

# Preparation for SU election begins in earnest

by Ninette Gironella

Despite the Students' Union Awareness Campaign last week, many students seem unaware (or maybe they just don't care) that the Annual Students' Union General Election looms very close in the future.

To alert anyone who's contemplating a political career, and to prepare voters for the onslaught of propaganda soon to come, the Gateway presents this handy descriptive guide:

**Itinerary:** If you're thinking of running, act fast because nominations close at 5:00 PM on January 26 (that's next Thursday). Pick up nomination forms from RM. 256 SUB. From February 1 to 9 there will be furious campaigning as candidates attempt to show the errors of their opponents' ways and the wisdom of their own.

In the midst of campaigning comes the election forum on the 8th in SUB Theatre. From noon to 1 PM classes are cancelled while candidates speak at the voters and

get mercilessly grilled and heckled.

Finally, on Friday, February 10, students may present their ID cards at the polls and choose the people they think will do the best (or least bad) job. (With any luck, the traditional appeal to DIE Board by whomever didn't win will fail to materialize).

**SU Executive: President** - The Grand Overseer is responsible for the general workings of the Students' Union. She or he is also a member of the Board of Governors, General Faculties Council, and many of the numerous boards and committees of the SU.

**Vice-President Internal Affairs** - This large and important portfolio deals with the SU services and businesses (Exam Registry, RATT, etc.), the operation of SUB including space allocations, clubs and student media, and entertainment (SUB Theatre and Dinwoodie). He or she also chairs the Building Services Board.

**Vice-President Finance and**

**Administration** - Although this is probably the least political position, it is of vital importance to the Students' Union. She or he is merely responsible for the 5 million dollar budget. To help him or her, is the Administration Board, the General Manager, and the Finance Manager.

**Vice President, External Affairs** - Our ambassador to the outside world represents the SU to the University, Government, business and labour, on issues ranging from student housing, employment, and parking, to students' views on university funding (and lack thereof), and political oppression in other countries. She or he also chairs the External Affairs Board which organizes awareness campaigns like the Central America Awareness Week held last term.

**Vice President Academic Affairs** - This position involves delving into academic issues, including entrance requirements, class sizes, effects of funding cutbacks, academic appeals by

students, and dealing with departmental clubs and faculty associations. She or he chairs the Academic Affairs Board.

Incidentally, these preceding five positions all pay \$900 per month (under review).

**Board of Governors Rep** - The B of G is the Supreme Exalted Decision maker of the U of A and decides which department gets less funding, tuition fees, residence rents, new programs, and so on and so forth.

There are two undergraduate student reps: SU President, and a student elected specifically to the Board. If the thought of sitting inches away from University power brokers and government appointees impresses you, run for this important position.

**University Athletic Board** - Numerous sports clubs and intramurals, as well as our Panda and Golden Bear teams are subsidized by this board. The four student positions up for grabs in this election are the Presidents and Vice Presidents of Men's Athletics

and Women's Athletics.

**The Slate System** - The theory of the slate system is that would-be politicians of similar objectives and ideologies join forces to run for the various positions (usually the SU executive jobs). In practice, slates get formed because it's easier to campaign in groups. There are, as well, usually some independent candidates who choose to strike out on their own sans groupthink. You need not vote for an entire slate; you may pick and choose among the lot, regardless of which slate they're on.

**Joke Slates** - Every now and then a group of students campaign in an intended humorous vein. Last year saw two joke slates: the Utopian Pragmatists, who wanted an MX Missile in Quad and the Conservative Youth Front for Liberal Extremism, who photocopied their faces for their posters. Hopefully we'll see at least one slate this year who know they're a joke. It helps to lighten up the whole political procedure.

## Council debates amendments

by Brent Jang

After a half hour delay Tuesday night because someone forgot to book University Hall, student councillors finally sat down to a left-wing speaker, a resurrected yearbook, and to discuss a new election bylaw.

The most contentious issue of the three-hour Students' Council meeting was the amendment (re-number 23) to Bylaw 300 of the SU Constitution.

The amendment, part of a motion which passed first reading, says: "The Returning Officer shall seal ballot boxes until all questions of election irregularities have been dealt with."

If the motion makes it through Council next Tuesday, it would postpone the counting of election ballots until DIE Board hearings were finished.

Acting Chief Returning Officer Glen Byer disagreed with the proposed changes to Bylaw 300, number 23, saying DIE Board needs to know the vote spread when considering the seriousness of an election violation.

VP Internal Block said DIE Board should be able to look at charges based on their own

merits, without having the actual election results.

The idea behind the amendment would be to reduce the number of appeals to DIE Board coming from candidates that lose and appeal out of bitterness, said SU President Robert Greenhill.

Byer suggested that ballots be counted immediately after the polls close, but the results be made available to DIE Board and not to U of A students.

There are numerous changes to the election bylaw that Council will have to consider in the motion's second reading next Tuesday.

Those amendments include shortening the campaign by an hour to remove posters, increasing the allowable expenses for candidates, using a 1-2 voting system, and outlawing the use of federal or provincial political party names in a slate.

The so-called left-wing speaker, former Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley, will cost the SU around \$3000 to bring in, causing Law rep John Pfriem to question its appropriateness.

"We're open to charges that the SU is using the students'

money to further a political cause. I'm not saying that just because the speaker is from the political-left. I don't think we should use the students' money for this because it makes the SU look like it's supporting Manley," said Pfriem.

