

## Ignoring the Law

The lawsuit filed by the Students Association of the State University (SASU) against the SUNY Board of Trustees is one we applaud.

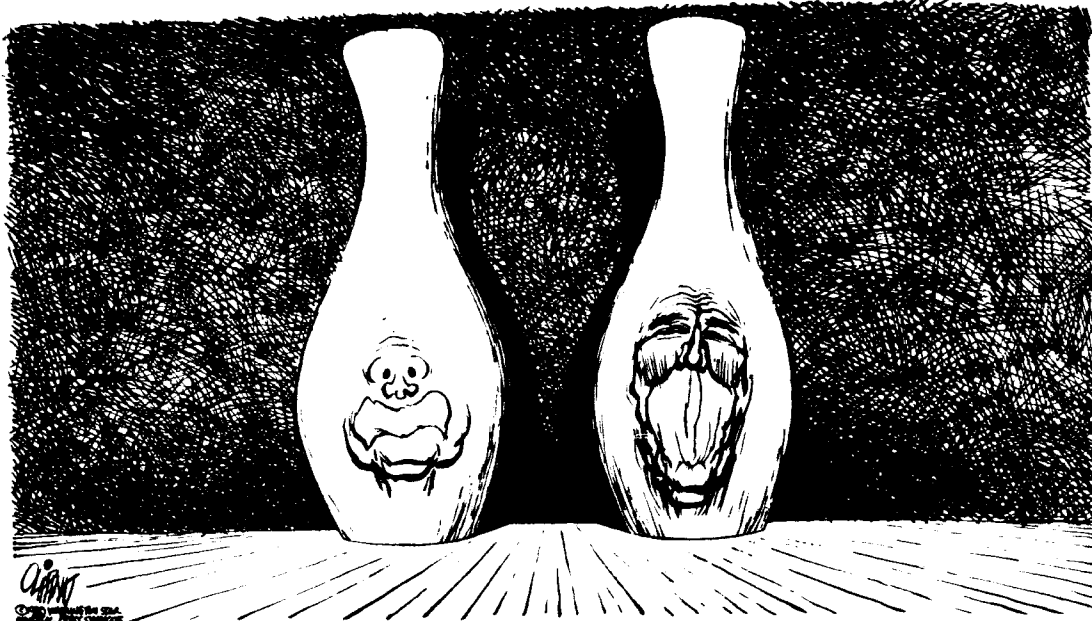
The SUNY Board of Trustees' decision to raise the room rent is deplorable, and SASU's fight against it should be supported. We believe the trustees' action was not only wrong in content, but also illegal in procedure. By discussing the issue at a closed meeting, and then voting on it without giving prior notice, they have obviously violated the State's Open Meeting Law, which forbids actions of this sort. It is true that no democratic institution upholds each letter of the law when it acts — doing so would slow the process down to a halt — but certain important issues that would have had a significantly different outcome had the letter of the law been observed should be decided within the laws designed to govern their decision-making.

The trustees' decision last May is typical of this. Had students been informed that the issue was being discussed, they undoubtedly would have turned out in masses to protest. Were the trustees, in not upholding the letter of the law, ignorant of the possibility that students with a vested interest in their decision would want input in it?

Giving the trustees the benefit of the doubt that they were unaware of students' interest in this matter, they still should have had the common sense to correct their wrong and take another vote after students had voiced their objections. But the trustees did not do that. In fact, they decided to raise the dormitory rent on May 28 — after all, SUNY schools had recessed for the summer and no students were around to voice objection.

Moreover, their decision included raising the room rent beginning this semester. Are not all people bound to contracts? Isn't it wrong to bill students \$75 more per semester than they agreed to pay when they left school for the summer?

We think it is. We hope that the State Supreme Court judge handling this case realizes this too, and rules against a body that ignores laws specifically designed to equitably govern it.



## LETTERS

### Alternative Spelling

To the Editor:

Since you don't seem to understand the reasons for alternative spellings of the word "woman," as evidenced by your overuse of the Latin adverb "sic," we will explain. According to Julia Penelope, a linguist at the University of Nebraska, the word "woman" is not derived from the word "man" (which is used in Modern English to refer to a male human being) as the spelling might lead one to believe.

