New 'animal' created to heal campaign money abust Ou

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United Press International WASHINGTON — The politic-

al clout once enjoyed by wealthy 'fat cat" contributors in smoke filled rooms, is now being wielded in board rooms, club houses and union halls around the nation.

The reform laws enacted after the Watergate scandel to cure campaign spending abuses have created what critics such as Common Cause call a new and dangerous political monster - the Political Action Committee, or "PAC."

The millions of dollars individual contributors used to give to candidates — sometimes in return for ambassadorships or a favorable antitrust decision — were out-lawed. Individual contributions were limited to \$1,000.

But at the same time a new political animal was created, allowing the unions, big business, trade associations, and ideological groups like the National Rifle Association and anti-abortion groups to get into the action in a

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Numbering more than 2,500, PACs raised and spent more than \$130 million in the 1980 election. The Federal Election Commission has not yet compiled final spending figures from last fall's election, but it is widely believed that for the first time PACs gave more to congressional candidates than individual contributors.

PACs were also active in the presidential race, giving nearly \$2 million to candidates in the pri-

The Republican and Democra-National Committees have PACs. Ronald Reagan used one to keep his political activities going between the 1976 and 1980 elections. Sen. Edward Kennedy and former Vice President Walter Mondale recently organized PACs, some say in anticipation of 1984 presidential bids.

But there is a major difference between the new PACs and the old fat cats. Contributions by PACs are legal and are all reported

. ETERNITY RINGS

on the public record. The fat cats did not have to report their contri-butions, which were legal except when they used corporate funds.

PAC money does not come from corporate funds or union dues, but from contributions by individual members to the corporate or union PACs, which give the money

And while \$5,000 from any one PAC may not seem like much, 20 or 30 different PACs can all give their money to one candidate. Common Cause and other re-

form groups have been highly critical of PACs, charging that these contributions are a subtle form of buying influence in Congress. Defenders maintain PACs are just a constitutional exercise of free

A look at the campaign records of the FEC show clearly that PACs give their money to members of

Congress who influence their turf.

Some examples: -Sen. John Tower, R-Texas, now chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, received contributions to his 1978 campaign from PACs of Grumman Corp., General Dynamics, Hughes Aircraft, Lockheed Air-craft, McDonnell Douglas, North-

defense contractors. -Sen. Jake Garn, R-Utah, chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, got contributions from the American Bankers Association, Chase Manhattan, Citi-

corp, First America Bank, and

rop, Rockwell International and

United Technologies — all major

Household Finance.

These examples were picked at random, but a pattern of similar contributions can be found in almost all the other House and Senate committee chairmen and ranking minority members. And to a lesser extent members of these committees get contributions from the interests they legis-

Common Cause is outspoken in its criticism of PACs, which it wants abolished in favor of public financing of congressional elec-

"Our representative government is rapidly becoming a government of the PACs, by the PACs and for the PACs," David Cohen, president of Common Cause, said. He said PAC contributions to members of Congress buys access and enables special interest groups to influence legisla-

"It's a system that benefits special interest and buries solutions to our most pressing public problems - inflation, energy and

health care," Cohen said.

A lot of the controversy surrounding PACs has arisen simply because they have changed the way America does its political

By the end of 1974 there were

less than 600 PACs. Labor still dominated. But by 1980 there were more than 2,500 PACs, 1,250 of them tied to corporations, and only 332 connected with

But most of all, the PAC phenomena was a question of Republicans and big business learning to play the game that the unions and liberals had used for years.

After the defeat of six liberal senators in the 1980 elections, ultra-conservative PACs like the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, Gun Owners of America and the political wings of the Moral Majority and the antiabortion movement said it was their money that did the job.

"PACs really ought to be called Purchase the American Congress' because that's what they're going to be doing in a few years," says Rep. David Obey, D-Wis., who for several years has sponsored legislation to curb the power of these committees.

"It is critical to the integrity of the democratic process that a limit be put on the amount of PAC contributions," he said.

Obey uses himself as an example of how PACs operate. He said that although he has been a spon-

money bill in recent years, the tional Education Association its contribution to his campair 75 percent when he voted are its pet project, creation of all partment of Education.

"I don't think people contri to me because I'm such a statesman," Obey said. "He voter) wants to know what going to do for the widget inde or the widget workers. Do really think when a congress sees that lobbyist in his offer doesn't see the gleam of PAC lars in his eyes?

