

# Greenhill gives

SU President Robert Greenhill is returning the retroactive part of his salary increase.

"I will be donating it to the Political Science Library," says Greenhill. In all the retroactive part of the increase comes to \$1050.

Greenhill announced his decision at Tuesday's Students' Council meeting.

However, Greenhill will still accept the salary raise from \$900 to \$1050 for the last three months of his term as President. He still thinks next year's executive should get \$1200 a month.

"I do support the principle of an increased salary for the executive," says Greenhill. "The decision I announced at Council was only about the retroactive part - not the salary increase. That is entirely a different matter."

"It was very much an individual choice. It was a personal decision, not a political decision," says Greenhill.

At the January 24 meeting of Students' Council, Council voted to increase this year's Executive's salaries from \$900 each per month to \$1050 retroactive to July 1, 1983. Council also raised the salary of next year's Executive to \$1200.

None of the other four members of the Executive have announced any intention to return their retroactive or any other part of their salary increases.



The new protectors of SU virtue and integrity: VP Internal Gord Stamp, VP Finance and Administration, Christine Ens, President Floyd Hodgins, Board of Governors Representative Jim Shinkaruk, and VP Academic Donna Kassian.

photo Bill Ingles

# Gay nineties a myth

**Toronto (CUP)** - Senior lesbians are an endangered species, artist and author Mary Meigs said at the University of Toronto last week.

The 60-year old Meigs said many of the first women to declare their lesbianism and define their identity according to it are now rarely seen or heard.

Some have died, but some have withdrawn from the world for fear of ostracism in their old age.

"A semi-paralysis has afflicted silent lesbians," Meigs said. "Women have been complicit in the social practice of their silence," she said.

Meigs said fear of rejection by her family, friends and others kept her from revealing her sexuality. She said this was also true of lesbian writers Willa Cather and H.D.

With the publication of her

first book, the autobiographical *Lily Briscoe: A Self-Portrait*, Meigs said she was relieved she could finally make her homosexuality public.

She said gay women have a great deal of difficulty revealing their homosexuality. She cited the example of poet Elizabeth Bishop, who upon discovering that her publisher had found one of her poems suggestive of a love affair between two women, ordered the description removed from the jacket cover of the book.

Bishop felt ostracized when labelled as a lesbian writer, Meigs said, because she wanted to be known as a writer of significance, for all people.

Meigs said most people believe lesbian authors write only for a lesbian audience. But this view is wrong, she stated, and only serves to limit gay writers' readership.

## analysis by Kent Cochrane

Floyd's victory in last Friday's Student Union election is being widely interpreted as a reaction against the conservative attitudes which seem to have overcome recent members of the SU Executive.

However, only 15.5 per cent of the student population voted, so is such an analysis really relevant?

University students tend to be more aware of political issues and to be more politicized than many other segments of society, according to Professor E. Murray of the Political Science Department.

Thus, there is likely more involved in low SU election turnouts than simple voter apathy.

Turnout rates have fluctuated wildly during the last ten years, from highs of 35 per cent in 1976 and 30 per cent in 1977, to a low of 13.5 per cent in 1982.

However, these numbers pale when compared to national turnout rates in federal elections, with 69 per cent voting in 1980, 76 per cent in 1979, and 71 per cent in 1974.

Alberta turnout rates for federal elections tend to be among the lowest in Canada: 61 per cent in 1980, 68 per cent in 1979, and 67 per cent in 1974.

Rates for provincial elections in Alberta are lower still: 66 per cent in 1982, 59 per cent in 1979, and 60 per cent in 1975.

Some idea of student voting trends can be gained from an examination of Strathcona in recent provincial elections.

This riding consists of the area around the U of A and is more heavily populated with students than other ridings.

The Strathcona turnout rates were 73 per cent in 1982, 67 per cent in 1979, and 55 per cent in 1975, among the highest of the 18 ridings in the Edmonton area.

However, there are many residents of Strathcona who are not students, so it is difficult to judge from these figures.

According to Dr. J.P. Johnston of the Political Science Department, people with university educations do tend to vote more regularly than those without. As well, people from middle and upper class backgrounds tend to vote more often, and university students tend to come from these groups.

But at the same time, he said, turnout rates for the 18-21 age group are less than those for all other groups.

According to a 1975 study by Phillips and Blackman called *Electoral Reform and Voter Participation* the three most important factors for a high electoral turnout are close contests, ideologically divisive issues, and voter perception of participation as important.

As well, according to Johnston, the ease or difficulty of getting out to vote has an effect.

Thus, since by definition university students are highly educated, since it is easy for them to vote, and since ideological cleavages exist on campus, one would expect fairly high turnouts in SU elections. But, since turnouts are low, the logical assumption is that SU politics are simply not

relevant to the majority of students.

In fact, student politics are perceived by many as silly and useless.

For example, after almost every SU election there are official challenges to the legality of the election, generally on very trivial matters.

The February 5, 1982 election was annulled by the DIE Board because the Walker Slate had committed the heinous offense of stuffing campaign literature in Lister Hall mailboxes.

Since most students are here to get an education, they are likely turned off by the fact that the SU is run by self-serving political hacks who are out of touch with student issues.

The vagueness of election issues and promises also keeps students from voting.

Since most candidates simply promise to "work hard" and rarely (if ever) offer any concrete suggestions, voters realize there is little difference between candidates.

The people on the Executive may change, but little else will.

Perhaps some students even feel the same way as the Italian Anarchist Errico Malatesta who said: "This election business makes me sick."

"Once the workers have lost faith in the ballot-box swindle, they'll see the necessity for social revolution."

# Exit stage right

**Winnipeg (CUP)** - It looks like the University of Manitoba's theatre company and program may fall victim to high technology.

Theatre program director Chris Johnson said the department may lose half of its already tight space to an expansion of a nearby computer terminal room, even though enrolment has doubled in the past few years.

"Any reduction of this space would irreparably damage the quality of education in the theatre program by limiting student accessibility, reducing rehearsal space, and hampering the practical ability of the company to produce plays," states a petition currently circulating around the department.

# Let us compare mythologies...

by Neal Watson

Comparative Literature Professor M.V. Dimic says the newly established Research Institute for Comparative Literature is the "only institute of its nature in Canada and perhaps the Western hemisphere."

Approved by the University administration last December, the

Institute will be an "umbrella" organization to coordinate the research ambitions of the Department of Comparative Literature and related departments on campus.

Professor Dimic, who will be the Director of the Institute, says his department has "achieved research results that justify their ambitions."

Because there is no budgetary commitment on the part of the University, the institute will have to produce to survive.

"Success depends on results," says Dimic.

Along with the revenue generated by publications, the Institute will solicit funds from a variety of public and private sector sources.

The Institute will be applying for support from the Federal Government's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Secretary of State for Culture, Alberta Culture and private sources.

"The kite will fly or fall depending on outside financial grants," Dimic says.

Dimic emphasizes the substantial results and the high profile of his department with the profession - Comparative Literature publishes the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* and its monograph series and the *Comparative Literature in Canada* newsletter.

The new institute has been ensured of the "collaboration of the best Canadian scholars," says Dimic.

The Institute will also produce a comprehensive history of Canadian literature and examine the present relationship of Canadian letters with world literature.

Though Professor Dimic is optimistic about support from government agencies, he concedes the "intangible results" of the institute may result in limited private funding.

Dimic says the University is planning to launch the Institute soon as a major event.

