



'61 Grad Streaks Academy Awards

"...everything the Dominicans taught me."

by
"Hollywood" Cimini

(Editor's Note: The information in the following article related by Mr. Opel, according to one of his classmates, may not be totally correct. Mr. David Duffy, the former Editor of the Scowl (a type of Harvard Lampoon), emphasized that satire was an important ingredient in the publications at PC during the early Sixties. He believes that Mr. Opel may be reliving his college days and simply putting Mr. Cimini on.)

The 1961 Veritas, Providence College's yearbook, described Bob Opel as a "one in a million."

Thirteen years later, the very same Robert C. Opper Jr., PC's original BMOC, stunned Hollywood and the rest of the nation by streaking across the stage while David Niven was announcing the nominees for the best picture award during the Academy Awards presentation held last Tuesday evening.

In a telephone conversation with this reporter, Mr. Opel (who since '61 has dropped one of the "p's" in his name) remarked, "By streaking, I simply employed everything the Dominicans taught me."

Mr. Opel told the press after his streak that he did it for two reasons. First, he viewed the entire escapade as a "challenge." Secondly, he wished to make a statement about sexual freedom. He stressed, "It's cool to be nude."

Mr. Opel was one of the more active members of the "trippy" Class of '61. He was a member of the Student Congress and became its President during his Senior year; a reporter on the 'Cowl during his first two years; an Alembic staffer; a Pyramid Player; a member of the Barristers, the Debating Club; a loyal member of the Friars Club

(that's right, Jerry, you read it correctly); and an announcer on WDOM. He also made the Dean's List for three years, and for all his achievements was mentioned in the "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities."

Mr. Opel presently is working for an advertising agency in Los Angeles, but he now hopes to embark on a new career in the entertainment field. He will be opening a new comedy act in a Philadelphia night club this week and he "needed the exposure." He plans to use his recent fame as a springboard to success.

Although a number of people have been quoted as saying that the streak was "set up," Mr. Opel denied such reports. No one was tipped off about his plot, nor did anyone offer any financial rewards. He arranged to have a press pass so that he could remain backstage. When the former Friar thought the time was right, he discarded his clothes and ran through a tear in the curtain.

Mr. Connolly of the Alumni Development Office did not believe that the Hollywood streaker was the very same Opel. This did not surprise the '61 grad.

One of Mr. Opel's recent schemes involved informing the Alumni Office that he was the Grand Bursar of the Madalyn Murray - Oscar Wilde Memorial Trust Fund. The whole idea of telling the people at PC that he was the head of such an organization (which was named after an atheist and a homosexual) fascinated Mr. Opel. Of course, no such foundation ever existed, but even in the most recent edition of the Alumni Directory (1974) the name of his fund appears after his name.

A former native of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, Mr. Opel never

married because marriage was never his "type of trip." The '61 Veritas noted that he was an All-American High School debater and one of the finest speakers in his class. One of his trademarks was his "ultra-dry-martini" type of humor.

Mr. Opel received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Letters (similar to today's English program) from the College. He was one of the pioneer members of the Arts-Honors program. He described his era at PC as an interesting social experience, but not an "educative" one. He added, "You can never come to terms with life and yourself while at PC."

The Hollywood Streaker was also a staffer on the SCOWL, the alternative newspaper at PC. He claims he was associated with the first "radical" editor of the Cowl, Charles Goetz. Mr. Goetz, however, would probably not have considered himself a "leftist."

Mr. Opel believes that the major fault with the administration during his time at PC was that it was too "authoritarian." With Fr. Slavin as President of the College, Mr. Opel could observe no great changes in the college's structure. His two greatest achievements as Student Congress President were affiliating the school with the National Students Association and instituting a campus insurance program.

The 1961 edition of the Veritas was dedicated to the Providence College Man. According to the yearbook, the PC man is "a wise and good man, one who has developed a quest for knowledge, a love of truth, and a mastery of the Christian virtues." The yearbook staff chose thirty-one members of the Class of '61 to represent the PC man. Robert C. Opper Jr. was one.



(1961) Robert Opel talks with obscure poet.

Memo from the Editor . . .

(THE COWL is published each full week of the academic year by Providence College.)

A good college paper is a campus talking to itself; therefore, we report the news, the whole news, and nothing but the news. What reactions do we evoke from this campus? Accusations of misquoting, misrepresentation, slander, and libel — of course.

Because this is not a full academic week, because we were not planning to come out this week, because it is hard to break the habit of gathering on a Sunday in the COWL office and putting out an issue, and because we hoped to tap that rich vein of PC humor (it is only human to laugh at oneself) — we have come out with this issue.

