

Darwin challenged...Here we go again!

by Tarra Kongsrude

One wonders whether Darwin would be concerned or amused, but 100 years after his death people are still arguing about his theory of evolution. An unexpected capacity crowd of 200 people at an evolution vs. creation special lecture on March 10 indicated the issue is far from resolved.

Dr. Ruse, professor of philosophy and history at the University of Guelph, was sponsored by the Dalhousie biology department to discuss the present Canadian controversy over the creation/evolution content of biology texts.

The creation evolution debate was reopened about ten years ago by fundamentalist religious groups in the mid-western and south-western states and more recently in Alberta, said Dr. Ruse.

Fundamentalists, he noted, believe Genesis, which says the world and all its life forms were created by God in six days, is contradicted by Darwin's Theory. Evolution is the development of a species or organism from its original to its present state through a process of natural selection.

Dr. Ruse explained that during the late 1970's the fundamentalists were unable to have evolution removed from biology texts. Failing this, they demanded that the biblical account of creation be presented as a scientific theory in biology class along with Darwin's theory of evolution.

According to Dr. Ruse, the fundamentalists demand that "creationism science" be taught in schools is the culmination of the creation evolution debate which began after World War One.

Until the 1920's evolution was generally accepted as "common sense," he said.

The fundamentalists concentrated on the abolition of alcohol until Prohibition was introduced.

Then they turned their attention to evolution, said Dr. Ruse.

Dr. Ruse described the famous Scopes Monkey Trial, held in Tennessee during the 1920's which resulted when John T. Scopes was fired for teaching evolution in the classroom. As an outcome of the trial, evolution was banned in biology classes and texted from 1930-1950.

When the USSR launched Sputnik, the first manmade satellite in 1957, the Americans realized that they had fallen behind in scientific studies and evolution was reintroduced, he said.

The fundamentalists' recent attempts to introduce creationism science in schools represents an "if you can't beat them, join them" attitude, said D. Ruse.

Fundamentalists brought their plea to court 18 months ago in the highly publicized Arkansas Trial, at which Dr. Ruse was called as an expert witness.

The court ruled creationism science was religion masquerading under the guise of science. Because the first amendment of the United

States constitution prohibits mix of church and state, the fundamentalists' appeal was denied, said Dr. Ruse.

He warned Canadians not to develop a smug, "only in America" attitude. Creationism science has a foothold in Alberta, and unlike the United States, he said, Canada has no specific law to maintain separation of church and state.

He noted that in smaller communities many teachers bow under public pressure because they lack active support from the legal and scientific community to keep creationism out of biology classrooms.

Dr. Ruse did not want creationism banned in schools, just removed from the biology curriculum.

"Creationism simply fails as a science," he said. He stressed teachers only have time to "build on the best theory." "After all," he pointed out, "We don't expect astrology and astronomy to be taught equally."

One of the major reasons creationism fails as a science, explained Dr. Ruse, is because the fundamen-

talists deny empirical data which does not correspond with their beliefs.

Fundamentalists demand that evolutionists produce intermediate organism which would prove one species develops from another. However, Ruse said when intermediate creatures, such as the *Archeopteryx* or the *Australopithecus afarensis* are found, fundamentalists deny the evidence.

The *Archeopteryx* fossil is believed to be the link between reptiles and birds. It has the teeth, digits, and tail of a reptile and the feathered wings of a bird. The fundamentalists claim the creature is a true bird because it has feathers, said Dr. Ruse.

Similarly, the *A. afarensis* is one of the oldest hominid fossils found to date. "Lucy," as she is referred to, is an early intermediate between ape and man. According to the fundamentalist, said Dr. Ruse, she is human and her ape features are the product of rickets, a disease characterized by the softening and bending of bones.

After discrediting creationism as

a true science, Dr. Ruse concluded: "If God exists, his/her gift to us is the power of reason and we weren't intended to be intellectual ostriches."

When asked to comment on Dr. Ruse's lecture, professor Tom Sinclair-Faulkner noted creationism science is "not only bad science but bad religion."

Since the development of modern classical science in the seventeenth century, people have believed "science gives us truth," he said.

People concluded if both science and religion were truth, then religion must be a science, Sinclair-Faulkner explained.

Fundamentalists are opposed to evolution, he said, because they fear it indicates God does not actively participate in the lives of His creations.

However, Faulkner noted, there is nothing inherent in evolution which denies an active Deity. Evolution, he continued, can actually be an affirmation of the Divine.

Professor Sinclair-Faulkner related an old Jewish tale which demonstrated God and science were compatible:

A scientist told the rabbi when the chosen people crossed the Red Sea, the gravity, wind factors, and earth's position were such that the waters had to part. God, he concluded, performs no miracles.

