

CF gene tagged

by Joseph Lee
The Newspaper (Toronto)

Marking both the conclusion and beginning of an era for scientists worldwide, researchers at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children announced August 24 that they had discovered the gene causing cystic fibrosis (CF). Their findings end the concerted efforts of scientists in several countries in 1985 to identify the gene. Yet, the discovery is only a first step in understanding a presently incurable disease.

Cystic Fibrosis is the most common inheritable disease known in the caucasian population. One in twenty Canadians is a carrier of the CF gene and one in 1600 babies is born with the disease. CF is usually diagnosed in childhood. Typical symptoms include lungs being obstructed by thick mucous secretions (once described to me as "green tapioca pudding"), frequent lung infections, weight loss due to

and sterility, especially in males.

The discovery of the CF gene, however, has opened new frontiers to CF patients and their families. With the identity and sequence of the gene established, researchers can now go on to examine the molecular mechanisms underlying the disease symptoms and eventually develop a cure. This cure may involve injection of a missing protein, much the way juvenile diabetics inject insulin. In the as yet unforeseen future, the defective CF gene may be replaced by the normal gene using a technique called gene therapy. Gene therapy has not yet been developed for use in humans but may eventually allow for replacement of defective genes in selected cells of the body, eliminating the need for injections of missing or defective proteins.

Another potential use of the identified CF gene is the development of a genetic marker for the gene. This would allow those who are carrying the gene but do not

have the disease to be identified. However, ethical questions are then raised as to who should be tested and who should have access to this information. Nevertheless, to young couples in which both members have family histories of CF and who may be carriers of the CF gene, the development of a screening test may be helpful in their decision on whether or not to have children.

The potential applications of the identified CF gene are numerous. Its discovery has been widely hailed as the most important scientific achievement thus far in understanding this debilitating childhood disease. In this new age of medicine where important scientific discoveries are made daily, we can all be proud of the remarkable achievement of the Hospital for Sick Children research team, which included two University of Toronto professors. The results of their efforts have captured the imagination of CF patients, the medical community, and the general population equally.

Campuses unite for affordable bus rates

by Dawn Lerohl

Edmonton's post-secondary campuses have banded together to seek a reduction on monthly Edmonton Transit passes.

The Intercampus Lobby Committee was formed in early August to solicit a 15% reduction in Edmonton Transit bus passes for post-secondary students across Edmonton.

In the past, students were offered a Student Saver Pass for \$137 valid for four months. Sales are dropping because students do not want to pay out a large initial sum, and they don't really need a bus pass in December and April, said Housing

and Transport Commissioner John Mark Fisher.

Bus passes are presently \$38 per month but would drop to \$32 per month if the proposed plan is approved.

"We are coordinating the efforts of all campuses in Edmonton to show general public and student support for a 15% reduction in monthly bus passes," said Fisher. "We are considering canvassing people at bus stops," he said. "It would be great if we could get it (the reduced bus pass) in January or May, but we're getting the ball rolling," said Fisher.



Colin Northcott

Cycle parking permits

by Dawn Lerohl

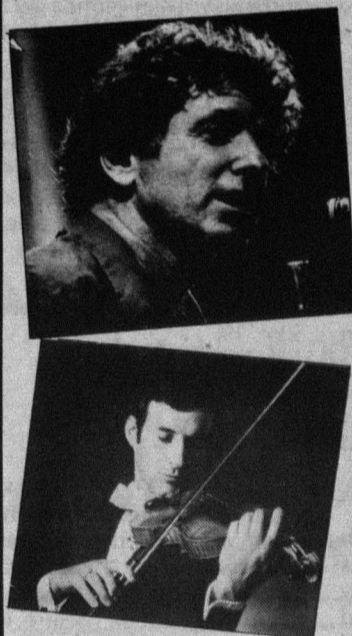
Motorcyclists now face the same situation as other motorized vehicles on campus. There is a charge for parking and the stalls have been moved out of the centre of campus.

The cost is \$10 monthly, \$50 annually, or \$30 sessionally (spring/summer or winter.) "Motorcycle parking has been moved to peripheral areas — to carpark zones," said John Mark Fisher housing and transport commissioner. "This is part of a long range development plan to eliminate motor vehicle traffic through the centre of campus and turn it into a predominantly pedestrian area," said Fisher.

In the past, motorcyclists caused difficulties by overlooking zones and blocking fire exits.

There are now 21 parking areas on campus with 5-30 stalls each. "There is more space than before on campus, just relocated," says Fisher.

"Space availability will not be a problem but centrally located parking may have more demand than space," says Kevin Campbell Administrative Assistant for Parking Services.



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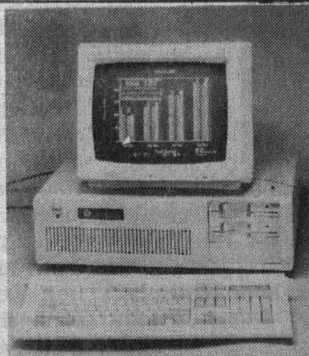
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