

# NYPIRG: Fighting Wealthy Special Interests

By Stephen Johnson

This article is a reply to Gideon Isaac's Viewpoint entitled, "NYPIRG: Political and Moral?" (11/3/80). Its length is due to the staggering amount of misinformation presented in his viewpoint.

• SUNY is not trying to find out what NYPIRG does with student funds. Our actions were obvious to them when we drafted and got passed the Truth In Testing Act last year. Our budget is open to all, and we are audited yearly.

• Isaac claims, "... or is it [PIRG] more centralized and ideological than NYPIRG students care to admit?" We elect two representatives to the State Board of Directors, which operates as a democracy. Stony Brook students presented a proposal to the State Board in Binghamton on Nov. 2. The project involves a study of energy use in low income housing projects receiving public funds on Long Island. It was passed with only one dissenting vote.

• Everyong has an ideology, and therefore there are many within NYPIRG. What is common in the ideologies of PIRG members is the belief that wealthy special interests should not dominate decision making. The welfare of the general public needs a voice also.

• We do admit to centralization and having an ideology, and I do not understand his objection to this.

• His name is spelt Jim Leotta.  
• We avoid moral issues such as abortion, and we avoid political issues by being non-partisan. Our bills are sponsored by legislators from both parties and of varied ideological bent.

What we do get involved with is the political process. Each year we have students working 15 credits as fulltime interns. They work on legislation we have initiated and endorsed dealing with consumer and environmental protection, human rights, and government accountability.

### Own PIRGs

• Our money comes from within this state. Approximately 30 states have their own PIRGs, such as CalPIRG, MassPIRG, etc.

• You overstated our budget. It is approximately \$1.5 million.

• We don't "arrogantly decide what's good for people better than the people themselves." Our State Board is elected and governed democratically. We also lobby for the rights of initiative and referendum in New York State.

• Isaac claims we are forcing the Bottle Bill on reluctant store owners. A ban on throw-away beverage containers is for the

greater good of Long Island consumers and store owners. Retailers will receive at least 20 percent of each deposit, and as traffic through their stores increases, so will their sales.

The voters in six states passed this bill by referendum. This occurred despite enormous financial opposition by the industries. All reports from these states, including follow up referendums, show enormous support for the system.

The federal government endorses returnables, as evidenced by the ban on throwaways in federal buildings, post offices, and national parks. There are many reasons for all this support. Beverage prices decrease, energy and natural resources are preserved, litter and landfill use is reduced, many new jobs are created, and the industry become decentralized. All this, plus a healthy profit for industry, by their own admission.

And speaking of being forced, if you can find a returnable Coke bottle on Long Island, let us know, we are still searching.

• We never said marijuana was safe. We do say that it should be decriminalized. Tobacco and alcohol use is not safe, but people do not go to jail for it.

Even NORML couldn't provide a full-time lobbyist in Albany, as we did. We

drafted, testified and worked for, and got passed the Marijuana Reform Act.

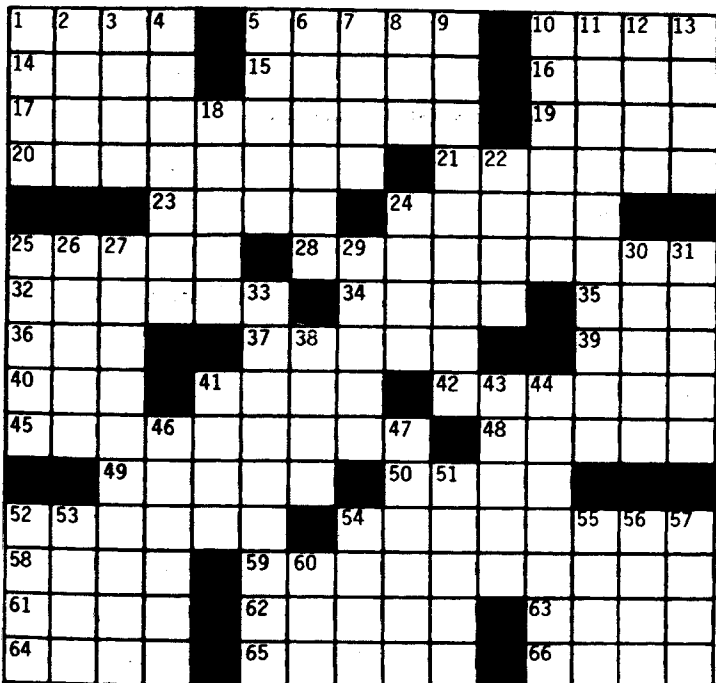
• Our absolute stand against nuclear power, as evidenced by the Safe Energy Act, and our organization of the No-Nukes Rally in Battery Park, is accompanied by many sound alternative proposals.

• We do feel that companies should be taxed to pay for the health and environmental problems they have caused. We support the Superfund to clean up contaminated dumps, rivers, wells, and aquifers. Hooker Chemical and friends are responsible for the poisoning of Long Island's drinking water. We have been paying the price by Nassau's higher cancer rate than New Jersey, and the medical bills to contend with it.

• Your final suggestion is acceptable to NYPIRG. Refunds are available to students at Syracuse, Brooklyn, Queens, Hunter, Queensboro, Staten Island, and CCNY. However, the Chancellor will not allow it at SUNY. If he did, we would follow this procedure. Then Stony Brook students would show the same support for us as the other schools by not collecting refunds. Except for Gideon Isaac.

