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SPECIAL FEATURE REPORT on public school participation in nationwide Environmental Teach-In April 22, including letters from students and specific activities of schools and educators.

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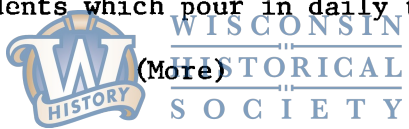
Nationwide Environmental Teach-In Captures Imaginations of Students, Teachers

WASHINGTON, D.C.--"I am 13 years old writing you a letter about air pollution. Yes, so I'm concerned, but what can a 13-year-old do about air pollution and what power do I have over big men who smoke cigars, probably nothing. What can I do about exhaust from cars and trucks. I want to know more about it, because it is my generation who will have to live in the smog and I have even heard that Florida will be uninhabitable in 20 years. Please write and tell me about it."

The above letter from DeDe DeMuth of Baltimore, Md., (504 Somerset Road), hangs amid pollution posters and other appealing letters from youth on the walls of the Environmental Action headquarters in Washington, D.C., an informational clearinghouse for the Nationwide Environmental Teach-In April 22.

Concern and interest of students--even the very young--about pollution and the environment is apparent in letters sent to the teach-in headquarters. A carefully printed request for information from Jane Pearson of Toms River, N.J. (103 Morris Blvd.), ends, "Please hurry. I'm interested in stopping pollution," while another from an Aloma Elementary School student in Winter Park, Fla., proposes an unexplained "minirail highway" solution and is signed, "Very Concerned, Robin Elder."

These letters, along with the approximately 200 letters from public school teachers and from other students which pour in daily to the busy teach-in headquarters,



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illustrates "one of the most pleasant surprises and developments of the environmental teach-in movement," according to Denis Hayes, national coordinator. The overwhelming response and interest from not only high schools but also from the junior high and elementary schools across the country for a movement which originated primarily on the college level.

Hayes estimates that the Environmental Action headquarters has received letters from students, teachers and administrators in more than 7,000 elementary and secondary schools and anticipates some type of environmental education programs in no less than 10,000 public schools across the country on April 22, now labeled "Earth Day."

Dennis Vinton, coordinator of Project Man's Environment reports that environmental education activities will be occurring in schools in every state April 22 and adds, "It would not surprise us if something happened in almost every one of the approximately 18,000 school systems in the United States." Vinton has been receiving between 100 and 150 letters daily from teachers and students for the past six weeks. Project ME is sponsored by the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, a unit of the National Education Association.

Both Vinton and Hayes attribute much of this response to concerted efforts of the NEA and many of its affiliated state education associations which represent 2 million educators. The education associations have urged teachers to work with students in planning meaningful educational activities for April 22, supplied members with information and resource guides, suggested inclusion of environmental education in the schools' regular curriculum, and urged the government to make pollution problems a priority concern.

In emphasizing the need for a new educational approach to environmental issues, NEA President George D. Fischer pointed out, "Our environment is rapidly being



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destroyed, not by the ignorant, ironically, but by the best educated and most intelligent among us. Pollution of air, water and land by our automotive engineers, industrialists and chemists indicates dramatically the need for change in our teaching of the sciences and technologies. We must begin to teach of the great dangers as well as the great potentials inherent in agricultural and industrial chemistry and technology."

Many education associations and teachers across the country are working on environmental education projects in response to what they consider a great need in this area and in response to the expressed interest of their students. Vinton estimates that about 1,000 school districts now have some type of longer-range environmental education programs. Schools and teachers may be publicly answering Jerry Murphy, a Lansdale, Pa., elementary school student who wrote the following letter to Environmental Action headquarters:

"Please send me all the information you have on Earth Day. I am in the fifth grade and would like to organize my community. The teachers and adults of my area are less aware of the urgency of this problem than the children and I would like to help make them aware. I will send some money when I can."

Monetary awards for the continuation of worthwhile antipollution projects initiated in Indiana schools are being given by the Indiana State Teachers Association. ISTA will give \$25 for outstanding April 22 projects reported to its newspaper which goes to members, while in the Northwest the Washington Education Association is giving its highest honor this year to an individual or group which has done the most in the category of environmental quality control.

State education associations in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and California, among others, have sent their teachers teach-in kits with informational resources and ideas for environmental education activities for April 22 and beyond. Many state education association publications have run an exclusive interview with Sen. Gaylord Nelson, D-Wisc., cosponsor of the teach-in and author of a bill on environmental education;



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devoted entire magazines to ecology and environmental education; and developed public service radio spots.

