

NC PIRG: questions and answers

EDITOR'S NOTE: The PIRG future at Meredith is now under consideration by the Board of Trustees.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT NC PIRG.

Q. What is the North Carolina Public Interest Research Group (NC PIRG)?

A. It is a group of scientists, lawyers, social planners and other professionals working full-time under the guidance of a student representative body to present citizen causes before the courts, the legislatures and the public. It works on broad social problems of general concern. NC PIRG is financed by student funds and directed by students.

Q. Isn't NC PIRG disrupting the capitalist system by challenging the businesses and government agencies which compose it?

A. The purpose of PIRG is to work within the established system to make business responsible to the consumer and to make government responsible to the citizen. In this attempt, PIRG is working to improve the current system, not disrupt it.

Q. Will PIRG be independent of student government?

A. Yes, PIRG is an independent group since it will be independently funded.

Q. Is PIRG relying solely on student financial support? Wouldn't this limit PIRG's effectiveness?

A. PIRG is planning to rely mainly on student financial support. However, the door is open for contributions from private citizens, community organizations, alumni, etc. If all major schools, the state cooperate, the anticipated budget of up to \$200,000 can be met.

Q. Is there a real need for this kind of group, given all the volunteer work now being done by the big law firms and the valuable work of legal aid lawyers?

A. Voluntary work by big law firms is increasing. However, much of it is band-aid law. It can help the individuals in a crisis, but it seldom achieves long range social change. Legal aid lawyers have done much valuable work on an individual basis, but they simply cannot afford the time to engage in the massive research required to perform public interest work. Since the most seriously injured victims of pollution and consumer fraud are the Black and the poor, public interest lawyers should work as the allies of legal aid lawyers.

Q. Won't NC PIRG use up energy and resources which could better be applied to the problems which beset the poor and the community?

A. NC PIRG will work toward long-range permanent sol-

utions of these problems. It is the poor of the urban centers who are most affected by unsafe consumer products, polluted air, poor building codes and racial and sex discrimination in job hiring. It is the rural poor who are most injured by pesticides unsafe for human use, rivers so polluted their fish are poisonous and inhuman treatment of farm labor. These ills must be attacked at their source.

Q. Is there any place for community action in NC PIRG?

A. Yes, NC PIRG must use the existing knowledge of the citizens to apply the pressure to political decisions. Too often citizens are bewildered by their massive infrastructure of government and cannot find channels for their frustrations. Irresponsible government is a great motivation force for the common citizen who is paying exorbitant taxes and seeing little return. Both students and community working together can accomplish a maximum of impact in the shortest time.

Q. Isn't the cost of a public interest group too great for the students to bear?

A. Students have long underestimated their capacities. They are eight million college students in America today. At \$3.00 per year per student (equal to the cost of most record albums), students could raise \$25 million per year. One very large campus or several smaller campuses working together can easily raise the \$200,000 - \$300,000 per year necessary to fund such a group. How? Simply by increasing the student activity or incidental fee by \$1.50 per student per semester. On a nationwide basis the \$24 million raised by such a voluntary contribution could fund over 100 public interest research groups.

Q. Why should I give \$1.50? What do I get for it?

A. What each student gets for \$1.50 per semester is a voice in a group that will take up problems which affect the student as one who lives in North Carolina. Most students have to deal with consumer problems, many are tenants in off-campus dwellings, all students drink the water and breathe the air of this state. The problems involved in those activities are what NC PIRG will seek to solve.

Q. Aren't you just another bunch of Nader's Raiders?

A. No, although the initial impetus for, and philosophy behind the NC PIRG came from Nader and his organization, it has no political or economic ties to the Nader organization in Washington.

Q. If you want to have such a project, why not simply make contact with something

like the Environmental Protection Agency in the Research Triangle and make a school project out of that?

A. That by itself is a fine idea, but its scope is too limited, considering the possibilities open to the NC PIRG. It can expand to projects behind the domain of the EPA into consumer problems, discrimination, etc., and also link together the resources of many schools in the state, not just Duke.

Q. What are some SPECIFIC things PIRG would do?

A. Consumer protection, environmental quality, and corporate responsibility are often too general for people who want to hear specific. Some possibilities might be: race and sex discrimination -- cite example of woman lab worker in Oregon, grocery store pricing -- price goods in stores and publish prices regularly in newspapers so public would know where to buy the less expensive goods, land/tenant relations, advertising practices, occupational safety, property assessment for taxes, campaign against harmful products, lobby in Raleigh for consumer and environmental oriented proposals, environmental education - waste management, land use planning. In answering questions of whether or not PIRG will investigate a particular topic say that PIRG will determine if it can be of service. However, at this time it is too early to give a definite yes or no.

