

Sex, Violence and Mathematics

by Andy Foster

Interesting people do interesting things, right? This summer seven Dalhousie students and several of our professors went to a math conference. Interested? - NO?!

Well anyway, this is our report on the fifteenth biennial seminar of the Canadian Mathematical Congress. The seminar was held from August 10-22 at l'Université de Sherbrooke, Québec. This year its theme was "Math and the Life Sciences", which tied it closely with the work being done in our Biomathematics program at Dalhousie. Since the seminar stressed a relationship between subjects so diverse as math and biology or medical science, it naturally attracted people from several different branches of science. At the conference we were exposed to, and in many cases able to find an interest for, fields other than our own specialities.

The seminar consisted of about 120 university professors, government researchers, and medical researchers, and of about 40 university students. The students from Dalhousie were Leah Edelstein and Nelson Chan (biomath), Paul Scott (grad math), Réjean Tessier

and Andy Foster (undergrad math), and Brenda Coté-Tessier and David Green (grad biology).

There were six main lecturers at the seminar, each influenced the conference greatly by their individual insights. They were Richard Levins from Harvard (qualitative analysis of complex biological systems), J. Maynard Smith from Sussex (population biology), George A. Barnard from Essex (biostatistics), David Finney from Edinburgh (bioassay), Hans Bremmerrmann from Berkeley (biological algorithms), and Robert Rosen (patterns in biological systems). Dr. Rosen is this year's Killiam Professor of Biomathematics at Dalhousie, coming from Buffalo.

Other main topics discussed were models in large scale health care systems, models and use of statistics in disease processes, models in human physiology and developmental biology, and J.G. Taylor's Splibbich Theory. The students at the seminar, who were mere observers for the most part, were given a chance to conduct their own lectures on current research in a special Saturday morning session.

As the lectures began at 8:30

a.m. and continued until 9:30 p.m. most days, there became a hard-fought contest to see who could consume the most coffee in the mornings and get the evening lecturers to finish early. There came a break in the work on the weekend of the seminar, however, and many people went on excursions into Quebec City or Montreal to assimilate some Quebec culture.

It seemed a shame that a Canadian seminar held in the Province of Quebec would only be given in unilingual English for the most part. Though, as it happened, nearly everyone had their chances to attempt bilingualism outside the lectures.

Most of the people attending the seminar were living in the University residences on campus. This

gave us an opportunity to exchange ideas about the conference and interests on an informal basis. It is always helpful to talk to people from other universities and discover the similarities and differences in programs and research interests. Also this afforded the chance to get to know the other people on a social level, and make some lasting friendships.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Student Council and the Department of Mathematics for their financial assistance in helping to send us to the seminar. We found it a worthwhile (and enjoyable) experience, and hope that what we have gained from it will benefit more of our university community.

Great Whales Slaughtered

During May, June, and July of 1975, two Greenpeace Ecology Ships, completed the first stage of **PROJECT AHAB**. This was the first time in history, that a group of humans, made a concerted effort to communicate with, and save an alien intelligence from extinction. The Greenpeace V, the Phyllis Cormack, positioned itself amidst the Soviet Whaling Fleet, about ninety miles from Eureka, California on Friday, June 27th, in an effort to thwart the continuing slaughter of the great whales by mankind.

PROJECT AHAB, is the reverse mirror image of an enraged Captain Ahab, sailing out to sea, to hunt down, and kill Moby Dick. Instead, we sailed off to sea with love for the whales, intent on proving their intelligence, and the stupidity of mankind in killing off the remainder of these beautiful creatures.

The only Sperm whales that the Greenpeace Expedition has seen, were either dead, or being chased by Soviet Killer boats. The first Sperm whale we came upon was floating in a pool of its own blood, with a gaping hole in its side, graceful even in death, with a radio buoy tied to the flukes. With lumps in our throats, we measured this whale to be 23 ft. The Sperm whale does not even reach sexual maturity, until it reaches the length of 33 ft. Because of the dwindling populations of whales, the whaling fleets are now killing these creatures before they are even capable of producing young. This is the equivalent of **GENOCIDE**.

As we mourned over the death of this whale-child, the Russian Killer boat circled our boat, threatening us with a high pressure hose. We believe that they were upset about us documenting the killing of an undersize whale. They hoisted the child before our eyes, halfway out of the water, and lashed it to the side of their ship, along with what appeared to be another undersize whale.

We followed the killer boat, back to the factory ship, The Vostok, to film the transfer of the bodies, and to try communicating with the whaling fleet. We played and sang our whale songs, over our powerful sound system, and tried reasoning with them through our Russian translator, to spare the lives of our aquatic friends, only to have them say, "#!&*%GO TO HELL%\$#!". Communicating with the whales, during our three month trip, was much more rewarding. Meanwhile, we had to suffer the sight of whales being pulled apart, like so many old buses, while blood poured out of a hole in the side of the Vostok, in a continuous stream, almost vomiting with the stench of dead bodies,

while the crew played volley-ball on the top deck of their travelling morgue.

Later on, that same day, we had our chance to interfere with the killing operation of the whaling fleet, by launching three speedboats, and a crew of six members from our ship, to place themselves between the harpoon and the fleeing whales. The Russian whalers proved to have more respect for human life, than they had for the lives of the whales.

While one of our small craft, held a shielding position behind the panicked sea mammals, directly in front of the killer boat, the harpooner became confused and seemed unwilling to shoot. An ominous little black figure, ran down the catwalk from the bridge to the gunner, as though he'd just received word from a higher authority. The harpooner, then assumed a crouching position, and fired his explosive projectile, over the heads of our crew members, missing them by mere feet, into the back of a female Sperm whale, who immediately sounded, pulling the cable attached to her, whip like, through the water, further endangering the lives of our crew.

The enraged bull whale, of the pod of ten, charged the rusted hull of the killer boat, ignoring the smaller Greenpeace boats, lifted his head in anger at the harpooner, and received a reward for his devotion to his loved ones. **BANG**- another death-dealing missile hit its mark. Because of the confusion and chaos, created by our tactics, eight whales managed to flee to safety, perhaps to live another day, before the ruthless killers caught up with them again.

After three days of constant Greenpeace pressure, the entire Soviet North Pacific Whaling Fleet, sped away to the South East, until the Greenpeace V lost contact with them.

All of these events, have been documented by a professional film crew and will be used by the Greenpeace Foundation, to raise the "whale consciousness" of our global village, and to provide evidence to the United Nations, of the genocidal slaughter of a helpless race of giants.

The Phyllis Cormack, GP V, and the Vega, GP V1, returned their weary but happy crews to Vancouver, B.C., where they were greeted by a crowd of at least 5,000 well-wishers.

After three months of their Eco-Patrol, the Greenpeace vessels have compiled valuable studies of the marine life, off the west coasts

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