

# Glasnost demands response from the universities

The dramatic changes taking place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe demand a response from Western governments and universities, a noted Canadian Slavic scholar argues.

On a recent visit to Monash, Professor Gleb Zekulin of the University of Toronto said that the West could assist the momentum of glasnost and perestroika and turn it to advantage, but it would need to rely on the careful interpretation of university-trained scholars to do so effectively.

"It's no good sending over two or three more reporters to Eastern Europe. Governments should be supporting and putting pressure on the universities. It's the universities which will provide the future material needed by governments to deal with the questions raised."

Professor Zekulin is a former director of Toronto's Centre for Russian and East European Studies and a respected scholar of modern Russian literature. He is also a life member of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Slavists.

He said that the United States was already responding to the challenge of glasnost and perestroika by supporting the study of Russian in particular. A program had been established where students studying Russian could apply for Government fellowships and bursaries, "but languages and literature are not as well-supported as political science and history".

This support came at a time of renewed interest in the humanities, he said. "In the US and Canada business has suddenly realised that they need to train their own specialists, and humanities scholars are much more trainable."

"A university which wants to be considered a full university, at the level of world universities, must provide space and

resources for exotic, seemingly impractical disciplines such as Slavic Studies. Great universities are great because they find ways of supporting such activities".

Professor Zekulin said that Australian Slavic Studies quite clearly had developed into the strongest in the Southern Hemisphere.

"What strikes me as making Slavic Studies most interesting and promising at Monash is that the department concentrates on more than just one Slavic language, and there is a certain balance between the fields of language, literature and linguistics."

The lecturer in Ukrainian, Dr Marko Pavlyshyn, who has just returned from a visit to Canada echoed Professor Zekulin's remarks. He has been exploring the possibility of links with Ukrainian students and scholars in other countries and has made important contact with the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies in Edmonton, Alberta.



● Professor Gleb Zekulin of Toronto.

## Centre spreads the word

A Monash research centre devoted to the economics and management of telecommunication systems is beginning to have a significant national and international impact.

The Monash Information and Communication Technology Centre (MONICT) recently has staged two important conferences — an important interactive program for the managers responsible for operating national telecommunication systems within the Asian region and a policy research conference for senior operators and regulators of the Australian system.

The week-long interactive program attracted participants from as far away as Saudi Arabia, with strong support from the ASEAN countries. The main sponsors were the Department of Transport and Communications (DOTAC), the Australian International Development Assistance Board (AIDAB), Telecom and OTC.

All countries are experiencing difficulties in managing their telecommunication systems, the main problems stemming from the growth in consumer demand and the pace of change driven by technology.

Any viable connection between two countries demands equipment and infrastructure in both — usually managed, maintained and regulated by a different

authority in each. International calls can be made only with the co-operation of both.

But new technology, often owned and operated by competitive private companies, was not putting pressure on the traditional co-operative arrangements.

In the long run, the only logical solution would seem to be less regulation, because no country can control the vast majority of the international network which is outside its own borders. The ways individual countries could come to terms with this formed a significant backdrop to the program.

The Second Annual Telecommunications Policy Research also focused on deregulation. It was held at the Law Institute of Victoria for a carefully picked group of about 75 informed and influential operators and regulators.

Among the speakers were an economic adviser to British Telecom, Mr Jeffrey Wheatley, the managing director of Telecom New Zealand, Mr Peter Troughton, the director of corporate strategy for Telecom Australia, Mr Terry Cutler and the director of MONICT, Professor Henry Ergas.

MONICT will soon release the first of a regular publication of news, views and events, the *MONICT Bulletin*. For further information, contact Dr Peter White on 565 5421.

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## Text gives classical context



● After the artist, the copyist: epigrapher Paul Wilson transcribes ancient Greek inscriptions from a "squeeze", an impression obtained by moulding a special kind of paper over the surface of the marble. Photo — Tony Miller

The detailed work of a PhD student in Classical Studies on a series of 2000-year-old inscriptions could help construct a time-scale of people and events in Roman Athens.

When it is published next year, Paul Wilson's study will be the first complete collection of texts that name those who once attended one of Athens' best-known institutions, the Ephebia.

The Ephebia was established in the fourth century BC as a military training college. By the time of the Roman Empire, however, its focus had turned to matters cultural.

With its emphasis on athletics, gymnastics and philosophy, enrolment became something of a status symbol among Athenian males aged between 18 and 20.

The stones bearing the inscriptions once formed a kind of honor roll at the college, containing the names of students and their teachers, together with details of their achievements, between 30 BC and 300 AD.

The stones were later incorporated into a wall hurriedly built to defend Athens in the third century. They were excavated in 1861.

Says Mr Wilson: "The work is important for the chronology of Athens. Not

only can the careers of the local hierarchy be traced as its members went through the Ephebia, but also it can help calculate the population of the city.

"It will be a basic text that people can refer to in order to find out who went through the institution at any given time."

The collection of marble stones, many of which are broken, is now held in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens, where Mr Wilson has been recording their minutiae and the stories they tell.

There are about 300 inscriptions which have to be carefully measured and transcribed. He was recently awarded 600,000 drachmas by the Archaeological Society of Athens to enable him to finish his work.

Says Mr Wilson: "There is a lot of new work to be done on stones that have only recently been rejoined."

"Also, previous texts had suffered from uneven editing, so I'm reading them all again to get them right."

The Roman period used to be fairly unfashionable, says Mr Wilson. "But with the Classical and Hellenistic periods done to death, that seems to be changing."

Mr Wilson visited Greece earlier this year as a Fellow of the Australian Archaeological Institute of Athens, of which Monash is an institutional member.



# New chaplains transcend stereotypes

Meet two newcomers to Monash. One is a former academic in politics who likes to write novels; the other loves food, opera and conversation (not necessarily in that order) and has a background in marriage annulments.

Meet Monash's Ecumenical and Roman Catholic chaplains.

The Reverend Steve Russell (Ecumenical) and Father Tony Vidot (Catholic) are a long way from the boring stereotypes many see as representing the clergy.

Father Tony Vidot — the opera lover — is tall and bearded, with a penchant for the occasional practical joke.

His serious countenance belies a dry wit and a wicked gleam appears in his eye when something amuses him.

Father Steve Russell — the former politics tutor and sometime author of the Great Australian Novel — is less than tall, with a smile that would put anyone at ease.

Their brief at Monash is to be a religious presence on campus; in Father Tony's case that means for the Roman Catholic Church, while Father Steve is the front man for most Protestant denominations, in addition to the Anglican Church to which he belongs.

Born in Zimbabwe, Father Tony spent his early life in England being educated by the Carmelite order, before migrating to Australia and continuing his schooling with the Jesuits.

"One thing I was certain of when I left school was that I was never, ever, going to be a priest, so I went to university and trained as a teacher in English, History and Philosophy," he said.

"Somehow or other I came to the conclusion during the final year of my studies that I was meant to be a priest, so I thought I'd better do something about this, even though I didn't want to — and here I am."

Father Tony trained at Melbourne's Yarra Theological Union and belongs to the Dominican order. "The Jesuits taught me so well in terms of weighing things up, that I joined the Dominicans."

He is a former chaplain at the Australian National University. His immediate past appointment was with his church's Canon Law Tribunal, which deals with marriage annulments.

