

The power of positive PIRGing

by Kristine Anderson

What the Heck is a PIRG?

We are the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NS-PIRG) at Dalhousie and if you are a full-time student at Dalhousie you are a member.

PIRG began at Dalhousie through a student referendum in 1989 and officially opened its office (third floor of the SUB) in September 1990. The concept of PIRG's has been around since Ralph Nader's consumer advocacy movement of the early 1970's and PIRG's now exist across Canada, the United States and Australia. Like its elder counterparts, Nova Scotia PIRG is a student funded, student directed research organization which aims to put the skills, talents and knowledge of students to work for the public interest.

So what does that mean? The goal of public interest research is to make information available to the general public, information which enables the public to make informed deci-

sions, and possibly influence decisions made by others on their behalf. This can be done in various ways through workshops, demonstrations, printed matter, presentations, theatrical skits, benefits, sky writing or in any other way we communicate.

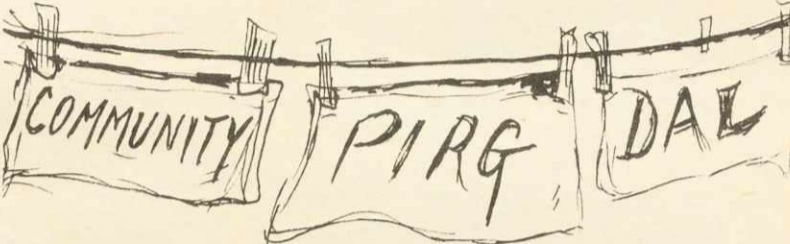
The PIRG Board of Directors is comprised of nine Dalhousie students who determine the policy, budget priorities and organizational struc-

ture of the organization (a new board will be elected in March). PIRG employs a part-time Executive Director to act as a liaison between the students and the Board of Directors. Beyond this structure, PIRG's primary energy resource is provided by volunteer students and community members.

What has PIRG been working on in 1992-93?

Current Working Groups:

- UNDO: United Nations Discrimination Obliteration is working towards updating the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights to include gender neutral language, the protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, a specific reference to the mentally ill, the aged, and people with disabilities to emphasize their rights to dignity and



quality of life.

- Waste Management Alternatives: Working with Metro's "It's Not Garbage" coalition towards more environmentally friendly ways of handling our wasteful habits, this group works closely with the Dalhousie Campus Environmental Action Group (CEAG).

- HART: The Homeless Action Research Team has just completed a

successful Christmas Toy Drive for Adsum house a shelter for homeless women and children. This group of dedicated volunteers continues to strive against human resource deprivation.

- Animal Rights: This group is putting together information on products that are not tested on animals.

- POWER: PeOple Working for Economic Responsibility is addressing the influence of globalization on this region, and is presently focusing on issues surrounding the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and supporting local economic alternatives.

- Men for Change: Their aim is to raise awareness amongst men on the issues of violence and gender myths.

Current Projects:

- Waste Management Guide to Metro

- Directory of Resource Centres and Contacts in Metro

- Community Connection: A linking up of social justice and environmental organizations and students who are doing research papers in order to spark research going back into the community.

- Pamphlet on pesticides and Christmas Trees

- Anti Racism Workshop for students and professors

- World AIDS Day guerrilla theatre in SUB lobby

- Week of Reflection panel discussion on violence against women

Ongoing Projects:

- In 1990 PIRG produced a single mother's survival guide (written by Brenda Thompson), distribution of the guide continues.

Full-time students at Dalhousie are members of Nova Scotia PIRG and contribute two dollars per term to PIRG's work through the student union fee. It is PIRG's policy to make this levy refundable for students who disagree with the directives of Nova Scotia PIRG. A refund period will be held from January 26 to February 16 during regular Office hours. Better yet, work with Nova Scotia PIRG and learn what's behind that catchy acronym.

PIRG is still open to new working groups and projects. Just contact the PIRG office with any questions or ideas at 494-6662 or visit in person Room 310 Dalhousie Student Union Building.

Getting the inside story

by Gazette Staff

Ever wonder from whence that pile of Gazettes appears every Thursday morning? The answer lies in a process that lasts all week and culminates in fateful last-minute layout on the night before publishing. Lots of people are involved, and lots more people are needed to help out.

To uncover some of the mystery associated with the inner workings of our team of journalists and production staff, the folks at the Gazette invite you to an Open House, next Thursday, January 14th from 2 to 5 p.m. in Room 312 of the S.U.B. so you can check out what's going on in this little corner of the world.

Don't feel you need to be a prolific writer/journalist type to be welcome here. If you can type, cut, paste, draw, read, talk, drink beer, eat pizza and/or breathe, we would love to have you hanging out around here.

Lots of present staff members, including one of the editors, started their stint with student newspaper life because of the intrigue of free pizza and beer every Tuesday night. As they continued on, they discovered the wonders of laying out a page, and the unexpected ease of writing an article that *lots of other people read*. Indeed, seeing one's name and one's words in print proved to be an addictive, fulfilling pleasure.

The Gazette helps open up one's mind. "It's a great way to get away from the daily grind of school," said one staff member. "I never knew I had so much to say." The student newspaper provides a forum for whatever is on one's mind (as long as it is

not sexist, racist or homophobic).

Some have accused the Gazette of being too politically correct and taking itself too seriously. True, most other forms of media in the Metro area feel many subjects in the Gazette are too "radical" for their readers' and advertisers' tastes. The paper aims to give students a voice, report on events concerning the university campus, provide a different perspective on the news as well as dissipate ignorance by fighting various forms of discrimination.

Students run the place. Most

major editorial decisions are made by the Gazette staff as a collective during staff meetings, Monday afternoons. A person officially becomes a staff member after contributing (writing or lay-out help) three times to the newspaper.

So, if you're interested, stop by our office next Thursday to see what's up. Staff meetings are every Monday at 4:00 p.m., lay-out is Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to midnight and goes on all day Wednesday 'til it's done.

We look forward to seeing you!

2 DOUBLE DEUCE ROAD HOUSE
1560 Hollis Street around the corner from Maritime Centre

WEASLE FACED JUDGE + STONE DELTA
Thurs., Fri. Jan. 7, 8th \$3

SLOAN + jale
Saturday night \$6

14 EYZ album release party
Wed. Jan. 13th \$3

Open Stage every Tuesday!

Every Monday CKDU **97.5 FM** **club night!**

MATRIX is a six-week, day program for women who are dependent on alcohol and/or other drugs. MATRIX is a pilot project that is sensitive to the needs of women.

MATRIX
A Program for Women

4 2 4 - 4 2 7 0

Nova Scotia Department of Health Drug Dependency Services Division

BURGESS TRAVEL AIR FARES

TORONTO from 199	AMSTERDAM from 489
VANCOUVER from 711	LONDON from 538
CALGARY from 677	MYRTLE BEACH from 429
CALIFORNIA from 647	CANCUN from 559
BOSTON from 223	SINGAPORE from 1589

The above fares are subject to availability and advance purchase rules. The fares vary according to departure date and are in effect Jan. 4/93. Fares are subject to change without notice.

UNIVERSITY BREAK WEEK
FEB. 20/21 1993 DIRECT SUN SPOTS

Bermuda air only 321 pkg 649 ppdbl
Jamaica air only 549 pkg from 830 ppdbl
Cuba Punta Arenas hotel from 759 ppdbl
Orlando air only 459 air, hotel, car from 685 ppdbl

Halifax 425-6110
1505 Barrington St. Maritime Centre
New Toll Free In N.S. 1-800-421-1345
Liverpool 354-5400 Bridgetown 665-4812

OPEN SATURDAY 9-5