

# Deadwood dialogue on living

by Ron Norman

Two students: Glumglower and Wiseman.

Glumglower is sitting in the Grawood by himself, hunched over a glass half filled with beer. Wiseman, after waiting a half hour in line, shows his Dal I.D. and moves hastily towards Glumglower's table.

Wiseman: Have you heard, Glumglower?

Glumglower: What?

Wiseman: Have you heard? Glumglower: No, no; I understood you the first time. What is it that I'm s'posed to have heard?

Wiseman (looking fully pleased with himself): The Dalhousie Gazette has requested that we, you and I, do a study on the housing situation here at Dal. They want us to -

Glumglower: Oh, that. I know Wiseman, I know; but it's no big deal. Don't get so excited; the Dal Gazette is not the Globe and Mail, or even the New York Times.

Wiseman: Yeah, but if we do a reasonable job on this report we can pick up thirty-five dollars - if it appears as a feature.

Glumglower: his face brightening up considerably - partly due to the fact that he is working on his fourth beer and it's only two in the afternoon: Si'down! Si'down! (motions to the waiter to bring two more beers) To Wiseman: Those Gazette staffers only told me about the story they wanted; no one mentioned the thirty-five dollars.

Wiseman: Well, let's face it, the Gazette probably just didn't feel that they should spend too much time with you. After all, rumour has it that they're really a bunch of arrogant, condescending, self-inflated egos.

Glumglower: You're not kidding! They're always printing crap on how

much they do for the student union and how the rest of us are apathetic slobes. Hell, I'm supporting the bar services all the time. I -

Wiseman: O.K. O.K. Enough about the Gazette. I've got a class in a while - have you thought about the project at all?

Glumglower (pouring his fresh beer brought by the waiter): That's the fastest service we've had in a long time! Yeah, I've looked into the housing committee that was set up here some time ago. I think the full formal name was The Residence Committee - anyway, it was established a long while back. I think, though, our concerns rest in the period beginning last January '74 and ending now - today - this minute.

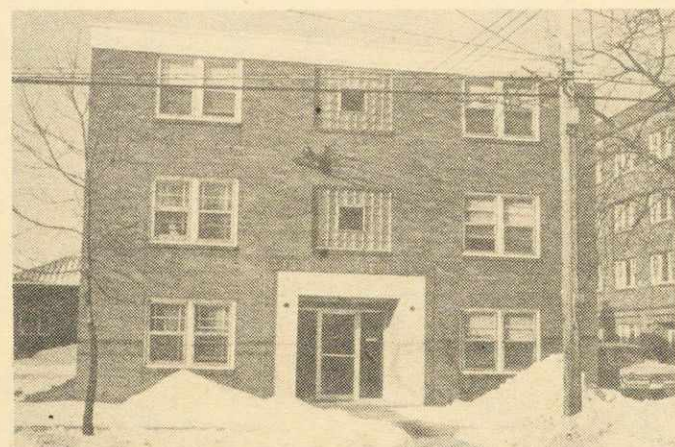
Wiseman (nodding his head in affirmation): I think so. But I just thought of something - since we are individuals, and we have certain opinions, certain likes and dislikes, do you think we ought to be as objective as possible, or should we pepper our report with certain personal views?

Glumglower: Damn right we'll put our opinions in! In fact they should be at the forefront of our report; information on housing is valuable to a point - we'll spice it up with some judgements and speculations!

Wiseman, noticing that the beers are having an effect upon Glumglower hesitantly puts forth: What about the Residence Committee?

Glumglower: Oh yeah. Well it began as I said - did I say that it began a long while back?

Wiseman: Yeah. Glumglower: Oh. Well in January of 1974 the committee began to think that there was a housing



Studley apartments

problem here at Dal. I don't think they looked on it as a crisis - probably because they had places to stay. Anyway, they made some tentative suggestions, but instead of proposing concrete solutions they hummed and hawed for a long, long time - just long enough for classes to end. Before leaving for the summer vacation, though, they put down one definite item: Dalhousie was expected to increase in enrollment and the housing crunch was going to get tighter.

Wiseman: Hold it. You mean to say that the housing problem was recognized over a year ago?

Glumglower (gloating over his "knowledge"): O yeah. Not only was it recognized, but the housing crisis of this year was predicted back then.

