



Facing the crisis of complexity

"The eleventh hour . . ." What's that?

At first I didn't like the name of this column because I've already passed through my fatalistic, adamant phase. While I still feel strongly about the fate of the world, I've accepted that the gloom-and-doom approach to controversial subjects doesn't work very well.

It's been said that our most serious crisis these days is the crisis of complexity. I think that's especially applicable to the field of biology. The problem is bigger than just cute little endangered species, or even awesome and wild endangered

species. At stake is the smooth functioning of the self-maintaining solar-powered mutually supportive living systems that make such an abundant life possible for so many people.

There are so many issues, so many aspects of so many problems, that to try to deal with the Big Picture in so small a column seems absurd. When you have some free time drop by the Environmental Resource Center on the second floor of Nebraska Union. You'll find a myriad of periodicals, books and tapes — a small sample of what's available.

Some years ago I attended a speech by Helen Caldicott, a pediatrician from Australia who got upset about the potentially horrendous effects of a nuclear war on children and other living things. She helped organize Physicians for Social Responsibility and traveled around describing in detail the various ways to suffer and die from radiation. She also talked about "psychic numbing," which describes how people stop thinking about things too horrible, too huge or just too complex for them to do anything about.

Since the end of the Cold War, we are somewhat less likely to "go out with a bang." The remaining problems are more subtle: biodiversity, global warming, overpopulation, ozone depletion, ur-

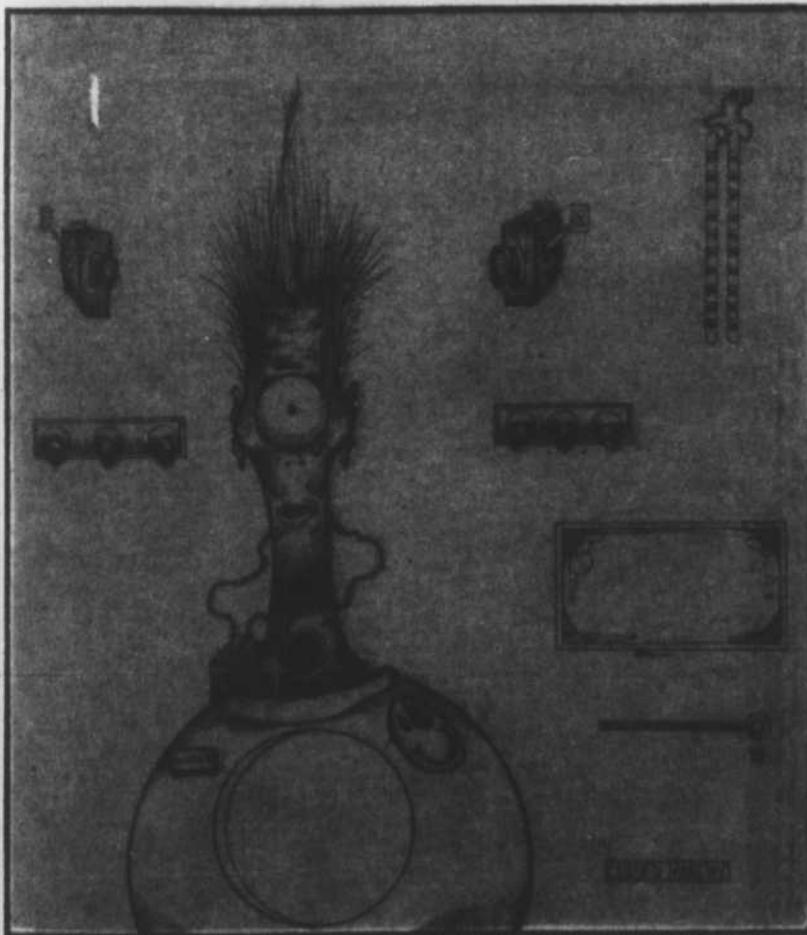
ban sprawl, deforestation, contaminated water, desertification, public education . . .

You can take a class like Global Ecology and you too can understand population dynamics, "carrying capacity," cornucopian myths and other things most other people don't like to think about.

These issues don't disturb me too much because I'm basically an optimist. Like the late Buckminster Fuller I have faith in Youth and the "intuitive love of truth" that most people share. But sometimes late at night I still worry and wonder why people who seem to care the most about other people aren't in positions of political power.

The laws of ecology, according to Barry Commoner, aren't that complex really: Everything is connected to everything else; Everything must go somewhere; Nature knows best; and there's no such thing as a free lunch.

— Daniel Clinchard



Bank teller 2050

Paul Tisdale

'92

OutWeek

Sunday, Oct. 11th- Hanging of the banner, public speakers at Broyhill Fountain, UNL, 4 p.m.
• Night Out #1

Monday, Oct. 12th- Share coming out stories, Room 24, Nebraska Union, 7 p.m.
• Night Out #2

Tuesday, Oct. 13th- An evening of art and literature with Barbara Di Bernard, Regency Room, Nebraska Union, 7 p.m.
• Night Out #3

Wednesday, Oct. 14th- Mid-week party at Panic! All ages welcome. 18th and N street, Lincoln

Thursday, Oct. 15th- Movie: "Combatting Homophobia" and "Lesbian Battering", 7 p.m., Nebraska Union
• Night Out #4

Friday, Oct. 16th- Workshop on Spirituality and Well-being by Annie Pearson, Ballroom, Nebraska Union, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 17th- Amateur Alternative Talent Night, Nebraska Union, 7 p.m.

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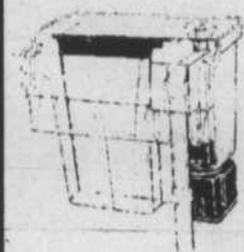
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