

# Voter Registration Drive Held at Stony Brook

By Mitchell Wagner

A voter registration drive on all SUNY campuses is being launched by the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG), in conjunction with the Student Association of the State University of New York (SASU). Stony Brook students can register to vote or obtain voter registration information in the lobby of the Stony Brook Union this week. In addition, NYPIRG members will be soliciting voter registration during and between classes until Sept. 26.

Thanks to a decision by United States District Court Judge Neal McGunr in Albany County, SASU, together with the Albany Student Association won the rights for Albany students to vote in their college communities. Previously, Albany students were subject to 22 questions regarding their residence, marital status, employment, and financial dependence on parents. This year they have the option of registering to vote in their home or college communities. This decision helped students in Broome and Onondaga counties to register in their college communities.

According to Jim Leota, project coordinator of the Stony Brook chapter of NYPIRE, NYPIRG will not be registering Stony Brook students in the college community, pending a lawsuit NYPIRG is filing to extend the Albany decision statewide. Results on this suit are expected later this year. Students who rent off-campus



Students register to vote in the main lobby of the Stony Brook Union in a registration drive sponsored by the New York Public Interest Group in conjunction with SASU, the Student Association of the State University of New York.

housing, however, will be allowed to register to vote in the districts in which they rent. Last year, six students

living on-campus who registered to vote in the campus community were denied registration by the Suffolk County Board of Elections, Leota said.

## Students Denied Vote

Several students from SUNY Cortland have attempted to register in Cortland county in the past few weeks, but were told they could not, according to a report by the Students Association of the State University (SASU), a student-interest group.

One student was told by a Cortland County Board of Elections staff member that he needed "emancipation papers" to register in Cortland, the report said. Other students have been told that if they register to vote in Cortland, their parents will be unable to claim them as a dependent for income tax purposes.

However, "After speaking with two different tax representatives in the Internal Revenue Services district office in Baltimore, Maryland, we found out that where a person registers to vote has nothing to do with dependency for income tax purposes," said Briggs,

who, along with Bill Thomas, president of the Cortland College Student Association (CCSA), CCSA Vice-President and SASU delegate Julie Hastings, decided to determine the validity of the Election Board's statements. "We also checked with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, and the same tests for dependency are used by the state government for income tax purposes. The Cortland County Board of Elections is actually dispensing incorrect information. This only serves to discourage a large segment of the population from registering to vote."

"We've known that winning students the right to vote in their college communities would be a difficult struggle," Briggs said, "but it will be one marked with constant vigilance."

"Students live in their college communities the majority of the year. They are counted as part of the census. They pay sales taxes there and are subject to the same city and town ordinances as other residents."

"They are truly members of the community," said Dave Wysniewski, president of SASU.

"The ability of students to vote in their college communities means the opportunity to elect representatives who are responsive to our needs," Wysniewski added. Locally, students may vote for community service funding. On a state level, students may vote concerning SUNY funds and the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). On the federal level, students can influence federal legislators regarding the affects of reduced financial aid programs.

## Commuter College Closes for Construction



By Nadia Sefein

Commuter College, located in room 080 of the Stony Brook Union, has attempted to open its doors to commuters several times in the past year but has been hampered by construction problems.

The new room needed plumbing repairs and lighting work that will take about four weeks to complete according to construction workers. Under the urging of Diane Neuls, student coordinator of Commuter College, carpenters are now working seven days a week to rush the job so the new lounge can hold its grand opening October 1.

The lounge has new equipment, including a pool table, ping pong tables and a giant television screen. Also, with additional space since commuter college moved from the basement of Gray College in G Quad, there is room in the lounge for an office, a storage room, a study area and a kitchen complete with a microwave oven.

Nuels is anticipating great reaction to the new Commuter College. She said that response has already been very favorable and that the new lounge will probably serve twice as many students than when it was housed in Gray College.

Commuter students will be able to use the new equipment which includes ping-pong tables and a giant television screen when Commuter College, located in the Stony Brook Union, reopens on Oct. 1, according to Diane Neuls, (inset) student coordinator of Commuter College.