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Book Review by Peter Birnie

Goodbye, Mr. Spark
(Slurtig, paperback 1977, \$6.95)

Frank Mutton's biography of the late Student's Union President Jay Spark must surely rank as his greatest literary work. This definitive volume offers a rare insight into a 'man in charge', and it is written with such depth of feeling that one begins to feel an immediate kinship with Jay.

We all knew him as a man of authority, but few of us ever saw the deep compassion that he held for everyone. Frank illustrates this so poignantly by mentioning the hamsters Jay kept in the presidential office. He loved those little furry creatures so much that when one, named Howie, passed on, he arranged a simple little ceremony and had it buried in Quad. Only a great man like Mr. Spark would do such a thing.

Jay was also a family man, as we see in the chapter of the book entitled 'Jay-Jay Grows Up'. We are told that as a youngster growing up in a middle-class neighbourhood of Calgary, Mr. Spark was forced to suffer the indignity and embarrassment of having to park his Mustang on the street, since the family had no room in the driveway. He swore then that 'as God is my witness, I'll never do without a two-car garage again.'

True to his word, Jay began work the next week as a part-time accountant and managed to save enough in two years to make the down payment on a split-level on Lake Bonavista. At the time of his death, he had amassed a block of real estate ringing the lake, and was charging kiddies \$1.25 to swim. He was always thinking, that boy.

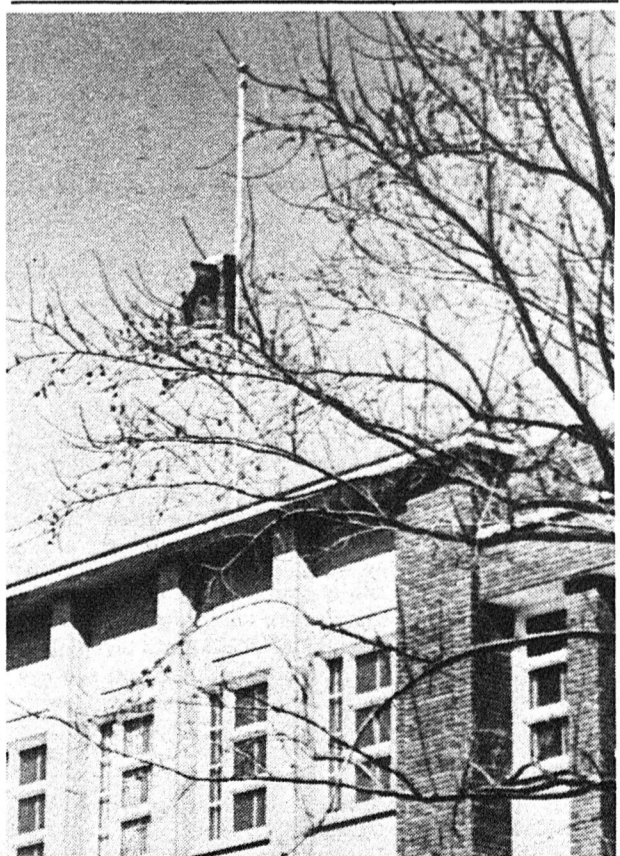
When Jay moved to Edmonton to attend classes at the U of A, he had no inkling of the awesome tasks that were to face him in the years ahead. He set up a bachelor's apartment in Residence, where he acquired a reputation as a man of taste and refinement — serving chilled Baby Duck and sardines a la Ritz crackers to the constant stream of guests. He became so popular on his floor that he was elected Floor Wonder Kid three years in a row.

When it came time to think about running for President, Jay Spark was ready and rarin' to go. He enlisted the aid of a 'Mr. Buglosia', who agreed to finance the Spark campaign in return for two small favors. One was that Jay rename St. Joseph's College 'My Muddah Naomi the Divine' College, and the other was that the liquor concession for all future Dinwoodie socials be granted to an Italian wine firm in Trenton, New Jersey.

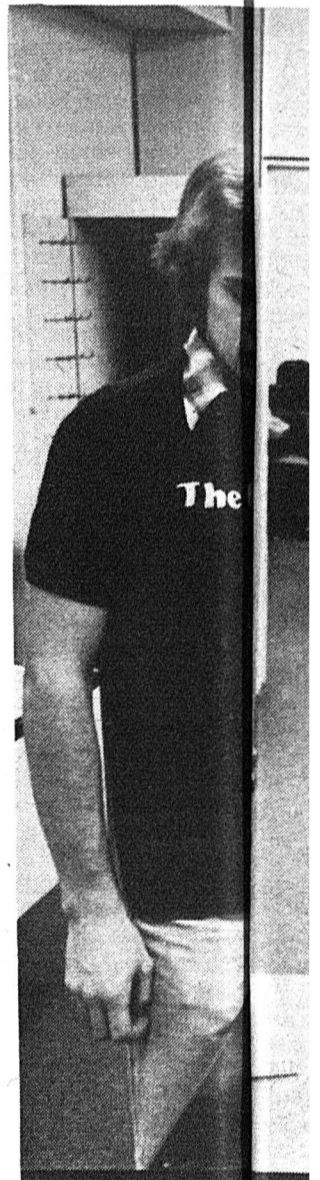
We of course know the outcome of that famous election — all the other candidates mysteriously disappeared, and the Spark slate swept to power on a platform of hard-hitting issues like 'More Dollar-bills in the Change Machines' and 'Smoother Toilet Paper in SUB'. We learn in the book that Jay became so excited that he...well, I'll have to let you read it and find out for yourself.

Overall, the book is well written, neatly tied together, and very readable. Mr. Mutton's popular style, well-known to readers of the *Journal*, makes the book all the more enjoyable. Mind you, those little **boldface** entries can be just a little irritating.

Frank will be at Woodward's Book Store, Southgate, this Saturday. Drop by and pick up a copy of this remarkable book — well worth the price.



The flag atop Administration flaps at half-mast in a mournful tribute to a great man. Mind you, it always flies at half-mast...



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