressed.

★ GOOD EATS ★

The Egg!

By HARRY STINSON

Yes friends, this week the lowly yet nutritious and delicious egg falls victim to a variety of culinary manglings (and remember what Dr. Jim Wheeler says: there's protein in them thar eggs).

Savory (Basic) Omelet — Break 2 eggs into a small bowl, beat gently with 2 tablespoons cream (or milk) so that it blends with the yolks, (but don't whip into a froth), and season with garlic salt and white pepper. Have preheated a seven-inch frying pan and plop in ½ ounce butter. When this begins to go a very light brown, carefully add egg mix and stir vigorously with a fork, moving the pan simultaneously. Fold in both edges toward center when the top is still runny, then add the filling of your choice (usually cheese, but you can try anything: shrimp, stewed tomato and bacon, mushrooms, ham, etc). Turn out onto a hot plate (turning the omelet over), and brush with butter.

Sweet Omelet — In a basin, whip 4 egg whites, 1 tablespoon water, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Add 1 ounce of your favourite liquor or flavouring and 1 ounce superfine granulated sugar to the yolks and beat together. When the egg whites are very stiff, gently fold in the yolk goo. When a small piece of butter in a heated pan begins to froth at the edges, add the mix, stir quickly with a spatula, bang the pan on the element a couple of times to settle the mixture, and smooth the surface with a knife. Shove immediately under a moderate heat broiler, and lightly cook until small surface bubbles or blisters appear and it begins to rise. Remove and stuff in your filling (fresh fruit is best for this, to complement the liquor-flavoring), and then turn out of the pan with the help of a spatula. Dust with sugar and serve (try flaming it at the table... now that's real class!).

Sweetcorn Soufflé — Create a sauce with 2 tablespoons butter, ¼ cup flour and 1 cup milk, season with white pepper, nutmeg, cayenne and salt and leave to cool. Then beat in well 4 egg yolks. Next, add ¼ cup creamed corn and 1 tablespoon dried mustard. Whip the remaining 4 egg whites, pour over the sauce and spoon together.

Turn half into a buttered soufflé dish, spread with ¾ cup creamed corn, and bury with the rest of the egg. Bake at 375 for 35 minutes.

When making a soufflé, fix a band of foil around the dish so that it sticks up several inches above the rim. Also set the dish on a baking sheet when it's doing its thing in the oven. To test the doneness, tug the sheet sharply: if the soufflé top wobbles... leave it a while longer.

Spiced Mushroom Eggs — Melt ½ tablespoon butter, add ½ crushed garlic clove, and 6 tablespoons each tomato purée and dry white wine. Boil this to reduce to sauce thickness (half volume) and toss in ½ tablespoon parsley stalks. Fry 1 cup mushrooms and throw into sauce.

Meanwhile, boil 1 cup rice (or more depending on your appetite) and form into either a large nest on a serving platter or individual nests on 4 plates. Stick shelled hard boiled eggs (4) into the sauce and gently heat through, then pour the mixture into the nest(s), garnish with parsley and serve.

Now go out and buy a lot of eggs (cheap at Kensington Market).

