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Students Making a Difference

Vol. 8, No. 3 Jan/Feb/Mar1993

Taking It On The Road

Bring a national staff member to your campus who will help you launch and strengthen programs, develop organizing skills, and build coalitions. Over the past seven years, the Campaign has conducted workshops, trainings, and regional conferences at hundreds of campuses nationwide.

Currently, staff members and interns are traveling across the country participating in regional conferences and conducting city-wide trainings. The following training will be facilitated on campuses in Worcester, Hartford, and Providence.

Training

The success of a campus campaign depends on a group's ability to attract and keep new student members. There are three basic questions which need to be addressed before embarking on a recruitment effort. First, who are you trying to recruit? Second, how are you going to recruit them? Third, what are you going to have new members actually do? The City-Wide Training will prepare you on all three of these counts so that your recruitment efforts are virtually a guaranteed success.

While much of our effort to recruit activists is done through mass activities — speaking to groups, tabling passers-by, articles in the paper, etc. — true organizing can only happen on an individual and personal basis. The City-Wide Training will teach you how to use individual meetings to transform new recruits into motivated activists and leaders.

Now that you have recruited a large number of people, what do you do

with them? The City-Wide Training will teach you how to make sense of the chaos by putting your ideas about how to change the world into a coherent campaign plan. We'll also give you tips on how to develop in your best new people a sense of ownership over your campus program.

Discussion

The problems of hunger and homelessness continue to grow in our society. Campus volunteer opportunities and educational events contribute to the solutions; yet, time and time again the problems seem overwhelming and our solutions just don't seem to get the job done.

How can we develop programs which provide tangible solutions? What is the link between service and advocacy? How can we diversify the network of students that are presently involved with hunger and homelessness issues? These topics will be discussed during the training.

Logistics

These City-Wide Trainings will be held at Brown University in Providence, RI on March 7th; at Clark University in Worcester, MA on March 20th; and at Trinity College in Hartford, CT on March 21st. Trainings begin at 10AM and run until 6PM. Local activists will join participants during lunch for a round-table discussion. The cost will be \$10.00 - \$15.00 per person and includes lunch and materials.

For more information please call Julie Price at (617) 292 - 4823.

Building Blocks for Change

By Michelle Alwin, Rockford College

Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois hosted the First Annual Midwest Regional Hunger and Homelessness Conference, February 5 - 7, 1993. The conference, "Building Blocks for Change", was product of the Midwestern regional meeting at NSCAHH's Sixth Annual Conference at UVA last October.

The goal of the conference was to gather students, faculty, and staff from Midwestern colleges and universities and provide them with the motivation and necessary information to establish an-going network that will advocate on behalf of the hungry and homeless.

"The most important aspect of gathering students of this type is to see and hear the enthusiasm and conviction of college students who want to affect systemic change and make a difference", said Kathy Engelken, co-advisor of the conference committee and assistant Dean of Student.

The conference included Harry "Hooks" Swets, a homeless reporter from the streets of San Francisco; a number of workshops presented by local social service providers and national advocates on hunger and homelessness issues; and a presentation by "Address Unknown," a Chicago-based theater group comprised of homeless and formerly homeless people.

continued on page 4



U.S. PIRG is the national lobbying office of the State PIRGs. Here, Susan Birmingham, U.S. PIRG Environmental Advocate, hands out "Wastemaker Awards" for products that have excessive packaging.

Create Recycling Markets

All across America, municipalities and private companies have established curbside and workplace recycling programs - 2700 communities now separate materials for recycling. Yet the ability of the marketplace to absorb these materials has lagged.

PIRGs support legislation that would require certain consumer goods packaging and newspaper to contain recycled content, and we support government purchasing standards for recycled products.

Moratorium on Incinerators

Municipal incinerators are extraordinarily expensive, compete with recycling programs for valuable materials and are a significant threat to public health and the environment. Incinerators create a highly toxic ash and pollute the air with discharges of toxic substances, including mercury, lead and dioxins.

Incinerators are not compatible with Reduce, Reuse & Recycle strategies. Construction costs drain funds that could be more effectively used for recycling. Once built, incinerators require a steady flow of combustible materials, much of which is recyclable. PIRGs support a moratorium on the construction of new garbage incinerators until the year 2000.

What You Can Do

The Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Campaign is a national effort to win significant reforms in solid waste policy in the 1993 congressional session. The Campaign has the backing of major national environmental groups, local recycling groups, neighborhood associations and community groups, and local governments.

Community support for the Campaign is being organized by the state Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) and the organizations' national lobbying office, U.S. PIRG. The Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Campaign can win if individuals across the nation demonstrate a public commitment to recycling that outweighs special interest lobbying and campaign contributions.

