

# Excursion into democracy

By BRIAN CAMPBELL  
Gateway Casserole Editor

This year 48.5 per cent of the electorate voted in last Friday's students' union general elections.

What the hell for? Perhaps the voters get a warm-all-over feeling from taking an active part in students' union activities.

The official notice tells us in glowing officialese that "a vigorous election involving broad student participation is in the best interests of this university's traditions of robust student government, and students are encouraged to take part in election proceedings as much as possible."

And think, 48.5 per cent put out an extra effort on kick lines, or putting up posters, or writing speeches, or on all the other clap-trap that goes into our giant yearly, participatory-democracy binge.

## OFFICIAL LINE

If the winners had their way, they would have me believe they won on a platform.

"I would like to serve you, not only in the realm of student activities, which still plays such a vital role in your students' union, but also in your attempts to achieve the full education we all desire. The following abbreviated platform indicates my balanced approach to student government.

- Full use of the new SUB through imaginative programming and the involvement of a greater number of students on planning committees;
- Construction of a parkade behind the new SUB;
- Students must have the right of representation to the Board of Governors and the General Faculty Council, with voting membership on all GFC committees which affect students in any way;
- Hold-the-line policy on tuition fees and residence rates;
- Students should have representation on curriculum planning boards in all faculties and schools;
- Organization of a car pool bureau;
- Stay out of CUS this year, but provide for annual re-evaluation."

"In an attempt to implement the philosophy outlined, I propose the following:

- CUS re-entry;
- Course evaluation;
- Freezing residence fees;
- Student ombudsman;
- Council re-organization;
- Independent student newspaper;
- Co-op housing;
- Active support of universal accessibility;
- Voting representation on various university bodies, e.g., B of G, GFC, standing and adhoc committees;
- Freshman orientation seminars;
- Re-evaluation of union fee structure."

Just a slight change from Sunday school and there it is—"all things bright and beautiful, all projects great and small." And it will all be done in the twinkling of an eye while coffee pours down the throats of the expectant thousands.

## MINOR MIRACLE

Well it won't be done. I say if Al Anderson gets a good start on any of these projects it will be a miracle.

And when our "tradition of robust student government" has stagnated another year we will have another election. The voters will elect another leader to do the things the last failure was unable to do.

The voters elect a leader who will get something done, and then the leader either forgets his platform or dies trying to do it himself.

All those sweetly-swaying, short-skirted, big-breasted bods who

graced his kickline are not there when the work is to be done.

But every year the same bods come out to say they believe in good old X's platform and move-it-on-out to prove it.

How many of the people who put up posters with idealistic catchwords they say they believe even join a committee to make sure those ideas are put into operation?

## DEVOTED CREW

Damn few, but the same ones are out with the masking tape and staplers every year.

In short, these people are hypocrites, just the same as the rest of the 48.5 per cent stuff-the-ballot-in-the-box, warm-my-ass-in-the-coffee-shop voters are hypocrites.

Perhaps there are some students who realize what is going on. These are the ones who voted for the red-head's shapely legs, or the blonde's nice thighs, or the brunette's statuesque figure, or the candidate's confident leer.

Students should have representation on curriculum planning boards in all faculties and schools, Al Anderson tells us.

This means students are going to have to learn something about the university community. They must know something about current ideas in university education, classroom design, course design, and student reaction to all these things.

## WORK NEEDED

To get this knowledge students are going to have to involve themselves in massive and expensive research. John Fekete, a senior editor of the McGill Course Guide, a student-run course evaluation, says his project cost \$9,000. And even at that it only covered senior arts and science courses.

The McGill students are running projects in experimental learning under the Project In Course Design at that university. This isn't cheap either.

But more important are the number of man hours behind these things. Who punched the 4,000-odd questionnaires on to IBM cards at McGill? Who collated the comments on those 4,000-odd questionnaires? Who designed the questionnaire so it was valid? Who wrote the Course Guide after all the data had been processed and the results were available?

Students. And students will have to do it here too. No good fairy is going to wave a wand.

## TOO BUSY

Right now there are 100 students working inside the union. They haven't got the time to do it. They are busy.

And anyway, even if they wanted to work on these projects 100 students wouldn't be enough.

So even if the man manages to get representation it isn't going to do any good. Next year someone will call for improved action in this area—he may even win.

And what about a car pool?



—Brian Campbell photo

LOOK UP, LOOK WAY, WAY UP

... but the administration building isn't the answer

Who's going to make the phone calls? Maybe Al Anderson should do it.

And who's going to fight increased fees? Who's going to face-

up to the administration in this vital area. Maybe the students' union executive will make a show of force and all five of them will demonstrate while the rest of the

campus is taking a coffee break.

Building a better university is a one-man job. One of these days we may find a leader big enough to do your work.

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