Wiseman: Wow! How many times did they meet? How long did they meet for? And most importantly, why was nothing done? This will undoubtedly have to go in our report; I mean - Christ!

Glumglower (hunching over his beer): Now take it easy Wiseman and I'll explain what I think went on. (using his fingers to count out the points) Firstly, they seem to have met infrequently at the whim of the chairman. All told I think they got together about 4 or 5 times - not very many at all. To answer your second question, they usually met for a few hours; however, the funny thing was that nothing really got accomplished in all that time. I've been wondering what they did with all the time they had.

Wiseman: Now Glumglower, you know that I've only been here since September, and in that time I've become familiar with various aspects of the housing committee. Did they have the same trouble assembling all the members of the committee then as they do now?

Glumglower: It's hard to say. I really don't think that's where the problem lies though - no, the problem definitely lies in the people who are on the committee; some are ignoramuses. Though I must say, and this need not go into our report,

that Dal has certainly got a phobia about committees - everything is done by committee. Do we need more bathrooms? - form a committee and find out; do they need more scissors in the Gazette office? - form a committee and find out; is John's and Suzy's love life going well? - form a committee and find out; who is Betty Jo Bialowski? - form a committee and find out -

Wiseman, realizing that Glumglower has definitely been carried away in his analogies breaks in: All right, all right. I have to agree that there is a committee phobia here at Dal, and before you go rambling on again I realize that nothing was done in the spring of '74. What happened during the summer of '74? Did Dalhousie prepare for the expected increase of students? Was anything done to increase the number of places available to students?

Glumglower: Well to bring you up to date - you do know what has been going down this academic year don't you?

Wiseman: Of course. Why else would the Gazette have asked you and I to prepare the report together?

Glumglower: I don't know - the Gazette does not think in a logical, consecutive way; they tend to - oh forget it. To begin again, when classes began in September of this past year the Residence Committee met to rehash all of the problems left over from the spring - and a few new ones created by their own inactivity. They had ended the spring term with an agreement to recommend to the President that some additional residence space be planned immediately.

Wiseman: I don't understand. You said earlier that they had done nothing in the spring term - that they were inactive, but here you say that they recommended additional housing for students.

Glumglower: Just a minute. (motions for two more beers) What time is your class?

Wiseman: Two-thirty. Glumglower: Well it's twenty to three now - you might as well stay and have another beer.

Wiseman: Yeah, but I have another class at three-thirty, so let's get on with it.

Glumglower: Right! Well the crux of the spring term proposal lies in the wording; there was only an agreement to recommend to the President that additional residence space be planned; they did not recommend it.

Wiseman: So that was what it was all about. When they came back in September and Howe Hall and Shirreff Hall were flooded with a 20 - 25% increase in applications it merely confirmed their expectations - but nothing had been done.

Glumglower: That's right; but don't forget that the space in Fenwick tower was also scarce with an increase in applications of 10%.

Wiseman: Good God! That kind of reminds me of the old barn door and the run-away horse.

Glumglower: Yes, they were a little slow in acting on the information, but we mustn't give the impression in our report that nothing had been done over the summer.

Wiseman: Yes, I heard something about Sykes working on the feasibility of an addition to Howe Hall.

Glumglower: Exactly! J.G. Sykes, one of the members of the Residence Committee, had spent some time in the summer of '74 working of the feasibility of building a two tower high rise adjacent Howe Hall. Sykes proposed this form of addition because Howe Hall's food services need not be expanded. Rather, the 350 new additions, which, by the by, were to be built west of the present residence complex, could quite readily be incorporated into the Howe Hall setup.

Wiseman: Ah, just like they plan to do with Studley Apartments.

Glumglower: Right, but let's leave Studley Apartments for a moment longer and pursue the two tower high rise proposal by Sykes. (taking a couple of empty beer bottles to enhance his "presentation") Now, as usual around this fast-paced Dal campus a problem arose.

Wiseman: Doesn't one always.

Glumglower (continuing in a trancelike state ignoring Wiseman for the moment): Now it seems that the problem was the proposed Physical Sciences Complex. Dal had planned to build it in the same area as the proposed two tower high rise. The Residence Committee figured that there was no sense beginning an addition to that area until the plans for the Physical Sciences centre were clear. (looking up from his beer bottle relief map) Sykes put forth the

idea that maybe a building serving both academic and residence requirements could be built - could you imagine living in the Life Sciences centre?