Father Steve moved to Australia from England at the age of eight. "I came from a nominal Anglican background but had a powerful religious experience in my teens and became a Baptist. Eventually I found my way back to the Anglican Church."

Father Steve was ordained at the early age of 24, and spent several years working in outback Western Australia.

"I worked in Boulder, near Kalgoorlie, and then went to the wheatbelt town of Mukinbudin, by which stage I was starting to wonder what on earth I had said or done to my bishop!"

After this he left active ministry to return to university and do a second degree in politics, philosophy and sociology, and carve out an academic career as a politics tutor.

He was invited to start a PhD at Flinders University in South Australia, which is where he was when the opportunity to become Ecumenical Chaplain at Monash presented itself.

Both chaplains are relatively new — Father Steve began his appointment in February, and Father Tony in early July.

Father Tony Vidot says his role as chaplain in 1989 is to be a resource for Catholic students and staff. "It may sound trite, but my role is also to keep saying my prayers — I have to remind myself of that — and to be a focal point for Catholicism.

"My work involves working with the various Catholic groups on campus, but not running them. I am here to encourage and to bring out something Catholic for them."

Father Steve sees his job as being a person to come to in times of stress.

"There's a number of significant pressures in universities at the moment, so people seek out a chaplain as a counsellor really, as a person they can come and see and let off some steam.

"That's a very important part of what a chaplain does."

He adds that a chaplain has a theological role in bringing a Christian approach to university structures.

"That may be in the form of lecturing, or in forming courses which deal with religious themes, or being involved in various committees that deal with ethical issues or student welfare."

Both chaplains feel they communicate well with the students they see.

Says Father Steve: "The students seem to see a chaplain as someone they can relate to, although we are also seen as 'God-botherers' anyway.

"I suspect the bulk of the student population see us as irrelevant, but the others see us as people they are at ease with — we are part of the uni structure, but also outside it."

Most people who come to see Father Tony are Catholic, but they cover the whole spectrum, from practising to lapsed.

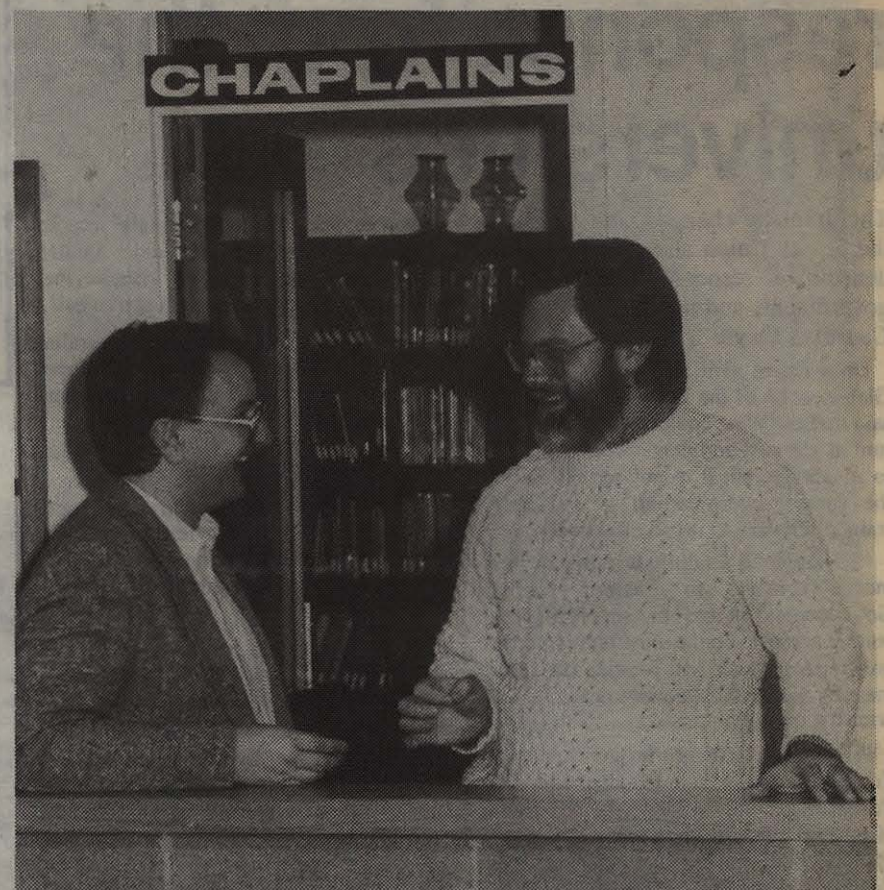
Father Steve says the people who consult him also are a mixed bunch.

"There's no pattern, really, but at least half would identify themselves as being religious in some way."

Father Tony has been surprised at the amount of counselling involved in his work, with the issues of death, grief and family problems being prominent.

He says moral guidance is another aspect of his job, especially with young couples preparing for marriage.

"It's all part of Catholic teaching on responsible parenthood, so I usually ask



● Should they ever need a reminder of their calling, Father Steve Russell (left) and Father Tony Vidot have only to look above for a sign.

what discussion they've had on this, as it can be a key area in the causes of marital breakdown. Couples must clarify that and find a common place."

But is there a common place where an issue like contraception and the Catholic church is concerned?

"Of course there is. You balance the primacy of conscience with the primacy of church teaching.

"The church has rediscovered the primacy of conscience — Catholics are duty bound to inform their conscience as well as possible, and I see that as part of my role, but they also have to make their

decisions as a married couple.

"Thirty years ago a Catholic chaplain would have been much more directive, saying 'you do it this way, you can't marry this person etc'. But in my work, I have no trouble with a person's response."

Both chaplains feel they are an adjunct to the University Counselling Service, because some people who profess a faith find it easier to come and see a chaplain rather than a more secular counsellor.

"There are all sorts of reasons why people may not want to see an official counsellor — sometimes they just want someone to talk to, and to listen to them."



● A group of visitors to Monash inspect one of the many displays mounted for last month's Open Day, this one in Engineering. Attendances exceeded even the most cautious predictions — about 29,000 people visited campus, almost 5000 more than last year.



# Materials research helps animals over hard times

A researcher in Materials Engineering is collaborating with staff in the university's Animals Services Unit in a study of a serious problem affecting laboratory animal production — food pellet hardness.

Dr Chris Berndt is working with the unit on a pellet hardness testing program to help prevent recurrent episodes of dietary deficiency in the Central Animal House.

In the latest outbreak earlier this year, there was a dramatic drop in mouse production because of infertility, poor growth and development of young and weight loss and wasting in adult animals.

(And when the rate of mouse reproduction falls, so does the supply of mice to keep important medical research going.)

The director of Animal Services, Dr Jim Adams said: "We came to the belief that animals were unable to eat because their food was too hard. They were very hungry. So we got fresh (softer) batches of food in and the animals' condition improved dramatically."

Food pellets can become hard either because they are manufactured that way, or because they dry out during storage and handling. The problem is by no means trivial.

Berndt said: "I became interested because to come up with a reproducible way to measure pellet hardness was a difficult intellectual problem. But it was right up the alley of materials engineering and answer was immediately useful to someone on campus."

It is not the first time that pellet hardness has proven a difficulty, nor is Monash the only place to suffer its impact.

Each spring for five years starting in 1981, for instance, young weanling rats in the Animal Services Unit became anaemic because of an iron deficiency in their mothers' milk. The iron levels in the diet were adequate but, because the pellets were made using hardened wheat from the previous season's harvest, the mothers were unable to eat sufficient food to maintain iron reserves in the liver.