Help demonstrate this support by:

1. Writing a letter or postcard and calling your members of Congress. House of Representatives, Wash. DC, 20515. U.S. Senate, Wash. DC. 20510. (202) 224-3121 for both.
2. Urging your local officials and community organizations to endorse the Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Platform.
3. Writing a letter to your local newspaper on the need for congressional action to amend RCRA this session.

For More Information:

Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Campaign, U.S.PIRG
215 Pennsylvania Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 546-9707

**"Citizen activism is
the key to winning
PIRG's Reduce,
Reuse & Recycle
Campaign."**

**Susan
Birmingham
U.S. PIRG**



**REDUCE
REUSE &
RECYCLE
CAMPAIGN
THE PIRGS**

The Solid Waste Crisis

The 360 billion pounds of trash our nation generates each year is a monument to the throwaway ethic American industry has embraced over the last two decades. With 80% of our landfills likely to close within the next 20 years, with disposal costs to taxpayers skyrocketing, with our energy and natural resources more expensive and more scarce, and with our roadsides cluttered with litter, it is time to live by a new ethic.

For instance, the 13.5 billion beer bottles discarded each year in the U.S. result in: 2.4 million tons of landfilled glass; 200 million pounds of pollutants discharged into the environment; and energy use equivalent to over 320 million gallons of oil.

Most people recognize that our quality of life is not dependent upon a throwaway consumer culture. By wide margins, Americans support policies that will REDUCE the amount of waste we create, REUSE the products and packaging we do create, and RECYCLE the raw materials.

Public opinion polls demonstrate that over 90% of the public strongly supports individual and institutional recycling. There are few technical barriers to creating an efficient, national Reduce, Reuse & Recycle system. In fact, of all

"We'll pass a National Bottle Bill to encourage recycling by creating small deposits on all glass and plastic bottles."

**President Clinton
April 22, '92
Earth Day**



The State Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) are at the forefront of the drive to Reduce, Reuse & Recycle. Here, MaryPIRG staff announce the collection of 10,000 postcards for the campaign.

industrialized nations in the world, the U.S. has the lowest recycling rate at just over 17%, despite the fact that we generate, per capita, more garbage than any other nation. The obstacles that we face in the U.S. are political.

Large industries have been founded on selling products and packaging that are designed to be consumed and thrown away. Led by such multinational giants as Coca-Cola, Anheuser-Busch and Phillip Morris, industry spent millions of dollars in the 102nd Congress to defeat legislation designed to create a measure of corporate responsibility for recycling.

A congressional vote in 1992 on a National Bottle Bill demonstrates the problem: those who failed to support the Bottle Bill received 250 times more PAC dollars than those who voted for the bill.

"Without federal stimulation of markets, recyclables will continue to be warehoused."

**U.S.
Conference
of Mayors**

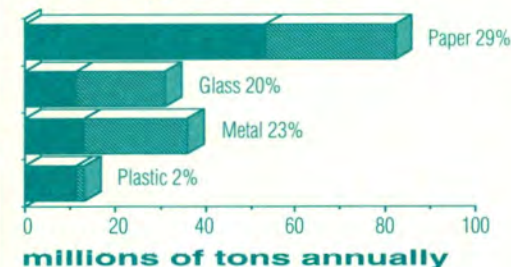
Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Platform

In response to our solid waste crisis, the PIRGs have launched the Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Campaign. Congress is currently considering amendments to the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA), the nation's chief law governing the management of our waste. The law is virtually silent on issues of recycling. The Campaign is calling for the adoption of a three-point platform, based on the most effective laws already adopted by many states.

The Bottle Bill

Deposits on beverage containers, "Bottle Bills," are the single most effective, immediately available means to encourage the use of refillable bottles and increase container recycling rates. Recycling rates for glass, plastic and aluminum in the nine Bottle Bill states are the highest in the nation.

What is Recycled?



Deposit systems remove large volumes of materials from the solid waste stream by returning containers to manufacturers. This encourages the use of refillable containers and makes manufacturers responsible for disposal of their product packaging - an important step in creating incentives for reusable and recyclable packaging.



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For instance, the 13.5 billion beer bottles discarded each year in the U.S. result in: 2.4 million tons of landfilled glass; 200 million pounds of pollutants discharged into the environment; and energy use equivalent to over 320 million gallons of oil.