VP Internal Peter Block defended the choice of Manley, because it would be a controversial forum and it would give the new speaker-series a high profile.

Council approved 14 to 9 Block's motion to hold a forum with Manley on February 12th.

Also given the go-ahead was the yearbook "Evergreen and Gold." Yearbook editor Mike Ford says he'll be applying for funds from Council in the future. "Evergreen and Gold" was last published in 1971.

The year-end review will be 200 pages and will contain a Universiade section. The 1984 edition will highlight the U of A's 75th anniversary. The yearbook will cost students four dollars a copy, going on sale in April.

In other business on Tuesday, the SU gave \$1000 to the Unemployment Action Centre and \$200 to the Eritrea Campus Committee.

And in a motion that went largely unchallenged, except for GFC rep Mike Grant's query about location, the Copy Centre was given the boot by Council.

## B.C. University Centre closed

**Vancouver (CUP)** - The BC government's decision to close the David Thompson University Centre has shocked and stunned the students and faculty.

"At this point, I'm speechless with shock at the radical action that was taken," said Tom O'Connor, president of the Nelson University's faculty association.

"We had no idea they were going to axe the whole program and cause a cultural catastrophe in the West Kootenays." The rural university is known for fine arts programs, especially writing.

The Centre will close on April 30.

Students and staff are protesting the move. They launched an intensive letter writing campaign at a mass meeting, Jan. 9. The Nelson arts community and city council will join in the protest campaign, student society president Gary Shaw said.

The Centre's 450 full and part time students and 100 staff will be

seriously affected by the move.

The government announced the closure Jan. 4 just four months after saying the centre would continue to operate and notified the college's director only one hour before the news appeared in the daily newspaper.

Education Minister Jack Heinrich claimed the centre's limited enrollment and high costs were behind the decision to close the only degree granting institution outside of Vancouver and Victoria.

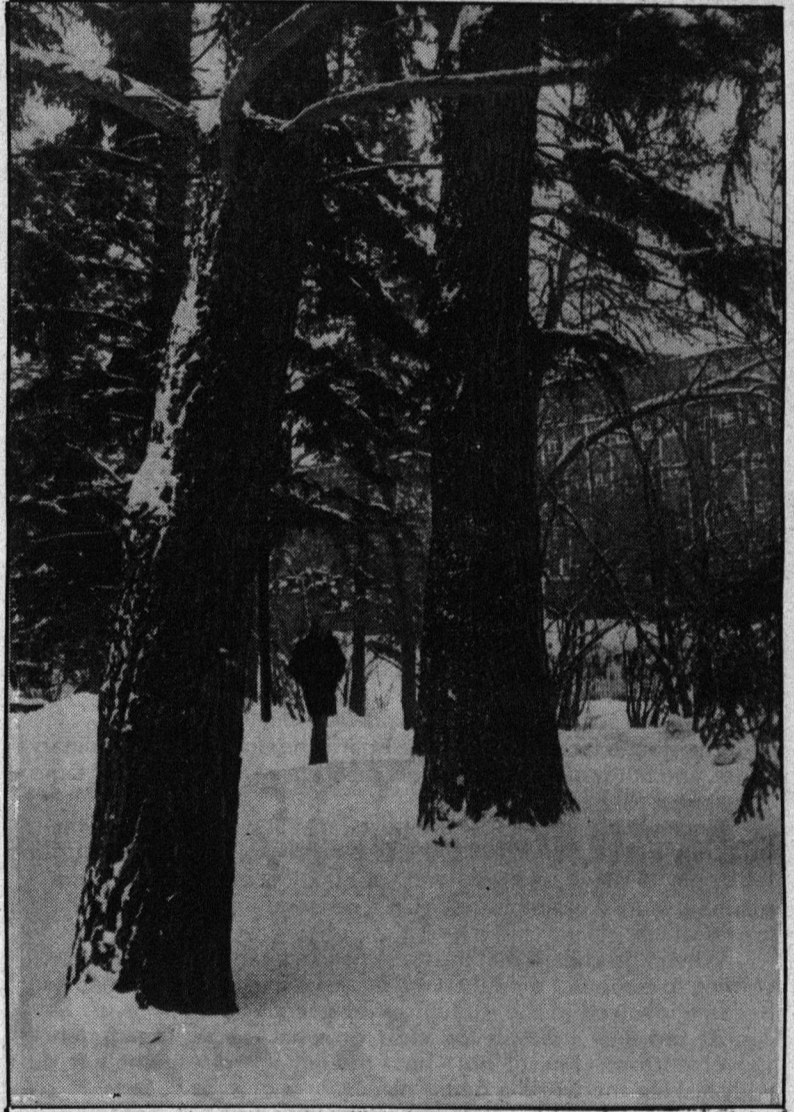
But Shaw said enrollment was on the increase.

Jack Finnbogason, president of the College and Institute

Educators Association of BC, said the closure demonstrates the government's attitude toward higher education.

"I think the decision was made strictly on economic grounds, without reference to the decision's impact on the Nelson community," he said.

Government officials denied David Thompson was being singled out, noted funding to all colleges and institutions were reduced. But Dick Melville, education minister information director, admitted the decision was based on economics. "Economically it was not feasible to continue," he said.



An undercover campus security officer investigates claims that several of the trees north of Saskatchewan Drive have been strangling people.

photo Angela Wheelock



**Newswriters Meeting.**

**Today at 3:30 in SUB 282**