In 1984, the anaemia problem continued for eight months. It was then that the staff at the animal house first suspected hardness of the diet, leading to reduced food intake, was the root cause of their problems.

Adams approached Materials Engineering and Berndt agreed to look into the problem. The first step was to experiment with ways of documenting and comparing pellet hardness.

At that point, discussions with the manufacturer revealed that a new die had

been fitted to the pelleting machine, and that this always produced harder pellets. In fact it emerged that the manufacturer had set out deliberately to make harder pellets following complaints from another user.

This year's episode has been completely different. It affected only the mouse section of the Central Animal House. Again it was found that the manufacturer (a different one this time) had fitted a new die.

But Adams and his staff suspected the problem was compounded by food drying out after it had been distributed to the animal cages. They reasoned that this was related to the greater efficiency of a new air-conditioning system which recently had been installed.

The necessary test procedures had already been developed in 1984. So a rigorous weekly experimental program was set in place.

Each Thursday between noon and 2 pm, animal technician Ms Alecia Jones measures six groups of 12 pellets which have been handled differently in the Animal House.

The cylindrical pellets are tested in a compression rig. After the length and diameter of each pellet has been measured using callipers, it is put under a measured force which is gradually increased until it fractures.

From the earlier work it was apparent that the average calculated figure of the tensile strength of a group of about 12 pellets gave a good measure of relative hardness.

Pellets are delivered once a month in four-tonne lots and are stored in a silo. One test group comes from that silo. Another group has been kept from the delivery before. A third group constitutes food put out for the animals and a fourth food put out in another section not covered by the new air-conditioning system.

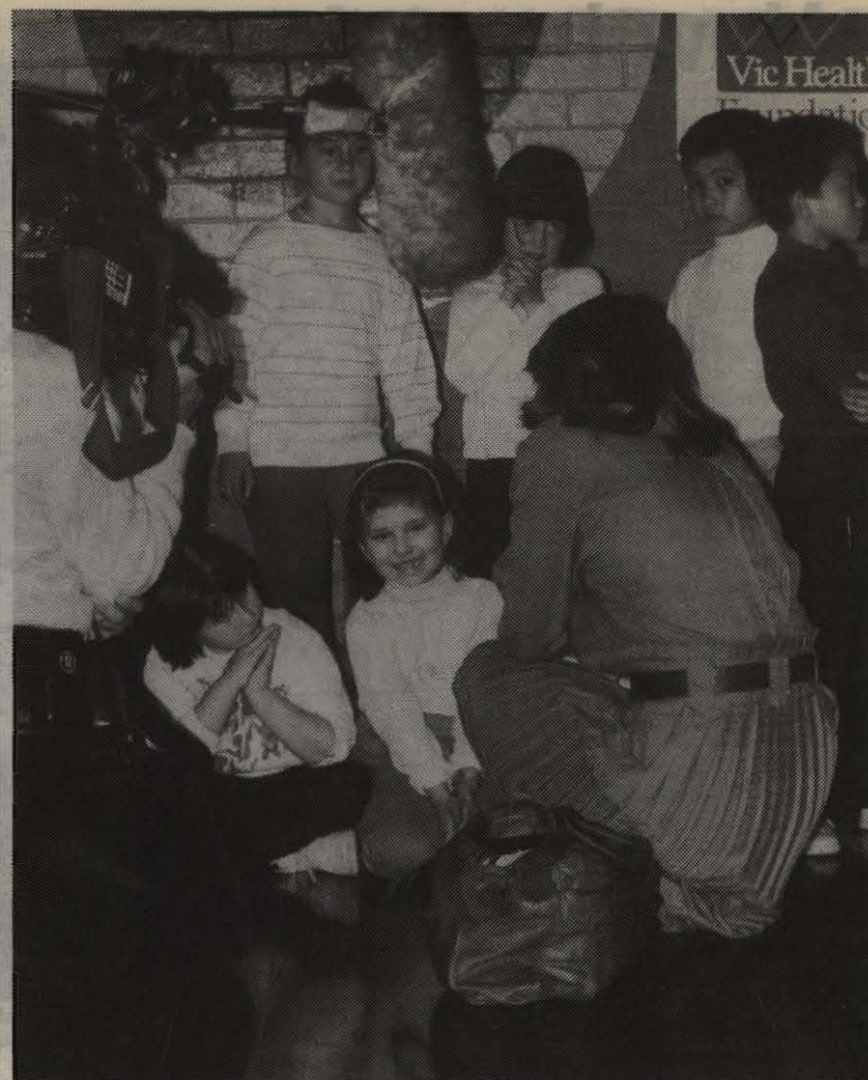
Already, the results are beginning to confirm the initial suspicions. During a period of one week, the pellets put out for the animals become twice as hard in the air-conditioned section. And when a new batch of pellets is delivered, the old batch is nearly three times as hard as the new.

At the end of the testing program, Adams and Berndt hope to document the rate of hardening under different conditions and work out how best to slow it. They also want to relate their measure of hardness to food consumption.

Perhaps in future their research may lead to a suggestion of the optimum hardness of pellets for rats and mice. In the meantime, Adams intends to put a bigger humidifier into his air-conditioning system.



• Animal technician, Ms Alecia Jones, feeds another food pellet into the compression rig in Materials Engineering. Photo — Tony Miller



## The media launch HIPS

Media interest ran high at last month's launch of a new health and fitness program for Victorian primary school children.

The Primary School Community Health and Fitness Project, conducted jointly by the Monash Faculty of Education and Victoria College, was prompted by growing concern over the general level of health and fitness among young children in Australia.

Recent studies show that one Australian child in three is overweight and half have cholesterol levels above those recommended by the National Heart Foundation. The studies also indicate a progressive decline in fitness after puberty.

The project, funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, will look at how schools, in collaboration with their local communities, can encourage sustainable healthy practices through a total health and fitness program.

The Foundation will give \$682,000 over three years to the projects.

The HIPS project (Health in Primary Schools) will be implemented in stages. The first stage will involve a group of 12 city and country schools from state, Catholic and independent systems in the development of integrated approaches to exercise and health.

In 1991-2, more schools will be given assistance using the results obtained from the initial group.

## Improving relations with Asia

In Japan punctuality is the essence of good business and government relations; in Indonesia almost exactly the reverse applies — and if you do not know the difference your dealings could founder.

These are facts of daily life for any working business or government representative in Asia, and their families.

To help these people out, Monash is to establish an Asian Resources and Briefing Centre within its Institute for Contemporary Asian Studies. The centre will present regular, up-to-date briefings on the political, economic, business and cultural conditions in the countries of modern Asia.

It will bring together the expertise of more than 80 specialists at Monash who teach and research on Asia, as well as Asian business experts from the Chisholm Institute and Victoria College and academics from other universities.

The centre also will enlist the aid of business and government leaders from Asian countries including Japan, China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Korea.

The director of the Monash Institute for Contemporary Asian Studies, Professor

Margaret Kartomi said: "The Australian attitude towards training its business and government representatives in Asia needs to become more professional.

"In Japan these people automatically are given at least a year's training before sending them to work in another country. In Britain, Canada and several other countries, there is a long tradition of such training. Monash, with its briefing centre on Asia, now will be able to provide the same kinds of opportunities.

