

\$8,000 would have "Let Nao Go": CGF



Professor Maasaki Naosaki

by Nancy Phillips
and Jacob Katsman

If the Canadian Gymnastics Federation (CGF) would have compensated the university with \$8,000, York president Harry Arthurs would have let coach and physical education professor Maasaki Naosaki accompany gymnast Curtis Hibbert to the Commonwealth Games, said CGF men's director Rob Paradis.

Paradis said Arthurs spoke to director general of the CGF John Brooks January 11 and made the offer to have the CGF pick up one third of Naosaki's term salary of about \$24,000. Brooks turned down the offer as the organization did not have the money, said Paradis.

Arthurs would not comment on the request.

Naosaki has been Hibbert's coach for 12 years. The York student, who won a silver medal at the 1987 World Championships, stands to win as many as seven medals at the Auckland, New Zealand Games.

Stu Robbins, chair of physical education at York, said Naosaki was refused permission to accompany Hibbert as he did not give the university enough advance notice. Naosaki submitted a formal request for leave December 18, and said he did not apply earlier as he was not appointed coach until December 17.

"I said that I am willing to leave as late as possible and come back as soon as possible, but the answer was still no," said Naosaki. Since Naosaki had been

granted two weeks in October 1989 to attend the World Championships, the department felt he would miss too much of his teaching time if he went to the Games.

Paradis also said, "Stu Robbins wanted to negotiate a long term agreement with the CGF where the gymnastics federation and York would split the bill on Naosaki's future national team commitments. Robbins wanted a long term solution right away, and the CGF was not prepared to do so."

York director of athletics and recreation Mike Dinning said, "York has acted in a consistent and fair manner. Sometimes when you make an unpopular decision, you have to live with the consequences of that decision."

Despite the university's decision to not let him go, Naosaki still

hopes to attend the Games. The York University Faculty Association has appealed to the university on his behalf and hopes the case will be settled quickly.

Naosaki said he has also received a petition of support signed by over 400 music students.

Hibbert and his teammates left from Vancouver for Auckland last Sunday with Naosaki's replacement, Michel Venne from Montreal.

Paradis said the CGF has no funds to send Naosaki to Auckland now that another coach has already been sent. The Commonwealth Games begin January 24.

Hibbert had threatened to boycott the Games to protest York's ruling, but decided, together with Naosaki, that he should represent Canada in Auckland.

Mechanical room fire forces student evacuation

by Susan Vanstone

A fire early Sunday morning in the mechanical room joining Stong and Bethune residences forced about 300 students to evacuate the buildings and caused smoke and electrical damage estimated at \$20,000.

Captain David Gazey of the North York Fire Department said the fire took about 30 minutes to control and its cause is still under investigation.

The smoke emitted from the mechanical room was dispersed through the air distribution vents to Stong and Bethune residen-

ces. The fire was confined mostly to cardboard cartons and was hindered by the activation of the room's sprinkler system, according to a Security report.

At about 5:15 a.m. Sunday, fire alarms went off in Bethune residence. Students left their rooms for the lobby and were then moved to Stong College. Alarms sounded in Stong at approximately 5:35 a.m. and residents moved to the college lobby. Students, some barefoot, were sent outside, then to the Bethune lobby and finally to the Petrie Science building where they waited until 7:20 a.m. before they could return

to the residences.

Three Stong residents who requested anonymity said they noticed the smell of smoke on the fifth floor at about 5 a.m. "Shortly after, we went downstairs, and the smoke on the first floor was so thick you couldn't see," they said. "We wondered why no one had pulled the fire alarm, but we saw (resident tutor) Don Butcher who said the smoke should trigger the alarm, but if not, Security would pull them." They added that the alarm didn't sound until 15 or 20 minutes later.

Butcher said the time gap was caused by an attempt to deter-

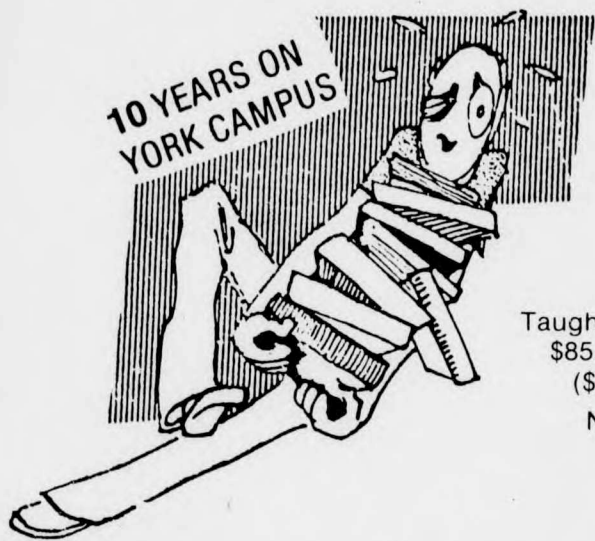
mine the source of the fire, but that the delay caused "no danger or threat to people in residence."

Another Stong resident said that due to the number of false fire alarms this year, "We figured it would be a prank, but once we were in the hall and the lobby and saw the smoke, people were concerned."

The fire also forced the Stong/Bethune dining hall to close for most of Sunday. Director of hous-

ing and food services Norman Crandles said because of soot and fire damage, the exhaust system couldn't supply air to vent fans. If cooking equipment was used, fire alarms would then sound and activate the release of a fire-extinguishing substance. Free food was provided Sunday morning and afternoon, "as a gesture to make life a bit easier for students," said Crandles.

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