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INSIDE

- National Student Day gives students a chance to vent off steam, see page 3
- Buhaqiar in eloquent Lorca Play after rocky ride on Highway 61, see page 10
- Hockey Yeomen net 19, still manage to lose a weekend game, see page 13

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Bus pass for students still low priority

by Pina D'Agostino

University students may be waiting for quite some time before they get a reduced rate student metropass.

Students are fed up with the increased metropass rates which hiked to \$67 per month from \$56.50 since March.

"High school students get a discount with a student card — well, I'm a student too," said Mike Kourtsidis, a third year political science student.

"It costs too much," said Michael Payne, a second year biology student who uses the metropass and commutes to York every day.

"For students who don't work and have tons of expenses to worry about, the amount we pay is ridiculous. We need a decreased rate," said Payne.

According to Jeff Orchard, Ontario Federation of Students' communications director, there are currently no negotiations between the Toronto Transit Commission and metro university organizations for the creation of a university student metropass.

But Mary Lynn Bolton, the TTC's public affairs supervisor says things are not that simple.

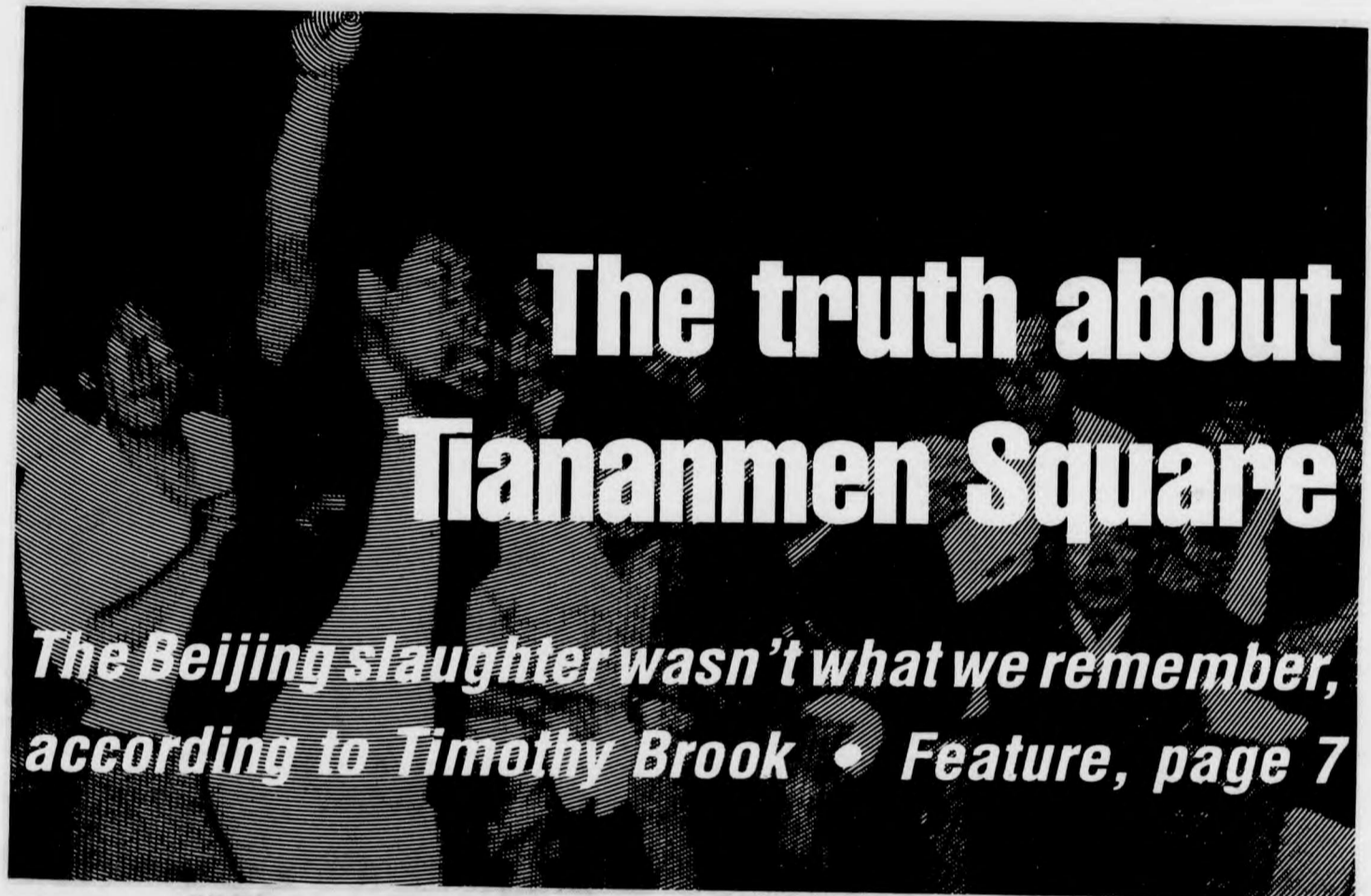
"It always comes down to money — who pays for [the metropass] — and right now we don't have any," Bolton said.

