

By Jennifer Holmes:

With York's multitude of student clubs representing everything under the sun, and somethings that belong under a dark rock, I was not impressed to hear about the launching of the African Caribbean Alumni Association (ACAA). That is, not until I spoke to Debbie Costello, president of the association, and went to the "kwanza" style gathering ("potluck" for the uninitiated) organized by the club.

Family Day was intended to bring together current students and York graduates of African and Caribbean descent. The event as explained by Costello, marks the association's official arrival on the campus.

"Critical is the total lack of professional networks available to Black students." The ACAA intends to change this situation.

COMMUNITY

Looking into non-profit services at York

ACAA is "absolutely not a political organization." The association is founded on the belief that there needs to be greater "continuity" between

York's Black Alumni and its present students.

According to Costello "currently there are no means for new students to liaise with graduates" for help with the ins and outs of the university, and to get advice or help on assignments.

Even more critical, notes Costello, is the "total lack of professional networks available" to Black students. The ACAA intends to change this situation.

Family Day took place in Founder's dining hall, on Saturday, October 26. The

event culminated with a "conscious party" that went on past midnight. Michelle Hughes, president of the York Federation of Students, and several members from the association opened the festivities with brief welcoming addresses. Following this, all those interested were free to browse at various booths.

Books, clothing, jewellery, arts and crafts and even christmas cards reflecting African and Caribbean culture were available for purchase. In keeping with the "kwanza" theme a few people brought food to share with the group, and quite a few Caribbean dishes were also on sale.

The comfortable family atmosphere the ACAA was hoping to create was achieved largely due to children running underfoot as alumni members

and students talked, browsed, ate and listened to reggae and pop music.

The one disappointing element to Family Day was the lower than anticipated turnout, especially from the targeted graduates. Costello explained that the low turnout is reflective of the difficulties the association has faced since early summer in trying to contact African and Caribbean graduates. She points out the association has had to use a word of mouth system since information regarding students' ethnicity is not recorded at York. Nevertheless, Costello who was pleased with the day, said the association achieved what it had intended — to establish itself as a new and significant club on York's campus.

The word is out.



York dominates debating

by Royal Morton

The York Debating Society sends teams to competitions in Canada and the United States throughout the year. The University of Toronto's Hart House recently held what was one of the largest debating tournaments in North America.

The York team fared well in the debating portion of the tournament, but in the public-speaking portion York dominated a very competitive field and achieved the best results in the seven-year history of the society.

Against over 130 of the top debaters in Canada, York placed five speakers in the top twenty. Fourth year political science major Laurence Rabie and veteran debater Robert "the Borg" Borg led the way with a second and third place finish respectively. Both of these outstanding speakers used eloquence and side-splitting humour via five-minute impromptu speeches.

They were given topics such as "You are a badly bruised day-old banana" and then given only 10 seconds to prepare their speeches. Rounding out the top 20 were society vice-president Royal Morton, who grabbed 11th spot; Audrey Weinburg, who placed 16th, and Andrew Feldstein of Osgoode Hall law school fame who placed a strong 17th.

York's other speakers made the top 50. They included first year debater Michael Hrylov, society president Debra Moskovitz, Hugh Scher, also of Osgoode Hall fame, and first year debater Edmond Sholz.

BOOKSTORE BACK ON TRACK!!

A number of students and faculty were distressed with the service breakdown in the new Bookstore in York Lanes this fall, and justifiably so. We know that when students can't get their course books in a timely fashion, it's frustrating for them. We did have a few problems this fall, some of which were caused simply by the enormity of the move to the new location. Other factors, which were largely beyond our control, also came into play:

The installation of the new computer system was a full seven months behind schedule. This meant that all ordering, receiving and tracking of books had to be done manually, a nearly impossible task.

Hiring and training of new staff took much longer than planned, resulting in a shortage of adequately trained staff for the fall rush.

The TTC strike meant that staff living in isolated areas couldn't get to work on time, or in some cases, not at all.

The PSAC strike resulted in some shipments of books being turned back at the border and returned to the southern U.S., and having to be reshipped.

Over 500 hundred course book requisitions from professors were not received until mid to late August, making it impossible for those books to be on the shelves in time.

The postal strike delayed our ordering of books.

However, we did better than it seemed. Only five percent of ordered texts were missing during the fall rush, meaning that we actually had 95 % on the shelves on time! And in terms of lineups, the longest time anybody had to wait for cashier service was 20 minutes - we timed it - and many of you complimented us on it.

We can do better, and we will. The computer system is now on line, meaning that the course book ordering is proceeding in an orderly fashion. We are planning and preparing now for the winter term, and can assure the York Community that our service level will be substantially improved for the January rush.

We look forward to serving you in future.