

The sun is horizontal, so the flesh of the near-naked girl bouncing a ball is netted in its light, an orange mesh waving between the shadowed wall. She kisses the hand beside her mouth. It is his hand on her hand. It hardly matters, the sun is flashing everything in gold. It bathes the blunt grey rocks and the low-lying lichens and the delicate hairy roots and the tough rock cranberries. The river flows both ways. Granny was waiting on the floor of the parrot. She smoked smelly, lonely, and patient, and at the sight of her the children and their mother in a guile. Those who may pity (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which artificially dressed will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

## Another well-written, thought-provoking work from John Keegan about military history of North America

Warpaths

by John Keegan  
Key Porter Books

JOHN RICKARD

THE BRUNSWICKAN

Few military historians in the world can match British author John Keegan's output and innovation. His first, and perhaps greatest work to date, was *Face of Battle*, which brilliantly explored the close realm of combat at Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme. Since the publication of this work in 1976, Keegan has been a prolific writer.

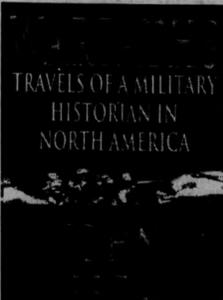
His latest book, *A History of Warfare*, though at times ponderous, was widely hailed for its unique perspective on warfare from antiquity to the present. With this latest work, Keegan has produced another wonderful comparative analysis reminiscent of *Face of Battle*, *The Price of Admiralty* and *The Mask of Command*.

In *Warpaths*, Keegan sets out to explore the effects of military conflict on the shaping of the North American continent and does so in grand fashion. As in previous works, Keegan sets out to prove this point by pinpointing different positions in time. In *Warpaths*, he focuses on the British conquest of

Quebec in 1759, the British surrender at Yorktown in the American Revolution, the great peninsular campaign of the American Civil War in 1862, and the subsequent bitter struggle against the Plains Indians. The high point of the latter battle was the annihilation of George Armstrong Custer's Seventh

battles themselves. Thus we see General Wolfe, the British commander at Quebec, already wounded in the wrist, wounded yet again, this time in the chest as he was preparing to lead a final charge. Wolfe's foe on that day, French Canada's "mythologized hero," Montcalm, was hit twice as well, but did not expire until the next day.

We have the scene of Lord Cornwallis, surrendering the British colours to the lowly Americans, and George B. McClelland's ignoble retreat before inferior Confederate forces in the Peninsula. Most thought provoking, however, is Keegan's recreation of the last hours of Custer's life at the Little Big Horn. Keegan's descriptions of the battles are excellent for their clarity and powerful personal effect. One can almost visualize Custer's facial expression when he finally realized that it was not he who was the attacker, and that amidst the smoke and noise of the escalating calamity, none of the remaining Seventh Cavalry companies could be seen coming to his rescue.



Cavalry in the Valley of the Little Big Horn in 1876.

Keegan repeats the same pattern throughout the book, beginning with a general discussion of the various factors weighing on each great conflict, followed by an intimate portrait of the

Wolfe's conquest of French Canada crushed the French presence and guaranteed North America would be an "Anglo-Saxon" realm.

The Conquest of Quebec was followed by the American struggle to gain freedom from the British and Yorktown Symbolized the cutting of the umbilical cord. North America had thus evolved from two principle power blocks, the British and the French, to one, the British. Later the continent went back to two, with the British controlling Canada, and the Americans controlling the rest (with the exception of the Spanish in the Southwest).

Within the confines of the United States, however, the evolutionary process continued and the American Civil War cemented the identity of the eighty-year old republic. In *Warpaths*, the final evolutionary process in North America was the struggle to dominate the Plains Indians. The disaster of the Little Big Horn, notes Keegan, was the apex of Indian power, followed by successive US army victories. With these victories, the Americans attained ascendancy over their portion of the continent. As Keegan concludes in his introduction, "North America is a land for everyone; it is also a land where the strongest do best. That, I suppose, is the theme of this book." If people find this type of reasoning politically incorrect, they cannot argue with its veracity.

## Sometimes funny, often strange book offers advice to the debt-wary university student

The Debt Free Graduate  
by Murray Baker  
Harper Collins  
275 pages

JOSEPH FITZPATRICK

THE BRUNSWICKAN

There is a lot of interesting and potentially valuable information in *The Debt-Free Graduate*. To its credit, it is presented, as the cover says, in a "witty, accessible" manner. That having been said, for the most part, I was disappointed by the book.

There are three reasons for this: anecdotal insight, contrary advice, and over use of humour.

Anecdotes make the world go 'round. I'm sure there is no shortage of advice given to students, but by the fourth chapter, the incessant use of stories without firm evidence or results made me begin to question the advice more and more as the book went on. While the author's intention was probably an attempt to make the book more accessible and enjoyable, I found it grated on me.

Several conflicting ideas perturbed me. I wondered if there was

comprehensive editing done in some cases. While some instances of this are merely philosophical, such as the suggestion that silk flowers could be purchased if you couldn't keep a real one alive, others run next to each other. To be fair, some of the contradictions are pretty well spaced, but a few are embarrassingly close. For example, the author suggests against grocery

shopping on an empty stomach, but later in the same chapter advises you to time your shopping with lunch in order to eat your fill with free samples.

It also struck me as odd that a book which advises a student to buy chicken legs over chicken breasts to save money would include the recommended freezing times for veal, lamb, and salmon.