The rabbi replied God arranged that the physical forces would part the waters at the chosen moment. God, he concluded, does perform miracles.

By this same reasoning, Sinclair-Faulkner said, evolution affirms God. Natural selection is not a random process he explained. It is cumulative.

The desirable traits in each organism are carefully preserved over the eons until they produce a new species. "Is this not a miracle?" he asked.



Hayes/Dal Photo

Acquaintance rape: They'd laugh you out of court

by Tarra Kingsrude and John Weeren

"Acquaintance rape is sexual assault by an attacker who is known by the victim, and perhaps emotionally involved with her." Guest speaker Brenda Rothwell made that comment during the last of six rape seminars held March 11 at the Dalhousie Student Union Building.

The classical rape myth depicts a helpless woman violently assaulted by a madman who leaps upon her from the bushes.

The emphasis placed on classical rape by the police and the media is misleading because a staggering 60% of rapes involve acquaintances, said Rothwell.

This gives rise to uncertainty in the woman's mind as to whether she has actually been raped, Rothwell stated. She too probably holds a traditional perception of the rapist. It is difficult, she said, for the victim to label a hitherto trusted, and perhaps loved, companion as "one of those."

Empirical studies of how women attribute their failures and problems as compared to men show that women will blame themselves, whereas men blame outside factors.

Therefore, when an acquaintance rape occurs, the woman is assailed by doubts as to whether she invited the attack. Coupled with this, said

Rothwell, is her reluctance to condemn the man because she has been lead to believe that men have less control than women over their sexual urges.

Not only may the woman doubt if she has been raped but so, for the most part, does society.

"She must have invited it," is the common response. "Joe isn't that kind of guy, and besides, she had him over for a drink."

Because of her self-doubts and the community's disbelief, the victim is hesitant to press charges. And if she does, said Rothwell, her case is likely to be judged unfounded.

In acquaintance rape the victim is "less likely to be seriously physically injured," she said. Therefore, Rothwell continued, despite the fact that physical evidence is no longer a legal requirement to initiate proceedings, her case would be weak.

Rothwell pointed out it would be her word, which even she may begin to doubt, against his.

Acquaintance rape can be more psychologically damaging than classical rape, Rothwell said, because it constitutes an attack on the fundamental bond governing human relationships — trust.

According to Rothwell, a victim of acquaintance rape may lose all faith in men and women. She

wonders what man she can trust: her boss, her neighbour, her boyfriend?

Similarly, Rothwell said, the victim cannot rely on support from her female friends who are likely to pressure her not to make waves.

Her friends' attitude is not surprising, Rothwell asserted, because exposing the frequency of acquaint-

ance rape would call into question the whole social structure of male/female relationships.

People have been conditioned to believe that female passiveness and male assertiveness balance into a harmonious relationship. "Not so," said Rothwell. The high frequency of acquaintance rape indicates that men exploit women's socialized

passive nature.

A woman must learn to be more assertive she stressed, and men must respect her right to say, "No!"

"Mutual respect," Rothwell emphasized, "is the basis for a truly balanced relationship and is the only effective prevention for acquaintance rape."

Health Profession students to get lounge

by Bob Morrison

Renovations have begun in the Tupper Building to create a lounge to serve Dalhousie's 1000 Health Profession students.

It is a joint venture financed by the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) and the Medical Students Society (MSS). The project will cost \$40,000, with \$10,000 being paid by the MSS and \$30,000 by the DSU.

"The MSS brought the proposal to us several months ago — we were not totally in objection but told them we would be more likely to pay it if it were also open to other Health Profession students," said Student Union President Peter Rans.

A few weeks ago a referendum was held among medical students on just that possibility. Voter tur-

nout was low but a slight majority did vote to allow other Health Profession students to have equal use of the lounge.

President of the MSS Miklavz Erjavec said "The result is an invitation to all other Health Profession Students to use the lounge."

"A lot of medical students feel we need such a place for rest and relaxation," he added.

Erjavec said some medical students objected to the whole idea but he feels this is inevitable, "You have 400 medical students and therefore 400 different opinions," he said.

Some feel with current restraint measures, \$10,000 is too much money to spend on a lounge. MSS Treasurer Bernie MacGregor said the money is coming from accumulated interest on the Society's sav-

Other medical students complained it is too close to their study area. Erjavec explained this problem has already been solved since sound proofing has already been

installed. He added the lounge would be used for functions such as receptions and banquets, but not during the months of December, March or April, when exams are being written.

"The lounge is not an attempt to replace SUB services students want," said Student Union Treasurer Shawn Houlihan. He said a lounge is needed on lower campus as it will give the students a place to relax throughout the day. It is not practical for them to walk up to the SUB between classes.