

# The Dalhousie Gazette

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## Munro Day

The second Tuesday in March is Munro Day. Declared by the Board of Governors in 1881 as a Dalhousie University holiday, Munro Day is a day of tribute to the benefactors of our University. It is a day when Dalhousie students and graduates everywhere should remember and offer thanks to those individuals and organizations who have contributed to Dalhousie. Without the aid of such persons and bodies, this University would not be an institution of higher learning today. It would not have such an illustrious list of graduates, and it would not have contributed in such great measure to North American society.

In the early nineteenth century, the idea of a non-sectarian University was first conceived. Not having the financial support of any particular religious group, Dalhousie existed on a fund established by its Founder, Right Honourable George Ramsay, Ninth Earl of Dalhousie. The fund soon diminished, however, and a young Dalhousie soon found itself in a storm of financial difficulties. With such leaders as McCulloch, Howe and Young, the idea of Dalhousie still shone through the mists of despair. Then in 1879, George Munro, a publisher of New York fame, bestowed the first of several considerable munificent gifts on Dalhousie. The benefactions secured several prominent teachers and Dalhousie was given a firm foundation on which it could carry on the work of an institution of higher learning. George Munro was Dalhousie's first great benefactor and it was in his honor that Munro Day was first established.

Since Munro, Dalhousie has been blessed with many benefactors and in 1928, Munro Day was declared in honor of all benefactors.

Dalhousie has come a long way since those early days. It has expanded tremendously and is following the trends of further expansion in University education in Canada. Although many universities have larger enrolments and more buildings, few can match or even approach the standards of Dalhousie. Its graduates have been most distinguished in virtually every field of Canadian and North American life.

Now, as another year draws to an end, another graduating class leaves Dalhousie. How many of these young men and women will follow in the footsteps of their illustrious alumni? Time alone will be the ultimate judge. One thing that is certain, however, is that they have received a first rate University education at Dalhousie. This is Dalhousie's gift to the graduates of 1955 and to you who are receiving such an education in undergraduate years. On Munro Day, let us be thankful for our University and be aware of the prominent part played by the benefactors of Dalhousie.

## The Honourable W. H. Dennis English Prizes

Joseph Howe Prizes for Poetry  
James DeMille Prizes for Prose

The attention of candidates for these prizes is drawn to the following regulations adopted by the Senate to govern the awards.

1. Candidates for these prizes must be registered in at least three classes in Dalhousie University.
2. Candidates may submit not more than four poems for the Joseph Howe Prize. The poems may be epic, lyric or dramatic, and they may be of any length.
3. Candidates for the DeMille Prize may submit more than one manuscript. The term "essay" is to be liberally construed to include short stories and descriptive sketches as well as essays proper upon any literary, historic or philosophic subject. Essays proper should be about the length of an ordinary review article, i.e., of between 4,000 and 6,000 words; but originality of thought, freshness of treatment, style, etc., will be chiefly considered by the Jury of Award.
4. Candidates are recommended to choose Canadian themes.
5. Three typewritten copies of each composition must be sent in by the competitor. These compositions must be typewritten, upon one side of the sheet only. They must not be signed by the candidate, but a pseudonym is to be typed at the end of each manuscript and after the pseudonym a statement as to whether or not a first or second or no prize had been previously awarded to the writer. They are to be accompanied by a sealed envelope bearing in one corner, in typewriting the same pseudonym and addressed in typewriting to the "Jury of Award, Joseph Howe English Poem Prize", or "James DeMille English Essay Prize", as the case may be. The envelope shall contain in typewriting the pseudonym, the titles of the poems or essays, as the case may be, and the candidate's name.
6. No prize will be awarded for any composition unless it attains to a high standard of merit.
7. Successful compositions shall become the property of the University and shall be available for publication in the Dalhousie Review without remuneration.
8. In the poetry contest no winner of a first prize is eligible to compete again, and no winner of a second prize is eligible for a second prize in a subsequent year.
9. In the prose contest no winner of a first prize is eligible to compete again, and no winner of a second prize is eligible for a second prize in a subsequent year.
10. The winner of a prize in the poetry contest is not debarred from competing in the prose contest, and vice versa.
11. Compositions must be handed in to the Registrar's Office on or before March 31, 1955.

N.B.—Attention is called to the fact that only Dalhousie students are eligible for these prizes.

# Comment On Education

Department of Economics,  
March 2, 1955.

The Editor,  
The Dalhousie Gazette,  
Dalhousie University,  
Halifax, N. S.

Dear Sir:

I am writing in connection with the earnest attempt which was made to discuss the question of initiation at Dalhousie, in the February 8th issue of the Gazette. I would have written earlier, but I hoped that the points I thought should be raised would be raised by student contributors.

Unfortunately, the section on initiation is headed 'GAZETTE URGES RETURN OF INITIATION TO DALHOUSIE', and some of the articles are preoccupied, rather barrenly, with this theme. This is indicative of some confusion of thought. For initiation was never banned at Dalhousie. It was hazing that was banned. Hazing includes not only the 'oil and molasses treatment' but all elements of compulsion exerted on the members of the freshman class by students in other years. Surely, initiation is not to be regarded as synonymous with hazing; nor is hazing to be regarded as necessary to initiation. And surely hazing is not a desirable element in initiation. In fairness to the Gazette, I should add that there is agreement with this in the wise article titled, 'Hazing — What? Why?' and elsewhere, although I gather that the Gazette attaches a much narrower meaning to hazing than I do.

