

Judges—Short Sentences

It is difficult not to share the fundamental opinions of Batten: it's tough being a judge and most of them are doing a pretty good job. And his assertion that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has made the judge's role more significant and, consequently, more difficult, makes a lot of sense.

What is irritating about *Judges* is both the tone that Batten adopts toward his subjects and his writing style. A reader can be excused at times for thinking that she is reading a Bobsey Twins novel. The sentences are shorter than the average Daily News reporter's and the paragraphs even more brief than my own. This creates quite a readable and lyric script, although three hundred pages of it is a bit much.

The criteria used to analyze individuals is unbelievably detailed an often silly. Batten shares the Howard Cosell, "Up close and personal" style. Discovering that Justice Lamer of the Supreme Court of Canada does not need an alarm clock to get up at five in the morning will automatically endear him to the

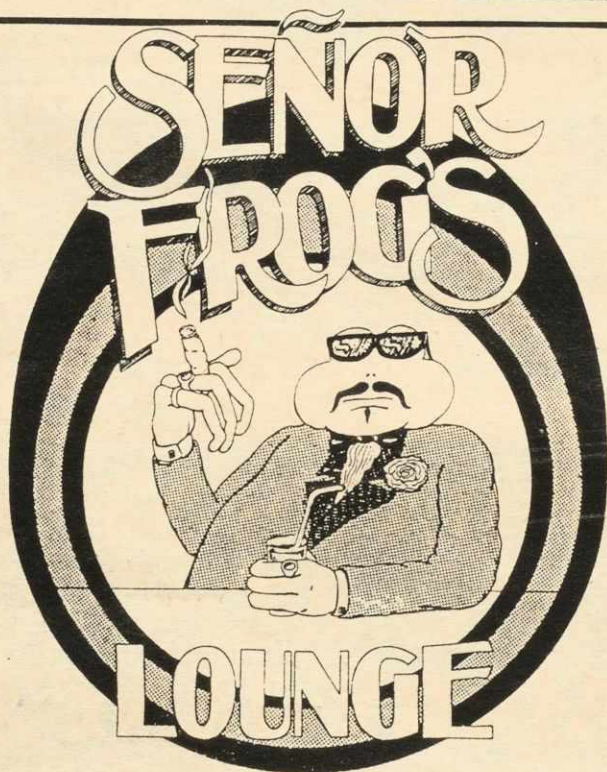
reader. Batten feels he must tell us that even Supreme Court Judges are real people like you and me.

The chapter on Davie Fulton is interesting. Fulton, a promising Tory in the fifties and federal justice minister under Diefenbaker, became a Judge and an alcoholic — in that order. He then dropped out of sight. It is hard not to feel for Fulton, since every other judge in the book seems so calm, tough and together. It was tasteful of Batten to include a chapter on a man who experienced the darker side of being a judge.

What is most lacking in *Judges* is an examination of where these people (mostly, although obviously not all, men) came from, how their backgrounds affect their decisions as judges, and why they were appointed. The colour of the stain in their mahogany panelling is perhaps less important.

Don't buy this book. If you get your hands on it read chapters, and make sure you read "Liechenstein's Man from Canada".

The book is not important, but bits of it can be interesting.



What's happening in downtown Halifax?

SEÑOR FROG'S

1669 Argyle Street

(next door to the Carleton Hotel)

- Large screen videos
- Dancing nightly 'til 2:00 a.m.
- Specials all week long

CHECK IT OUT!

Halifax's newest is really hopping!

Culture for Money

By S. Shay

"When you consider television's awesome power to educate, aren't you glad it doesn't?"

Donald Reilly

It was hard for me not to think of television as I listened to Kurt Vonnegut speak. He is everything a talkshow host should be: witty, sarcastic but charming, and above all — unmistakably American.

But it wasn't just his talkshow host potential that had me thinking about the insipid tube. It was the American attitude he shamelessly expressed. The assuredness of his own importance. I really couldn't help but think of Letterman.

Vonnegut's spiel was like

watching the television news. Like the news, he flips through a series of topical but unrelated events and doesn't delve into the issues and doesn't pose any pointed questions (or genuine answers for that matter). Albeit, the entertainment value is high but is it (gasp!) educational?

We are constantly bombarded with American culture and the irony is that nobody seems to really like it. It's too easy to say there's nothing we can do about it, that it's all technology's fault as Vonnegut would have us believe. There are real people exporting this culture and equally real people importing it. If we look at culture as a commodity it appears more concrete, which makes it easier to identify. Culture as a commodity means the more we import the less incentive there is to produce our own, especially if one culture is

dominating the marketplace. It makes it too easy to adopt the import as our own.

For years our professors have been insisting there is too much American content in the classroom, and they have been taking steps to remedy this, yet we students continue to pick *Miami Vice* over *The Journal*, *People* rather than *Maclean's* and, yes, Vonnegut over Timothy Findley. And so it goes.

If students are here to be educated, then they must insist they are exposed to different ideologies than the predominant American one. Vonnegut's lecture was subsidized by all students, which means we all have a say in whether we want less American viewpoint and more Canadian content. Remember, it's your education and it's your money.

U.S. out of Canada. And so it goes.



Vonnegut — impressed by his own powers.

Photo by Ariella Pahlke