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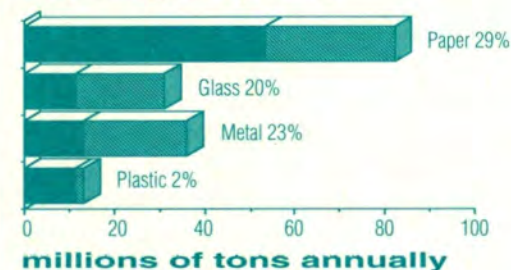
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The Solid Waste Crisis

We face a solid waste crisis of staggering proportions. Consider:

- Over one billion pounds of garbage are generated each day in the United States.
- The latest figures from the U.S. EPA show a 71% increase in the amount of garbage generated by consumers in just 13 years and only 17% of that is being recycled.
- Over 50% of our landfills will be closed within the next 5 years.
- Incinerators burn up reusable and recyclable materials, waste money and pollute our air, land and water.

The Solution

Most people now recognize that our quality of life is not dependent on a throwaway culture. By wide margins Americans support policies that will:

Reduce the amount of waste that we generate,

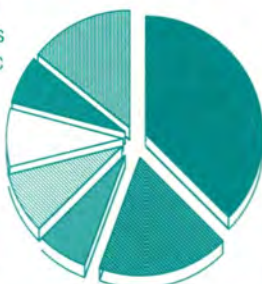
Reuse the products and packaging that we do create and

Recycle the raw materials.

Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) have launched the Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Campaign to urge the President and Congress to enact federal legislation that will require industry and government to follow these policies in manufacturing, purchasing and waste disposal.

What's In Our Trash?

- 37.5% paper
- 17.9% yard waste
- 7% glass
- 8.5% metals
- 8% plastic
- 6.7% food
- 14.4% other



National data from
U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency

National Bottle Bill

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Throwaway beverage containers are some of the most wasteful kinds of product packaging. Just 30 years ago, virtually all soda and half of beer was sold in refillable glass bottles with deposits.

Recycling. 85-95% of containers are returned in the 9 Bottle Bill states, which helps to give these states the highest recycling rates in the U.S. Over 90% of all plastics and 66% of all glass that is recycled in the U.S. comes from Bottle Bill states.

Litter. Bottles and cans make up 40-60% of litter by volume in states without Bottle Bills. The 9 states with Bottle Bills have cut beverage container litter by 75-86% and reduced injuries from litter by 60%.

Energy Use & Pollution Reduction. The 13.5 billion beer bottles discarded each year in the U.S. alone result in 2.4 million tons of landfilled glass; 200 million pounds of pollutants discharged into the environment; and energy use equivalent to 320 million gallons of oil. Reuse and recycling promoted by a Bottle Bill would lead to savings in all these areas.

Opposition to the Bottle Bill

Opposition to the Bottle Bill is led by large corporations such as Coca-Cola and Anheuser-Busch that make money on containers that are used and thrown away. Industry groups spend millions each year to defeat citizen Bottle Bill initiatives.

Last Congress, senators that failed to support the Bottle Bill received over 250 times more PAC contributions from anti-recycling interests than those who voted for the bill. Industry spent an estimated \$4 million to defeat the citizen proposal.

The Campaign for a National

BOTTLE BILL

REDUCE,
REUSE &
RECYCLE



The State PIRGs

The Congress

The National Bottle Bill is being sponsored in the 103rd Congress by Congressman Markey (D-MA) and Senator Hatfield (R-OR) and will be introduced this year on April 22, Earth Day. President Bill Clinton called for a National Bottle Bill. It is time for national action.

What You Can Do

- Write and call your U.S. legislators and urge them to support and co-sponsor the National Bottle Bill. House of Representatives, Wash. DC, 20515. U.S. Senate, Wash. DC, 20510. (202) 224-3121 for both.
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U.S. PIRG

215 Pennsylvania Ave., SE
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recycled paper

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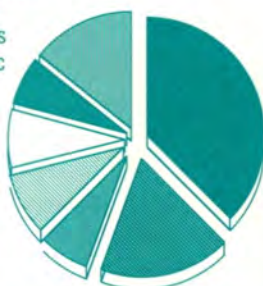
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1971-20th-1991
ANNIVERSARY



State Public Interest Research Groups

PIRGs

20th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 25, 1991 ▼ WASHINGTON, D.C.



PIRG Students & Staff with Ralph Nader
Taking Charge Conference, 1981 ▲

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MASSPIRG

REPORT

The campus newsletter of the Massachusetts Student Public Interest Research Group

Green Voter Campaign

18,000 Student Voters Registered

A coalition of MASSPIRG student volunteers, student government representatives and campus leaders joined forces to register close to 18,000 students to vote in 1992. Nationwide, PIRGs in 14 states registered more than 50,000 students to vote.

During Voter Registration Week, September 30 - October 7, MASSPIRG's 27 campus chapters brought local registrars to campus or deputized students to register others to vote:

- The UMass Amherst MASSPIRG chapter teamed up with the Student Government Association to register more than 1,900 students to vote;

- Williams College deputized six student volunteers to register others to vote, built a Green Voter Coalition of more than 20 campus groups and registered a record-setting 300 students to vote in Williamstown, 15% of the campus population;

- The Worcester State College MASSPIRG chapter brought a registrar to campus who signed up 126 students to vote in just two hours.