Drawing upon the tradition of the SCOWL, an "inside Providence College newspaper" produced by, of, and for the Class of '61; a paper reeking of satire from which "no one was safe"; with the two Special Editors of this edition, Henry Golembeski and Edward Cimini, and a little help from their friends (and you know who they are) and Ma Bell's finest — "What City please?" — this COWL has been produced.

Not quite an April Fools issue, with malice towards none and for the sake of fun . . . here it is!

A very happy and healthy vacation — Easter — and Passover — to everyone from all of us!

Sincerely,
Ann Frank

PC 1961: A Far Cry from Hollywood

by "Pappadopoulos" Golembeski
Nineteen Sixty-One. Does anyone remember what they were doing in sixty, much less in sixty-two? Does anyone really care?

National media typified the early Sixties as the Kennedy years, the beginning of the New Frontier. People were still people and not some form of bastardized hyphenated American. Students were listening to rock music at the time but contrary to popular opinion, it was not the Bill Haley Rock lately come popular, but rather was exemplified by a singer named Cliff Richards. The Beatles were in Hamburg and still using Brylcreem. Perhaps what happened in 1961 was the beginning of the Great Rude Awakening, now commonly referred to as Shamelot.

For Providence College, this was the beginning of the Mullaney Years. The basketball team was making its presence felt at Madison Square Garden with such names as John Egan and Lenny Wilkins.

It was also the start of student involvement at PC. According to Dave Duffy, President of Dave Duffy Public Relations in Providence, PC "was great. It was intimate. There was a lot of spirit."

He typified the class of '61 as "having a lot of imagination in doing the things that it did." Things such as a pass-fail system, and the challenging of the Administration over disciplinary actions and testing procedures were the logical beginnings of student activity that would culminate in the late sixties and mellow in the early seventies.

Talking to various people on the phone Saturday, this writer noticed differing opinions as to the conservatism of the college in 1961. Mr. Dennis Guimares, a guard on the '61 NIT team described PC as "very conservative". The most exciting thing was "hanging moons" out of the dormitory windows", to which Mr. Guimares added quickly, "I never indulged in it myself." (By the way Dave, Dennis has got some boys he wants you to look at, a 6'8" center named Barnes, oddly enough, and a 6'2" guard named Rich Byrd).

Yet Paul Pisano, a lawyer for Providence College, remembers the Class of '61 as being "radical". It was the first to bring controversial figures such as Gus Hall, the head of the American Communist Party, and Senator Eugene McCarthy to speaking engagements at Providence

College." The school also saw an underground newspaper started called the "Scowl" which lampooned everything regardless of habit. Mr. Pisano also equated PC with Berkeley in that "There were a lot of people (here), politically and otherwise".

A middle ground might be found in a statement made by Charles Goetz, Professor of Economics and Director of Graduate Study at Virginia Polytechnical Institute, and an ex-editor of the Cowl. He stated that the PC student of '61 saw himself as a "liberal Kennedy Democrat" but in actuality "voted conservative". Students who did criticize the Administration were branded as "Communists or at least Communist dupes" by professors at the College even though the student voicing the opinion was probably right of center.

"Censorship not only existed on the Administration but also on the part of the Student Congress," Mr. Goetz continued. "The Congress attempted to force the members of the Cowl Editorial Board to sign their editorials, but however, it was defeated." It appears that controversy was even a by-word in the early sixties.

Socially, PC was totally different

from what it is today. Aside from the obvious lack of women at the College, Bradley's Cafe was just opening and students had to get out of the habit of "sleep-kneeling" when attending the new Dialogue Mass on Sundays. Jazz was the prime musical idiom in colleges at the time (maybe you would have been better off then, Charlie) and people were still trying to produce the concert that would be a financial success. WDOM became one of the first college radio stations to become affiliated with NBC Radio but unfortunately was closed down by the end of the year due to poor equipment and inadequate funds. (Sounds a bit familiar, doesn't it Bob?).

Campus notables included John Egan who was selling Bibles and other items out of his Stephens 128 address, and Robert 'Skip' Chernov, a freshman, whose letter to the Editor that year was full of misspellings and other punctuation mistakes that left little doubt as to why he left the music business. A film shown that year depicted all students who demonstrated against the House Committee on Un-American Activities as Communist inspired; and up-and-coming other notables included Matthew Smith, and Stuart "Stew" McPhail.

The Class of 1961 — like so many others and yet, so different.

THE COWL

Providence, R. I.



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