

MOMENTS OF MIRTH by *Bernard VanCuylenburg (Melbourne)*

Any Hollywood writer of comedy scripts would have come up with box office record breakers had he or she spent some time at St. Anthony's College, especially in the boarding. Humorous incidents, hilarious escapades and anecdotes were an integral part of boarding life, and after all these years, they still live in the collective Anthonian memory. So let us part the veil of time and return to that great College by the river.....

A TALE OF THREE ROSES

Many Anthonians of the early sixties era will remember that famous Anthonian - Kingswood cricket encounter in 1961 with Michael Landsberger keeping wickets for college. Kingswood was at the crease and having lost two early wickets, the new batsman who had just made his way to the wicket was determined to increase the run rate showing scant respect for our bowlers. What transpired next still chills the bone when recalling the incident. Attempting a mighty hook shot, he missed completely and propelled by the momentum of the stroke, brought down the bat with a sickening thud on Michael's head! So horrifying was the sound that an ominous silence spread over the ground when we saw Michael collapsing in a heap! Unconscious, he was carried off the ground on a stretcher and rushed to hospital.

I was in "The Journey's End" at the time and around 7.00 pm. during study time, we heard that Michael who had been discharged from hospital was in the sickroom. Our warden Reverend Father Bruno Daniels supervising prep time, suggested that we all pay Michael a visit after dinner, to lift his spirits, offer some encouragement and give him a much needed moral boost. Accordingly, after dinner we trooped in and gathered round his bed. Michael, his head bandaged like an Egyptian mummy lay there in obvious pain, severely concussed. Well intended questions were directed at Michael by us concerned Journey's Enders deeply concerned for his welfare - "How are you feeling Michael?" "Is there anything you need?" "Can we get you some Ovaltine?" "Are you in severe pain?".....etc. Father Bruno remained silent, in deep distress. Finally, worry and concern etched on his ample cheeks, he asked Michael in hushed tones -

"IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU NEED MICHAEL - ANYTHING AT ALL, JUST LET ME KNOW AND I WILL GET IT FOR YOU. DONT WORRY, WE ARE ALL HERE FOR YOU....." The transformation was stunning! Michael, who upto that point had remained comatose, slowly opened or rather, half opened one eye and establishing eye contact with

Father Bruno responded "IF YOU DONT MIND FATHER, PLEASE GET ME A PACKET OF CIGARETTES- PREFERABLY "THREE ROSES" !!

Considering the seriousness of the situation, never has an answer to a question had such a dramatic effect and turned a grave moment into one of high comedy. While the rest of us cracked up in peals of laughter, Father Bruno recoiled as if he had been stung by a snake! The sombre mood evaporated into hilarity, while Father Bruno stormed out of the sickroom in high dudgeon muttering under his breath followed by comments from the rest. One comment which I remember to this day is a classic - "FATHER, WHILE YOU GET A PACKET OF THREE ROSES FOR MICHAEL, COULD YOU ALSO PLEASE GET A PACKET OF NAVY CUT FOR LINTON ?" (Referring to Linton Van Starrax, one of the "Journey's Enders' present). Uproarious laughter erupted in the Sickroom, much to the consternation of the matron in charge ! Michael subsequently made a complete recovery, and life continued on its merry way !

Michael sadly passed away a few years ago, and among my memorabilia of things Anthonian is the last letter he wrote me a few weeks before he passed on. Each time I look at it, it brings a wrench to my heart.....

THE GHOST WHO WALKED BY DAY

There was a large storeroom in the vicinity of the refectory from which Jamis the Cook (Master Chef) made his daily requisitions. The Storekeeper's name escapes me and in his absence the storeroom was always locked. But not on the day when Keith Haynes walked in trying to retrieve a ball. As can be expected with Keith, he fell into the large flour bin ! His attempts to climb out were unsuccessful, and as time passed he panicked.

Now who should happen to pass by, but Mrs. Mulholland. Hearing the sounds of Keith in distress, she rushed into the storeroom and after a dramatic struggle rescued Keith who being fair by nature was now covered from head to toe in flour, and this made him look whiter than white ! A small crowd had gathered to witness the drama, and Mrs. Mulholland now in full charge of the situation evoked riotous laughter when glancing at Keith, she made the following announcement..... "I THOUGHT I WAS RESCUING A BLOODY GHOST!!"

(Sadly, it was Michael Landsberger who in his last letter to me drew my attention to this incident)