

Knickerbocker Ledger

KnickLedger.com Albany's Fastest Growing FREE News Source - Vol. 1, Issue 13 Aug. 17 - Aug. 23, 2011

Top Story > Public Universities Illegally Funding Political Groups?



With rising tuition and higher scrutiny, funding of political groups at public universities such as SUNY illegal?

BY LEDGER STAFF - ALBANY BUREAU - ALBANY info@knickledger.com

As tuition and fees rise at public universities, so does the scrutiny level of where funds - specifically student activity fees - are specifically allocated. At the University at Albany, where funding has been cut for programs and operations, its student government has come under attack for the use of its funds, in which some have called into question proper legal use of the fee.

UAlbany's student activity fee - assessed per-semester at \$85 - is paid by every undergraduate student at the university to fund student groups, events, and stipends for Student Association (SA) officers and full time staff.

In the past year, the Student Association had been on the defensive regarding its \$200,000 payout to President Clinton as part of the university's World Within Reach Speaker Series, which - according to the association - aims to "bring to UAlbany the most influential voices in politics, science, business, journalism and technology to discuss pertinent current topics in their fields."

SA became its own non-profit corporation with 501 (c) 3 status in November of 2008, in which it would be subject to federal tax regulations, including subsidiary organizations.

According to the IRS, "Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements ... clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity. Violating this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of tax-exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes."

"The IRS code also states that a 501 (c) 3 may not take substantial partisan action, the key word being substantial," said Kevin Fox, 21, the political director of the College Democrats of New York.

"Funding from college Republican chapters do not go to candidates, especially those chapters funded directly by the schools," said Michael Ventre, 21, the chairman of the New York College Republican State Committee.

"To the issue of funding candidates, there is no individual chapter of College Democrats in New York State that will fund candidates," says Fox.

SA has had a history of litigation regarding use of its student activity fees. In 2003, the College Standard, a conservative-leaning newspaper, sued the organization due to defunding over the publication's "content" even as SA has in its own bylaws a section regarding "viewpoint neutrality" over decisions, in particular in respect to budgeting. The suit has been argued in federal court for years and has recently been appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States.

"I feel that as long as the group meets the criteria set forth by the constitution of that student government, particularly the minimum number of students required to be considered a group, the purpose of the group is trivial," says Andrew Ziegelstein, 22, a former student government leader at SUNY Rockland and at the University at Albany.

Paul McCarthy, 23, a law student at Chicago-Kent School of Law, a former N.Y. State Assembly aide, and himself a former Student Association Senate chair, believes making them independent instead of part of SA would be the solution.

"in short, while both of these organizations bring valuable services to the campus and a positive, educational environment for students to congregate, perhaps their activities are better left outside of the Student Association." said McCarthy.

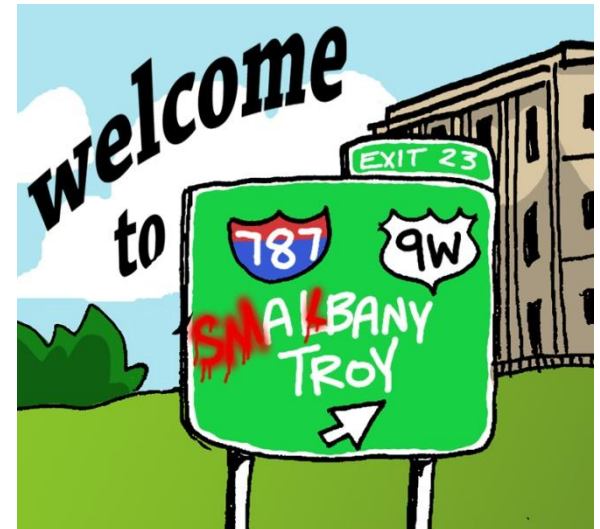
Fox contends that this is not SA advocating in an election one way or another. "It's a student group that does not represent the Student Association as a whole similar to any school newspaper directly funded by the school is not a direct representation of the school itself."

"It's important to understand that student governments are not taking direct partisan action by funding political groups," says Fox. • KL

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Exclusive > SMALLBANY



By Dana S. Owens

For more SMALLBANY cartoons from Dana Owens, visit KnickLedger.com for exclusive, digital content.

