

"Ici on parle français..."

By Glenn Walton

Attention tout le monde! For those who may not be aware of the fact, there is a thriving French community on the Dalhousie campus, to help students improve their French, and incidentally have a good time at it.

The French Department is in the basement of the Killam Library, but will soon move to LeMarchant Street. On LeMarchant the department already owns three houses which are rented out to francophiles.

"The only house rule is 'Ici on parle français'", says Judi Henderson, who taught a year in France and has been hired by the department as a resident student supervisor. "I'm responsible for encouraging people to speak French, must report to the department, handle any complaints, and arrange social events. Last year people didn't speak French."

"It's very difficult to keep speaking a second language when you are living with anglophones," says Jennifer Campbell, co-president of the French Club, "so it's beneficial having the monitrice around to encourage French."

Does the monitrice encounter any resentment?

"One of the girls who lived in one of the houses when



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there was no monitrice said that they've spoken more French than all last year. Apparently people tried speaking French in the morning, but by noon it had died out. It also depends on the people in the house, on their personalities as well as their language competence. We're really lucky this year," says Henderson.

There is still one vacancy in one of the houses (for a female student). "It's a unique atmosphere in Halifax, to be able to combine your university studies with living. Besides, it's cheaper than the grad houses," says Campbell. "It's kept up my French. If you don't

use it, you lose it."

Besides the French houses, there are other opportunities for students interested in French. There's the conversation hour in the SUB (Wednesdays from 12:30 to 1:30) and at the Grad House (Fridays from 3:30 to 5:30). Each French class has a representative in the French Club to act as spokesman and publicity agent for activities such as the infamous *Vins et Fromages*, which in the past have been very popular events.

Last week in the *Gazette* there was an article on the future establishment of a café (in the French departmental

house soon to be occupied) for which help is needed (contact Jennifer Campbell: 429-9043).

The Club also plans to visit College Ste. Anne (the Acadian University at Church Point, Nova Scotia, also home of Frenchy's) and have evenings of cuisine française.

"Anyone can participate; there is no membership fee or

even academic status required" says Henderson. A student even dropped by the French House one morning before a French test, for a little moral support and review. We welcome these people; that's what we're here for, and that's the kind of atmosphere we'd like to encourage. He even tried some of our homemade pear muffins.

Dal tiger victim of espionage

by John Cairns

In athletic circles across Canada, Dalhousie University is associated with the colorful jungle predator, the tiger. Equally colorful at times is that animal's history at Dalhousie. The experiences of one particular tiger will illustrate this.

In autumn, 1958, a group of energetic Dalhousie engineers undertook a project of utmost worthiness. From a heap of newspapers, two-by-fours, and nails, they conceived a mammoth tiger. Their creation sported a thick paper maché hide with painted orange and black stripes. Standing several feet tall and fully ten feet long, and weighing one hundred pounds, the beast might have made short work of its engineer creators, but they need not have worried. Either because Dalhousie athletes bore the name of its species, or because of the friendliness of the people on campus, the tiger soon proved exceptionally fond of Dalhousie students, and consented to serve as a university team mascot.

Always accompanied by admiring students, the animal appeared at various athletic events. Its presence probably heightened the enthusiasm of Dalhousie fans, and soon it had become a celebrity of sorts. As such, unfortunately, it was a target for criminals.

The *Gazette* published on November 19, 1958, reports that the tiger was suddenly kidnapped from its quarters in the boiler room of the university rink. Subsequently, its captors phoned the *Gazette* to inform one Gregory Murray, president of a booster organization for Dalhousie athletics, that ransom for the animal would be 1,673 pennies, one for every student at Dalhousie. Further communications explaining delivery of the pennies and recovery of the tiger were to follow. According to

the *Gazette*, Murray emphasized that, "We must succumb to this dreadful situation in order to insure the safe return of the tiger". The dilemma was worsened by a fast approaching football game.

The atmosphere among the tiger's friends was tense, perhaps more tense than any newspaper can convey. The *Gazette* of November 26, 1958 explains the unfolding of the drama, but the exact details are somewhat confusing to the reader of twenty-one years later. Evidently, numerous student attempts to discover the place of their mascot's imprisonment proved fruitless, and no rescue attempts were possible. The only recourse was to relinquish the pennies as demanded. This was done, and the kidnapers seemed satisfied. They freed Dalhousie's beloved animal, and informed its friends of its whereabouts. Following these instructions, several students located the animal in a sports field in the middle of Halifax. Ignoring the curious glances of passers-by, they loaded the animal into their vehicle, and escorted it back to its campus home.

The tiger appeared unhurt by its ordeal, although it was too upset to communicate any information leading to the reprimand of its abductors. The *Gazette* had urged that "all efforts should be made to locate the kidnapers and bring them to justice". As fate would have it, however, the villains apparently made good their escape.

As for the tiger, it returned to service at Dalhousie games. In a just world it should have lived happily ever after, but the animal of paper maché died a violent death less than two months later. That, though, is another story, and it will have to wait to be told in next week's *Gazette*.

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