After October 7, MASSPIRG's Green Voter Campaign organized forums, mock debates and mock elections to educate voters on local, state and national candidates and on the four statewide ballot questions.

"Democratic participation increases with knowledge," said Bradford College student Debbie Nicholson.

"Voters want information on the positions and records of the candidates and the facts about the ballot questions before they step into the voting booth."

Voter education events included:

- The UMass Boston MASSPIRG chapter polled the student body on their choice for president and on Massachusetts' four ballot initiatives. Students



UMass Boston students (left to right) Corey Levine and Pamela Thilo and campus organizers Dan Jacobson and Cindy Briggs distribute information about November's ballot initiatives.

voted overwhelmingly for President Clinton and Questions 3 and 4, the MASSPIRG-supported Recycling and Polluter Pay Initiatives.

- At Holyoke Community College, students held a bilingual Spanish/En-

glish voter education forum to prepare students for the upcoming election.

To get out the vote, MASSPIRG gave reminder calls to newly registered voters and organized rides to the polls on Election Day. ■

Environmental Action Campaign

MASSPIRG Urges New Leaders to Vote for the Environment

This semester, MASSPIRG's Environmental Action Campaign is working to make the environment a top priority for our nation's newly elected leaders.

"This year's election brought 122 new members to Congress," said Corey Levine, UMass Boston Environmental Action Campaign Coordinator. "We have a new opportunity to focus our nation's leaders on stopping the destruction of our environment."

Working with more than 60 PIRG campuses across the nation, MASSPIRG student interns and volunteers are mo-

bilizing "green voters" to hold elected officials accountable on an environmental agenda.

Ancient Forests

From California to Oregon, only 10% of our old growth forests remain. The federal government protects half of what remains, while the timber industry cuts down the other half at a rate of 129 football fields per day.

MASSPIRG, working in coalition with Sierra Club, advocates legislation to preserve our ancient forests.

Student interns and volunteers plan to educate the campus and community about the issue through forums, films and media. MASSPIRG plans to collect 10,000 constituent signatures and 500 endorsements from campus and community leaders to congressmembers in support of old growth forest legislation.

PAC Reform

Despite broad public consensus on the need for environmental action, spe-

Continued Page 2



A Worcester registrar signs up Clark University students to vote during one of 27 voter registration drives sponsored by MASSPIRG.



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■ Reduce, Reuse & Recycle Campaign

Curbside Recycling Faces Market Crisis

Many of the state's largest recycling programs are economically threatened, according to a Florida PIRG study. As prices for recyclables plummet, many local governments are giving away materials, and some even pay to have materials taken away.

The study of 16 of the state's largest county and city recycling programs revealed that local governments have paid as much as \$125 a ton to get rid of plastics, \$25 a ton for newspapers, and \$13 a ton for brown and green glass. The reason: weak market demand by manufacturers for these recycled materials.

"Local governments and consumers have done their part by setting up and participating in recycling programs," explained Florida PIRG Solid Waste Researcher Bill Wood, author of the report. "Manufacturers have not. They are failing to use recyclables in the making of new products. As a result, we're not recycling, we're just collecting materials."

The report documented the need for recycled content standards for newspapers and packaging materials to help strengthen the demand for recycled materials.

More than a dozen newspapers and several television and radio stations covered the report. In response to the reports' findings, *The St. Petersburg Times* editorialized in favor of recycled content standards to solve the market crisis.

A second Florida PIRG report, released on November 13, exposed that state incinerators burned at least two million tons of highly recyclable newspaper, plastic, yard waste and other materials this year.

The report noted that if Florida stopped burning recyclables, the state would eliminate any need to build new incinerators to handle growing amounts of solid waste.

PIRG studies have documented that even state-of-the-art incinerators emit health-threatening air pollution and generate tons of hazardous ash, which threaten water supplies.

Continued Page 5



Photo by The Tampa Tribune

Florida PIRG's Bill Wood displays recyclable items that Broward and Hillsborough Counties and St. Petersburg and Fort Lauderdale must pay to have taken away.

■ Save Our Shores Campaign

Coastal Protections Ripped From Energy Law

Florida PIRG continues to fight for long-term protection for Florida's Gulf Coast after lawmakers failed to include such a measure in the National Energy Policy Act, which was signed by President Bush on October 24.

A Florida PIRG-supported provision would have banned oil and natural gas drilling off the Florida coast and Gulf of Mexico until the year 2002, but a House and Senate conference committee dropped coastal protections from the bill.

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Winter 1993

Florida PIRG