Your Choice > 2012 GOP Primary TPaw is TFail: Pawlenty drops presidential bid

BY LEDGER STAFF - ALBANY BUREAU - ALBANY info@knickledger.com

Former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty has officially ended his bid for the Republican nomination Sunday, one day after he ranked third in the Ames straw poll after Reps. Michele Bachmann and Ron Paul.

Pawlenty, 50, said to ABC on Sunday, "I wish it would have been different, but obviously the pathway forward for me doesn't exist so we are going to end the campaign."

Pawlenty's campaign has been plagued with indecision and lack of excitement. • KL

FINAL WK: RENT RUNS THRU AUG. 19-21

Schenectady Light Opera Company (SLOC) Presents "RENT" - SLOCtheater.org - 427 Franklin Street

Business > Technology

Rising above commuters, new Apple Store at Grand Central Terminal to be omnipresent

BY LEDGER STAFF - ALBANY BUREAU - ALBANY info@knickledger.com

Apparently, 2011 is "1984."

Apple's planned fourth store in New York - located at the balcony store section in Grand Central Terminal - has the appearance of being "over" commuters who filter through the landmark train terminal.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) released images of the layout and planned design of the store - apparently after significant resistance from the Cupertino, Calif.-based company which is now the world's most valuable public company.

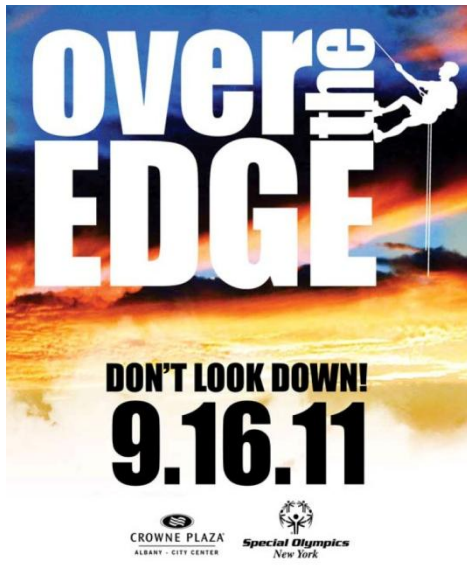
Apple currently has three other stores in Manhattan - the flagship iconic Fifth Avenue store (undergoing renovations), the Soho store, and the Meatpacking District location.

The new Grand Central location most likely will provide commuters with a place to check mail, their social networking sites, and more - as it the case with other Apple stores in high-traffic locations. • KL



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Opinion > Cavalcade

The Show Must Go On For Park Playhouse



BY JOE BONILLA - ALBANY
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Outdoor theatre's a tough business to get into and to do in the first place. Weather, weather, weather – just like “location, location, location” makes the difference in a show having a spectacular run or a mediocre, shortened exhibit in theatrical practice.

Park Playhouse, which just completed a four-week run of *The Producers* with Jason Marks and Jason Jacoby in the title roles of Max Bialystock and Leo Bloom, has been the venerable outdoor showhouse for not only Albany, but for the Capital Region for over twenty years.

This past Sunday, I caught the last performance of the show's run amid ominous clouds all day, resulting in a bit of rain during Act 1. However, with roughly 200-250 audience members strong and a cast wanting to cap off a strong show with one, last performance – Sunday's performance was not only reflective of the cast and crew's perseverance to keep to “the show must go on,” but the organization itself.

Park Playhouse is a unique institution in that it's municipal-based, but this past year received no funding from the City of Albany due to Jerry Jennings's cuts to arts grants. In the past, Park Playhouse's budget comprised of approximately 20 percent coming from the city. And unlike its recent past with such landmark shows (pun fully intended) as *High School Musical* gracing its Washington Park stage, Owen Smith - its producing artistic director for the past two seasons – is on pace in restoring the name of Park Playhouse back to the era of Steve Fletcher in the late 1990s with such Broadway-caliber productions of *Damn Yankees*, *Hello Dolly*, and *Guys & Dolls*.