I suppose it's the philosophical incongruities which just plain rub me the wrong way. The book doesn't have a substantial theme running through it. In a bid to be "accessible" it includes advice for students in many different situations. The result seems muddled. The same book suggests eating at the hospital cafeteria to save money and approaching your parents to buy a house and set you up as building manager.

Contributing to my ambivalence with this work has to be the way humour is used. A little humour is fine, welcome even. But the author goes out of his way to be funny. There are pages and pages of humour, much of which seems forced.

There are also some real holes in the book, such as pets, a thorough investigation of the costs of alcohol, significant others, nutrition, dealing with roommates and university officials.

There are a few bits of advice that

bother me, or strike be as potentially wrong, but one in particular that irks me is the advice on car insurance.

"Take out the minimum insurance possible" that sounds like a cost saving measure, but there's a reason why insurance is so much higher for students: we have more accidents. While I'll admit that the cost of collision insurance is high, one collision without enough insurance will ruin your entire financial future. I'll never regret paying it.

Expectations are the key to this book. Don't think it will solve all your financial problems, but don't be surprised at a few pieces of advice that you hadn't thought of.

And then, there's the title. It's pretty bold, especially with the real lack of cohesion between this title and the conclusion. The subtitle "how to survive college or university without going broke" is left hanging in the conclusion:

"...the good news is that you can still spend wisely, and save, without giving up your pleasures and passions."

The long and the short of it is that this book doesn't deliver on its purported promise. The complete novice will find some good, if maybe not the most comprehensive, advice. The experienced student will likely find a few hints, but by and large, will put down the book feeling a bit mystified.

## American humourist publishes collection of satirical stories

Age and Guile  
Beat Youth, Innocence, and a Bad Haircut  
by P.J. O'Rourke  
Vintage Canada

CYNTHIA KIRKBY

THE BRUNSWICKAN

Due to an incredible ignorance of American politics, I had never dared read of P.J. O'Rourke's work before, even when it appeared in *Rolling Stone*. This, though, was labeled simply "Humor" and looked approachable.

*Age and Guile Beat Youth, Innocence, and a Bad Haircut* is a collection of articles written between 1970 and 1995, which O'Rourke acknowledges have been thrown together because somebody will do it sooner or later. "I might as well publish them myself. Also, I'm being paid for it." Even though he calls his earlier work "twaddle and blather," I'm afraid much of the satire has been lost on me, making this review unfairly shallow. Oh well.

The stories are enjoyable, mainly because of their ramblings. (My father, an O'Rourke fan, calls him a commentator rather than a satirist. It might be useful for other fans to note that my father was not inclined to finish reading the book.) One section, entitled "Current and Recurrent Events," includes pieces on Whitewater, Health Care Reform, and the 1987 Stock Market Crash. I have a mixed reaction to these: they're entertaining but not educational in their digressions, and they don't seem to require much background knowledge. It is possible, however, that if I had more background knowledge, the digressions would become informative satire. Either way, although O'Rourke calls himself a journalist, don't expect to learn much. (He's no better at being impartial.)

Many of the stories detail episodes of drunken driving, minor misogyny, and animal torture (beyond hunting and fishing). I found it interesting that O'Rourke wrote in "Bird Hunting", "It upsets actresses and sensitive undergraduate types." I'm certainly one of the latter. (Also interesting to me is that I was reading Howard Stern around the same time, and I can't decide who is more offensive. Probably O'Rourke, who seems not to value anything but his own middle-aged Republican pleasures. His irresponsibility is infuriating: do whatever since it'll be someone else's problem once he dies.)

He is, however, funny. (Which is not meant to reflect negatively on Stern; I'm done with him now.) As a fan of silliness, I loved the first section, "Juvenilia Delinquent." It includes, among other great pieces, a review of a train ride as if it were a play. O'Rourke captures the pretentiousness of theatre reviewers (not book reviewers, of course) with statements like "Act II, by far the longest of the three acts, is the ride itself. This has a certain intentional boredom and audience fatigue à la Warhol. I found even less attention to detail here and less authentic effect," followed by how "the director" had gone wrong. (This satire I understand.)

*Age and Guile Beat Youth, Innocence, and a Bad Haircut* is certainly worth reading, although long-time fans may need to abandon their preconceptions of how O'Rourke's writing should be, and those of us with sensibilities will need to overlook O'Rourke's disgustingly self-centered approach to the world.

## Witty cartoon book laughs at the computer age

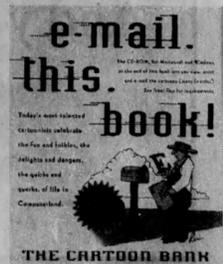
E-Mail This Book

The Cartoon Bank  
Alfred A. Knopf, Pub.

JETHILO E. CABILETE

THE BRUNSWICKAN

This is the age of technology. An age that brought us electronic vehicles, medical wonders and of course the computer. The blessings and curses of the computer age has provided fodder for many humorous experiences and anecdotal images that allow us to laugh at ourselves. In their third humorous installation *The Cartoon Bank* leads us through yet another series of witty, comical and sometimes cutting gaffs, laughs and foibles of the people from "computerland." Drawing on a collection of images from notable cartoonists such as John O'Brien, Jack Ziegler and Roz Chast the cartoonists present a merry romp through office romances, fine dining, parent-child squabbles and of course e-mail.



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