

'It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World'

by Terry Dupuis
Tomorrow through Saturday, the Pen Theatre in Penetanguishene is running what is probably the biggest and best comedy blockbuster ever made - the 1963 film *It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World*. It's one of those favourite movies which I never miss an opportunity to see (so far, about 10 times, over a period of a dozen years).

Silvers, Ethel Merman and Terry-Thomas, among others. In smaller roles there are at least two dozen well-known personalities that turn up, including Buster Keaton, Carl Reiner, Andy Devine, Edward Everett Horton, Leo Gorcey, Peter Falk, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson and the Three Stooges. There are also a few "surprise" guest appearances by celebrities who are not even listed in the cast credits, such as Jerry Lewis and the late Jack Benny. Last but far from least in adding to the fun is the presence of Spencer Tracy, an actor who was not usually associated with comedies.

The second characteristic of *It's a Mad Mad World* is that it abounds with slapstick, sight gags, car chases, wild stunts and special effects. It contains more slapstick per reel than any film which has come out since the days of the silent Mack Sennett comedies.

The third distinguishing feature of this movie is its original story by William Rose. It concerns a robbery and the crosses and doublecrosses that follow. A dying crook (Jimmy Durante) reveals to a number of passersby the location of a cache of loot which he has buried away.

This sets off a frantic chase for the money.

A large amount of the credit for the success of *It's a Mad Mad World* must go to the snappy, knowledgeable direction of producer-director Stanley Kramer. Throughout his film one senses that his affection for the oldtime chase comedies is truly felt. In fact, it is amazing that such a hilarious comedy could be turned out by a movie-maker whose forte has always been rather heavy "message" dramas which have something important to say. Kramer's films include *The Defiant Ones*, *On the Beach*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Judgement at Nuremberg* and *Ship of Fools*.

On the contrary, Kramer's *Mad Mad World* is pure escapism. If there is any "message" in this film, it's in showing the wild extremes to which people will go when there is money at stake. However, Kramer's comedy needs no moralizing

to justify itself; its entertainment value is justification enough.

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Book tells about secular church



The bookworm

by Shirley Whittington

It appears that union between the Anglican and United Churches in Canada may never progress beyond an ecumenical pipe dream, but one failure to unite proved to be a spiritual springboard for All Saints' Anglican Church in Toronto. In 1968, a proposal to unite the parish of All Saints' with that of St. Luke's United Church was voted down by the vestrymen of All Saints.

Since then, the historic old church at the corner of Sherbourne and Dundas Streets in Toronto has been transformed into a community resource centre - which ministers literally and meaningfully to the dejected and despairing residents of one of the city's seediest districts.

The story is told in *My Parish is Revolting*, by Norman Ellis pastor at All Saints. Parish history began in 1872. The present enormous Victoria building was erected in 1874 and great names in the history of Toronto and Canada have been associated with All Saints.

"So the world that always suspected that the church was phony is ultimately convinced that we really are," says Ellis.

Several alternatives presented themselves. There was a proposal to tear down the building and build a high rise complex on the site, with the church on the ground floor. Then came the ill fated amalgamation proposal.

Then an opportunity for All Saints' to use their buildings for community purposes arose. A men's club that had formerly met in a disused pub asked to use All Saints' Parish Hall. A clinic from the Queen Street Mental Health Centre moved into the gymnasium.

Ellis points out that historically, the poor people do not go to church, because they do not belong to the cultural setting which the middle class church provides. The large, poor and unworking population of All Saints' parish tended to be suspicious of what they saw in churches.

Ellis's answer was the dis-establishment of All Saints. Yards of pews were moved out. An eighty-seat worship centre was set up at the front of the church. The remainder of the space was covered with second hand carpet scrounged from the Royal York Hotel, and furnished with black leather furniture, television and gaily draped coffee tables. Doors were painted bright gold and red.

"All that was open, lovely, surrounded by bright stained glass windows... a barren waste had become a place of colour and joy and laughter."

The secular church was soon humming with activity. There was a drop-in centre for women, a room registry service, the Open Door social

club, the Men's Club, a friendship centre.

There is a special program for Canadian Indian children which emphasises their folklore and heritage. The Dundas Day-Care Centre is a half-way house for patients from the Queen Street Mental Health Centre. Legal aid counselling, Alcoholics Anonymous, children's groups, a community dress making group, a dental care plan a singles club and an overnight drop-in centre have all taken root at All Saints'.

And what of religion? "When I think of 'religion'," says Ellis, "I think of Synods and conferences... school prayers and compulsory church parades... Bible punchers and Holy Rollers..."

"When I think of Christianity... I think of Christ and doing good and... the drunks on Sherbourne Street... whose friendship we have valued."

There is Sunday worship at All Saints' and a weekly agape supper.

There is also a great community commitment in this inner city church. The future is uncertain pending financial support.

But, says Ellis, "as long as we are ready to adapt, and also do no worry about who gets the credit for what we do, then we feel assured that we at All Saints' will have lots of fun."

My Parish is Revolting: Norman Ellis: Papejacks. 158 p.p.

Midtown opens new restaurant

The unofficial opening of the Midtown Motel's new restaurant takes place today, following extensive renovations.

The motel has been rebuilt on part of the inside, with a liquor lounge and licensed dining room planned.

The official opening of the lounge and licensed dining

area awaits final approval from the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario, and is expected some time this month.

The motel is owned by Wally Boyer, former hockey player with the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Winnipeg Jets of the World Hockey Association.

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