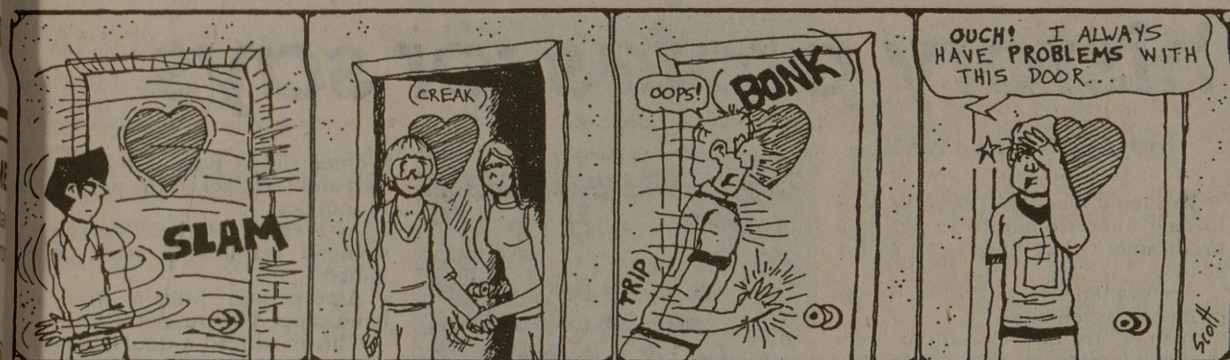


Warped

by Scott McCullar



National interest group

PIRG serves students

By KIRSTEN DIETZ
Staff Writer

Students concerned with consumer ripoffs, acid rain or the arms race can stop protesting and start making changes by working with a Public Interest Research Group.

A PIRG is a student organized and directed social change organization that conducts research, educates the public, registers voters and advocates reforms, Bill Wasserman, PIRG's California college organizer, says. The students work with a paid staff of lawyers, scientists, organizers and other professionals.

Currently, the only Texas PIRG is at Rice University. However, the University of Texas has an approved PIRG organizing committee.

While Texas A&M doesn't have a PIRG, students are still eligible to work as an intern with a professional staff or during the summer or after graduation, Wasserman says.

As an intern, students can work

on anything from a single course credit project to a full-term program with state or national PIRGs. An internship can teach a student valuable hands-on training that can help the student find jobs or prepare for graduate school in the areas of law, government, environmental science, business and journalism, Wasserman says.

Students interested in working during the summer can join a PIRG Citizen Outreach Staff. Staff members educate the public on environmental and consumer issues while learning communication skills, Wasserman says. Summer workers can earn from \$150 to \$200 a week.

After a student graduates, PIRGs offer entry-level professional positions concentrating in four areas: organizing, citizen outreach, administration and publications. For example, an employee concentrating in citizen outreach might deal with membership recruitment and an or-

ganizing job might deal with mobilizing citizen support for an issue.

Wasserman says the national PIRG is organizing a national network to keep student newspapers informed by mail on student issues. He says the newspapers will also be able to share information with each other through the network.

Interested students can begin PIRGs on their own campus. Sources of funding for the chapter are decided by the members. For example, Wasserman says some campuses vote to earmark part of the student activity fee for the PIRG.

While 125 campuses in 25 states have a PIRG program, Wasserman doesn't know exactly how many students are involved nationwide. However, in California, he says more than 40,000 student members on six campuses participate.

Wasserman will be visiting Texas to conduct a student leadership conference March 19 on the UT campus.

Critics attack state payroll deduction bill

Associated Press

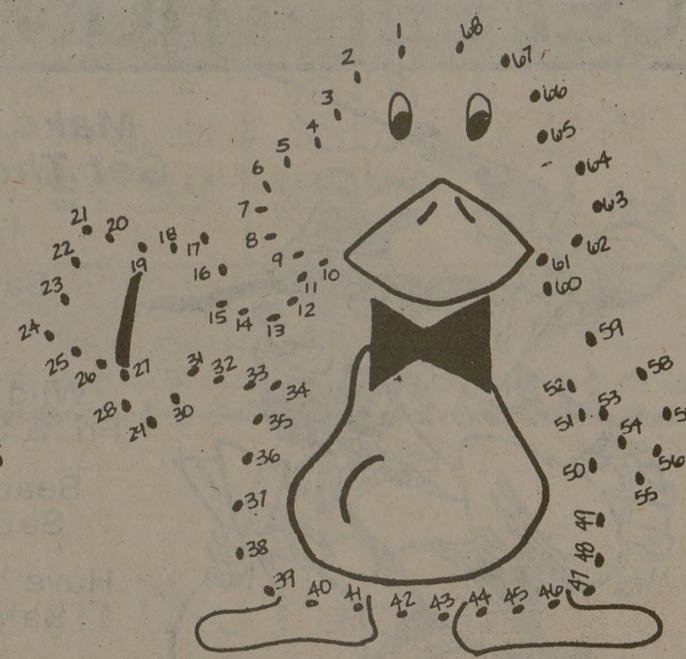
AUSTIN — A bill that would allow union dues to be deducted from state employee paychecks is the first of a series of bills that would bring collective bargaining and compulsory arbitration to Texas, right-to-work backers said Tuesday.

J. Manley Head, a spokesman for the Texas Right to Work Committee, told the House Labor and Employment Relations Committee Tuesday that union dues check-offs would "cede to labor organizations a large measure of control over the

public's work force."

But Willie Chapman, AFL-CIO legislative director, said: "It is just an attempt to give state employees the same right that most public employees have in other states and in some cities."

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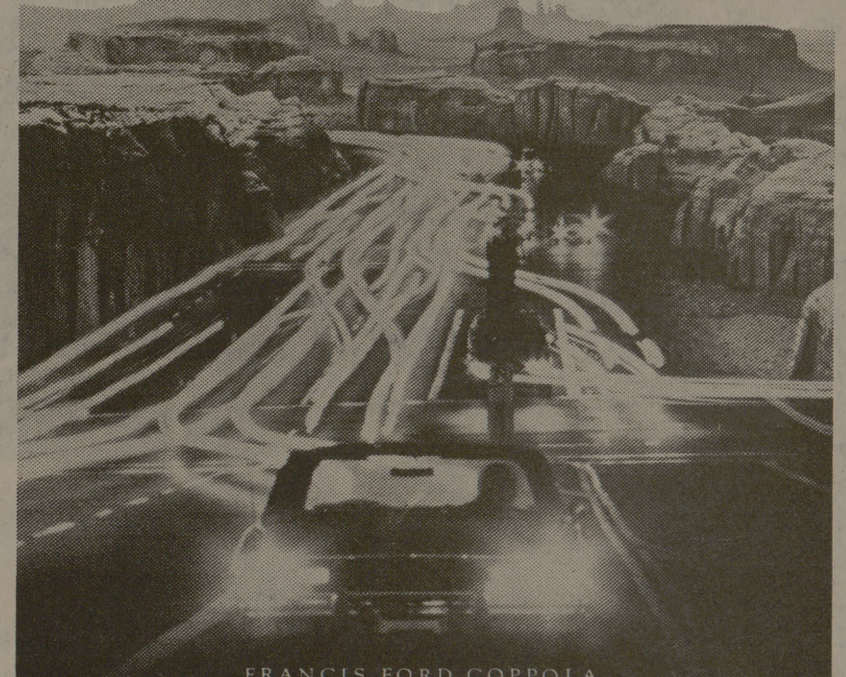
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