"If we are to improve our balance of payments we must get serious about doing business with Asia, our natural trading partner."

It is intended that the centre will be based at the Monash City Offices (at the corner of Flinders Lane and Exhibition Street in the city), and will begin its activities in 1990.

As well as organising seminars and training courses, it will establish an active database on Asia for business market research and operate a consultancy service on such things as market research, environmental impact and aid-related issues in Asian countries.



# New hope for men as IVF goes unisex

Mention in vitro fertilisation and most people assume you are referring to female infertility.

But a leading Monash researcher predicts that within a couple of years, between 30 and 40 per cent of people queuing up for treatment on IVF or GIFT (Gamete Intra-Fallopian Transfer) programs could be men.

According to Professor David de Kretser, director of the Centre for Reproductive Biology, about 40 per cent of infertility results from problems in the male, while another 40 per cent from female problems.

Ten per cent of the remaining cases involve factors in both partners. And in the other ten per cent the cause of infertility is unknown.

While there are many ways of treating male infertility, Professor de Kretser sees IVF as playing a bigger part in future.

"If you looked at the reasons why a couple were having IVF treatment in a couple of years' time, you would find that about 40 per cent of cases were due to male infertility, whereas at the moment it's mostly tubal causes and unknown factors."

One example of male infertility is low sperm count, says Professor de Kretser.

"There's no good method of increasing a man's sperm count, but what we can do is determine whether his sperm can be used for in vitro fertilisation.

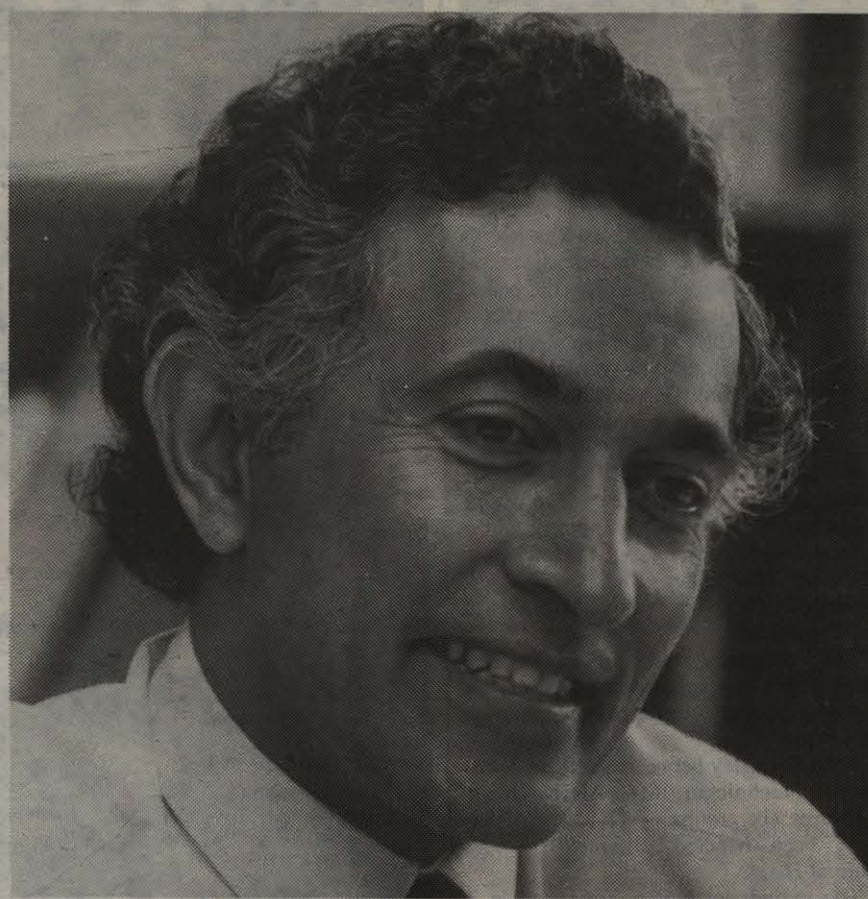
Professor de Kretser says a normal sperm count is at least 20 million, but in IVF you only need about 200,000 sperm per egg for insemination.

"By incubating the sperm and the egg directly the sperm don't have to pass through the vagina and uterus and tubes to reach the point of fertilisation. The obstacle course is limited.

"From a man who has a count of five million, we can extract, say, 500,000 sperm of good quality and use them in IVF."

Two other male infertility problems are abnormally shaped sperm and a low rate of movement.

"The fertilisation rate in IVF for a man with one of these sperm problems is about



Professor David de Kretser: "If you looked at the reasons why a couple were having IVF treatment in a couple of years' time, you would find that about 40 per cent of cases were due to male infertility."

65 per cent. If he has two problem factors, the fertilisation rate drops to around 55 per cent. With all three problems, the rate is around 35 per cent to 40 per cent."

Professor de Kretser says this can be compared to the 75-80 per cent fertilisation rate achieved in other areas of the IVF program.

"Because the fertilisation rate was lower in these men with various types of sperm disorders, fewer fertilised eggs are transferred to their wives.

"Yet the pregnancy rate compares favorably with tubal infertility and those patients with infertility of unknown origin."

IVF for males, it seems, is a realistic proposal.

Another group of infertile men being helped by the IVF program are those whose vas deferens (the tube which carries sperm from the testis to the penis) has not developed properly.

The result is that sperm are being produced but cannot reach the outside world.

Monash researchers are now collecting sperm from the testes of these men directly by surgery, and using them to fertilise eggs collected from their wives in the IVF program.

Professor de Kretser says promising results are now being obtained from what was previously a hopeless condition.

"We can never predict where research will be applied. IVF was developed originally for tubal infertility, and then used for cases where we didn't know the cause of infertility. Now we're demonstrating another potential use for the program."

The current waiting period to join the IVF program is around 12 months.

Looking back over 15 years, Professor de Kretser says the way infertility treatment is handled has changed.

"Then, a woman would have been investigated quite a long way down the track without even a sperm count being done.

"Later it would be found that the husband had no sperm, so all that investigation of the woman was a waste of time and energy. That doesn't happen any more."

Professor de Kretser says the ideal is to have the husband and wife investigated together, as there often can be problems on both sides.

Although he is an infertility expert of world renown, Professor de Kretser was well on the road to becoming a surgeon before a request to do some special research on male infertility sidetracked him into a career that gives him little time to put his feet up.

"It's a fairly heavy commitment — I don't believe you can be competitive on the international scene and not make that commitment.

"With the progressive reduction in grants, it's just not on to do it as a 9 to 5 job."

Professor de Kretser is most impressed by the expertise around Monash and its research institutes.

"You can do a lot of creative and innovative collaborative studies which you can't do in any other city.

"People in Melbourne don't realise how lucky they are where they have such a network to draw on. There's tremendous co-operative spirit which doesn't occur in places like Sydney — in Melbourne, if you've got something somebody else needs, you help them out, and vice versa."

## Computer helps chemists to cope with first year

The need for a new method of teaching first-year Chemistry students could lead to a dramatic expansion of computer-aided instruction at Monash.

A series of computer-based lessons to supplement lectures, devised by academics in the Chemistry Department, has already won the support of a test group of first-year students.

And now senior lecturer Dr Frank Burden and senior research assistant Mr Tam Vu are confident their programs could expand teaching at university, particularly of science.

"We saw the need for something like this in our own department where, because of the way the course is constructed, first-year students receive minimal attention from staff," Dr Burden said.