Q. Who runs NC PIRG? Who decides what happens to the money?

A. A regional board of directors will be elected to govern the use of the money and the problems to be investigated. This board will be composed of representatives from each campus in proportion to the size of the school so that for each 4-5000 students on a campus there would be one representative in the regional board.

Q. How can I inform PIRG of issue I think should be investigated?

A. All meetings of the local board on each campus will be open so that any student may appear to voice his opinions on the specific directions of the PIRG. Students may also influence PIRG during the election of the local board of directors.

Q. How will students know about the progress of PIRG in dealing with these problems?

A. Each local board will be responsible for informing its constituency of the work it is doing in general and on particular problems. Also many students will be actively involved in research and other ongoing functions of PIRG.

Q. What will the breakdown of funds be in the PIRG?

A. On the basis of the work of OSPIRG AND MPIRG the following estimates can be made. Employee salaries for 10 professionals, 4 secretaries, and two community workers \$ 148,000
Office space, equipment, and supplies 25,000
Student research projects (grants of \$1,000 for 10-15 students to do summer research 15,000
Contingency costs (court costs) 7,500
TOTAL is approximately - \$ 200,000

Q. Will students be allowed to decide on which issues will be investigated by referendum?

A. This would be too cumbersome and time consuming, so an elected representative body (regional board) will choose the specific issues from suggestions of students through their local board.

Q. How will students views be represented, and what checks will the student have on PIRG?

A. Students will be able to express their views at the publicly held open forums with the state board, and through elections of board members, students have a recall power of state representatives. The local board will be responsible for establishing similar recall power of the local board. Support for PIRG is completely voluntary, if enough students ask for a refund, PIRG cannot exist.

Q. How will the professionals be chosen?

A. The regional board will probably advertise for applicants in this area and in some major newspapers as the New York Times and the Washington Post. From the applicants, the regional board will select 5 and 10 professionals from different disciplines.

Q. Why spend all our money on professionals?

A. The hiring of paid professionals is necessary in terms of providing continuity and effectiveness. They will not be subject to the ups and downs of the academic year as a student staff would be. Therefore, they would be a continual force for change. As professional their experience and knowledge would be effective in combatting public interest problems. The amount of pay allotted to these professionals will be set taking into account the needs for economy and the need to lure competent people.

Q. Exactly what will these professionals do?

A. They will research a specific problem with the help of students and then find a means of implementing this knowledge so as to effect some concrete reform.

To N.Y.

(Continued from Page 3)

passed down to the members of each successive graduating class -- is the service provided for young women by a smooth-running, friendly organization known as MAMSELLE IN MANHATTAN.

Now in its eighth year, Mamselle in Manhattan has built a reliable reputation for solving the apartment finding and apartment sharing problems of both the new arrival and the established New Yorker.

Owned and operated by Mrs. Dorothy Jessop, Mamselle is centrally located at 141 East 55th Street in midtown Manhattan. This compact and unusual organization has services available which runs the gamut from apartment and job-finding to socializing and shopping.

In return for a small fee, Mamselle arranges to locate each individual client in a living situation tailored to fit her personal, social, and financial needs.

Further information can be received by writing to Mamselle in Manhattan, 151 East 55th Street, New York, N. Y. 10022. Telephone: (212) 755-8817.

Film Forum

(Continued from Page 1)

California. The production was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

University of North Carolina Television reaches 96% of North Carolinians over its statewide network; Channel 4, Chapel Hill; Channel 2, Columbia; Channel 17, Linville; Channel 33, Asheville; Channel 58, Concord; Channel 39, Wilmington; Channel 25, Greenville; Channel 26, Winston-Salem.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Mrs. Ruth Mzc-Kerron (919) 933-8191.

TRY Brothers Pizza Palace

2508 1/2 HILLSBOROUGH

THE BEST PIZZA,
SPAGHETTI
and LASAGNE

HAMBURGER STEAK,
SANDWICHES

AND GREEK SALAD
All Fresh (No Frozen)

THE BEST PIZZA
IN TOWN!

BROTHERS
ORDERS TO
TAKE OUT

THANK YOU

Phone 832-3664

SHERATON CRABTREE MOTOR INN

NOW OPEN

Ground Floor Restaurant; Davy Jones Locker Lounge; Sparkling New 9 Stories, 143 air-conditioned, color-coordinated rooms, color T.V., 3rd floor pool, spacious banquet rooms.

CALL: 800-325-3535, local 787-7111 for your reservations for parents week-end.

Located in Crabtree Valley Shopping Center

THE PLACE FOR JEPS

MAC JOSEPHS



CASUAL COLONY

HER PLACE...
Where There Are
Always Lively
Young Fashions

Join Your Friends
For Free Pepsis and
Candy, Compliments of
Mac Josephs