

# THE DALHOUSIE COLLEGE GAZETTE.

FORSAN ET HÆC OLIM MEMINISSE JUVABIT.

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## Dalhousie College Gazette.

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### SALUTATORY.

Another issue of our paper has appeared, and is now before you. Previous to introducing you to its contents, we crave your attention for a little, while we endeavour to state the aim of this special number of the *Gazette*. Its purpose is two-fold, viz: to celebrate the illustrious history of our newspaper, and the students without whose generous and self-denying efforts it would not be before you today; and to provide both entertainment and historical insight by presenting samples of articles on a variety of subjects which have appeared in these pages in the course of one hundred twenty-five years of publication.

Throughout its history the *Dalhousie College Gazette*, and the modern paper into which it has evolved, has endured and prospered through a many transformations of content and form. The original issue featured a mere four pages, and the publication in its initial years consisted almost wholly of poetry, metaphysical contemplations and reserved social commentary, unbroken by photograph or work of art. It would be unnecessary to detail the myriad ways in which technological advance has permitted the development of a larger newspaper of much greater visual complexity.

In addition, the tone expressed in the submissions to the *Gazette* has changed through the ages such that our forebears, had they the occasion to peruse our pages, would scarcely comprehend the difference. The paper in the early decades of this century demonstrated a sentiment of pride in our University, our Nation and the Honour for which its soldiers fought in distant lands. The seventh and eighth decades, by contrast, were remarkable for a spirit, manifested boldly in the newspaper, which rejected such antiquarian concepts. Future readers will doubtless look back on our current period and be struck by the many tensions present in our University community among students, professors and administrators of the School.

The common thread which draws together every volume and number of the *Gazette* is the individual students who have devoted their work to its production, for their belief in the importance of a newspaper managed by and for Dalhousie students. It is to these people that this issue is dedicated.

As our predecessors wrote in the inaugural number, we continue to trust that our readers will find our columns interesting as well as instructive.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY! CANADA'S OLDEST STUDENT NEWSPAPER

BY ADAM NEWMAN

*Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.* Perhaps a time will come when it will be good to remember these things.

So spoke Aeneas, hero of Virgil's *Aeneid*, addressing people having difficulty founding the city of Rome.

So also spoke the editors of *The Dalhousie College Gazette*, regarding their difficulty founding this newspaper 125 years ago. The first issue was met with "much opposition and many difficulties and disadvantages". It was four pages long, it cost five cents, and it bore Aeneas' motto of perseverance.

Today *The Dalhousie Gazette* is the oldest student newspaper in Canada and the United States. It is three years older than the *Globe and Mail*. Perhaps at this time it will be good to remember some things:

The paper was born on January 25, 1869. It had two aims, the editors wrote, those being "the cultivation of a

literary taste... and the establishment of an organ in which free expression can be given".

The salutatory continued: "The prosperity of a University is the prosperity of a Nation. The training and mental tastes formed there extend their influence to succeeding generations, and give to the national character tone and direction." The editors envisaged quite an important role for the fledgeling student newspaper.

Two pages of poetry later, the issue concluded with an explanatory. "We will most willingly open our columns to any expression of opinion on the merits or demerits of the paper," it read.

"Political and denominational articles will be strictly excluded... but all others — literary or social, grave or gay, heavy or light, will be thankfully received, and readily inserted".

Following this assurance, the editors pleaded for help.

"Will you not, then, lend us a helping hand in our design? Will you not join with us in striving to make the *Gazette* distinguished for its high and intellectual tone, and for its general as well as academic usefulness?"

The *Gazette* was founded as a private enterprise. At first it was owned and operated by three students. Soon new editors were elected, and the paper became the property of all students.

When the *Gazette* was founded in 1869, only 57 students were enrolled at the university. They were all male. Dalhousie did not admit female students until 1881.

