

# Proteins in space

By Keya Dasgupta

Space: the final frontier.

When we think of the "world" beyond our globe we conjure up images of UFO's and Martians. As children, we thought of space as the place where Luke Skywalker and Hans Solo battled against the forces of evil. It was where Captain Kirk and his crew conquered the unconquered and discovered the undiscovered. Maybe one day we will find life on other planets or establish colonies on Jupiter or Mars, but that day seems pretty far in coming...or is it?

Everyday day we are becoming more and more connected to the universe around us. We have satellites surveying conditions on other planets, space stations carrying out countless experiments, and men walking on the moon. Today, even UPEI has ties with outer space. Marc Beauregard, a chemistry professor at UPEI, is the head of a research project at the university that is looking to improve the milk produced by cows.

The quality of the milk is improved by implementing certain "essential" amino acids into the diet of cows. Professor Beauregard and his team are trying to accomplish this by making proteins which contain these amino acids.

You may be asking yourself how this all relates to outer space. In order to improve the quality of these proteins their structure has to be analysed. This is often done by growing crystals of proteins, which increase their size and make them easier to handle. Crystals grow better in micro gravity (i.e. space conditions) so the proteins being studied at

the university were sent up via the space shuttle Columbia and are now on Mir to be experimented upon.

Beauregard accomplished this by getting a contract with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) to be part of Canadian Advanced Protein Crystallization Experiments (CAPE). Prof. Jean Grundy, who is part of the research team, explained that the proteins were sent up in September and the end of October. The experiment will be completed by the January at which time they will determine the success of the protein crystal-

lization.

A few decades ago carrying out experiments like this in space was unimaginable. Today we can use space to improve the quality of milk. Perhaps in a few years from now solutions to environment decay and overpopulation will be found in outer space. Great things always seem to develop from modest beginnings. So several million decades from now when we are establishing colonies on other planets and marrying creatures of different life forms we will remember that it all began with sending a few proteins into space.



## Students and postal workers

By Todd MacLean

The Canadian Federation of Students-PEI component is supporting the Canadian Union of Postal Workers in its current negotiations with Canada Post Corporation in an effort to protect the thousands of jobs that could be slashed from the union, and to retaliate against high unemployment and poor wages.

Not only does this recent statement of solidarity help to keep students away from crossing picket lines and deters students from volunteering for scab labour in the event of a postal strike, but the joining of forces also means aid in return to students, in their battles against education cuts.

"It's a natural solidarity," said Mickey MacDonald, president of CUPW Charlottetown. "We have a vision of what Canada should be, just like students do. It's just all part of the big picture."

Representatives of CUPW were at hand to lend support to UPEI students in last week's protest march to Province House, speaking out against cuts to education by the government.

"That's just a sample of what they can do when we have them on our side," said Yancy Ross, Chair of CFS PEI, on the subject of the benefits that can be obtained from this solidarity statement.

The policy was agreed upon on November 5th, 1997,

with the main goals of creating students have a place in scab labour," continued Ross. "These jobs are temporary, mail delivery is tough, and it's not a resolution to unemployment. Crossing picket lines will just be a strike against you in the long run of looking for jobs."

"We have seen students, the poor and the unemployed, used in other moments by the Corporation to force our members to accept unfair changes," added MacDonald. "We want to make sure that students are not exploited."

Whether a strike will take place or not in the near future is still undecided. There are still many offers and counter offers being exchanged by both sides at the present time.

"We could be out tomorrow; it just depends on what responses the Corporation has," said MacDonald. "We're just waiting by the fax machine."

But when faced with losing 4000 jobs, and coping with low salary wages, CUPW is faced with little choice in the matter.

In the meantime, CFS and CUPW will continue to work together to promote awareness among students and the public in general, to dissuade the public from crossing picket lines, and to prevent scab labour in the event of a strike.