

UNIVERSITY NEWS

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"UP ALL NIGHT WITH
A SICK ENVIRONMENT..."

Time Magazine on Jan. 26, 1970 first took note of the concern on campus about pollution when it reported that the first environmental teach-out would be held at Northwestern University -- "Project Survival."

Time's cover story the following week was devoted to "The Emerging Science of Survival," and to ecologist Barry Commoner who, said Time, has probably done more than any other U.S. scientist to awaken a sense of urgency about the declining quality of life.

"Last week," Time reported, "he addressed 10,000 people at Northwestern University, where young activists staged the first of a series of major environmental teach-outs that will climax in a nationwide teach-out on April 22."

Science magazine, the organ of the U.S. scientific community, on January 16 noted in a round-up on student activism concerning the environment that "One of the first of the larger environmental teach-outs this year will be held at Northwestern University. This is billed as an all-night affair that is to begin with speeches by environmental evangelists Paul Ehrlich of Stanford and Barry Commoner of Washington University. There is to be a songfest, followed by a smorgasbord of group discussions. The teach-out is being organized by Northwestern Students for a Better Environment, a nonradical group set up last October to investigate and take positions on environmental questions and to stimulate wider public interest in these issues."

"Up all night..." /Addl

The "Teach-Out" was also discussed in two issues of Chemical & Engineering News, organ of the American Chemical Society.

It was not only the timeliness, but the scope of Northwestern's "Project Survival" that provided information the news media needed to inform the public of the critical and complex issue being raised.

This point was made by Fred W. Friendly, producer of the Edward R. Murrow Reports and the innovator of the Public Broadcasting Laboratory. Viewing preparation for "Project Survival" some weeks earlier, he said, in effect, that Northwestern University was "where it was at" in presenting the issue of the day. He urged radio and television to look there to achieve their educational promise.

The national and Midwest broadcast media did turn out in force for "Project Survival."

Representing Chicago radio were crews from WBBM, WIND, and WFMY. Television crews came from WGN-TV; NBC TV City Desk; NBC TV Night-Beat.

CBS-TV Network also filmed the activity.

Midwest colleges sent radio crews, too. These came from Northwestern, Kendall College and the University of Illinois.

Under a headline, "Public Service at Highest Level," Chicago Daily News radio and TV writer Norman Mark made this observation Jan. 27: "WIND's 10-hour coverage of the Northwestern University pollution conference last Friday night was a fine example of community service by a broadcaster.

"I thought that fewer interviews should have been repeated in the course of the program and the home audience should have been allowed to contribute comments, but the idea of committing 10 straight hours to one subject was often highly successful in communicating the enormity of the pollution around us. Bravo, WIND."

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The Associated Press and the United Press International carried the highlights of "Project Survival" across the nation. Thus, from Houston, Texas, to Minneapolis, Minn., to both coasts citizens were afforded some expert evaluations of President Nixon's "clean waters" program, which he had announced only the day before "Project Survival." The wire stories quoted Drs. Commoner and Lamont Cole, for example, as saying the program was inadequate to handle the nation's sewage.

Newspaper coverage by such metropolitan papers as the Milwaukee Journal, Chicago Today, Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Daily News, and Chicago Tribune, had been extensive during planning stages of "Project Survival." They devoted pages to the event itself and, in the following days, published several editorials.

Among the more comprehensive accounts was a picture and text report by the Milwaukee Journal team:

"Northwestern University was up all night with a sick environment, and the result was a dramatic display of youthful commitment.

"Thousands of people, mostly students, attended an all-night -- 7 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Saturday -- program of speeches, workshops and folk singing in what was called "Project Survival, an environmental teachout." It was called a teach-out because it was an effort to dramatize environmental problems, and because the university was reaching out to involve the community.

"The commitment the young people displayed is sure to have political influence on the issues of overpopulation, pollution, and the impact of man and technology on nature."

Mentions of "Project Survival" in other papers and magazines across the nation hit the same key.

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Business Week, in its February 7 issue, for example quoted Casey Jason, one of the organizers of "Project Survival," in an article the magazine headlined, "How Students See the Pollution Issue":

"Students in general seem unimpressed with the Administration's current efforts to marshal student opinion behind its antipollution program. 'Their attitude smacks of channeling student energy, putting up posters to keep them happy and busy,' says Northwestern senior Casey Jason, co-chairman of the Northwestern teach-out. 'Well, that's not what we're after, and we're not going to settle for it.'

U.S. News & World Report, in its February 16 issue, in an article devoted to a seeming ebb of violence on U.S. campuses printed a picture from Northwestern University's "Project Survival," the first teach-out on the subject to be held in the nation. The caption: "Improving the environment is 'in' as a campus issue."