With the aid of a \$70,000 grant over two years from the Academic Development Fund, the team is in the process of assessing students' reactions to the modules (sets of questions and answers).

At first glance the modules seem to be variations of a computer game. "They

have to grab a student's attention, so they must be bright and attractive on the screen," Dr Burden explains.

After a colorful introduction, students are confronted with a set of questions accompanied by helpful graphics.

Any incorrect answer prompts a response from the module that would not be out of place in the lecture theatre.

There is a reason for this computer informality. "The module should be able to stand on its own away from the university."

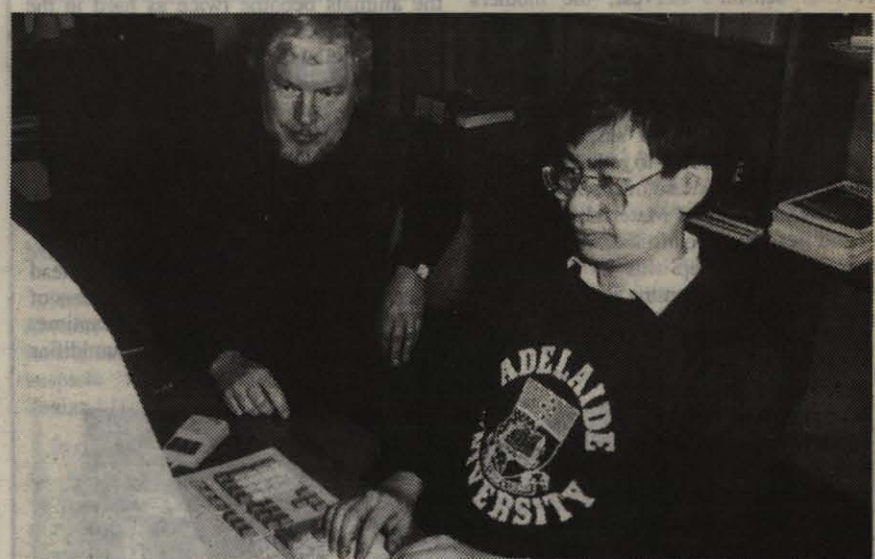
Dr Burden says the most important thing is that students should not feel frustrated.

"To this end we've designed the modules in small bites, rather than have the student spend long hours at the terminal.

"The user does, say, a quarter of an hour's work, stops, and then moves on to the second module."

Dr Burden and Mr Vu write their modules in a special computer language called Unison, chosen for both its range of graphics and the fact that there are no royalties on the finished product.

"We want to be able to sell the discs for



● Dr Frank Burden (left) and Mr Tam Vu appear blissfully unaware that 100 hours at the keyboard produces only an hour of computer-aided instruction.

a dollar and have the student swap them for other discs."

At present, the team is looking beyond the boundaries of the Chemistry Department.

"Our aim is to provide a framework for the whole university to develop computer-aided learning software.

"Soon we will be able to provide group instruction for lecturers on how to write their own software, and on how to present material to us for encoding.

"Teaching staff will find this method of teaching particularly useful for distance education."

A university-wide seminar will be held in February for those interested in this aspect of computers in the classroom.

Dr Burden said: "Until now, computer-aided learning programs have been boring and basic. But now, with the combination of hardware, experience and markets, they have become a realistic and viable teaching aid."





## A Thai river of history leads to the future

The archaeological dig on the central plain in northern Thailand pictured above has taken a Monash geomorphologist on a journey from Thai history to future ecology.

When Dr Paul Bishop of Geography and Environmental Science was invited to Ban No Koi, 500 kilometres north of Bangkok, one of the world's largest, ancient ceramic producing sites, his brief was to record the history of the region's river system.

Now, four years and several discoveries later, Dr Bishop has started charting the long-term environmental history of the area, which begins some thousands of years earlier.

Dr Bishop, then lecturing at the University of Sydney, first went to the village of Ban No Koi in 1985 to help a team of archaeologists piece together evidence of what is now regarded as one of the world's most important archaeological digs.

Between the 10th and 16th centuries, the area was the site of Si Satchanalai, which along with its sister city, Sukhothai, constituted the first recognisable capital of the nation of Thailand.

At its peak, a 10-kilometre stretch along the River Yom was dotted with hundreds of kilns producing an array of what Dr Bishop describes as very attractive, but perhaps "second level" wares.

Many pieces were exported overseas — pots, jugs and plates have been discovered as far away as Indonesia, Philippines and the Middle East, as well as in shipwrecks in the Gulf of Thailand.

Dr Bishop was asked to help out on the joint Australian-Thai dig when archaeologists became puzzled by the placement of the kilns (some of which were up to 10m long and 2m high) in relation to the river.

"The history of the river system is very important in the understanding of the kiln operation," he explained.

"The kilns in the present-day village are high above the river, above the flood plain, while some are exposed in the side of a large bank.

"But their location made no sense. Had they been placed there on purpose?"

His surveys suggested that the river had eroded the face of the bank, exposing a number of kilns that had been dug into the ground for the purposes of production. The river then moved to its present course below the level of the kiln field.

At first, archaeologists thought that the industry had been wiped out by major flooding sometime in the 16th century. But Dr Bishop discounted this theory when no evidence of sedimentation was found around the kilns.

It is now believed the industry died when the capital moved south to Ayutthaya.

With Dr Bishop's discoveries, another question was raised: who were these people who established such an enormous, complex and long-lived industry?

Archaeologists at Ban No Koi are almost certain they were ethnic Thais, a discovery that should have been greeted enthusiastically by the country's nationalists. Far from it.

The problem is one of royal integrity, says Dr Bishop. According to Thai "official" history, the ceramicists were especially imported from China by the first king of Thailand, whose throne was Sukhothai.

"In many respects," says Dr Bishop, "Thai culture began with King Rama Kham Haeng. It is believed that he even invented Thai script. So to suggest that the official story may be incorrect is to go against the received wisdom.

"But there is a clear evolution of style in the ceramics — from the simplest kilns and products to the most sophisticated kilns producing fine export wares — which indicates that both the industry and technology were homegrown."

Despite rumblings from some disaffected Thais, the village of Ban No Koi has become a popular tourist destination.

Its 20th century inhabitants, of Laotian descent and weavers by trade, have begun making reproductions of some of the old wares to sell as souvenirs.

A black market in the genuine article has even flourished. Stalls at the entrance to the old capital openly conduct an illegal trade in half-finished and repaired pieces looted from the site.

Towards the end of his research, Dr Bishop became fascinated with the large scale of the earthworks that accompanied the construction of the enormous kiln field.



● Dr Paul Bishop of Geography and Environmental Science.

Major engineering projects were involved, including a number of wharves from where the ceramics were loaded directly from kilns onto barges for transportation to the coast.

A series of canals totalling some 130 kilometres were built around the old capital, partly to transport the wares

around a series of rapids on the Yom, but also to irrigate local paddy fields.

Now that he has finished his investigative work on the Ban No Koi kilns, Dr Bishop has begun studying a system of ancient rivers exploited by the early Thai engineers in the construction of the canals.

Most of these ancient rivers are now shallow depressions, but the deposition of sediment holds clues to the long-term environmental history of the region.

In his most recent work, Dr Bishop has been taking core samples from a series of holes drilled into the beds.