The essential purpose of initiation, I think all would agree, is to welcome and introduce, that is, initiate, freshmen to university life in all of its facets. This includes, of course, helping freshmen to get acquainted with one another and with their fellow students in other years. The proposition that this commendable goal can in part be reached by giving the sophomore class or any other student group the duty, or the power, or the right, to enforce initiation rules and inflict penalties on the members of the freshman group is untenable. It is a peculiar form of initiation indeed, to introduce new students to university life by shoving them around or subjecting them to the will of other groups. One of the distasteful things about such practices is the invidious position in which they place the members of the sophomore class — in forcing obedience from and inflicting penalties upon a group of their fellow students. The argument in defence of hazing sometimes given — that the majority of both sophomores and freshmen favor hazing and that only a minority of the freshmen ever feel that hazing subjects them to personal indignities — is, of course, absurd. Action based on such a proposition is a travesty of the fundamental democratic principle that minorities must not be subjected to unnecessary coercion by the majority or by other minority groups. A university is the last place where such negations of personal freedom be countenanced and would not be worth much if it did not take a firm stand against them. Another fallacious argument for hazing is that there is a long tradition of it in past University initiations. If this is so, it is not to the University's credit. Students should surely emerge from their blind conservatism on this point and take care at least to ask honestly whether it is a tradition that is worth preserving, that is whether it serves to promote the essential purposes of initiation and whether it is consistent with the nature of a university.

It has certainly not yet been convincingly demonstrated that any element of compulsion with regard to freshman participation in the initiation program or penalties for failure to obey initiation rules are necessary in a well-organized program. It seems to me singularly unimaginative of the students if they cannot draw up a well-organized initiation program, full of color and interest, that will successfully accomplish the purpose of

introducing students to the many aspects of university life, without subjecting them to compulsion.

I would suggest that the initiation program should not be prolonged to the extent that students are unduly distracted from settling down to study (which is after all the main reason for their presence here). Some past programs have run from the Friday before the beginning of lectures until the end of the first week of lectures. This does not encourage students to get off to a good start at their studies, in a term that is already short enough. Furthermore, so long a program is likely to lose its zip. Would it not be more effective, for example, if it ran from the Friday before the beginning of lectures to Monday the first day of lectures, with nothing more scheduled until Friday or Saturday when a freshman show and the wind-up dance could appropriately be held. (The freshman show is one of a number of excellent suggestions made by the Gazette.)

I think the contention that it is in the initiation period that new students get to know one another is exaggerated. Certainly it is when they begin to get acquainted — and it should be an important beginning — but getting acquainted with one another and with university life is necessarily a slow continuous process that extends over a number of years.

A problem not discussed in the Gazette is the financial one. It has been the practice in the past to charge the freshman an initiation fee. Many students come to Dalhousie with great financial difficulty. And their first year is often the hardest because they have a shorter summer period in which to work than in later years. The initiation fee adds to their financial burden. It was partly because last year's initiation committee agreed to reduce the fee that the program was as short as it was. This suggests that it would be desirable to concentrate on activities that do not involve much expense. Another way of overcoming this difficulty and at the same time extending a more open welcome to the freshmen would be by the Students' Council defraying at least part of the cost by a grant.

I thoroughly agree that the University should take some positive part in the welcoming of freshmen into the university fraternity. The buffet supper idea has been under serious consideration for some



## This Is Education Week

Canadian Education Week was started in 1936 to stimulate public interest in education. Until 1950 the project was an undertaking of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Then the slogan, "Education — Everybody's Business", was translated into action through joint sponsoring by a number of national organizations.

No other project in Canada has brought into effective working partnership such diversified groups as are found in the sponsoring organizations listed below. These groups want more and better education for Canadians. They are united in this appeal to all citizens to turn the spotlight on education and its contribution to Canadian life.

Education Week 1955 brings a new sponsor on the scene — National Conference of Canadian Universities. The inclusion of this field of higher education rounds out the total engaged in this cooperative project to approximately 2,000,000 Canadian citizens.

Education Week is intended to promote orderly discussion of all aspects of education and to engender a spirit of partnership that will result in progress in the worthy task of developing good citizens, aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights, and equipped with the tools of knowledge and skills to enable them to enjoy full and useful lives.

I am glad to learn that the Gazette endorses the idea.

I question the idea of putting remarks on placards or name cards. Presumably the purpose of placards or name cards is to help students to get acquainted. The practice of putting remarks on them is subject to abuse and would serve only to thwart their main purpose since freshmen would then be less inclined to wear them.

The substance of my remarks is the suggestion that students think of the problems connected with initiation in terms of principles that are consistent with the nature of a

university and the essential purposes of initiation and that they set about designing an initiation program that is worthy of the University (which includes themselves).

I commend the Gazette for its part in the attempt to clarify the issue, even though I have found it necessary to be critical of some of its proposals. I should like to add that I have expressed here only my own personal views on the subject, though I know them to be shared by some of my colleagues.

Yours faithfully,  
John F. Graham.

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THE REGISTRAR

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