

Cracks In The Ivory Tower

THE NAME GAME

by MARGARET DOODY

What's in a name?

Many strange things—usually a lot of unrelated letters which when put together are just as apt to result in something like Humphrey Preeper or Byron Zbitnew. Names are one of the few things in the world that we have without being responsible for. We have no choice (except in the case of married women) as to what we are called. Our last names come with heredity, and our first names are likely to be saddled onto us by Great-aunt Hepzibah. We had little or nothing to say in the matter.

Yet, somewhere along the line these irrelevant, indescriptive and often unjust little syllables have assumed an overwhelming importance. They have come to mean more than character or honourable intentions—people tend to associate us with the things.

Recently there has arisen on this continent a powerful and pericious movement of Namesmanship, sparked by the best seller *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Mr. Dale Carnegie, in concocting an im-

age of the Ideal Man by mingling equal parts of Machiavelli, the Man in the Arrow Shirt, and a five o'clock Manhattan, has stressed the importance of remembering Names as a way to Success. "Remember" he says "a person's name is to him the sweetest sound in the world, and cannot be heard too often." This I find difficult to believe. Englebert Humperdinck must have had too much ear for music. And anybody who really thinks Oswald Crowe the best sound on earth must be missing a heck of a lot.

Mr. Carnegie, in ministering to man's vanity, on demand, as carefully as a mother feeding a Spock-trained baby, has created a huge Nameconsciousness. Not that any of us are getting much better at remembering names — we just feel self-conscious and guilty — in fact unsuccessful and downright unCarnegian—when we forget.

The Name Game is particularly noticeable about the campus at this time of year. The Freshmen have emerged from the dhrysalis covering of placard; they are no longer

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WE ARE DEAD

We are afraid, not of ourselves—but of others. We criticise but we are scared to offer suggestions for improvement. We know what we don't like but we are not sure what we do like. We must conform or be ostricized.

We are dead.

The major source of our problem lies in our fear of what other people think of things we do. Despite this fear, we are only too quick to criticize the few who do work around this campus. Criticism is heard because no one volunteers to direct a Broadway musical.

conveniently labelled for us. The first, fine total ignorance is over—instead of seeming entirely strange, most of the faces are assuming a half-familiarity, inspiring feelings semi-recognition. We have sat next to people in the canteen, or seen them in class, or waited beside them in the eternal bookstore queue. Everyday you see more and more people who are quasi-acquaintances you don't know them, but you feel you ought to. This sense induces a sort of mass Name Complex. People with this Common Campus Complex can be divided into two classes:

(1) The Name Forgetters—those who on the average day, at average barometric pressure, and at a point of average alertness forget more names than they remember. Most of us are somewhere here.

(2) The Name Rememberers—who remember more names than they forget. This class is much rarer—and specimens should be examined warily before approaching.

This is because a large proportion of the latter group are the Anxious Young Men, the getters-ahead, who decide that remembering your name is a good way to popularity (with you) and Success (theirs). Be wary of these experts in Namesmanship, with their eager Nameability. Their memory may not be so flattering after all.

Some may be using Mr. C's own system of remembering. In case you haven't heard, this method jogs the cerebellum with odd associations. Going by his system, if your name is Fawcett, you will inevitably be remembered by being associated with drip. Aren't you FLATTERED? Mr. C. also advises remembering by little rhymes. So the glad-hander who uses your name in the tone of an announcer bringing out a new soap may remember you as Joe because it rhymes with 'schmoe'. Aren't you PLEASED he remembered?

New students in their innocence often expect professors to remember their names, forgetting they are one in two hundred or so. Some profs do take pride in remembering students—others couldn't care less. After all, you can't expect someone who has to remember all the Merovingian kings and the mediaval wars, or the ins and outs of complex variables to remember YOU

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Criticism is heard because the football teams gets beaten. Criticism is heard because the *Gazette* is dull, uninteresting, and juvenile. Yet amidst all this adverse comment, no suggestions as to how improvement can be brought about are found.

Most students on this campus are wont to sit around and observe. They travel to Antigonish, not because they want to see the football game, but because they enjoy the train ride. On the trip back all they can say of the team is simply: "What a bunch of bums." Nobody ever stops to think that perhaps it is THEY who are the bums. Perhaps it is they who should be frowned upon by the team, instead of vica versa. At least the boys on the squad had the courage to try. They were active, which even in a losing cause, is better than no action at all.

Our sports stars are usually on two or three teams. They have to be, no one else will go to practice. Campus organizations feature many people on the executive of one who are also active in the work of another. This can readily be seen on the Students' Council where all the members also help run at least one other campus group.

All this is common knowledge and so the question arises: where does the fault lie, and what can be done to overcome it? The answer to the first is obvious, the fault is solely the students'. It is not, however, that he or she does not really want to help, but that he is afraid. Afraid that people will laugh because they write something which seems silly. Afraid that a fumble will make them the laughing stock of the campus, they believe that they will be despised by some, ridiculed by others, and ignored in stony silence by most.

This is a universal fact of human nature, but one which more people here must overcome if Dal is to become anything like a university should be. Every organization on this campus is looking for people because they not only need them, but because they want them. They want newcomers, be they freshmen or seniors; they want new blood, new ideas, new spirit.

Until more people turn out, Dalhousie will remain what it is now, a dormant, dead institution of learning, where men are like mice—or worse, for at least the mouse takes some chances.

Wake up, Dalhousians, before you too leave this college as an educated robot. Wake up and think. That's what you are here for. Then have the guts to express yourself. Until then...

We are dead.

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