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On the other side of the fight in Congress is Rep. Wil Frenzel, R-Minn., who saids been a positive force in pol because it has been em heaviest by the political part rebuilding their strength.

In addition, he said it gets people involved in the pol process.

To the "reformers" Fre says: "Once you get rid of PACs, once you force the m direct mail out of sight, once limit individual contribution you will have to use tam money to elect the same but

Farm co-ops growing in popularity

United Press International
CINCINNATTI — They are as old as the Mayflower Compact. They are as big as Sunkist. 15%

They are so popular that five out of every six farmers belong. 'They" are farm cooperatives. The co-ops are growing in num-

bers and in clout. Farmers have a saying about

their cooperative," says Bill Swank, executive vice president of the Ohio Farm Bureau. "We've paid for a lot of companies, but we

Many farmers used to think that both ends of their stick were short overcharged for supplies they had to buy, underpaid for the produce they sold.

"Simply put," says Swank, "a lot of farmers felt they were being ripped off. So, they formed cooperatives to survive. I suppose farmers today could exist without cooperabut I'm not sure they tives,

In America, farm cooperatives date back to the pilgrims. Their Mayflower Compact — sharing

the labor and its fruits - probably helped them survive.

roday, there are more than 7,500 farm cooperatives in the country. Many are a whole lot more than a dusty silo where a few dirt farmers stash their corn.

When you buy a Sunkist orange, you're helping a cooperative's product.

Spread some Land O' Lakes butter and you're spreading money through that Minnesota-

based cooperative.

Those well-advertised Ocean Spray cranberries? Another cooperative venture.

Most cooperatives, of course, are not as big as Sunkist. But the trend is to make cooperatives as large as possible. And sometimes,

as encompassing as possible.

The Ohio Farm Bureau's cooperative (Landmark), for ex-

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ample, not only sells the farmer seeds and fertilizer and buys back his grain, it also sells him gasoline, oil, tires and batteries.

All this to give the farmer a choice from the goods and prices offered by private companies.

'The main value of a cooperative is that it provides this competitive factor and is a bellwether for good, competitive business,' says Swank. "Without a cooperative, a farmer tends to feel there is collusion among other business people - that their profits are unduly high and that the prices they pay to farmers are unduly low.

But when farmers have their own cooperative, they have a pretty strong feeling about just what it costs to, say, deliver a sack of fertilizer or a bushel of grain, because their own outfit is also doing it."

With the growth of coopera-

tives, however, has come the that co-ops may have be their own enemy - perhaps ing with bureaucratic softne making them similar to the businesses they were trying to

Some critics feel farmer not to be in this kind of busine Swank said. "But we think of just an extension of the job off ing. What's the difference tween farmers having their fertilizer made and Sears Roebuck having their own ducts made? I don't thin cooperative can get too big would be too big if it forgot purpose — to help the farmer

Swank, of course, is a be in big farm cooperatives bec his Landmark operation is the gest co-op in Ohio. It do million worth of business 100,000 farmers last year.

But a more unbiased fam pert also agrees that bigge

'My feeling is, yes, it's and sity for farm cooperatives by larger simply because procompanies are getting large says Dr. Donald G. Chain, man of Wilmington (Ohio)

lege's agriculture department And, co-ops have been for to grow in order to be able handle sufficient volumes to overhead costs in line with or

petition from private business "I don't think that hurts then ginal intent of co-ops. I think Texas, w ust an economic fact of ousiness has to be sufficient large to be economical.

What about the small-scale mer? Do co-ops still help him Yes, because the little guy doesn't have sufficient volu benefit from the lower prior the bigger farmer could get large-scale buying at a p answers Chafin. favorably on co-ops bec

cial to farmers on all level Says Swank, "The little fa is helped a lot more than hu cooperatives. We end up he the little farmer get what needs, while some private panies just want to do bu with the big guy and forget little guy

think they've really been

Chafin, however, points ou area of weakness he has noted some cooperatives.

"Just like any business, if or aren't managed efficiently, costs are going to go out of trol," he says. "Sometimes the moval of a big profit incest causes a lack of cost-contr

"For example, in the crunch of the early '70s, som ops got into the oil refining ness to try to guarante members a source of fuel they also got locked into a cost of operation. They have careful of getting trapped really all they are trying to help."

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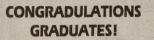


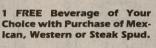
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