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**Howe Hall column**

by Mark Thomas

The focus of our attention today is Cameron House. For those who don't know it, Cameron is the rather large part of Howe Hall which is connected to the little dining hall that's fast becoming famous for its dances.

One of the unique things about this house is its population. (Now that's an understatement.) Unlike the other houses in Howe Hall, Cameron is divided into almost equal numbers of frosh and upperclassmen. This is a rather ideal situation actually. During Orientation Week there is always a good supply of frosh to "tub" or throw in the shower but from the other point of view, there are not so many upperclassmen as to completely overwhelm the rookies. Orientation is a critical period in the development of a frosh and by having a fair number of people in a similar situation, that he can identify with; a comradeship is quickly built among the frosh. Looking at the converse, there are not so many frosh that one could befriend only them. If one did he wouldn't know half the other people on his floor. But this is an improbable situation. It's kind of hard not to get to know someone with whom you share a TV room and bathroom (please don't take the last statement the way it wasn't intended). The result of all this is that the balance between frosh and upperclassmen in Cameron House directly leads to a friendship and united feeling between all of its residents. Not that this does not happen in other houses for it does but in Cameron it happens much faster. There is no segregation of frosh and upperclassmen or dominance by either group. As one Cameronite put it, "we are one big happy family".

The head, and top banana of this big happy family is the House president, Paul McCloud, affectionately known as "El Presidente", "The Godfather", and anything else that you can call him and get away with. True to his Cape Bretoner heritage, he is undoubtedly a connoisseur of wine, women and song although sometimes you might not think so. It's just that he keeps it in the right time and place setting the example that many others would do well

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the province to a more or less turn of the century style. There are no neon signs nor any buildings higher than three stories that I noticed. Trees grow everywhere traffic is light and people meander about at ease. Cafes and little shops lined the street we walked. We ate more than our fill at a place called The Buttery. Outside there was an open air cafe set up. Inside there were tables with beaten copper surfaces where we had our meal. Tina held the small

clock I'd bought her in her lap running her fingers over the polished brass face and roman numerals. We sat in the back seat together as the car rolled up and over the undulating flow of the road and the hills. We were all feeling very warm, very relaxed and very contented. The wine bottles were popped open and passed around as we stuffed ourselves, once more on bunches of grapes. I was feeling dizzy and very foolish. We all laughed at everything we could think of that would pass for a joke.

We stopped once at Anna's persistence, pulled off to the side of the road and spread a blanket in the grass. She made us join hands across each others backs in a circle. Then we would go around rising and dipping as we went oohing and aahing at the appropriate time. It was insane but I didn't care. Karl was carried away by our foolishness too although he was disgustingly sober.

It was already dark. We arrived home late for supper. The girls were strangely quiet and sober most of the way back. Anna leaned on Karl and Tina slept on my shoulder as much as she would have on any other cushion.

We sent the girls on ahead to the house. Karl wanted to march right up after them. I held him back. I grabbed our jackets and ties off the side hangers and my small travel case out of the back window. He was confused. I shoved a comb into his hair. He started combing. I told him to ask if we could change and freshen up before supper.

Mrs. Van Dyke smiled warmly as we entered the door. Karl was a natural. In a polished, winning way he greeted her, apologized sincerely for bringing the girls home late and asked if we

to follow. So far this year, he's shown himself to be a good leader and a good organizer and is making Cameron House a good place in which to live.

Another good point worth making is that Dean Chanters' apartment is in Cameron House. Obviously if World War III broke out in Cameron House or the boys were hosing down the halls, the Dean would be up to investigate the screams and for water leaking down through his ceiling. As this to my knowledge, has never occurred, I would like to use its example to try to clean up the gross misconception that Howe Hall is a den of thieves, sex-crazed idiots and other characters of diverse repute. Oh sure, once in a while someone will throw a roll of toilet tissue out of the window, write graffiti in the john or puke in the halls on a Friday night but you can bet your sweet bippy that it's all very quickly cleaned up, which is more than I can say for some places outside Cameron House, or Howe Hall. The days of the great water fights, riding the luggage cart down to the Lord Nelson Hotel and grossing out any girls within a quarter mile radius of the residence are long gone. If they ever existed at all. Unfortunately, reputations are hard to get rid of. It's too bad because life in Cameron House and all of Howe Hall for that matter, is good.

