

Preferential...

A preferential balloting system which allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference will be retained for Friday's Students' Union election.

Students' Union officials had earlier discussed dropping the preferential election ballots because of the high cost of tabulation. However, computerized ballot forms this year would do away with much of the expense involved, says SU returning officer Michael Amerongen.

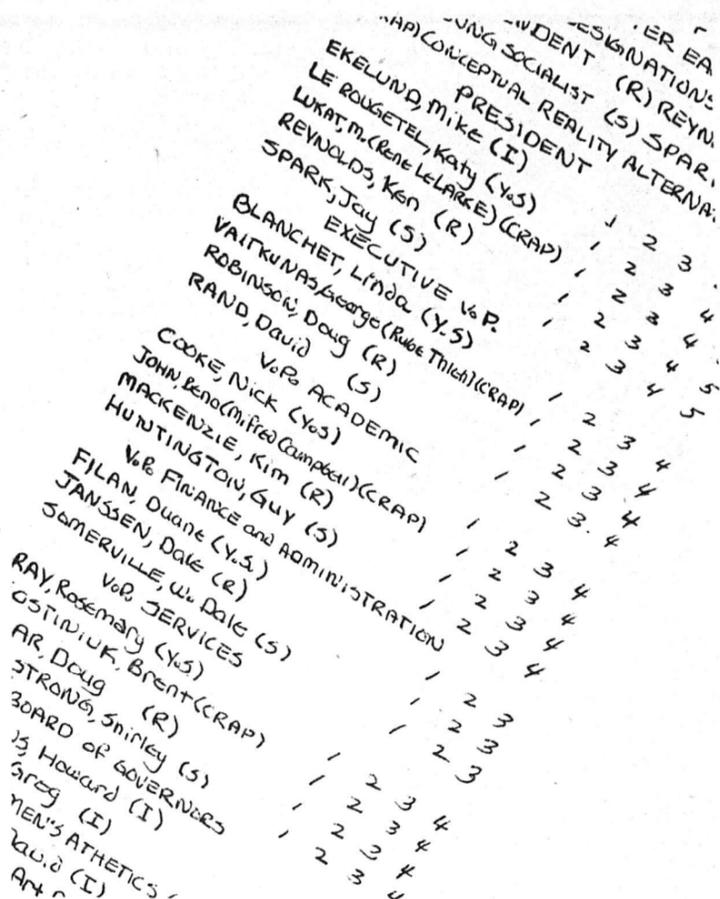
Preferential balloting takes account voters' alternate choices when the candidate receiving their first choice has been eliminated in the ballot.

Here's how it works: If any candidate receives 50 per cent of the vote in the first ballot, the winner is declared immediately.

If no candidate has sufficient votes to win on the first ballot, the candidate with the lowest number of votes on the first ballot is dropped from the second ballot.

A voter selects candidate A as first choice, and candidate A is eliminated on the first ballot, the voter's second choice on the preferential ballot (call him candidate B) is taken into account on the second ballot. Thus even though the voter's first choice is eliminated, his preferences are considered. Only the second choices of voters who supported eliminated first ballot candidates are considered on the second ballot.

If candidate B is eliminated on the second ballot, the voters who



It's going to look like this, kid...

Computer technology will aid in tabulating the results of Friday's Students' Union election, utilizing 16,000 punch-card ballots similar to this one. But to poke holes indicating your preferences, the computer will bow to a machine from 'way back' — the toothpick.

listed candidate B as their second choice now have their third choice applied to the third ballot. Similarly, all those voters who listed candidate B as their first choice now have their second choice applied to the third ballot.

And so on, until one candidate has 50 per cent of the vote. In this way, voters' preferences play a part in determining the winner, even if the candidate receiving their first preference is eliminated.

...computer tally

Computerized ballots — 16,000 of them — have been printed for Friday's Students' Union election.

Speed in tabulation is the reason for going to the computers, SU returning officer Michael Amerongen said Monday.

Last year the results came in at 6 a.m., he said with 240 man-hours spent in tabulation. "And that was with a moderate turn-out and only one recount," Amerongen added.

Those 240 hours cost the SU \$720 last year. Programming and tabulating costs this year will be under \$150, Amerongen said. The ballots themselves cost \$250 to print.

The computerized ballots can be fed through a standard card reader at the rate of 1000 per minute.

"Theoretically, we could have the results at 5:30 on Friday,

a half-hour after the polls close," Amerongen said. "But it all depends on how many cards have to be re-punched due to folding or mutilation."

Amerongen warns: "The cards can't be folded at all, or even kinked a little. Bent cards will stop the tabulating machine."

Allowing for inevitable delays, the results should be ready between 7 and 9 p.m. Friday, Amerongen said.

"As long as it's reasonably certain which choice is indicated on the ballot, it's not spoiled," he said. As returning officer, Amerongen makes the final decision on spoiled ballots.

Although 16,000 ballots cover only 90% of the eligible electorate, Amerongen said he would be "very surprised" if enough voters turned out to exhaust the ballots.

Computerized ballots have been used before, he added, but not for the last five or six years.



SPEAKING

for

YOU

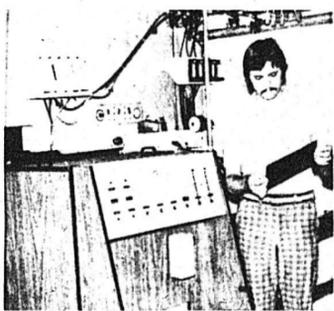
Noval, Greg

For Board of Governors

X

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