

OPEN LETTER TO THE COLLEGE STUDENTS

Plans are now well underway for a nationwide Teach-In next spring, Wednesday, April 22, on the grave crisis facing the quality of the environment and the quality of life in America today.

A national headquarters and staff to organize, coordinate, and service this effort is now established in Washington. The address is Room 600, 2100 "M" Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20037.

The aim of the National Teach-In is to encourage students across the country to take the initiative in organizing April 22 environmental teach-ins on their campuses, and associated efforts in their communities.

Successful teach-ins on all campuses on the same day will have a dramatic impact on the environmental conscience of the nation. They will be immensely effective as an educational effort in arousing public opinion concerning necessary steps to protect our environment and establish quality on a par with quantity as a goal of American life.

There is no question that in the long run, the environmental challenge is the greatest faced by mankind. Distinguished scientific authorities have been warning for years that mankind is rapidly destroying the very habitat on which he depends for his survival.

In addition, population continues to increase worldwide — while scientists warn that we may have already passed sustainable population levels. All across the country, and worldwide, increasing numbers of citizens are voicing the same intense concern as has been so eloquently expressed by the ecologists and other environmentalists.

Yet, many are still not aware of the environmental problems being created by our advancing technology. Federally-financed projects — such as the supersonic transport plane — raise grave questions about possible new environmental dangers. Many respected scientists and national leaders have indicated that although some positive steps have been taken, toxic, persistent pesticides are still accumulating in the world environment, wreaking destruction on fish and wildlife — and threatening man himself. Is the price we pay for these products in terms of their effect upon our environment worth the benefits we obtain from them?

The pollution of our rivers and lakes, and of the air in our urban areas continues to accelerate. Suburban sprawl continues to destroy vast scenic and recreational resources, with little heed being given to plans to create workable environments. And the millions trapped in our urban and rural ghettos continue to suffer the worst of the massive air, water, land and noise pollution.

Who will finally bear the brunt of this tragic irresponsibility? The new generation now in school, the generation which will soon inherit the world environment. The time has come for all citizens to begin thinking about the basic questions raised by technological advances and environmental degradation.

Students in America and the world, who are deeply concerned with the hard choices which their generation faces, are uniquely well suited to take initiatives in exploring with all citizens the problems created by man's growing impact upon his environment.

We believe the National Teach-In next April 22nd provides students the opportunity to accomplish this objective. Hundreds of teach-ins on that day would bring together for the first time on a national scale the many young people who are already concerned about the environment, and would involve and educate many more as well.

In addition to bringing this widespread involvement, the teach-ins would present information, draw the issues, stimulate plans for action, and demonstrate the strength of concern for a livable world.

Furthermore, the environmental teach-ins present an unprecedented opportunity for the involvement by student initiative of communities, organizations, leaders, and concerned citizens of all generations in a common, nonpartisan effort to meet a problem of far-reaching consequence.

Thus, we are writing this letter to urge that all campuses in America participate in a broad-based, student-led teach-in effort, involving all individuals and groups who share this concern.

Already, the student response to this idea has been one of overwhelming support, and a number of campuses are now well into the process of planning April 22nd teach-ins.

At the University of Michigan, a mass meeting was called recently by an ad hoc student committee to plan a teach-in. More than 350 people showed up, and the plan is now well underway. University officials and faculty were also contacted by the students for their support and advice, a step which we believe is important for successful teach-ins.

Campus Comments

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The staff reserves the right to reject, edit or condense any copy submitted for consideration. Letters to the editor must be brief, signed, typed or written legibly. Names will be withheld upon request.

HIRSUTE MALES CONSERVE MONEY, TIME

About four years ago a popular song entitled "Home of the Brave" told of the plight of a young boy with long hair and the school board.

This song could easily be the theme song of Mitchell College today.

We find it hard to understand why long hair and facial hair should not be grown by male students. It doesn't interfere with studying or learning, which is the reason for students being here, so why does the administration object to it?

We have all heard the reason given by the administrators that visitors who come here to "evaluate" the school think long hair and beards give the college a bad name. We feel schools should be evaluated on academics — not on the personal appearance of students.

Notice we say "personal" appearance. We believe a student's rights are being interfered with when he is told to get a haircut or to shave. As we see it, it is an individual's personal privilege to decide whether he wants long hair.

With haircuts averaging \$2.00, long hair is economical, and students must save as much as possible to go to school. Shaving is a time-consuming chore; with eight o'clock classes and studying to contend with, students are saving time by letting their beards grow. This time can be used for studying, and remember that is why we are here.

Mitchell is said to be a liberal arts school.

Liberal?

R.D.R.

One of the projects now being planned preparatory to the University of Michigan event is a comprehensive inventory of environmental problems in that community and region.

Similar inventories for other teach-ins around the country would be educational and practical and would provide the teach-ins themselves with specific examples of local environmental problems needing immediate attention.

The University of Michigan students have sent us a memorandum on how they have developed their plan. We enclose a copy of the memorandum for the consideration of other campuses as they develop their own plans for their April 22nd Teach-Ins.

We look forward to the April 22nd event and ask your support and leadership. We are convinced that, if young people put their energy, imagination and idealism to work on this issue, they will help write a bright new chapter in the struggle for a livable world.

If you want more information, or if we can be of assistance, please contact the National Teach-In office: Environmental Teach-In, Inc., Room 600, 2100 M Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20037. The telephone number after December 8 will be 202-293-6960.

Sincerely yours,

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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

American young people finally have a real and challenging cause on which to protest and to attempt some positive action. The cause is of the utmost and priceless importance; more important than the Vietnam War, civil rights, or even the irrelevance of their college education. Our planet and its inhabitants are being threatened with a lifeless and sterile existence.

Who is so insensitive, so callous, or so ignorant of the facts that he does not fear the hideous attack on our planet by air and water pollutants? One has merely to read Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in order to be shaken and shocked into becoming an environmental activist. Miss Carson vividly describes the horrors which the uncontrolled and wanton use of pesticides and insecticides are doing to the ecological systems of our planet.

Ralph Nader reminds us that industries, homes, and vehicles dump tons of poisonous gases daily into our atmosphere. Mankind is killing his planet by these means, and, in the process, he will destroy himself. The problem is here, now, and of the utmost importance. How can we, as students, attack the problem?

Let's begin to "clean up" our planet by organizing our collective efforts, for in unity there is strength. Let's make our collective voices, actions, and protests so loudly and so succinctly that they will be heard throughout the country, even into the cloakrooms of the Congress of the United States. Let's shake and shock public opinion to such a degree that the masses will be moved to help carry the fight to restore atmospheric purity to our planet. When that happens, results will, and must, surely come. As the greatest industrial country in the world (also, unfortunately, the chief culprit in spoiling our planet) begins to "clean up" its atmosphere and waters, other countries will do so also. One spark can consume an entire forest.

With youthful vigor and enthusiasm, students can lead the attack against environmental pollution. As environmental activists, students of this generation can alter (we hope!) the bleak and sterile future which faces us all. Unite and protest, for here is a cause which is worthy of our mettle!

S. Sowers
Jan., 1970

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