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Vivian

National

Teach-In

on the

CRISIS

of the

Environment

**Senator
Gaylord Nelson**



The destruction of natural resources on this planet is going on at a fantastic rate. If we don't act now to correct the situation, the decade of the 70's will signal the end of man as a species.

Eminent scientists predict the death of our oceans as life-bearing bodies of water by the end of the decade. By 1980, also we will be consuming each day the total water supply available in the United States, and will begin using and reusing water up to ten and twenty times a day. Clean air will be equally scarce. Deaths from cardiac arrests and respiratory illnesses will rise alarmingly on days when the wind takes a holiday and fails to chase the smog from the cities.

And then there is noise pollution. Psychiatrists tell us that noise is becoming increasingly suspect as a cause of neuroses. Geneticists are investigating the possibility that the noise from sonic booms is causing irreparable mutations in human and animal populations. The quality of life in our overcrowded, underfinanced cities is reaching crisis proportions.

It is clearly time to act to improve our environment. It is clearly time to start working toward gross national quality, as well as gross national quantity. Toward this end, a national Environmental Teach-In will be held April 22, which will cut across the generation gap and political party lines.

The objective of the Teach-In is to mobilize the constructive energies of American youth in a massive effort to halt the polluting and ransacking of our environment.

The Teach-Ins will be shaped campus by campus by student initiative, and may take the form of symposiums, convocations, panel discussions, or a combination of these. They will vary with the university and the section of the country in which they are located. For instance, students at the

University of California might want to discuss recent oil spills off the coast of their state; students at the University of Wisconsin might focus on the pollution crisis facing the Great Lakes; and students at Columbia University might well be most alarmed about the rapidly decreasing quality of life in major American cities. A national office in Washington serves as a communications and service center, and as an organizational stimulus for individual campus Teach-Ins.

The Teach-Ins, already being planned at one hundred and fifty campuses, will map out steps to protect our environment. They will present information, draw the issues, stimulate plans for action, and demonstrate a concern in this country for a livable world. Hopefully, they will set specific goals for the 70's, goals for a decade of national effort which will recognize the same priorities of expenditure as did the moon-shot effort of the 60's.

It is particularly appropriate that, by the 200th anniversary of the founding of this nation in 1976, we be well on our way to solving the problems of population growth, pollution and the degradation of our open space. The key to achieving this result lies in mobilizing the idealism, the motivation, and the energies of this student generation.

And this time we had better listen to what they have to say.

THE LIBRARY ROLE

There is a growing social awareness among librarians, and it is reflected on the book and record shelves and in the films and services available to library users. An escalating concern for fulfilling the rapidly changing needs of those who visit libraries— and those visited by libraries— is evidenced in the special unit created eighteen months ago within ALA devoted to exploring the issues facing man and bringing

them to the attention of the Association so that resources can be collected and developed.

There is concern voiced by many involved with libraries that there was an overconcentration in the past decade on physical expansion and the acquisition of materials, to the detriment of efforts to make the library resources available and to show the public the uses to which the resources might be put.

The national Environmental Teach-In of April 22, of which I am cochairman along with Congressman McClosky, presents an excellent opportunity for libraries to help insure the success of a crucial endeavor, by bringing the traditional services of the library fully to bear on a single problem, in cooperation with the myriad interest groups motivated by the Teach-In.

The libraries will be able to offer trained staff and collected materials that will help in the gathering of background materials and as guides to sources of information needed for local inventories. The bibliographic skill of libraries alone can increase the effectiveness of the Teach-In immeasurably. In addition, the lesser known facilities and skills of libraries in the field of media materials selection and distribution can provide the Teach-In with a broad selection and visual aids for the presentations they wish to develop for community use. Many libraries are equipped to supply meeting facilities, display space, and exhibit areas, and have staff or access to individuals trained in providing these services.

One specific service which can be of tremendous importance is the setting up in libraries of displays, in which the address and phone number of the Washington office of the Teach-In are prominent. The Environmental Teach-In, Inc. is located at Room 600, 2100 M Street, NW, Washington, D. C. 20036. The phone number is (202) 293-6960. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that the Teach-In is an educative, nonprofit organization. Li-

braries especially might want to get on the mailing list of the Washington office in order to receive environmental materials which will help them serve their local patrons. Enterprising libraries might want to arrange for speakers to address library users on what they can do to fight environmental despoilation.

Demonstrating their ability to meet such a concentrated effort to inform the public will give libraries the opportunity to perform a significant service and to show their potential force in the community. No more dramatic or urgent challenge has come forward to date to test the rising social awareness of the profession. All libraries and librarians, both as citizens and professionals, have a stake in the future of their environment, and it is fortunate that the investment in the growth of libraries on the federal, state, and local level will enable them to make a significant contribution to our national awareness of a serious ecological and sociological problem.

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Education for Abandon in the Bawdy House of Facts

-Gerald R. Shields, Editor, American Libraries

We are offering you the chance to let your hair down and cut loose. We think it is the opportunity of the century for libraries and their staffs, but it is going to take guts to pull it off.

On April 22, 1970, there will be a national "teach-in" on pollution. It is being cosponsored by Senator Gaylord Nelson (D.-Wis.) and Congressman Paul N. McClosky (R.-Calif.). Its purpose is to educate the citizenry to the sounds and sights of their dying environment. If the world is to end it will certainly be with a whimpering cry for a breath of air and a drink of water.