

FORTUNE

NEWS/TRENDS

BRING BACK THE GREASY POLE

■ "Corporate Ladder," a sculpture that purports to show the essence of American business, is looking for a new home. The 18½-foot-high plaster artwork in the rear lobby of the Lakeview II office building in Columbia, Maryland, portrays executives fighting for promotion, rung by rung. At the top, a CEO uses a foot to fend off the underling below him. They are both white males. Lower down are a white woman, a black male—both managerial types—and a white mailman.



New York City sculptor Ed Massey says he thinks it fairly represents the world of business. But it was too much for several of the building's tenants and their employees. They protested to the owner, **Principal Financial Group**, a \$26.5 billion insurance and financial services company that likes to invest in contemporary art. Says Michelle Warnke, a spokeswoman: "We weren't trying to make a statement. We try to purchase stimulating artwork." Maybe too stimulating in this case. The company has agreed to move the 700-pound sculpture elsewhere.

— Mark Alpert