I mentioned this to Owen Smith myself as someone who grew to love theatre because of what I saw on stage during my childhood through now. The summertime productions were something to look forward every July and my cousin and I used to go way early (we're talking while it's still daylight) in order to grab the best seats in the Washington Park amphitheater. And as other things in my childhood have gone by the wayside (the destruction of the North Allen Street playground adjacent to School 16, the closing of St. Teresa of Avila School on New Scotland), Park Playhouse remained the link to the past.

Yes – supporting the arts at the city level may be a “novelty,” but the impact it has for residents – particularly those who never would otherwise have the opportunity to engage or enjoy free musical theatre – is priceless. The success of Park Playhouse's education programs under Shirley Arensberg is proof enough – with Park Playhouse II now in its 16th season and Park Playhouse Kids a growing part of the arts program with the Albany City School District.

The Producers' plot involving two producers aiming to make a buck by producing a flop. Instead of producing lackluster productions, Park Playhouse is continuing to give vibrancy and summer electricity to a city that desperately needs it. Just as Tulip Festival, LarkFEST, and Bombers are Albany landmarks, Park Playhouse earns its spot up there. • KL

Knickerbocker Ledger

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Arts & Entertainment > Robin Zlotnick
The 90s Were All That



BY ROBIN ZLOTNICK – LOS ANGELES
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Upon learning the tragic fact that my little cable plan didn't include TeenNick and I therefore could not partake in the glory of their new weeknight block of old Nickelodeon shows called, “The 90's Are All That,” I went on a Netflix rampage.

Netflix's selection of 90's Nick shows is pretty fantastic, and my first choice was the brilliantly off-beat, “The Adventures of Pete and Pete.” “Pete and Pete” made me pine for the time when kids' shows were creatively written and shot and different from each other. It made me long for the days when adults in shows for kids could be not only negligent but straight up evil. They could be irreversibly stupid and irredeemable.

But it's become old hat to laud the brilliance of 90's Nick shows, and I'm not here to talk about how I miss the old days of TV where kids' shows were much smarter, more absurd, and more sophisticated than they are today. Watching “Pete and Pete” made me miss so much more about the 90's, about the decade of my early childhood that can only be described as...precious.

So here is a list of things about the 1990's that I started truly, unironically missing while watching “Pete and Pete.”

In the 90's, there were only two choices for outfits. Every single person dressed either like a girl who was going through a bad breakup: oversized sweatshirts, stirrup pants, a pint of Ben and Jerry's, and clogs, OR a mom who was going apple picking: turtle-necks, straight fit jeans, denim jackets...and clogs.

Only in the 90's could bands appear in shows or movies and play literally ANYWHERE. On front lawns, on the tops of huge buildings, in moving convertibles, on the beach, on trampolines, on the backs of large animals. Anywhere.

It was the age when people like Ellen Cleghorne could show up on screen and no one was super confused. (She just appeared in “Pete and Pete,” as Sally, the bus driver).

Not only the ugliness but the superior inconvenience of snap-on sunglasses didn't occur to anyone for a good while. We were blissfully spending whole minutes trying to find a dark layer of shades that fit exactly onto the pair of glasses we owned. And then once we found them, we spent more whole minutes trying to maneuver the little grippy things around the corners to put them on. How did we get anything done? And once they were on, you just had to leave them, because it was such an effort.

Rollerblading was a thing.

Hats and vests and buttons. Hats that were velvety and upturned with giant flowers on the side. Vests depicting whole countryside landscapes or lighthouse shore scenes. Buttons that were tiny mirrors or starfish or at least different colors and shapes.

Plaid was not yet hipster; it was grunge.

We could have prime time network sitcoms where all the characters were not only not human; they were really ugly puppets.

Everyone had multiple secret handshakes (that may just be a kid thing, but I don't think so).

Boys with long hair were the cutest ones. Especially if it was parted down the middle, wavy, and highlighted. But in the 90's, ponytails were okay too. (continued.)

ZLOTNICK (continued.)

Music that was weird and funny was mainstream. And we listened to the Crash Test Dummies or Savage Garden on our Walkmen.