With the help of Dr Peter Kershaw of Geography and Environmental Science, the samples are analysed for traces of pollen and other plant remains to build up a picture of vegetation that once grew in the region. Any charcoal found is radiocarbon dated to establish the period.

"Up until now we have not had a clear idea of Thailand's environmental history over the past 10,000 years.

"Our reconstruction of the past might also help to predict how the local environment could respond to future changes."

On arriving at Ban No Koi, Dr Bishop admits he made the mistake of looking at things through Australian eyes.

"I was used to landforms, such as the Eastern Highlands, that are about 60 million years old. But everything in Thailand is on a much shorter time scale.

"In the tropics, 'ancient' river beds are only maybe less than 2000 years old. It's a real lesson in geomorphology."

Dr Bishop has discovered several river systems around Ban No Koi, and in the process has drilled through more than 270 metres of silt — by hand.

With the assistance of an Australian Research Council grant, Dr Bishop plans to return to Thailand in November to resume drilling.

Participants in the project, originally funded by the Australian Research Grant Scheme, have been Adelaide University, the South Australian Art Gallery, the University of Sydney and the Thai Department of Fine Arts.





## An immigrant misunderstanding

The article in *Monash Reporter* (5/89) on problems of bi-lingualism among immigrant children of Slavic background may have given rise to some misunderstanding.

First, the one-day workshop on Slavic languages in contact with other languages, presented at Monash in May, aimed to promote research into such problems by pooling research done in Canada and elsewhere.

Second, the term "pidgin" was not intended as a technical term in any sense. While the problems of bi-lingual speakers of Slavic background require special study, which could eventually influence curriculum development, the suggestion that students of Slavic background experience special learning difficulties because of their bi-lingual background is entirely erroneous and unintended.

Dr S.M. Vladiv  
German Studies and Slavic Studies

## Reality does not imitate art!

I have the earnest assurance of those responsible that "A Most Peculiar Practice" was not inspired by Monash.

Dr George Silberbauer  
Anthropology and Sociology

## Early practice of women preaching

Re "Women in the pulpit" in your issue of 28 July. It would appear that Professor E. Lehman lacks any real knowledge of the place of "women in the pulpit" in Australia.

In 1937, my friend Rev Isabelle Merry OBE was ordained to the full ministry of the Congregational Church — the first woman to be ordained in Victoria. She then became Minister in charge of the Congregational Church in Croydon. Later, after ministering in other parishes, she became the first resident chaplain of the Queen Victorian Hospital, retaining that position for 16 years. Many other women were similarly ordained to the ministry of the Congregational Church throughout Australia.

In the Presbyterian Church, some of the women ordained as deaconesses were used as Minister in Charge of Home Mission parishes.

In the Anglican Church, certainly women have not yet been ordained as priests in charge of parishes, but were certainly "in the pulpit" long before the 1960s.

In the 1930s, Deaconess Minna Johnson, Head Deaconess of Melbourne, was in charge of a theological college for women training for deaconess, missionary, and Bush Church Aid work. Deaconess Minna also had oversight of all the institutions

belonging to the Mission of St James and St John, and acted as chaplain to "Fairhaven", an institution for women, conducting the Sunday services and preaching there each Sunday. Other churches used Deaconess Minna as a "woman in the pulpit" for special services.

I have heard Deaconess Kathleen Shephard preach "in the pulpit" in one of our largest suburban churches to a full congregation at a Communion service.

In 1930, the late Deaconess Marie Fulton and I, as deaconess students, worked in the parish of St Martin's, Carlton. There we were responsible for all parish visitation, the women's weekly meetings, the Sunday School, and the service of Morning Prayer each Sunday.

At that time, in the Anglican Church, women did such wonderful work in the Bush Church Aid — two women driving the Bush Church van in which they lived. They drove thousands of miles to lonely, isolated outback stations where they conducted church services and instructed children.

Although a "laywoman" — not ordained even as a deaconess — I too have been used "in the pulpit" in many churches, conducting services and preaching in Victoria and Tasmania.

May I suggest that the Christian Research Association at Monash find speakers who do know the real facts about "women in the pulpit" in Australia.

(Mrs) Mollie Coleman



## Software award

● Signals, road humps, roundabouts ... the ingredients of the road traffic system are a civil engineer's and traffic planner's nightmare. To help assess the impact of the many variables, Dr Michael Taylor (above), Reader in Civil Engineering, designed a personal computer-based software package for the planning of traffic networks. Not only does the package (called MULATM) now have more than 90 users in 10 countries, but it also recently won an Engineering Excellence Award from the Institution of Engineers, Australia (Victorian Division). Dr Taylor is the first individual to win the award.



## Monash law in Malaysia

Monash law academics, Professor Francis Trindade and Associate Professor Hoong Phun (HP) Lee, visited Kuala Lumpur recently to organise the First Tun Mohamed Suffian Public Lecture.

Tun Suffian was a member of the Malaysian Judiciary for 21 years. For eight of those years (1974-1982) he held the office of Lord President of Malaysia, the highest judicial office in the land.

In 1978, Tun Suffian, with Professor Trindade and Professor Lee, jointly edited a volume of essays entitled *The Constitution of Malaysia — Its Development 1957-1977* (Oxford University Press, 1978).

Professor Trindade and Professor Lee were then invited to edit a second volume of essays entitled *The Constitution of Malaysia — Further Perspectives and Developments* (Oxford University Press, 1986).

In recognition of Tun Suffian's significant contribution to the development of Malaysian Constitutional Law, the contributors to the second volume of essays (one of whom was His Majesty Sultan Azlah Shah, the present King of Malaysia) decided to dedicate the volume to Tun Suffian and to use the royalties from the book to fund a biennial lecture called the Tun Mohamed Suffian Public Lecture.

The income from the fund would be used to invite distinguished lecturers from Malaysia and overseas to deliver a public

● Among those attending the First Tun Mohamed Suffian public lecture, held recently in Kuala Lumpur, were (from left) Associate Professor P. Balan (Dean of Law, University of Malaya), Professor Francis Trindade (Monash), His Excellency Professor Tommy Koh (Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the United States), Bunny Suffian, Tun Mohamed Suffian, and Associate Professor Hoong Phun Lee (Monash).

lecture, in Malaysia, on a topic of current legal interest.

The first lecture, entitled "The Role of Law in the Creation of a World Order", was delivered on 20 July by His Excellency Professor Tommy Koh, the Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the United States of America.

The lecture was attended by more than 500 people including several members of the diplomatic corps, members of the Malaysian Bar and Singapore Bar, members of staff and students from the various law schools in Malaysia and Singapore and members of the public.

Professor Trindade, who chaired the proceedings, introduced the speaker while Professor Lee moved the vote of thanks. Proceedings were brought to a close after Tun Suffian had presented the Tun Suffian Prize in Constitutional Law to the student from the Faculty of Law of the University of Malaya who had obtained the highest mark in the subject, Constitutional Law.

The second Tun Mohamed Suffian Public Lecture will be held in Kuala Lumpur in the latter half of 1991.

## Index reviews education history

Those interested in the history of education will be pleased to know that an index to the *History of Education Review* has just been released by the Monash Faculty of Education.

The *Index to History of Education Review, Vol 1 1972 to Vol 17 1988*, like the journal itself, has been published under the auspices of the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society.

