

back in time:

DALHOUSIE, 1927

BY KAVERI GUPTA
& JOHN CULLEN

OUR afternoon began with a whirlwind of history named Leslie MacDuff.

John and I had called him to find out what life at Dalhousie was like in the 1920's. Throughout the interview, he talked of tree planting, dancing, the military, and school life at Dalhousie.

"There wasn't anything from Seymour to Oxford Street," he began, gesturing out the window of the Gazette office. "It was all farm land."

He went on to talk about the

two years he spent at Dalhousie (1927-1929) studying commerce. He said that he didn't really enjoy school and found the professors distant. But he also thought that people were friendlier back then and a person knew more students around campus.

The social scene consisted of many dances at Shirreff Hall, where males weren't otherwise allowed past the lobby. The girls had dance cards, which they filled with names of boys they would dance with throughout the night.

"[We] danced with all the girls who were our friends," said Leslie.

A group of couples would sometimes go to one person's house and dance to music played on their trusty gramophone although "there was none of this nonsense of staying overnight," he sharply stated when pressed.

Leslie belonged to the Commerce Frat which held meetings and parties. There was also the annual football game (ah, the good ol' days) against Acadia which always drew a big crowd. And, up until the gymnasium burning down in 1929, there were dances and plays every couple of weeks.

For Leslie, a typical day consisted of a couple of classes. He said that life was quiet and simple. When asked about the job situation, he stated that "anyone who wanted a job wasn't unemployed. Then it got bad after the Crash in '32, then good again when the war started in '39."

Leslie served in the Air Force and held the position of a Bomb

and Gun Repair Instructor.

Leslie continued to live in Mineville after he left Dalhousie, where he bought 3,000 acres of land in 1935 and married his wife in 1937. After that, he moved to Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, respectively.

The afternoon ended with John (who is from B.C.) and Leslie talk-

ing about British Columbia, and while they were wandering through the streets of Port Moody, I was left here in Halifax silently taking notes. From there it was on to tree planting and cars. Somewhere in between, Leslie mentioned that he had four very successful sons and 13 grandchildren.



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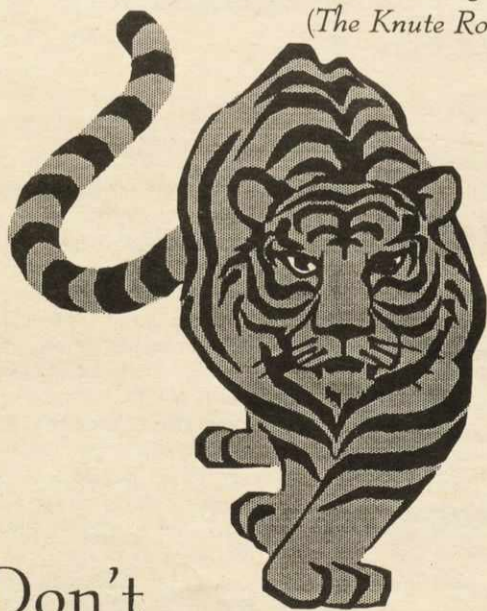
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