

DOROTHY LESLIE

ДОРОТХА ЛЕСЛІЕ

Mentions in [The Daily Herald-Tribune](#), Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

Being in the business world comes natural to city woman

By MARY DYKSTRA
Staff Writer

"My reason for being in the grocery business, I suppose, is that it's always been in the family. It just comes natural."

So says Mrs. Dorothy Leslie of Grande Prairie, owner and operator of Leslie's Drive Inn, store and auto court.

"My father owned and operated a store before he was married and when we came to this country in 1918, he built a general store in 1923."

The building, located where Lilge's Hardware is today was then called Morrison's General Store.

In 1930, Mrs. Leslie and her husband expanded. They decided to build another store on their farm property, in the Glenlesley district.

But in 1945, they sold their business and moved to Grande Prairie where Mr. Leslie took over the BA bulk agency in the city until 1952. "We then bought this present property with the store and the motel," says Mrs. Leslie.

In 1955, they decided to add the Drive-Inn to their business. "We thought that we could try it and sell soft ice-cream. It

went over quite big," points out Mrs. Leslie.

Then three years ago, she and her sons, decided to rebuild the store and the Drive-Inn, and with it came the expansion of the sales at the little Drive Inn. "Actually we didn't have a water and sewer system until 1956, here in the buildings," continues Mrs. Leslie. "The old store had a cistern and pressure system and we used to run a plastic line over to the Drive-Inn."

But the good-old days still remain feverently in the mind of Mrs. Leslie, who once taught school for seven years in East Kleskun school.

MORE MODERN

"Everything has been more

modernized now-a-days,' she starts. 'I can remember when we had to pay a hired girl only \$12 per month. But that was 30 or 40 years ago.'

In comparison to food prices, Mrs. Leslie recalls that to buy tomatoes and salmon then, it would only be eight tins for a dollar. "An Oxydol package which was the same size as they are today, was only 25 cents."

"People were far more price-consciousness then, also," she states. "An increase in the prices today is not noticed as it would be so long ago."

Mrs. Leslie raised her four children despite the hustle and bustle of the daily routine found among the little neighbourhood stores. Two of her children are

presently living in Vancouver and Victoria. Another son, Bill owns and operates the Grande Prairie IGA Foodliner. "My third son is in partnership with me here at the Auto-court," she says.

Mrs. Leslie's brother, Ivan Morrison, runs the Crooked Creek general store.

Comparing the city neighbourhood stores with those larger centers downtown Mrs. Leslie confirms. "We don't compete as much, although we try to keep prices in line with them and others."

"Presently as before, we are doing well because we are firmly established." With this, she notes that often people are found coming from the country into the city to buy groceries, which eventually makes poor business for the small country stores.

"But 10 years ago the country folk depended more so on their town stores than those of the city, since the road and other standards were not in the best of condition."

"So far, we have met a lot of people -- tourist, travellers, every type -- that come in to buy their little necessities."

Seniors enjoy a fun summer

By GARY HICKLING
of our staff

The Grande Prairie tourist booth, just west of Wapiti Rd. on Highway 2, closes this Labor Day weekend on an interesting and excellent year.

"You never know what kind of questions they (tourists) will ask; they ask all kinds," Dorothy Leslie said.

She is one of the city's senior citizens who religiously staffed and operated the log cabin-style booth during the summer months for the chamber of commerce. Two bodies, the 175 members of the Golden Age Centre, and the 35 members of the Lawn Bowling Club, are involved.

Jeannie McDonald remembers a time when two West German lads, about 21 and 23, came to the booth.

"They had flown over to New York, travelled through the U.S., and were on their way to Alaska and then eastern Canada. All they had was a tent and sleeping bags "which they thought were waterproof but were not," Mrs. McDonald said.

"They had been travelling since early spring and they really needed a bath."

UNIQUE QUESTIONS

Herman and Mabel Hindmarch were asked the history behind the Emerson Trail. A truck driver, who made hauls a number of times north, kept seeing the Emerson Trail sign on Highway 2 and wanted the story behind it. Apparently there isn't one, Mr. Hindmarch learned.

Mrs. Hindmarch remembers a time when a girl driving a truck came in and asked for a place. She was hauling explosives and she wanted to know where this certain business dealing in explosives was. A little investigation and she was on her way.

Mrs. Leslie, who was the major co-ordinator of the various shifts of seniors who manned the booth, remembers one of the first couples who came to the booth.

TALL ORDER

The couple had three questions for her including where there was an antique store; where was a man who had discovered dinosaur bones; and was there somebody who could carve an eagle out of wood.



Dorothy Leslie (left), Jeannie McDonald, Mabel and Herman Hindmarch

A tall order, but Mrs. Leslie directed them to various second-hand stores in the city that could have had antiques. She sent them to Bert Tieman at the city museum for the dinosaur bones and searched her friends for some people who worked in wood.

It is not known how many people visited the tourist booth since it opened in mid-June but a quick glance through two of the guest books sees people from across Canada, United States, and from across the seas including West Germany, Switzerland, England, Holland, Australia and New Zealand, northern Ireland, South Africa, Netherlands, Puerto Rico, and France.

"When we started we had about 100 people per day in July," Mrs. Leslie said. She noticed in early June a lot of people from Fort St. John were in seeking the manpower office.

LOTS OF QUERIES

Inquiries were numerous — where was a spa, what was there to do in Grande Prairie, where were the good fishing spots, how to get out of the city, where was a laundromat, what was the history of this place or that, and, a first for the

seniors, where was the liquor store.

"One day this couple came," Mrs. McDonald said. "They were both hairdressers going to Alaska from Atlanta, Ga., with their three children to work. They had everything they owned with them."