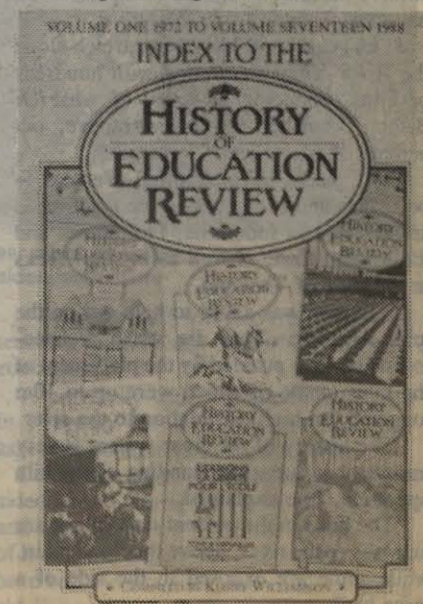
In recent years the *Review* has broadened its appeal by including articles in areas such as history, sociology, educational administration and politics. It is edited by Dr Marjorie Theobald, a lecturer at the Institute of Education, University of Melbourne.

The index was compiled by Mrs Kirsty Williamson while working as a senior research assistant in the Faculty of Education at Monash. She is now a lecturer in Library and Information Studies at the University of Melbourne.

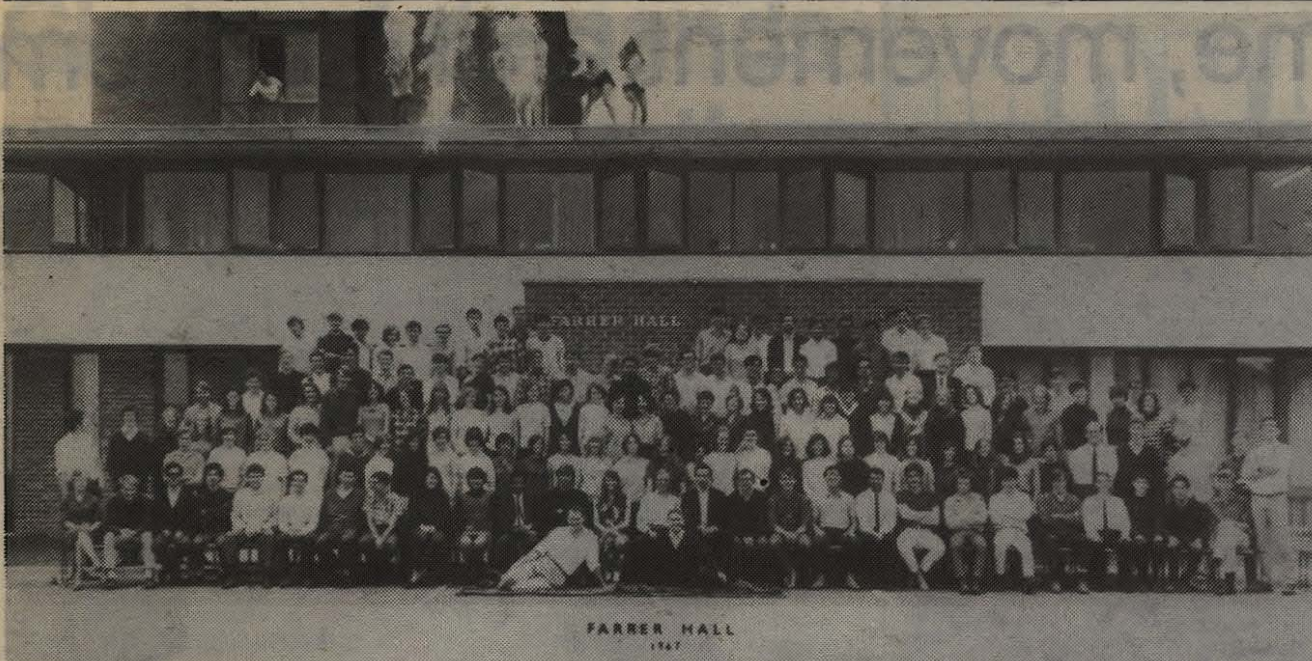
Her index consists of entries under author, title and subject in alphabetical sequence. The subject indexing, which is "in-depth" and includes extensive cross references, required two or three readings

of each article. Reviews are indexed under author, title and reviewer.

The index can be obtained from the office of Professor Richard Selleck in the Faculty of Education. The cost is \$16 (or \$8 for ANZHE members). Subscriptions to the *History of Education Review* can also be arranged through the office.







## Antediluvian innocence

The calm before the storm. As an instant deluge descends on the unsuspecting assembly below, the camera records for posterity the expressions of youthful innocence before the flood.

This photograph of Farrer Hall's class of '67 landed on the *Monash Reporter* desk a few months ago.

If any of those pictured have dried out, perhaps they could let the Information Office know the reason for the prank, and its aftermath.

# Takin' it to the suburbs proves a success

MONASH UNIVERSITY

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## Play Season 89

\* EDUCATING RITA July 11 to 15  
FROM PHILLIP STREET PRODUCTIONS

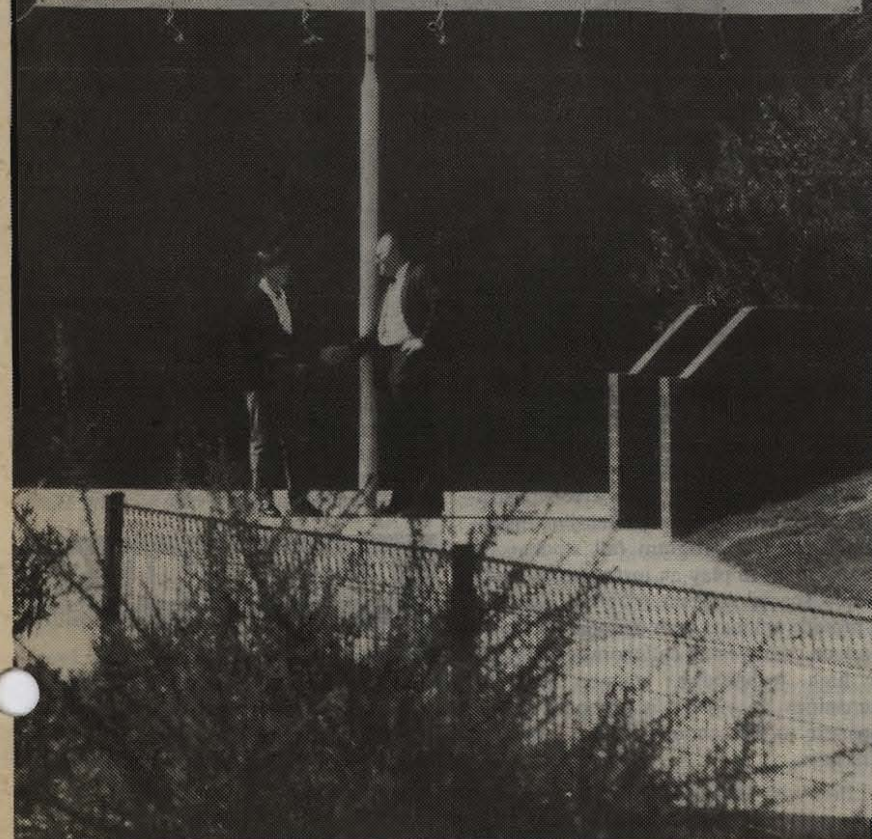
Playbox

\* NICE GIRLS July 19 to 22

\* CORALIE LANSDOWNE SAYS NO Aug. 9 to 12

TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW AT BOX OFFICE

ALEXANDER THEATRE



• A handshake confirms a successful theatrical experiment. The director of the Alexander Theatre, Phil A'Vard (right), and project marketing manager, Ross Mollison, congratulate each other beneath details of the season that brought Playbox to the suburbs. Photo — Scott Fitzpatrick

A bold experiment in bringing top class theatre to the suburbs has proved a hit for the university's Alexander Theatre.

