

Conference addresses race, gender aspects of environment

■ **FORUM:** Keynote speaker will address immigration's role in the ecological neighborhood

By Doug Irving
Student Activities Reporter

Environmentalists too often ignore the racial and societal issues in their cause, said Mustafa Kasubhai, co-organizer of the Environmental Racism and Justice Conference.

The conference, taking place Saturday and Sunday in the law school, will illustrate a range of factors in environmental problems, such as class, race, gender and labor issues.

It will consist of workshops, videos,

speakers and a potluck dinner. Workshops will deal with issues from housing to forestry.

"We want to show how students can be involved with the local communities," Kasubhai said. "We want to give them a sense of direction."

Many of the workshops will address environmental racism, which is when low-income communities or "communities of color" are singled out and zoned for waste dumps, or when low-income workers are treated unfairly, Kasubhai said.

"One example would be industrial workers, who face several toxic chemicals," Kasubhai said. For example, computer chip production can involve

cyanide, he said.

According to Kasubhai, all issues are integrated into the environment.

"It isn't just a race problem, it isn't just a gender problem, it isn't just a class problem," Kasubhai said. "Human beings are integrally related to the environment."

"What is happening to the environment also is happening to the community," he said.

The Coalition Against Environmental Racism will present the conference. This organization educates students about environmental justice, Kasubhai said.

"We wanted to address things that are happening in our local communities. We wanted to make sure people knew how to

get involved."

Several student organizations are co-sponsoring the event, including the Survival Center, the Multicultural Center and the Student Senate.

Katherine Flewellen, an immigration consultant, will give the keynote address. According to Kasubhai, Flewellen will discuss the environmental aspects of immigration.

"Immigration is used as a scapegoat by conservatives to explain why the environment is in trouble," he said. "People are looking for short-term scapegoats."

The conference does not require reservations, and admission is free. For more information, call 346-4073.

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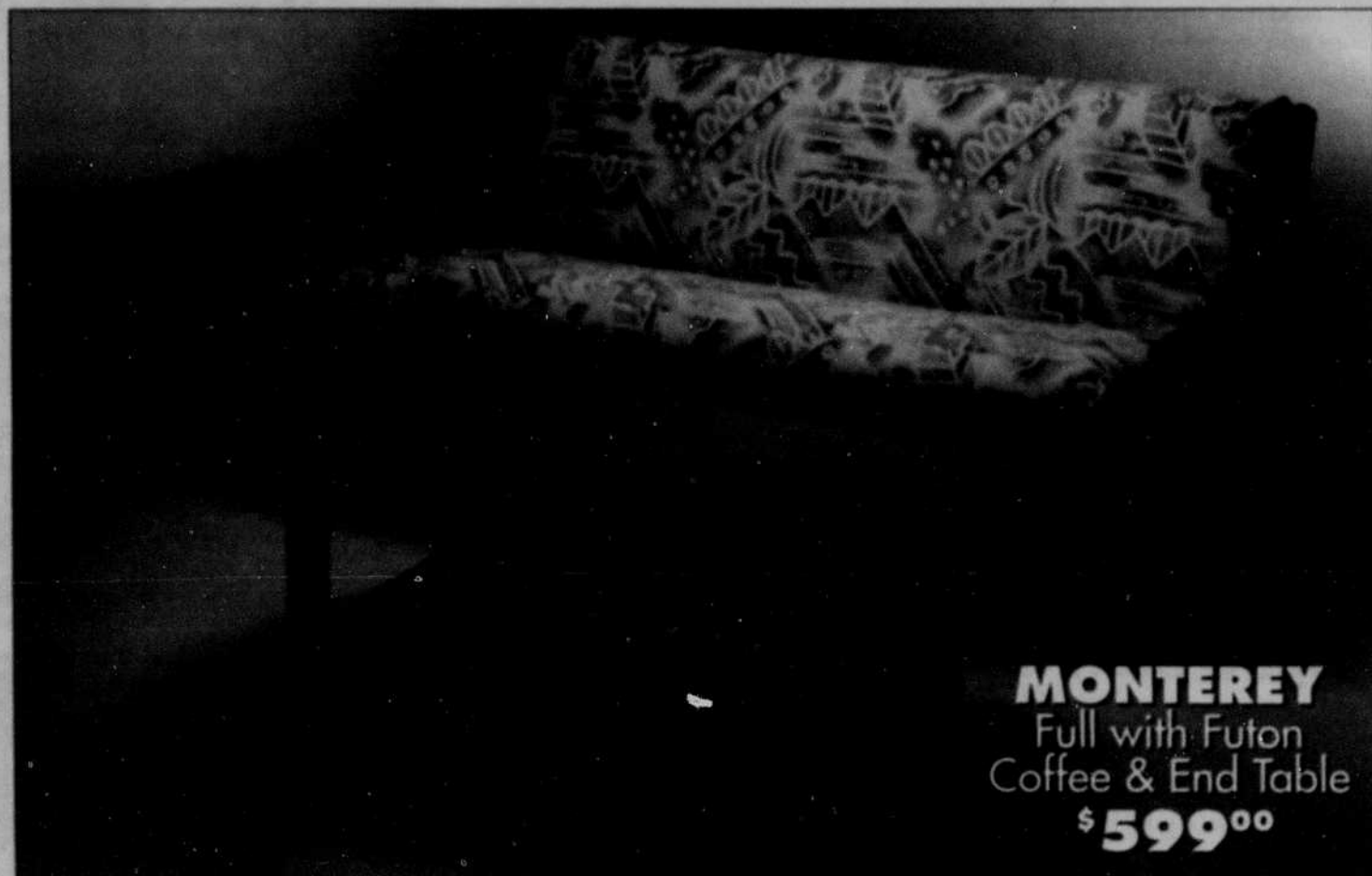
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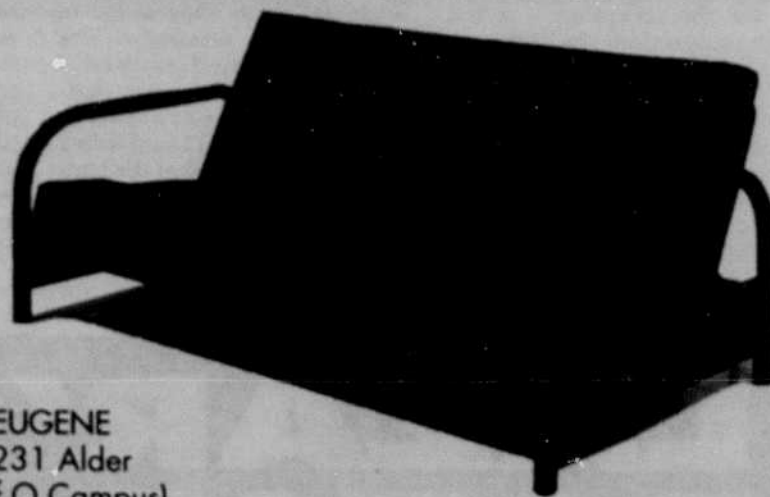
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