

A Short Story

Charlottetown Winter Monday

By D Cole

I met her at university. She seemed like a nice girl, so I said, "Hi!"

"I want to marry a vet doctor," she replied. "Get the hell out of my life!"

So I did. That was ten years ago.

Today, her husband — a vet doctor — is barely making a living, roaming around in rubber booties and helping bankrupt farmers.

I, on the other hand, am now the president of a successful company. To this very day, I laugh all the way to the bank.

Editor's Note: The movie rights to this story have been sold to a famous Hollywood movie company that wishes to remain anonymous, or so the author claims.

Awareness Week Proclaimed

By recent Council decree, Tuesday, October 21 to Friday, October 31 has been declared "Student Union Awareness Week". Wait a minute. There are seven days in a week, aren't there? Do this year's Student Councilors have a problem with arithmetic? Not according to Vice President Academic Paul Ledwell, who noted "where else but at U.P.E.I. can you get 10 days in a week?"

Apparently, there must be a lot of things of which students should be aware. So, what's Awareness Week all about? The Student Union is planning numerous events over the 10 days, each of which is designed to bring the attention of students matters of political, social, or recreational relevance. Beginning with the Premier's visit to campus on October 21st, continuing into Fallfest, and ending with the Hallowe'en Pub October 31st, the Week should introduce students to many aspects of the operations of the Student Union, as well as to some of the issues which are of current interest to both students and non-students alike. "This will be a major attempt by the Student Union to make everyone aware of some of the things we (S.U. executive, Councilors, and volunteers) are doing" said Ledwell. "And entertainment will be emphasized just as strongly as the Premier's visit or the Council elections. After all, everybody likes to party."

Events already scheduled for Awareness Week include:

PREMIER'S VISIT	October 21, 12:01 p.m. Library Lounge
S.U. GENERAL MEETING	October 28, 11:30 a.m. Library Lounge
LAMBERT AND JAMES	October 29, 9:00 p.m. S.U. Barn
COUNCIL ELECTIONS	October 29, 30 Robertson Bldg., Outside Library
HALLOWE'EN PUB	October 31, 9:00 p.m. S.U. Barn

There will be much more scheduled for Awareness Week, exact times and locations of which were unavailable at press time. So, keep your eyes and ears open for the announcement of these events. Even if you have no desire to be politically or socially aware, at least you can take time off studying to join in the festivities of Fallfest.

Burial in the USSR

In 1961, Khrushchev visited the United States and proclaimed, "We will bury you." However, up to this day, the Soviet Government has been so incompetent that they can't even bury their own countrymen in a respectable manner, let alone the Americans. After reading the following accounts published in Soviet newspapers, I believe no decent American would want to be buried by the Russian government.

V.M. Malishev made a visit to the local coffin bureau when his brother died. The first thing he heard when he got there was that a coffin would only be ready in five days. "If this is not convenient, then make the coffin yourself," he was told.

So Mr. Malishev, wondering for whom could this be convenient, built a coffin in his own backyard and took it across town himself. After placing his brother in the box, he had to pay a hearse driver to take it to a makeshift crematorium. That was not so bad, he said, but how they presented you with the crematorium was shameful and disgraceful. "It is ... like being handed back a repaired shoe."

The registrar spent a long time filling out forms, then pulled out an urn from underneath the desk, and handed it to him "without even standing up."

Mr. Malishev's account of the trials of dealing with the dead was just one of numerous letters to Soviet papers published after the papers had reported accounts of corruption and extortion in the funeral business.

F.K. Vityenkov, a veteran, lost his wife in March. After the funeral, he went to Granite the state gravestone factory. He was told that if he ordered a tombstone that very minute, it would be ready in four or five years. Fearing he might join his wife before the five years were up, Mr. Vityenkov resorted to bribing the officials, paying twice the rightful price to get a gravestone earlier.

An employee of the mortuary in the Ukrainian town of Shostka, said he worked there for a year and had to get out because he couldn't tolerate the situation any more. Because of the lack of materials the firm was taking apart fences and using the rotating planks to knock together coffins that were held together only by

the shroud they were wrapped in. Finding grave diggers was another problem. "There are no grave diggers ... on the payroll, so the client must look for them himself." When the ground is frozen in winter, he said, the relatives of the deceased must find three or four people and ply them with vodka until the job is done.

State grave diggers work only until 4:00 p.m. Yuri Kazmin had the misfortune of arranging a burial at 4:30 and had to pay \$100 extra to have the hearse driver work past four and an extra \$50 for each of the gravediggers. "All of us were crushed with grief, so they cheated us out of as much as they wanted," he lamented.

Once in the grave, a Soviet citizen's trials are not yet over. A man named Ankudinov said the main graveyard in his city was demolished one night to make way for the building of a specialty shop for foreigners. "The graves were razed to the ground. Rows of elderly people lined up to watch the graveyards being destroyed. How many tears they shed upon seeing the splintered remains of shattered tombstones lying around!"

One man report that a color television factory in the city of Alexandrov was built over one of his family member's graves and that he could never bring himself to buy a color television as a result.

Another man denounced the cold, heartless administrators responsible for such callous action. "If even one unglorified nobody is buried in some humble country graveyard and a zealous administrative person impatiently builds a high-rise building on his grave for the sake of progress and prosperity, then the widow's tears shed on his grave will weaken the reputation of any progress."

A secret phenomenon "that everyone knows about," said one letter, is that "plots are sold that contain the remains of other people buried there ... The plots that are the most valuable are the ones located near frequently visited graves of famous people."

If Khrushchev were serious about being in the funeral parlor business in North America, he would have gone bankrupt long ago. It is said that a culture can be judged by how it treats the elderly. Perhaps a culture can also be judged by how it buries its dead.

By Oliver Twist

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