

**VOLLEYBALL: BYE
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BLUES**

**TRAVEL: IRAN
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Excalibur

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Grads to picket

Bruce Gates

Members of York University's Graduate Assistants Association (GAA) yesterday confirmed plans to set up an information picket line next Wednesday.

Negotiations between the 750-member union and the university have reached a stalemate and both sides now await the appointment of a provincial conciliator, which should take place some time next week.

The GAA felt further negotiation would be fruitless until the general membership was consulted.

"When we explained the university's position, the members certainly supported our breaking negotiations with them," said GAA business agent Peter Gallus. The Nov. 7 picket line will take place at York University campus entrances.

"It's not a 'picket' line," Gallus pointed out. "We're not asking people not to cross it, we just want everybody to be aware of our position."

Added GAA shop steward and chief negotiator Leslie Sanders, "We're taking this action to avoid a strike." She said she hoped the picket line would be joined by as many students and GAA members as possible in order to increase awareness of the union's position.

The GAA, which represents part-time faculty members and teaching assistants, has been negotiating with the university for five months.

Besides seeking an increase in wages, sick leave and academic freedom, the union wants the university to guarantee an additional three years of teaching after the first TA-ship is finished. The GAA's argument is that their members need a guarantee there will be a source of income in order to permit them to continue academic research during the summer months.

"We see our demands as being extremely reasonable," said GAA business agent Peter Gallus. "What we're asking for is a guarantee of TA-ships."

University negotiator D.J. Mitchell would not comment about York's position regarding this particular demand by the GAA, saying it is not his policy to make comments to the press about York's position while negotiations are taking place.



Margaret Atwood at York. Page 10

Pierre DesOrmeaux

Council blasts Balloon

Staff

The Atkinson student council has threatened to fire the editor of the Atkinson newspaper for printing an editorial which criticizes the council.

In a meeting of the Atkinson General Assembly on October 20, a motion was passed by a vote of 24-1-1 in favour of censuring Balloon Editor Roman Smilka.

His controversial article, entitled "Atkinson Students Without Suffrage," called the ACSA a "mini-dictatorship." It also urged the Vice-President of York University not to accept the newly drafted by-laws unless there is "universal suffrage" for all part-time students at Atkinson College.

A letter by ACSA Speaker Daniel Bloom delivered to Smilka two days later elaborated on the motion, which demands that Smilka retract the October editorial in the next issue and give notice that it was the "opinion of the Editor and not a factual statement."

The final paragraph of the letter states, "failure to comply with the above order of the General Assembly of the ACSA is contempt of the General

Assembly and may result in your dismissal."

An incredulous Smilka described the editorial as "a classic model of editorial restraint, which should not be drawing such overt criticism. I'm surprised at the Assembly's negative response to this editorial," he added.

Excalibur spoke with Bloom earlier this week. During the conversation, Bloom indicated that he would pursue legal action against the paper if his remarks were quoted.

At present, any Atkinson student who wants to become a member of the Assembly must be either a class representative or a student proceeding to a degree through the college. In both cases, the Assembly must formally ratify their membership. Thus, the rewritten ACSA by-laws do not allow the part-time student population to elect its executive members by a general vote. In contrast, the CYSF has a cross-campus election of its president and executive.

Smilka argues that this is an example of one of the many threats to the existence of a free and objective press in our society.

Evolution seminar

Life before man

Lydia Pawlenko

Although Darwin's Origin of the Species was published over one hundred years ago, a two-day symposium held last week at York university made clear that scientists are only now starting to answer some of the questions it raised.

Organized by York's Science Faculty and Vanier College, "The Evolution of Life" drew an overflow crowd to Burton Auditorium for a look at the emergence of replicating molecules, cells, plants and animals, and our present understanding of human origin.

Participants seeking answers to that ponderous question, "How did life evolve?" were enlightened by theories that went far beyond confirming our chemical

ancestry.

Dr. Leslie Orgel, a renowned chemist from the Salk Institute, told the audience how molecules on the primitive earth could have evolved before life existed on this planet.

"We are now able to rephrase Darwin's theories in terms of molecules," he said. Orgel also explained that all the molecules necessary for life to begin are among the most common compounds in interstellar space.

Leading geneticist Francis Ayala, of the University of California, spoke of a "two-sided" modern theory of evolution.

Through distinguishing the amount of genetic variation existing in the population, scientists can now determine the

potential for evolutionary change and how much change actually takes place, he said.

"We know that through hereditary materials such as DNA and RNA it is possible to study the properties of organisms," Ayala explained. "Sets of proteins differ from organism to organism, so that we can find how much variation exists in organisms as a whole." Humans were mentioned as being 67 heterozygous, meaning, in effect, "the raw materials available for natural selection are really enormous."

Dr. Ayala stressed that no two individuals are genetically identical, with the exception of identical twins. "Every individual is different--this is true of both animals and plants," he said.

By examining the differences in proteins between related species, scientists can now construct phylogenetic trees showing the relationships between the species. Detailed pictures of how new species emerge can be built up in this way according to Ayala.

Natural selection creates features in the same way as an artist creates a painting: with proteins instead of paints, Dr. Ayala said, "the difference lies in the fact that the painter has a conscience, natural selection doesn't."

Later speakers talked about evolution from the social, behavioural and anthropological points of view.