Mrs. Leslie remembers three German men who were attempting to locate someone in the Bear Lake area. All they had was a telephone number and the person they were searching for was not at home. Calls to other people in the area finally tracked the local resident.

"Some (tourists) just wanted information and then walked out. Some would sit down to drink coffee and some were in no hurry," Mrs. Leslie said.

All of them said Grande Prairie requires more camping sites, complete with showers, close to town.

"A lot of people were travelling light and they needed it (a camping place with showers and electrical outlet for razors)," Mr. Hindmarch said. He remembered one man coming in and shaving at the tourist booth. The man kept a running conversation going with the Hindmarchs the whole time.

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THE LESLIES:

Highland Games' Clan of the Day has long history in Grande Prairie area

Herald-Tribune staff

The Leslie family motto of Grip Fast may be good advice for those who wind up in the caber toss at the Grande Prairie Highland Games this weekend.

The Leslies are clan of the day in the ninth year of the Games, which get underway at Muskoseepi Park this Saturday.

They will be honored at the official opening of the Games. The Games are a day-long festival recognizing Scottish traditions.

Besides traditional Scottish dancing, there will be events such as stock dog trials, piping competitions, hammer throwing and skilnet tossing.

Bill Leslie was born and raised in Grande Prairie.

"It is an honor for the family to be recognized," he said.

"The fact my father was one of the original homesteaders, it's kind of nice to have recognition."

Leslie has been actively involved in the community for many years. He spent almost a quarter century on the Grande Prairie Public School Board, including eight years as chairman.

He joined British American Oil,



This early-1990s photo shows Jean (left front), Kenneth Keith and Bill Leslie and Norman (back left), Gladys, Tom, with Marion on his knee, Margaret and Dorothy Leslie, with Tom on her knee, and Edward Leslie.

owned by his father Edward Leslie, as a bulk agent in 1948. He later ran a motel called Leslie Auto Court with his mother, Dorothy Morrison, before opening the local IGA in 1959. He stayed there until 1970 when he ran travel agents first in Grande Prairie and then Fairview. He is now semi-retired.

His wife, Jean, was a nurse for 20

years before retiring.

The Leslies have a long history in Canada and the Peace Country.

William and Isabella Campbell of Morayshire, Scotland immigrated to Canada in the early 1830s, settling in Ontario.

In 1913, one of William and Isabella's grandchildren, Thomas Leslie, and wife

Margaret sold the family farm in Ontario and made the long, tough trip to the Grande Prairie area to join sons Edward and Norman.

Taking up homesteads about 20 kilometres east of Grande Prairie, the family eventually applied for a post office, which was called Glen Leslie.

In those days, there was no church so they held services in their home until a church was built. It also acted as a school house for many years.

Ed continued farming in the area, marrying Dorothy Morrison in 1921. The pair moved to Grande Prairie six years later to work in her parent's general store.

The following year they returned to Glen Leslie to operate a store built by Dorothy's father on a corner of the family farm.

They stayed there until 1945 when Ed bought the British American bulk plant in Grande Prairie. He died of cancer in 1948.

Ed had five children: Margaret Edith, who died after seven days; William (Bill); Marion; and Thomas (Tom).

Bill and Jean still live in Grande Prairie, as does son Robert and his wife Maureen.

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Nurses reject freeze

Union wants hospitals to talk more

By DHT Staff-CP

EDMONTON (CP) — The 10,000 members of the United Nurses of Alberta, traditionally a militant group, have given a flat no to a contract offer that would have frozen their wages this year.

UNA president Margaret Ethier said the vote was 88 per cent against the offer from the Alberta Hospital Association, and the nurses — already the highest paid in Canada — want the hospitals to go back to negotiations.

Ethier said meetings are being arranged, but she doesn't know if the hospitals will actually resume bargaining.

"It remains our position that an improved offer from the AHA is necessary to reach a negotiated settlement," she said.

Ethier would not say what steps the nurses will take if the hospitals remain adamant.

A Grande Prairie spokesman for the UNA said she is hoping the AHA will get back to negotiating with a little more substance in its offer.

Dorothy Leslie said about 70 per cent of Local 37 members turned out for the vote with 46 in favor of rejecting the contract and 10 wanting to accept it — or 82 per cent saying no.

The nurses are asking for an across-the-board increase of \$1.90 per hour, Ms. Leslie said.

A first-year staff nurse made \$13.20 per hour in 1983 and the increase would have brought it up to \$15.10 an hour.

A staff nurse with six years or more experience made \$15.42 per hour and would make \$17.32 an hour with the increment.

While Alberta nurses have received substantial increases over the last four years, a study done shows that in fact their wages do not deviate from the provincial norm, Ms. Leslie said.

A staff nurse with 20 years' experience in 1983 would have received \$31,191, she said.

"That can hardly be described as a dramatic increase."

It isn't just the zero per cent increase that bothers the nurses, Ms. Leslie said.

"They (AHA) are trying to take away things we fought very hard for."

Presently a nurse in charge of a unit receives more because of the added responsibility to know what is going on in the unit but the AHA wants to end this, she said.

The responsibility is there regardless and affects smaller units in rural areas more than in centres like Grande Prairie, said Ms. Leslie.

As well the AMA wants to end short-term disability benefits and leave the nurses with only long-term, she said.

It is too soon to discuss illegal strike action and she wants to see the matter settled through the collective bargaining process.

Going to arbitration might result in a better contract than what the AHA is offering but it too is something she prefers is avoided, Ms. Leslie said.

The nurses have gone on strike twice in the past four years, but the government passed legislation last year banning such strikes.