(The writer is Stony Brook NYPIRG's Project Coordinator.)

## collegiate crossword



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(Answers to today's puzzle will appear in Friday's Statesman.)

### ACROSS

- 1 "South Pacific" island
- 5 Jazz dance
- 10 Spanish equivalent of "oui, oui"
- 14 Yaks
- 15 Sternward
- 16 Wallet inventory
- 17 Get better
- 19 Annual basketball tourney
- 20 Sophocles play or daughter of Oedipus
- 21 Buoyant
- 23 Minister to
- 24 Breed of terriers
- 25 Gloss
- 28 Relatives of brigs
- 32 "We have nothing but..."
- 34 Robert
- 35 Name for a street
- 36 Sandy's bark
- 37 Rice or Fudd
- 39 Grand Central (abbr.)
- 40 Opposite of SSW
- 41 "We'll take o' kindness..."
- 42 Aid
- 45 Obsequiousness
- 48 Council of 1545-63
- 49 Miles and -Ellen
- 50 Author Wiesel
- 52 Central Chinese province
- 54 Friendly
- 58 Irretrievable
- 59 Botches (3 wds.)
- 61 Formerly
- 62 Minneapolis suburb
- 63 Actor Jack of westerns
- 64 Turned right
- 65 France's patron saint
- 66 Any quantity per unit time
- 12 NYSE membership
- 13 British interjection (2 wds.)
- 18 Rocket stage
- 22 Suffix for child or life
- 24 Mr. Porter
- 25 Maurice of Watergate fame
- 26 Singer Lena
- 27 Fizz
- 29 Act the siren
- 30 Mr. John
- 31 Agent 86
- 33 Made arable, as land
- 38 Tiant or Aparicio
- 41 Broadcasts
- 43 City on the Mohawk
- 44 Table vessel
- 46 Open to the atmosphere
- 47 Native of San'a
- 51 Actresses Kirk and Hartman
- 52 Walk through mud
- 53 Strop
- 54 Related
- 55 Composer Bartok
- 56 Certain entrance exam (abbr.)
- 57 "For —, With Love and Squalor"
- 60 Sweet drink

### DOWN

- 1 — Raton
- 2 Part of a nerve cell
- 3 Spring period
- 4 Potential party-goer
- 5 Where a coiffeur works
- 6 Marketing concerns
- 7 Platinum wire loop
- 8 Singer Davis
- 9 Those who qualify what they say
- 10 Mexican state
- 11 Glow with heat

## Apolitical First Aid

By Joseph Borzekowski

In their recent reply ("Ambulance Corps Saves Lives") to Robert Patino's viewpoint of Oct. 31, Marc Teitlebaum and Ronnie Mason assume a strangely insecure and defensive posture. Their reaction exceeds any readily explicable by simple misinterpretation or oversight, leading one to believe that some private animosities, rather than any published statements, prompted this exchange.

Ostensibly having taken affront primarily at the claim that the corps' response time often exceeds two to four minutes, the authors proceed to construct an ill-conceived platform for partisan first aid. After stating that indeed "there is no justification for even comparing the different links..." The viewpoint continues to do just that, with the underlying implication that somehow safety services and citizen first aid are not nearly the equals of the Stony Brook Volunteer Ambulance Corps (SBVAC) despite their admittedly different functions.

"Citizen first-aiders have advantages as far as the time element..." one one hand, yet "lack experience, equipment, and reliability" on the other. Why judge relative "advantages of one group over the other if there was to be no comparison? Furthermore, they (Safety Services Citizen First-Aiders) are unable to "guarantee" response with "experienced personnel, modern equipment, and the ability to transport

victims," cannot provide "definitive treatment" (whatever that is), and are even "taught to call for an ambulance" because in "critical emergencies rapid transport and professional prehospital remain essential." What is the point here, or better still, where is the argument? Whomever claimed that citizen first-aiders employed any equipment, attempted any transport, or provided any duplicate, alternative, or substitute services to those of an ambulance corps?

To bolster their argument, the authors contend that although education in first-aid or Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) — as provided by safety services — may save the lives of loved ones, this is "a most selfish and worthwhile endeavor." This abstruse combination of adjective puzzles me for even if they had meant selfless, why the deprecatve tone?

### Saving Lives

In deference to Teitlebaum and Mason I do believe that Patino's statement urging people not to be fooled into thinking that "saving lives is a job for professionals" could have benefited from the qualification "only for professionals." His meaning however seemed clear in context, and certainly did not

take the form of a crusade for the supercession of corps members by citizen first aiders, as Mason's persistent comparisons might indicate.

I was also unable to detect the general "derogatory tone" which the authors so sensitively complained of, not to mention the "scolding" of anti-war activists; perhaps explaining why Teitlebaum's bittersweet adulation of citizen first aid and safety services left me bewildered. In fact, after reviewing Patino's article I found him to have been supportive of both the need for, and the performance of, the corps: declaring the four minute response time to be a rather improbable goal, whose unattainment should not be cause for criticism.

Let my own intentions be misconstrued, I state simply that in the business of saving lives both safety services and the Ambulance Corps serve distinct yet essential roles which ought not to face debilitation by petty squabbles, but rather enhancement through mutual respect and cooperation.

The infusion of politics has no place in our system of emergency care.

(The writer is not a member of SBVAC or Safety Services.)

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

Letters and viewpoints must be typed, triple spaced and may not exceed 350 and 750 words respectively.