



Is this your idea of alien intelligence?

Extraterrestrial intelligence explored

by Shelly Galliah

Some people may believe that the definition of Extra Terrestrial Intelligence (ETI) is accurately portrayed by furry, cynical ALF while others prefer to envision lovable film star ET as the description of this alien life. Whatever your ideas of alien life are, the likelihood of the existence of ETI is very real, according to astronomer Dr. Philip E. Barnhart.

Barnhart, of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Otterbein College in Westville Ontario, spoke last week at Saint Mary's University about the quest for ETI. Barnhart, a solar astronomer and physics teacher, has recently been involved in the recovery of lost satellites. Although he approached the subject with modesty, commenting that he was not a philosopher trained to deal with such worldly matters, his discussion proved to be both captivating and enlightening.

Barnhart stressed that it is foolish, even vain, to assume that earth contains the only intelligent life in the universe. The earth is an insignificant planet in a universe consisting of billions of galaxies, each of which is composed of billions of stars. He emphasized the modern cosmology principle where the universe is considered to be "homogenous in space and time." Therefore, nothing in the universe can be

unique and, as Barnhart stated, "the intelligent life that earth possesses can not violate this maxim."

Barnhart elaborated on a few hypotheses proposed on the probability of ETI. He referred to an early biological experiment by pioneer scientist ???????? Miller, where he tried to recreate the conditions of the primordial atmosphere by placing various compounds in an isolated chamber and exposing these to electricity. The end result was the production of many of the building blocks required to create life. Barnhart said that it was possible for these organic compounds to be created on other stars. Considering our galaxy has been around for ten billion years and the earth itself is a youthful five billion years old, there is a high probability that life as complicated as ours exists elsewhere in the universe.

The search for this ETI is an expensive one, involving both time and money. A few of the various strategies to conduct this search as aiming large antennae at the nearby stars or monitoring the entire sky. These methods are either economically costly or not feasible in our lifetime. Barnhart chooses not to use either of these approaches in his study, which he conducts at the Radio Observatory of Ohio State University. The search is performed with the world's largest and most efficient radioscope. Although the entire project operates on a zero budget and is managed entirely by volun-

teers, Barnhart does not complain, implying that he is motivated by the intrinsic quality of his work.

Barnhart is researching the concept of the "water hole", which is best described as a window or calm spot in the background noise present in the universe. It is at this point of cosmic commotion that communication to and from an extra terrestrial source is most likely to be detected. Barnhart's study involves an automated survey to identify the occasional signal on this water hole. Scientifically, the term refers to a frequency between microwave radiation emitted by ions H and OH which combine to form water — hence the name, "water hole". Barnhart finds a deeper meaning. As an oasis in an arid desert causes animals to gather, the water hole will serve as a "common ground, a place that extra terrestrial cultures will seek and come together."

Recently, there have been protocols developed governing the behaviour of scientists who first encounter this ETI — an event which Barnhart believes will be "one of the most significant discoveries in modern science." Of course there are skeptics who scoff at the likelihood of such life existing, or the possibility of us ever finding it in this millennium. But if we on earth are really the "intellectual infants of the universe" that Barnhart suggests we are, that "prove it to me" attitude is not too surprising.

Sexual harassment charges from jock pub night

by Erin Goodman, ARCUP Bureau

A student at St Mary's University in Halifax is charging administration with inadequate response to an incident of sexual harassment on campus.

The incident took place in the campus pub last November, involving two female students and twenty-nine members of the St. Mary's football team. The case was finally closed in mid-September, nine months after the women filed their original complaints with the sexual harassment committee.

"Initially, we put faith in the system," says Rachel Osborne, a complainant in the case. "I can say in retrospect that it was a mistake."

The incident occurred on a Friday afternoon in late November, when Osborne and two female friends dropped by the campus pub after class. The pub was packed with members of the campus football team, who had been invited by the management to hold their end-of-season celebration there.

"They dominated the pub," says Osborne. "Basically what was going on there was a private party in a public place." Osborne and her friends began to feel uncomfortable as the team's celebrations grew rowdier, and drowned out the musicians hired to entertain the pub's patrons that afternoon. Eventually, the musicians gave up and

left the stage. At that point, a team member took over the microphone and initiated an "awards ceremony".

"He was saying, 'an award for the player who fucked the ugliest girl, who fucked the fattest girl, for the guy who got a blowjob from a retarded woman'," says Osborne, who recalls that there were about five women in the pub at the time, including a female bartender. A male security guard was also present, but according to Osborne, "nobody made any attempt to intervene at all".

On December 10th, Osborne and classmate Dina Desveaux decided to file a complaint with the sexual harassment committee at SMU, a committee which had only been in existence for a year. The complaint was filed against the team member who had made the offensive comments at the microphone.

Osborne and her classmate decided to try mediation with the perpetrator. The session was mediated by Vicki Wood, a sexual harassment advisor at SMU who served as an advisor to both parties. According to Osborne, the four-hour mediation session produced a lot of compromises.

Osborne asked the respondent to forfeit his right to enter the campus pub, but had to settle for him leaving the premises if she was present. The respondent was also asked to donate 10 hours of his time to a local women's shelter.

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More space for Dal tots

by David Woolcott and Heather Hueston

Next month the University Children's Centre will offer 48 new spaces to children of Dalhousie University students, staff and faculty.

UCC plans to renovate space in the Life Sciences Building to accommodate 24 half-day spaces and 24 full-day spaces. UCC currently operates two facilities on campus; Peter Green Hall and the Dal Campus Daycare.

Dalhousie administration is providing the start-up costs of the new Life Sciences facility. Although the UCC falls under the auspices of the Halifax Student Housing Society, Dal administration gives them free space on campus.

Spaces are allotted evenly between staff, faculty and students, although UCC manager Eve Wright noted that it is staff and faculty that really "keep the ball rolling." A recent report on university daycare received few responses from students.