We (maybe just I) would get really nervous every time we wanted to have play dates because we'd have to call the home phones at our friends' houses and talk to their parents! We'd have to be all like, “Hiit'sRobincan'talktoJackie?” And then we'd talk to our friend and realize neither of us wielded any plan-making ability within our household, so we'd have to get our parents to figure out a time we could get together.

We'd each shout for our respective parents and BOOK IT for them. God-forbid your friend's mom or dad got to the phone before you found your parent. Your friend's mom would be like, “Hello? Hello?” and you'd not say anything as you were frantically searching your house for anyone who was old enough to drive and you'd throw the phone into your parent's hand and hope you're friend's mom hadn't hung up already. It was the worst. I miss it! • KL

Lifestyle > The Hollywood Review

Glee 3D

BY CRITIC AT LARGE - GUILDERLAND
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Rated PG-13

It's an old formula. Trade places with someone. See what their life is really like. And in the process gain a better respect for them and for your own life.

Mark Twain wrote about it in “The Prince and The Pauper”. Mary Rodgers wrote about a mom and daughter who switch bodies magically in “Freaky Friday”. Disney adapted Rodgers book into 2 films and a TV version. Dan Aykroyd and Eddie Murphy even did it oddly enough in a movie called “Trading Places”.

Now its time for a more adult version in “The Change-Up”. Dave Lockwood (Jason Bateman) is a straight-laced lawyer and family man married to Jamie (Leslie Mann). His lifelong friend Mitch Planko (Ryan Reynolds) is a single, sometimes employed man-child. At the end of a boys night out they make the mistake of wishing they had each others' life while peeing into a fountain. In the morning, guess what has happened? (Note: the Sturgeon General warns that it never pays to make errant wishes near a fountain.)

Overnight Dave and Mitch have switched bodies and lives. Now single – Mitch (in Jason Bateman's body) must live the family man, lawyer life of Dave. And poor, poor married Dave (in Ryan Reynolds's body) must live the accursed life of being single after years of marriage while looking like Mitch. What a shame!

Naturally misadventures and misunderstandings ensue. And like any good switch up movie there is obligatory paperwork and a waiting period until the switch can be unswitched (Think “Big” when they had to find a “Zoltar” machine). Will Dave and Mitch succeed in playing each other or will they completely screw-up each others' lives? Will public fountains ever be safe to pee in? For the answers to some of these and other questions see *The Change-Up*.

Be aware, however, that *The Change-Up* contains some frontal nudity and some explicit strong language. • KL

Ledger Life > Featured Events in Albany

Friday, August 19, 2011

Jonathan Larsen's RENT

SLOC Theater – Downtown Schenectady – 8 p.m.
\$18 / \$38 / advance at slocheater.org

Saturday, August 20, 2011

MIRK at Elda's

Elda's on Lark – Lark Street – 10:00 p.m.
Free

Lifestyle > On the Big Screen

Beats, Rhymes & Life

BY LEDGER STAFF – ALBANY BUREAU - ALBANY
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Having broke up nearly 13 years ago - the same amount of time since their last album - A Tribe Called Quest (ATCQ) remains one of hip-hop's most legendary collaborations. Director Michael Rapaport (from Fox's “Boston Public” and “Prison Break”) takes moviegoers on a journey from high school collaboration and brooding to what many groups of friends - after being together for decades - find themselves: as family.

The film opens up with Q-Tip stating that the 2008 Rock the Bells tour would be the last for ATCQ. The film then heads to the group's origins in Queens with fellow group members Phife Dawg, Ali Shaheed Muhammad, and Jarobi White. Filmgoers then go in depth to the creation of albums such as “The Low End Theory” and the impact it had on the hip hop industry during a time when it was popular to “F*** the Police.”

Many artists make cameos, including Black Thought and ?uestlove from the Roots, Common, Kanye West, Mary J. Blige, Mos Def, the Beastie Boys, Pharrell, De La Soul, and the Jungle Brothers - who speak about the inspiration ATCQ made upon their own careers.

Overall, the cultural milestones set by ATCQ with the Native Tongues movement are shown properly. The only criticism that we have is more should have been shown with the parallel between the rise of alternative hip hop against the rise of MCs such as Tupac and Biggie Smalls. • KL

MOP•CO