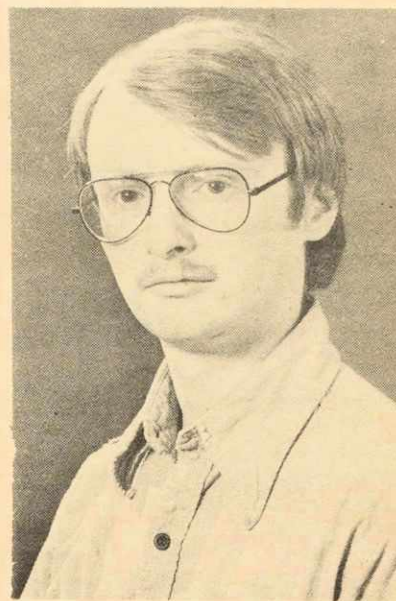


Allen Rodgers



Sam Billard

# Rodgers and Billard

**Gazette:** What do you consider the major issues of this campaign?

**Rodgers:** The major issues of this campaign as we see them are what we are putting forward: apathy. There's the apathy -- you have problems of increasing tuition -- tuition and the student loan and all these sorts of things, but the main thing is tuition-- I'm sorry, apathy, and the way we're going to approach apathy is by decentralisation.

**Billard:** The idea is that you have the many issues -- cost of tuition, whether university should be free, and the council should work on that -- Student housing? What are you going to do about student housing? Well, the union can't do anything with any of those because it doesn't have the support from the people that go to school here. And it can't get it unless we decentralise.

**Gazette:** What are your positions?

**Rodgers:** Well, we see the union set up in such a way that you would have several smaller unions, and the organizations for a lot of them are in place right now. Like you'd have an Arts union, a Science union, a Graduate Students' Union, a medical society, law society. They would collect their fees instead of going to university to collect their fees. Central issues, things they could agree on, would come to a central union, from the small ones, and they would deal with things.

**Billard:** They would have absolutely nothing else to do. They wouldn't have to worry about dances or social functions. The central union would have all their time devoted to things like, for example, free university education, and they could go out there and lobby, they could really do something. And they have student support, I mean, because the representatives will be closer to the student population, so you'd see the guy you elected in the hallway. And one of the big problems is that most

of the time people don't even know who's running. Or indeed, Mike told me the other day that I should put up posters announcing that there was an election. I mean, you know, it's pretty strange. You've got to do something like that, because it just doesn't filter down. It doesn't go anywhere, so that decentralisation is perhaps the most essential one sane, essential thing. And from that you get other things that naturally follow. I mean if the central union had strong student support, it could do just about anything it wants. It could deal effectively with the university, it could say, look, we have 8,000 people out there that really don't want to pay any more money, and unless you can really convince us that you need to spend this \$80 million on your phallic symbol, Mr. Hicks, unless you can really do that, we're going to say, "all right boys, let's go to a demonstration, and we're going to give you a headache, and give you a hard time." If the president of the union can't do that, then there's nothing; I mean if the president of the union can go out to Hicks and say, "I'm going to do something horrible to you", Hicks just laughs at him because the guy doesn't have any support.

**Rodgers:** But really, if 30% of the population, that's probably a high number, are voting every year, that's all the support that the presidents get every year, so with decentralisation, you bring it back to the people. This, as I see it, is one body representing 8,000 students, it's archaic and it encourages apathy.

**Gazette:** Based on your record, what makes you think you are capable of the job?  
I'll give you the next question with it, How much time will you have to offer to the job next year?

**Rodgers:** Well, the issues as we see them are self-evident. It's the only way to make a student union work. I'm the med rep on campus, I was president of high school student council, well, you know, comparing

it to this there's a big difference. I'm completing my first year as med rep, this is my sixth year at university.

**Billard:** I'm in math. I have nothing to recommend me at all except that I sit around and drink a lot. How much time will we have to give? As much time as it takes--you can always find time to do it.

**Gazette:** How do you perceive the role of President and Vice-President, and what made you decide to run?

**Billard:** We see them as more or less interchangeable, and we plan to divide the duties half and half. With (Alan) as President, because he's a more attractive political candidate, and he's had more experience, and, he should definitely take precedence; so that with administrative duties, I'm sure that I could take half of them, ...

**Rodgers:** We thought it was important that this issue be brought up. We felt that people were not getting involved in their student government and yet they elect them. People care about whether or not they can get housing, and student government can do something. People care about tuition, and student government can do something for them. For people who are realising that the student government isn't doing anything about these things--they're not even aware that there's an election or anything like that. Another issue is student fees. Fifty dollars, OK, I'm hearing a lot of this, down on our campus, they're paying fifty dollars and they're not getting fifty dollars back. There's 30 dollars, 30 dollars goes into the operation and payments on this building. There's 8,000 students paying that and how many students are using this? There's 2,000, using the building and that's probably a high figure, so you know you have too many students paying fees and they're just not getting their returns back. Also, there's really only five places in this building that are used -- the

McInnis Room, you have to pay for the functions there, it's not free; Games Room, it's not free; Greenwood, they're makin' profits there, what's the other room? Green Room? It's free, except on weekends. Cafeteria? They're still makin' money there. So really, we're throwing thirty bucks out for what?

**Rodgers:** Decentralisation helps out because it does work. In order to decentralise, in order to pay for decentralising, in order to give the small organizations enough money to run themselves, you'd probably have to find a way to give the money back to the university, and in fact the university does in fact own it (ie, the building) we did pay for it. I was looking at this thing tonight. The building cost three million dollars to build, and the Nova Scotia Government gave it two, and the university didn't give them anything. The Student Union paid off the loan... and yet the university owns the building. The university controls our funds....yet nobody on Council ever knows how much money there is. They don't have the control over it, all they do is get their allowance....

We're looking at the inequities of the situation, pointing out that it is basically a very severe problem, and, if elected, we would have to look very very closely at the money situation here and perhaps renegotiate the contract with the university.

Decentralization could be started right away. There's no doubt about that.

Within the union policy there is a method of revising the constitution. I don't think it has to go to a referendum. I'm not sure whether that is true or not.

You have to go through the situation as it exists. We'd like to have decentralization come fall, if possible. I think we could do it.

**Gazette:** Thank-you.