The commission recently conducted a pass study which recommended the pass be made "more convenient, more transferable and more marketable," Bolton said.

Bolton singled out the removal of the photo identification card from the pass as one recommendation, and the removal of the time restriction from the visitors pass as another.

However, none of the recommendations included a decreased rate for university students.

The problem is really with the TTC's agenda,



The truth about Tiananmen Square

The Beijing slaughter wasn't what we remember, according to Timothy Brook • Feature, page 7

said Bolton. Instead of realizing that ridership is decreasing, the commission is more interested in putting in subways and increasing fares.

"It's not a pressing issue," said Michèle Chai, York Federation of Students vice president of external affairs.

Chai added that she's tried to reach Jeremy Goldstein, Glendon's external affairs vice president, to figure out an approach to the issue, but no plans have yet been made.

Goldstein said Chai and himself have had some trouble getting together, but he believes York students should definitely get a cheaper metropass rate.

A possible solution could see York buying the passes in bulk and then selling them at a cheaper rate to students, he said.

Goldstein also said he is planning to send a formal letter through university student newspapers to inform students of the issue.

But Bolton said a cheaper metropass may not be the best thing, and students should learn to budget. Many of them do not have classes every day and some also have access to a car in the evening.

Ryerson university is going to be heading a submission to Metro council on the metropass, said Danielle Holmes, student union president.

But Orchard predicted the plan is doomed to failure, remembering there was a similar effort in the 1980s by a Ryerson-led coalition of students and several allies.

Trent University has a transit pass fee included in their tuition and presenting the student card is all it takes to get a bus ride, said Orchard.

But some students like Leeaa Xidhia, a first year York student, would not buy one even if she got a cheaper pass.

"I wouldn't take the bus even if I had no other way to get here, it's a zoo," said Xidhia, "It takes a long time."

Local events show opposite views of Columbus

by Junior Ramjattan

One person's glory could be another's misery.

This is the controversy surrounding the celebration of Columbus day in Canada, where aboriginal groups are calling attention to the destruction that came with the European explorers.

Christopher Columbus day was celebrated by Toronto's Latin American community on Oct. 11. Several hundred people lined up along Jane St. to see floats, dancers and costumes representing many different Latin American and Caribbean countries.

George Romero, president of the Columbus Day celebrations said the parade promotes Latin American culture "in order to preserve it for our children" and gets it recognized as part of Canada's multicultural society.

He said he was not bothered by the groups who op-



A float in the Jane St. parade. • photo by Junior Ramjattan

pose the celebrations.

"These people are only against this Columbus day this year because its the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the New World. By next year they will forget all about it," said Romero.

"This celebration has nothing to do with history. It's not even political," he added.

"These people come together to celebrate their culture."

Heather Dryden, vice-president equality and social affairs for the York Federation of Students says she strongly opposes Columbus day.

"To say that Columbus day isn't political is a misunderstanding of Columbus and his so-called discoveries," said Dryden.

This made a profound impact on indigenous people and other groups, by leading to the genocide of native populations

and the expansion of the slave trade, she added.

Americans have celebrated Columbus day for 40 years and this year, five million people attended, including celebrities like Pele, Julio Iglesias and Anthony Quinn, Romero said. Ministers from different Latin American countries were also invited.

Ashton Hall, a member of York's Black student law society, participated in a rally at Vari Hall commemorating "500 years of resistance" on Oct. 13.

This year marks 5 centuries of resistance against European expansionism, colonialism, slavery, genocide of aboriginal people and the plundering of their land.

"We remember Columbus but we do not celebrate him," said Hall. Columbus day should be looked at as source of strength for people who has suffered because of his arrival, he added.

"The past should be looked at in order to inform our present. I see myself and those who have survived from the outcomes of 500 years of colonization as Black survivors," Hall said. "Black survivors, because we would not be here carrying out the struggle if our fore fathers did not struggle before us."

According to Dryden, it is important students be made aware of how the significance of Columbus' discoveries are embedded in our governing and educational structures.

Dryden said when books on campus reflect negative stereotypes of racial groups, such as when natives are referred to as 'savages', often nothing is done.

"This is 'Columbus' manifested. The educators, by allowing books like this to remain in the curriculum are perpetuating these negative stereotypes."