

"END OF AN ERA"

by David Wood

Last week someone casually asked me in the cafeteria, "Did you know that Boris Karloff died yesterday?" I froze in my tracks and my mouth flew open in disbelief. Not Karloff. He was immortal, an institution--a legend in his own time. He was the salt of the three greats: Lon Chaney, Bela Lugosi, and Boris Karloff, and his death brings a marvelous era to an end.

Chaney died a success, but his personal life was riddled by heart-break and pain. Lugosi turned to drugs toward the end of his life and died a tragic and lonely man.

Lugosi asked to be buried in

the Dracula costume, and he was. His body lay in state as the line of mourners filed past. The last to view the body, before the sealing of the lid hid his face forever, was Boris Karloff.

Karloff leaned over the ear of the corpse and whispered: "You're not putting me on, are you sweetie?" Monsters never die, you see, only the men who breathed life into them.

Boris Karloff enjoyed his work, and was active in movie making until a year before his death. He was eighty-one.

I weep for his passing, for William Henry Pratt, Boris Karloff was only a stage name, has influenced our lives in many ways. We grew up with the Frankenstein monster, Count Dracula and the Wolfman. They are as American as apple pie--and part of the family--every family.

The motion picture, Frankenstein, in which Karloff immortalized himself as the monster became the most famous horror movie of all time and revolutionized movie advertising because Universal studios discovered people could be frightened into buying tickets.

Karloff's passing marks the end of an era. He was a kind and wonderful man, who except for an illness, would have come to the school to direct and even act in a play here-- the first year.

So, Boris Karloff--good-bye for awhile. Good-bye until I catch you one the late show--Good-bye until I turn every light off in the house and like Bill Cosby say: "Yeah! come on -- scare me! Scare me!"



School replaces Cafeteria Staff Jimmy Greenwood (left) and David Wood (right) serve food in the cafeteria line.



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