According to the manager of the Alex, Mr Phil A'Vard, the recent mini-season of professional theatre was a "wild success".

"I'm a very happy man — now I'll die happy!" he said after the season's closing night.

The three-play season of 'Educating Rita', 'Nice Girls', and 'Coralie Lansdowne Says No' was almost sold out. The theatre was full on Fridays and Saturdays and near capacity on other nights.

Mr A'Vard says it all started from a discussion with theatre director Peter Oyston in the foyer of the Alexander Theatre one day.

"I said to him, 'why don't you wake up to the fact that you've got people in this metropolis who don't want to go to the city, so you should take the theatre out to them'.

"Peter warmed to the idea and asked me to take it up with Carillo Gantner, who was wildly excited because he saw the potential of a theatre sitting here, right in the middle of Melbourne."

Mr Gantner, the artistic director of the Playbox Theatre Company, says he learned about the ideal while in Beijing as a cultural attache.

"A show might play in three or four different theatres around the city, taking the play to the people, rather than expecting them to get through the bad public transport or bicycling on a cold winter's night.

"So that's what we've done — we've taken the plays to the people."

According to Mr Gantner, the benefits of Playbox and Monash are many.

"We increase our audience, Monash gets the shows for a fraction of the cost of mounting them independently, and they get to serve the university and the wider local community.

"It's mutual self interest — and it's our first suburban season."

Mr A'Vard has a dream of extending the idea of the suburban season.

"We could even get to the stage when Playbox could consider starting productions out here and taking them into the city, so we could have two way activity between Monash and Playbox.

"This has indicated the audience is there — we just have to keep on hammering away to reach them and keep them excited."

'Nice Girls' and 'Coralie Lansdowne Says No' were presented in association with Playbox, while 'Educating Rita' was a production from Sydney's Phillip Street Theatre.

Mr A'Vard has already started planning next year's professional season, which will be more extensive.

He aims to have the opening of the Victoria State Opera's touring production as well as the popular 'Nonsense', and a modern Australian play with music called "Lipstick Dreams", which played successfully at Sydney's Belvoir Street Theatre last year.

"This is quite apart from what we may be doing with Playbox. My idea is to offer about five or six productions throughout the year, along the lines of a variety type season, not unlike our children's Saturday Club."

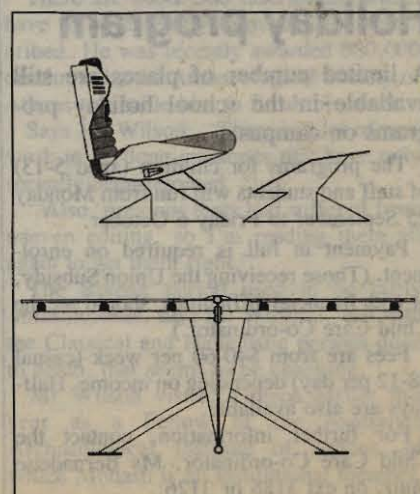
## Deus ex Machina exhibition

It is generally accepted that the machines in our lives must be discrete. There are complex codes about the degree of *machineness* a device can exhibit, depending on how and where it is used.

The Monash University Gallery's present exhibition, *Deus ex Machina*, is an attempt to come to terms with what seems likely to remain an uneasy alliance between man and technology.

The exhibition brings together the work of a diverse group of designers, artists and technicians and the work on display ranges from furniture and appliances through to sculpture, sound and images.

*Deus ex Machina* will be on display until Saturday 7 October.





# Mask, mime, movement and mayhem

Monash Student Theatre's entrant in this year's Festival of Australasian Student Theatre (FAST) is "Molière, Masks and Mayhem", now on at the Guy Manton Rooms until 16 September.

Described as an evening of slapstick and pathos, satire and compassion, the play features masked and unmasked characters from a selection of Molière's plays, including Commedia dell Arte and the farce "A Doctor in Spite of Himself".

Says production manager, Ms Jedda: "Student Theatre chose to do this production for a number of reasons.

"We wanted to further the development of improvisation skills, as well as give each performer an active part in the creative process.

"And we wanted to give Monash audiences an historical perspective of theatre — to show the origins of some present day comedy and comic routines of clowns like Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin and the Marx Brothers."

The play is directed by Alex Pinder, who trained in mask, mime and movement at L'Ecole Jacques Le Coq in Paris, and is presently teaching mask at Rusden.

After its Monash run, the cast and crew of "Molière, Masks and Mayhem" will travel to the University of Sydney, where the Sydney University Drama Society will host FAST from 24-30 September.

In addition to productions from different campuses, FAST will present a comprehensive series of theatre, dance and music theatre workshops, and professional productions. The cost is \$120 per student.

For further information on FAST and bookings for the production in the Manton Rooms, contact Student Theatre on ext 3108.



● Julie-Anne Smith (left) and Karen Berger with character masks from "Molière, Masks and Mayhem". The masks were made by members of the cast, who developed their characters during seven weeks of workshops and rehearsals. Photo — John Millar

## Holiday program

A limited number of places are still available in the school holiday programs on campus.

The programs for children (aged 5-13) of staff and students will run from Monday 25 September to Friday 6 October.

Payment in full is required on enrolment. (Those receiving the Union Subsidy, or with financial difficulties, should see the Child Care Co-ordinator.)

Fees are from \$40-60 per week (casual \$8-12 per day) depending on income. Half-days are also available.

For further information, contact the Child Care Co-ordinator, Ms Bernadette Muir, on ext 3186 or 3126.

MONASH REPORTER

## High school enrolments

Monash High School is inviting enrolments at all levels for next year.

The school is vertically structured from Years 7-10 enabling students to progress at their own rates.

Introduction of the new Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) is well advanced and the school intends to provide the

maximum range of options.

It takes special pride in its diverse extra-curricular program, an extensive instrumental musical program (all students in Year 7 learn to play an instrument), and a unique special interest program designed to provide students with the opportunity to work on creative and collaborative projects in high technology, science and the humanities. In 1990 it is proposed to add Japanese to the school's foreign language offerings.

Links with Monash University, Victoria College Rusden, and local industry are maintained on several levels.

Visitors are always welcome. To make inquiries or an appointment, please ring 560 9477.

## Monash Reporter

The next issue will be published on Wednesday 11 October, 1989.

Copy deadline is Friday 29 September, and early copy is much appreciated.

Contributions (letters, photos) and suggestions should be sent to the editor, Information Office, Gallery Building, or ring ext 2067.

## IMPORTANT DATES

- 15 Sept Semester 2 break begins  
Last date to lodge confirmation of enrolment form for semester 2  
Third teaching round Dip.Ed ends
- 18 Sept Term 4.1, Medicine 3 begins  
Study break begins for B.Ed.St., B.Sp.Ed., Dip.Ed.Psych and M.Ed.St
- 22 Sept Term 3 Dip.Ed ends