

the OSEA news

The monthly publication of the Oregon State Employees Association

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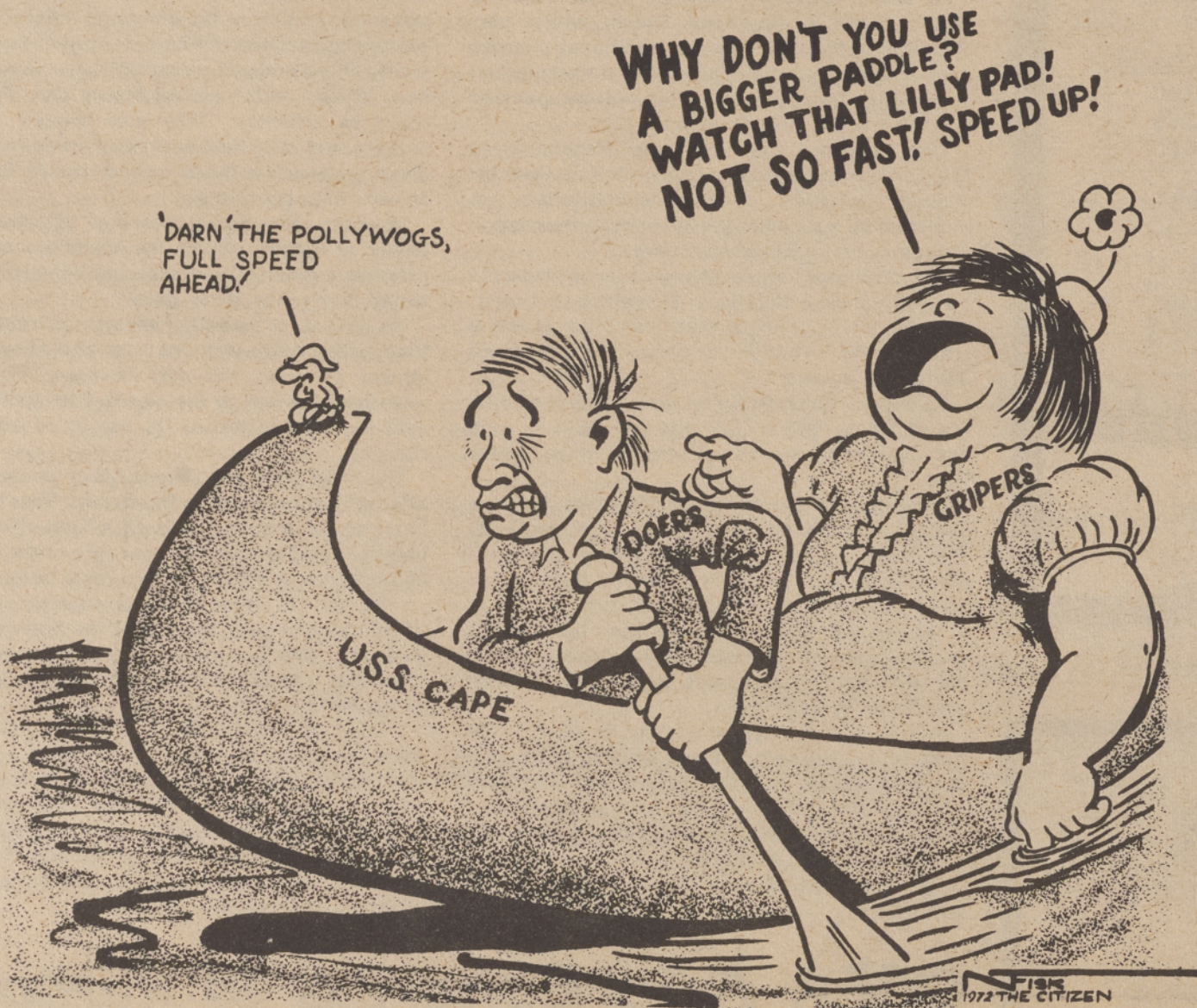
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Editor's Note: This cartoon appeared in the April issue of The Citizen, the monthly publication of the Colorado Association of Public Employees. CAPE is OSEA's counterpart in Colorado.

From the... Executive Secretary

Recognition for OSEA

As part of a recent Washington, D.C. trip to testify before a senate committee regarding the Hatch Act (expenses were paid by WAGE, the federation of 16 western state employee associations of which OSEA is a charter member), I detoured to accept a long-standing invitation to address graduate students at the School of Industrial Relations at Michigan State University.

Oregon employees may have forgotten that our state was one of the first to enact a collective bargaining law and rules in 1965-66, and may not realize that OSEA, along with perhaps the New York association, is recognized by the labor experts as making the most effective use of the process. It was for those reasons the invitation was extended.

The greater part of a day was spent in visiting with professors, talking to and answering questions from students, and then meeting in seminar with students and faculty. Accustomed to thinking of representation only in terms of the affiliated unions, the participants appeared much interested in hearing the independent association's viewpoint.

It probably was the first time the students heard there are people who believe collective bargaining can be engaged in effectively without abandoning a merit system; that there are progressive

organizations who still contend that the civil service systems, which protect fairness in hiring and retention regardless of race, creed, color, or sex, were the first real employment civil rights acts and must continue to be fostered.

We covered many subjects, such as political activity, the trend in some jurisdictions toward contracting out to private industry some governmental functions, and the built-in conflicts in unions which attempt to represent both public and private industry employees. One of the things which appeared most to impress both faculty and students was the kind of full-service grievance and other representation that OSEA offers its members.

The union-oriented groups are familiar with the shop steward system, in which fellow employees furnish representation on grievances and if legal representation is needed it has to be paid for by the local union or by passing a hat. I compared that to the chapter grievance committee system which OSEA threw out five or six years ago because it was not getting the job done.

They found it hard to believe that an organization could offer the legal and other services OSEA provides for a dues of \$3.00 a month. They found it more understandable when they were reminded that all OSEA dues dollars stay in the state to work for the members, instead of \$5.00 or more a month being diverted to the various echelons of a union affiliation before a penny can be spent at the local level.

It was a good experience, but one cannot help lament the fact there are still quite a few state employees in Oregon who fail to accept a message that could be understood by faculty and graduate students in a distant part of the country.