But getting back to Cameron House and all of Howe Hall for that matter in particular, the Dean's presence definitely ensures a degree of sanity. Another major factor is the Don, Pat Donahoe, who unfortunately will be leaving the house at the end of the year. His very presence commands respect, so much so that he has actually achieved a measure of quietness throughout the house for the benefit of those students who do study in their rooms. He has certainly been instrumental in making Cameron House what it is today and will be missed greatly when he leaves.

I don't lay a large claim to literary or prosaic dexterity so if you missed the point of this article, here it is; Cameron House is a great place to live, all of Howe Hall is for that matter, and don't let any rumour or reputation of Howe Hall bias your opinion because it just ain't true.

We the columnists wish Pat's replacement, Gordon Muir a great half year and we are confident that he shall continue the good work that Pat started.

might quickly freshen up somewhere before we spoiled supper anymore than we had already. I felt superfluous. She protested of course that that was totally unnecessary so much so that he started to waver in his resolution. I dug my thumb into his back. He made a point of saying hello to Mr. Van Dyke before we went upstairs. As we reached the top of the stairs he turned to me and said: "If you must marry the girl you must first marry the family." I thought it strange.

A smile of approval shone from Mr. Van Dyke's eyes as we came downstairs and into the dining room. There are only two kinds of dutch women. When they're good they're good but when they're bad they're bitches. Mrs. Van Dyke was an angel. Friendly and bubbly she heaped our plates with generous, hot helpings of good, solid food.

I was about to dig in when a pang of memory hit me. I looked up. Mr. Van Dyke asked me to pray over the meal. I agreed. The heads bowed down. Karl wore a smirk. The bastard. I swallowed an imaginary lump and started clumsily:-

"Onze vader wie leeft in de hemel heilig iz U naam..."

The Dutch are a people given to duties and this was one of them. I knew there would be a bible reading after the meal. It was a sense of duty that kept our country running like a clock that shaped our cities and roads and dykes and churches. Our little world was ordered and therefore comfortable. No wonder God was on our side. He had no choice. We were as reasonable as the English; as dour and thrifty as the Scots and as hardy as the Germans and incredibly narrow minded.

I remember the brick paved streets and tree

shaded canals; the streets jammed with bicycles, bromfietsen, motorbikes and trams. The streets of old, narrow, little houses in a row looking like chocolate boxes and doll houses. Everything was small and easily grasped, comfortable and predictable yet busy and demanding. In Rotterdam the yellow-striped canvas stalls of the Koosingel Market bustled with infectious excitement but the crowds could be pushy and caustic. The stalls breathed with the rich, intoxicating perfume of thousands of bushel baskets of flowers but children taunted and sometimes pelted the Chinese vendors. Outbreaks of fighting used to be not uncommon between protestants and catholics on election days. We had 24 parties based on religion, sects and shades of socialism. Though we deemed all the world as more or less mad we remained smuggly convinced, by an unverbilized all pervading conceit that we were sensible.

Karl smiled snidely when I finished the prayer and the "Aamens" had droned away. I had probably made a mistake. After asking us about our day Heer Van Dyke told us about his coming over from the old country, how hard it was and how he managed to accomplish so much with so very little help. His was a story you'll hear many times wherever Dutchmen live. There's no denying it. We came to Canaan with little more than the sweat on our backs and worked and worked to make a living. Having made a living or even before it we would save and scrimp to improve our homes and buy property or goods. Farm hands became farmers and they in turn bought up other farms. The same held true in other fields of

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