Wiseman: There'd be a lot of really fine parties.

Glumglower: Anyway the problem of the Physical Sciences centre was given all the play while the real issue lay tucked away in the folds. The actual problem was that the proposed addition would take as long as three years to construct because of all sorts of red tape that had to be unravelled.

Wiseman: Three years! Wow, so that's why Dal bought Studley Apartments - the problem is an immediate one and the acquisition of Studley is meant to be a short term proposition to alleviate the present conditions.

Glumglower: Exactly Wiseman. Now I've brought you up to September, or actually October '74 - you, I am sure, are familiar with the situation from that point on.

Wiseman: Yeah I am. (motions for two beers) To Glumglower: That whole two tower high rise proposal fell through didn't it?

Glumglower: Yeah, unfortunately. Dal applied to CMHC - Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation - for a loan to build the residence addition and they were refused any loan money for 1975.

Wiseman: So no construction of residence addition will begin until 1976 at the earliest. Hmm, that means there will be no completed residence addition until 1979 at the earliest, probably 1980 - 81.

Glumglower: That's right, and that's why Dal has turned to other solutions to this whole accommodation problem.

Wiseman: Yeah I've heard of some of their solutions - like how they've had a gleam in their eyes whenever they've looked at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design building.

Glumglower: That has been a thought I'm sure. Right now that building is being used by the Department of Education. Dal had also peered into the possibility of constructing an addition onto O'Brien Hall - the hall which belongs to the Nova Scotia Technical College; but that was rejected.

Wiseman: Yeah - the location of a residence way up by the Technical College would be a hassle - so far to walk; besides, Dal has no money to build, right?

Glumglower: Well now that's a very touchy subject. Dal has pleaded this excuse over and over, again and again. They say that since the government will not subsidize student accommodation Dal must come up with the money somewhere; so Dal applies to the CMHC for a building loan - they get rejected and say that there will be

no construction in 1975. Yet certainly this whole thing is a sham! Agreed Dalhousie does not get any help from the government, but they do have a great deal of money hanging around.

Wiseman: How so - if they do have a great deal of money what is being done with it - why haven't they acted?

Glumglower: Not so fast Wiseman - let's take it step by step. Firstly, the money is definitely available: the acquisition of Studley Apartments along with the proposed purchase of four other walk-up apartments is evidence enough of that.

Wiseman: But those do not come near the amount of money needed to build a residence addition of 350 beds. Studley Apartments has only 16 apartments in it. If all the other apartment buildings have 16 units in each that makes a total of 80 places - not 350.

Glumglower: Let me finish first Wiseman, and then I'll explain what is happening with Studley. The money is there to buy the five walk-up apartments, right?

Wiseman: Right. Glumglower: Well Dal is also looking seriously into the purchase of Park Victoria.

Wiseman: What! Park Victoria - that huge apartment building down the street on South Park!

Glumglower: Exactly. Now if Dal has the money to buy four walk-up apartment buildings and the Park Victoria which has 400 units and can hold over 1000 people, why is there no money to build an addition to Howe Hall?

Wiseman: I know one possible answer. There is to be no addition to Shirreff Hall because it would be too costly - right?

Glumglower: Uh Uh. Wiseman: Well then, the addition to Howe Hall would provide 350 very much needed beds. Would they all go to males?

Glumglower: Whoa! That is a problem. The present policy of the Board of Governors would have to be changed if there was a new addition to Howe Hall. The new addition would have to be co-ed; there should be no discrimination because of sex - everyone should have an equal opportunity to get one of the beds.

Wiseman: Right. But can you honestly see one of those old dudes on the Board of Governors, with all their antiquated sexual morals, ever approving of co-ed residences? Glumglower: I really doubt it; yet I can't help but wonder when they will ever catch up with what is happening in 1975. I mean co-ed dorms have been in existence for a long time all over the States - even Harvard and Yale have them.

Wiseman: Yeah - most of the Canadian universities have them too. But don't you see that this fits right in with what you were saying about money and why the addition to Howe



John Graham

Hall was put off in favour of something like Park Victoria?