In the fall of that year, Lillie Benn Calkin became the first woman to join the *Gazette*. Wrote the editors of that year in the first issue, "With our editorial staff increased and our sanctum brightened by a young lady associate, we trust to sustain the reputation of the *Gazette* as being the best college journal in the Dominion."

"To be born a woman is to be born a martyr," begins an editorial the following spring. The editorial, like much of the material in old issues of the *Gazette*, is unsigned. One can only guess at the authorship.

Although the *Gazette* has always been dominated by students, occasional submissions have been received from faculty members. The early *Gazette* is full of ads promoting Dalhousie University, and each year the paper published the Presidential Address.

The *Dalhousie College Gazette* abandoned its original motto in favour of the University's *Ora et Labora* (Pray and Work) in 1870, and shortened its name to the *Dalhousie Gazette* in 1871.

The *Gazette* is "a historical artifact of considerable value," says Professor Emeritus of History Dr. Peter Waite, who has read every issue of our paper from 1869-1948. The early presidents of the university did not save their correspondence, and he has had to rely on the newspaper for information about the period 1869-1911.

Waite's book, *The Lives of Dalhousie University*, Volume One, chronicles the history of the university from 1818-1925. It will be available in May.

The *Gazette* reported on the goings-on of the Law School's mock parliament and moot court. In the late nineteenth century, the newspaper reported that the student government headed by (future Prime Minister) R.B. Bennett proposed the introduction of votes for women, subject to the same restrictions that applied to male voters at that time. They were defeated by one vote.

However, Bennett's student government had other triumphs. It brought Newfoundland into Confederation in 1892.

In time the *Gazette* became increasingly political.

When it first appeared in 1869, there were eleven other newspapers in Halifax, says Waite. There was some dialogue between the *Gazette* and other newspapers.

In 1914 the *Gazette* published a pacifist letter by Hermie Abraham at the same time that Dal students were fighting in France.

"The *Herald* screamed about (the pacifist letter)," says Waite. "They thought it rank, outright treason."

"Student opinion was supportive of the fighting," says Waite. "Today's brutally destructive technology had not yet been applied, and war was seen as good for the character of young men. Half the student body joined up voluntarily. You have to remember, also, that students missed their friends overseas, and wanted to support

them."

While offensive to some at certain times, the *Gazette* has undergone numerous changes of form over the years — at times it was bound by thick cardboard and resembled a magazine.

Editors of the *Gazette* were responsible for the publication of the predecessor of Dalhousie's yearbook, a magazine called *Graduation Numbers* which appeared sporadically between 1912-26.

A few years later, the *Gazette* dropped its practice of selling subscriptions to its readers. The paper seems to have become free in the fall of 1930.

The paper was among the first to join the Canadian University Press (CUP) upon its inception in 1938. The *Gazette* was the first paper to win the CUP Cup, an award which recognized it as Canada's best student newspaper in 1945. The award has since been scrapped.

Peter Gzowski, Pierre Burton, John Turner, Joe Clark, and numerous other well-known public figures have been involved in CUP. Clark ran for the position of CUP President and lost.

R.B. Bennett was a manager of the *Gazette* in 1891-92, and may have written for the paper.

Joe Clark contributed editorial columns to the *Gazette* in 1962-63.

Author Lucy Maud Montgomery contributed a piece to the *Gazette* in 1939. "Write only of the life you know," she advised, "Write, I beseech you, of things cheerful... and KEEP ON TRYING."

Thanks to Joseph Walker, graduate student of Classics, for identifying and translating the original motto of the *Gazette*, Dr. Charles Armour of University Archives, and Dr. Peter Waite.

Early issues of the *Gazette* are located in the Archives of the Killam Library, fifth floor.

Anyone who has stories relating to the *Gazette* or comments on its history is urged to send them in.

## The Dalhousie College Gazette,

a journal of many tastes, whose aim is to foster and encourage a spirit of healthy discussion about all matters of the world, whether weighty or light, among the students of the above College, is published

EVERY THURSDAY.

BY A SOCIETY OF MANY DEDICATED PERSONS

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