

Once a mild-mannered university office building, the Spire, now well into its construction, seems to provoke strife and conflict in all quarters. Is this the strange effect of the radical new building material used in the construction? Biological Concrete, which is actually composed of bacteria which grows a keratinous shell, forms the outer shell of the tower. Could the computers, guided by two elegant mathematical functions, be causing these problems? What really is going on at Carleton University, the scenic, seemingly innocent university campus? Read on, gentle reader, in the third instalment of

The Spire

By James Foley

The Charlantan, Aug. 28, 1998
The University of Carleton's Official Student Newspaper, page 12

Dicky Needle Disintegrates: \$5 Mil of Our Money One Ugly Blob

In the most dramatic event since last year's Biology pub, the Carleton Spire, a.k.a. "the Druggie's Dream," (see article of July 14, "We'll Tell You Where You Can Stick Your Spire") was hit by lightning in the middle of the storm on August the 15 and by the 17th had disintegrated into a giant pile of slop and goo. The Spire had been having trouble the last few weeks. The "Biological Concrete," made up of a giant bacteria colony run amok, ran amok even more than usual, and the spire threatened to grow to colossal proportions. Dr. Gradshal, along with her colleagues in the Chemistry and Computer science departments, tried everything they could think of to stop the crazy growth of the tower, including air-dropping giant quantities of antibiotics and disinfectant-- to no effect, other than to reduce the incidence of bacterial infection among the seagulls of Dow's lake and send three people to hospital for allergic reactions to penicillin. Attempts to fiddle with the computer programming and change the computer's "infinity or bust" mentality had similar lack of success. The professors were finally reduced to cutting off all nutrient solution to the top of the tower on August 10th, but they refused to cut the electric supply to the computer and its related systems, for fear that the remaining colony might grow

out of control once the guidance system were removed. Ricky Clayborn, a real clever guy who works here (he's a biology grad student), tells me that removing the nutrient without stopping the growth process might have weakened the entire superstructure of the Spire, since bacteria starved for food but still electrically impelled would start feeding on themselves, all the way up and down the building.

Anyway, the end result was that the lightning strike really friggid things up. Nobody saw much change at first. Some wags even thought this might stop the thing growing, but instead "it overrode the computer program, causing twice-normal growth in an already weakened frame," says Ricky. So even if some bacteria died from electric shock, the ones who were left were more than enough to overgrow the whole thing. The actual collapse was slow-- no one was in any danger. It wasn't even very dramatic-- just some blobby thing that sort of dribbled down bit by bit. All this writer can say is next time, know what you're doing before you go blowing up some pie in the sky, spending who knows how much (5 million, to be precise-ed.) on some crap we don't need. So tough luck to all you engineers who are out of work-- maybe now you'll be able to go get a real job where you belong-- at Mcdonald's. And as for the Math and Computer people, hey, maybe you can sell some inSPIRING soup at your next barbecue [which is long overdue].

For more see: "Why Chewing on The Spire is Even More Fun Than Chewing Your Finger Nails," page 16, and a serious editorial from Todd about all this on page 2.

Are you a poet? A fiction writer? How about art, do you like to draw? If so, why not get some of your work printed in the X-Press? We are always interested in someone's imagination. Submissions must be in by 9:00am Firday mornings, room 06 Main.

Iron Maiden

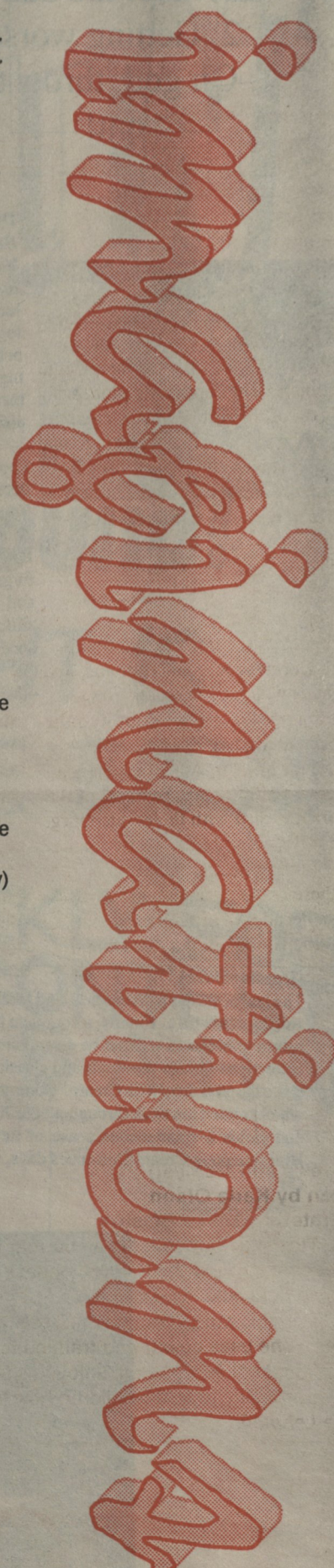
Unseen by all those who were to wary,
The cool unforgiving inner void of the,
Iron Maiden approaches.
Foolhardy hearts frolic within the breeze,
Unconcerned with the impending doom readying,
to imprison them.
Misled feelings cloud the senses as signals,
Are misread confusing one's thoughts of the,
Impending dangers ahead.
A painful tug of the heart was not Cupid's arrow,
but shall soon be found to be a painfully
poisoned,
Dart as those inevitable doors surround.
The sharp rap of reality is more than one's,
Heart and mind can bare as the disecption,
Is complete.
Once again the Iron Maiden claims another,
Of love's foolish suiters as it ravages their,
Shattered insides to leave only scars behind,
To speak of her passing.
-- Tom R. Beveridge

Notes Taken in Professor Gammel's Class

I
Born 1931--now lives in Ontario
Roles+Relationships are important
Loss/Mourning--Process of healing
Accident-child's death
Stone in the field--Father's death
Moon's of Jupiter--last days of father's life
Healing
Memory+Remembrance
Consoling Fiction
Realism of her writing
XV--Introduction--Presents ordinary routine
of life then brings in something
else, a sudden revelation (Epiphany)

II
Go Away, I want to be Alone
Don't talk to me, I don't
Want to talk to you. Everything
I say is so much of myself
And I don't Want to Give it away.
I want to be mysterious now
Go away, I want to get stoned
Wrapped, coiled in smoke and iron
Cloaked in such a mysterious way
Keep it short, if at all, Go Away

III
Men made woman
Bring home the Bacon
Francis raped the earth
Men made man
Who made them
Woman made men
Bring home the Bacon
Francis spoke such language
Bar stool Grovel and Rabble
Who made them
The one I am, of them
No smiles, easy going, flowing
Flashes of teeth to bite
Nothing like the perfect union.
No flow on a bumpy road
Bringing home the bacon
-- P.G. Matheson



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Oct. 31--Nov. 6, 1994