Glumglower: Yeah, I think you're right - though it is a knot which can be easily untied if the administration open their minds a little. It is an issue which will definitely crop up in the future, and it must be dealt with in terms of 1975 not 1925.

Wiseman: So, we are still with the acquisition of Studley and the four other walk-up apartments.

Glumglower: Right. Now in our report we must mention that this is very clearly a fine move by the Residence Committee and the Dal administration. You talked earlier about the idea that Studley contained only 16 units; but there has been a very strong rumour that Studley will be renovated to handle 50 students and incorporated into Howe Hall.

Wiseman: Yeah, I heard about that rumour, but at one time it was thought to be converted to a married students residence. The married students won't be happy.

Glumglower: No, the married students won't be happy; but it's a matter of numbers more than anything else. The administration can fit 50 students in there instead of 16 - that's a lot in this time of the housing crunch. Also, since Studley is surrounded by Howe Hall the location is perfect. To finish off any possible chance that it might be converted into a married students residence is the fact that the Howe Hall food services can easily handle the extra 50 students - it all points to no married students residence.

Wiseman: The numbers are really important aren't they? I've heard that the priorities for student accommodation run: Traditional residence first; married students residences tied for second with regular houses and townhouses; running a distant last is the conventional apartments like Fenwick.

Glumglower: Numbers are

while; but it is desperately needed right now. At the present the co-operative student housing building on Wellington Street has a waiting list of over 100 couples - and you can expect that to sharply increase in the next few years.

Glumglower: Married students are always caught in that bind - but they have one consolation in that the Residence Committee has placed them second in priorities.

Wiseman: The traditional residence units have been placed first, haven't they?

Glumglower: That's because of the attitude towards freshmen which seems to pervade the atmosphere around here. The administration and faculty consider the freshman immature, unable to control themselves. Dean Chanter even called them a "different animal". Presumably the traditional residences provide the necessary controlled environment for the first year student. The traditional residences can be expected to crop up in the form of the renovated walk-up apartments - that would provide 200 - 250 more beds.

Wiseman: In our report we mustn't forget to mention the situation concerning the University owned houses. There are an incredible number of them, and they do provide fine accommodation.

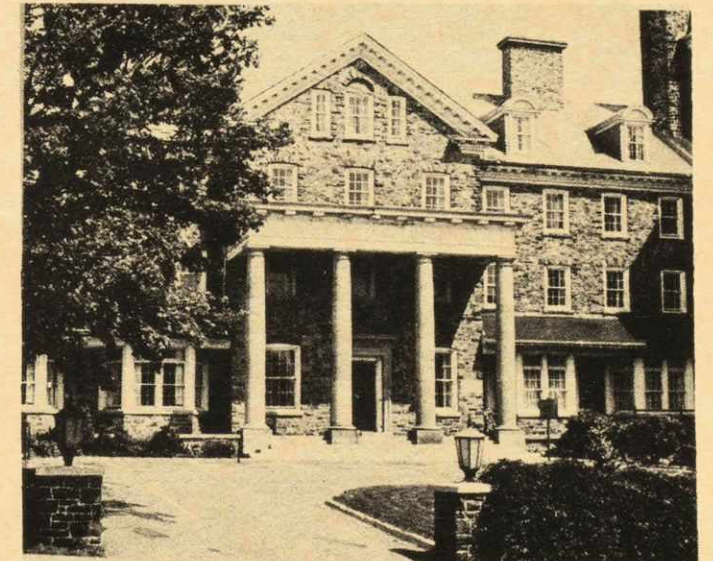
Glumglower: Hold it. Before you go on raving about the fine University houses let me tell you that Dal was charged with letting their houses deteriorate in order to push down the value of the neighbouring houses which they wished to buy. In New York they do the same thing only it's done by shady real estate people, and it's called blockbusting.

Wiseman: Well, I've heard conflicting reports about the houses owned by the University. At the time that the houses were bought Dal was only interested in the land which the houses were on, thus, they were going to let the houses run down until they were ready to be plowed under, then Dal would build on the land. However, since the housing situation has reached crisis proportions Dal has

count on it for a long



Co-op residence



Shirreff Hall residence (cont'd on page 18)