

CHRIS HALLIGAN

Earth needs action — now

Never had I seen such squaller. It was horrible.

The water was dark brown with tires and garbage floating around. The streets were clogged with blowing papers and abandoned Styrofoam insulation. The air conditioners were pumping out CFCs at an alarming rate. The cars were belching carbon monoxide out of their tailpipes, creating a dizzying stench and a gray misty cloud over the city.

I guess what amazed me the most was that when I moved to Seattle 10 years ago, it was sparkling clean. What happened?

Well, Seattle isn't the only town in America that is showing tell-tale signs of the gluttonous decades. Virtually every metropolis in America has transformed dramatically in the last 20 years.

This poses to me a rather disturbing question: If this much damage can be done in a minuscule 20 years, what will the next 20 years bring?

As many of us know, Earth Day will be April 26, and with it will come the typical Ecology Now rhetoric of how much the Earth has been destroyed — a tapestry of whining with one major thread missing: effective solutions.

Indeed, we will hear about the 74,000 acres of forest that are bulldozed or burned off the Earth every day and the desecration of the rain forests. We will be told of entire ecosystems that are destroyed daily and how the cure for cancer already may have been lost.

Of course, global warming will be mentioned. The evils of fossil fuels will be addressed, along with the chlorofluorocarbons that are blamed for the huge ozone hole.

And we can't forget the thousands of tons of resources going up in smoke with the rain forests. This very well could be the heated topic for this year's Earth Day advocates.

We will hear the harrowing stories of how we are poisoned every day by the DDT we export to other countries and hidden radioactive waste that causes cancer and makes large areas



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of land uninhabitable.

We will be told of the 158 million tons of municipal solid waste we create a year. Pictures will be painted of huge, stinking, stagnant, disease-infested mountains of solid waste that soon will be spilling into our backyards.

Acid rain, a travesty afflicting about 9,000 lakes and 60,000 miles of streams in 34 states, will be a focal point this year. It will be mentioned that it is not a wonder the salmon didn't spawn this year. They all probably were tripping on the acid rain.

These are simply a few of the horrific examples of how our planet is going down the tubes. While Earth Day environmentalists plan parades and Nirvana gives a free show in Central Park, the pollution will continue and attitudes will remain unchanged.

The reason is simple: You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

Earth Day began in 1970. Now, 20 years later, we face pollution problems that make the ones in 1970 look like child's play. Society has labeled

Earth Day advocates as any other liberal group out to save the world: eccentric and unrealistic.

Unfortunately, as our bizarre weather patterns suggest, this problem has gotten to the point where we actually are changing nature. The Earth is reacting to our misuse, and what has been done cannot be reversed. So what next?

Earth Day certainly is not the answer, but it is a tool to help. Our parents (ironically, the founders of Earth Day) and grandparents are lost causes. They still will buy air conditioners and huge Chevrolets and throw away resources as they have for years. The solution lies not in "asking" them to recycle and ride their bikes, but in our generation and the push for radical changes in industry.

Industry must produce alternatives very, very soon. Fuels must be cleaner. CFCs immediately must be banned. Western nations must unite to stop the blind desecration of Third World resources that affect us all.

City, state and federal policies must be adopted to force people to recycle, burn less fuel and change their habits to provide a cleaner environment. The only people who will initiate these tactics are ourselves, the students — the open-minded, unspoiled hope of society that isn't afraid of change.

I guess that we all must evaluate our priorities a bit more. We must ask ourselves what is more important. While the world whines about things that really represent nothing more than selfish whims, the Earth is going to hell in a handbasket.

It once was said that people would not react until it came to a crisis situation. Well, the hole in the ozone is bigger than we thought. People are dying from pollutant-caused cancers at alarming rates. Spring buds are dead on their branches because of the inconsistent weather patterns.

What else does the world need to see?

Halligan is a junior political science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Marijuana research ignored

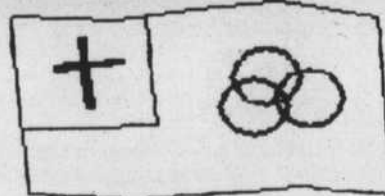
While Sean Green, without obvious research, has pointed out that the Public Health Service believes that pot smoke hurts your lungs ("Ill cruelly denied marijuana," DN, March 16), he also forgot to say that UCLA has given

pot a clean bill of health. That means no brain damage. Sean, check it out. Try some research.

Blake Chance
senior
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You're smart enough to know the difference between perestroika and glasnost. And you're still smoking?

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Campus Advance issue 'scary'

I am writing this letter in response to the "Campus Advance" article I read in the DN on March 16 ("Possible cult group resuming activities"). Early last semester, I started to get involved with the group, but let me stress that I was never a member. When I first started attending some of their things, I was totally unaware of the group's intentions. They seemed very friendly, and I enjoyed that. I thought I might possibly have found a group I liked.

At the first Bible study, I started to get doubtful. The church feels that in order to be saved, you have to be baptized into their church. I was brought up in a Christian home, and felt a little leery of what they were saying. But they were so friendly and convincing I started to accept what they said.

From then on, things started getting more confusing. I learned that the church didn't recognize any other churches as being "saved," and they even remarked that all the other church groups on campus were "false and hypocritical." They believed that they were the only true "disciples" of Christ, because nobody else lived by the Bible as they did.

One night, a member of the group told me to take 24 hours, fast, and decide if I wanted to give my life to Christ. I was to meet her the next day at the Union. When I saw her the next day, I told her that I have a great love and a heart for God, but that I wasn't ready to join a church. She told me that I was being selfish, prideful and that the devil was working with me. She told me that in order to be a true Christian, I had to be baptized into their church. Once members are baptized, they are part of the church.

Once you are a part of their church, you are dominated by them and are expected to live by their rules. You are not to date anyone but the people in the church, because they are the only true Christians. You are to adhere to your discipler's advice, and

they even tell you that if you have to hate your family in order to be with them, then do so.

Since that night, I have stayed far away from that group. I have become involved with a church in Lincoln, and am over that horrible experience.

I stress this: Be very careful if you are approached by a member of the Campus Advance group. With them you have no independence. It's either their way or no way, and as I stated, every other church or group to them is considered to be "false prophets" by their standards. Last year, the group was not allowed to be an established group on campus. That should say something. Members of that group will tell you that they "are only suffering from persecution, just like Jesus did." But that is not the case. Yes, all Christians have to suffer from persecutions on Earth at one time or another, but this is just their excuse to get people to believe them. If the only people who get to heaven are going to be the people in the Campus Advance group, heaven must be a very small place!

The group also expects you to make life-long commitments in a two-week span, and that is not right. In my opinion, it is very easy to get involved in a cult, but very hard to get out. That final night when I knew in my heart that group was wrong, I felt much better about myself. I was suffering from confusion, feelings of guilt, and fear. God doesn't create all that in a person if something is right. I realize now, looking back, how scary the whole thing was. The reason why I am writing this letter is not to argue with the Campus Advance group, or to start trouble in any way. I just want to share my experiences with others, so maybe I can help people who might be getting involved to really think things over. It's a very scary issue.

Karen B. Kuchar
junior
special education and elementary education

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