In an effort to make sure that this is not a "silent spring" on environmental issues, the Utah Education Association has adopted a position paper with action proposals ranging from designating April 22 "Clean Countryside Day" to beefing up library bookshelves with volumes on environmental education, arranging public tours of contaminated areas on that day, inserting environmental education in the subject matter of as many classes as possible, and urging churches to stress the moral responsibility of man to keep his environment clean for others, in addition to many ideas for environmental education in the schools.

The Iowa State Education Association is sponsoring a Conference on Pollution and Environmental Education May 2 which will be covered by educational television in that state. As the ISEA president points out, "If teachers are able to instill in students an honest concern for improving the environment in which they must live, many future pollution problems in our state and nation can be eliminated."

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Examples of Public School Activities for April 22 Supplied by Environmental Action Headquarters:

ELEMENTARY:

Chevy Chase Elementary School, Chevy Chase, Md.--Student committee responsible for organizing newspaper clips brought in by all students for bulletin board displays; Earth Day symbol contest for grades 4-6 and litter-bag design contest for grades 1 and 2, with bags for later use in parents' cars. Students are writing a newsletter for parents including information on dangerous pesticides and detergents and circulating a petition requesting protection for wildlife in Florida's Everglades National Park. Older students are preparing skits on the subject and acting them before younger grades.

JUNIOR HIGH:

Logansport, Ind., students are preparing a huge environmental display for a local shipping center, highlighted by a mural of a polluted city, and are displaying samples of drinking water at various levels of purification, and sewage at different treatment stages. Students will also show a film they did on the topic. They are planning a citywide pollution attitude survey and a downtown clean-up campaign and clean environment parade involving community organizations April 22. Students are also presenting environmental awareness programs to fifth and sixth graders.

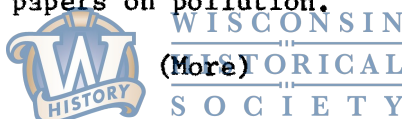
Hillside Junior High in Cranford, N.J.--Three-day observance of environmental issues April 20-22 including daily assemblies, a science fair, photography contest, films and a massive write-in to legislators. Students will wear surgical masks on April 22 made by home economic classes. Students have been writing their own ecology newsletter and have participated in a township meeting.

HIGH SCHOOL:

Cloquet, Minn., students and students from other Minnesota high schools will attend daily environmental awareness programs April 6-10 keynoted by former Vice President Hubert Humphrey and including more than 125 outside professionals.

Linton High School, Schenectady, N.Y.--Second Survival Week planned for April 13-17, with speakers, panels, films and a massive litter walk by more than 2,000 students. A popular on-going program of "Survival Ambassadors" has high school students making environmental presentations to elementary grades. Student action has resulted in the addition of an environmental education course to next fall's curriculum, and to the discontinuance of burning paper at the school in favor of baling and selling it. Students will also distribute foil strips to measure atmospheric particulate matter, sulfur, lead and benzopyrene.

Horton Watkins High School, suburban St. Louis--Plans week-long environmental awareness activities beginning April 20 with outside speakers and a multi-media environmental show using multiple screens, slides, film and sound. Students from universities in the area and from community organizations and business will participate in programs and discussions. A parent teach-in and grade-school teach-in are being considered for fall. All English classes are reading "The Population Bomb," and students are doing research papers on pollution.



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HIGH SCHOOL: continued...

Abraham Lincoln High School, Council Bluffs, Iowa--Plans include elaborate multi-media center for April 22 with three antipollution films running simultaneously with a film and slide presentation put together by students. Strobe lights, folk music, rancid smells, taped noise pollution will further add to "total pollution effect." Informational booths, an environmental book sale and a large art display are part of April 22 events. Students edit a weekly "pollution paper" and place anti-pollution posters in stores.

Bergenfield, N.J.--Planned march by students and community from the school to an old bridge crossing the heavily polluted Hackensack River for a short ceremony and then to a state historical site for speeches, music and a folk mass.

Edgemont High School, Scarsdale, N.Y.--Planned environmental awareness day for April 30 with folk singer Pete Seeger, films, discussions and speakers.

Portland, Ore.--Students have opened an office to coordinate efforts to pass an Oregon Scenic Rivers Bill which would protect five rivers in the state from developers. The bill has been buttonheld in committee. Car washes, bake sales and other such events have helped pay the office rent and expense money. Students are also planning Operation Big Stink in which each April 22 participant would contribute money to a fund used to retain legal services in prosecuting local polluters.

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