"Woman" has a different etymological history. Spelling's of words did not begin to be standardized until after the invention of the printing press. At this time, nearly everyone who could read or write was a male. (Wimmin who could read or write were often burned as witches.) When they began to standardize spellings, these men deliberately chose the spelling "woman" to suggest that woman was a derivative of man, etymologically and in nature. To demonstrate to yourself that this is not the case linguistically, say the words "woman" and "women" out loud. Even today in our spoken language, we do not pluralize "woman" by pluralizing the "man" segment, but by changing the sound "wo" to "wi."

However, in our written language, we pluralize by changing the "man" to "men." This is clear linguistic evidence that the spelling was tampered with to make it appear that wimmin are a derivative of men. We are registering our noncompliance with this notion by respelling the word "woman" in ways which do not suggest any relationship to men. The alternative spelling of "womyn" and "wimmin" are derived phonetically (i.e. womyn, womyn, wimmin). For several years the Womyn's Center has spelled its name with a y as a political statement against sexism in language. Individual wimmin use other alternatives.

People do not generally understand that respelling words which contain the units man or men is not something we do across the board every time those letters appear in sequence. The man in manual comes from the Latin word for hand. The men in menstruate comes from the Latin for month. These words are not at all a problem

for us, as the (male) creators of absurd words such as "personipulate" would have you believe. We object only when man is used to exclude wimmin or to define them by their relationship to men.

We find it objectionable that the Press and Statesman (this man definitely needs an alternate spelling) harass the Womyn's Center and trivialize our statement by their persistent misuse of "sic."

Jean Ann  
Laurie Salvati  
Sheryl Chomak  
Janet Yager  
Diane Snider

marked for specific purposes. They want to steal that funding power from students and turn it over to the undemocratic, bureaucratic, political, and often vindictive budget committee. I ask, what's the point of even voting on referenda if no definite action results from them? Do they feel that the present student body is too dumb to know what campus activities they want funded?

The intramural sports program and the New York Public Interest Research Group had honest and logical reasons for running referenda mandating specific amounts for their activities. For instance, they wanted to remove their question of funding out of the hands of Polity elites who often are not aware of the popularity of sports, resulting in insufficient resources to run the program properly. They understood that an effective NYPIRG chapter requires a minimum amount of funding to cover a full-time project coordinator, intern programs, activity costs, printing costs, phone bills, etc. Their budget cannot be left to the whims of some overzealous Polity Council members.

The fears of some Polity members that students will run hundreds of referenda earmarking all the activities fee are

The fears of some Polity members that students will run hundreds of referenda earmarking all the activities fee are groundless. Presently, less than four percent is targeted and the two existing referenda would not have been necessary if Polity had originally responded to the student demands for increased funding. I often ask myself whether Polity stands for or against student power. Vote No on this referendum.

Clark Jablon

### Thank You

To the Editor:

The Election Campaign is concluded and before returning to the important legislative responsibilities which remain unfinished for the 96th Congress in Washington, I want to take this opportunity to express my thanks to you and your staff for your very thorough coverage of the events of the past several months.

I also wish to thank the voters of the First Congressional District of Suffolk County for the confidence which they demonstrated in me through their votes on Election Day. And, special thanks to the more than one thousand volunteers who gave of their time, talents and energies throughout the campaign.

Across our nation the voters have mandated new directions for our federal government. It is not a new spirit for the people of Suffolk County, however, who have been urging our government to move in these very same directions for many years. When the new Congress convenes in January, I am confident that the people of Suffolk will be well satisfied with the actions which are taken. I look forward to the opportunity of serving this district in the 97th Congress and to the progress which I believe can be made on behalf of all America.

William Carney  
Member of Congress

### Groundless Fears

To the Editor:

Polity, in its almighty wisdom, has initiated a referendum to amend its constitution so that the future referenda cannot specify dollar amounts of student activities fees to be ear-

*Statesman welcomes opinion from its readers. Letters and viewpoints must be typed, triple spaced and may not exceed 350 and 750 words respectively.*

*Letters and viewpoints are the opinion of the writer and do not necessarily reflect Statesman's policy.*

# Statesman

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