

# Newsletter, Summer 1999

**This and the other back issues of newsletters are archived here so that interested parties can learn about the kinds of activities in which World Population Balance is involved and learn about the importance of our growing population problem. To receive timely information in our free newsletter, please subscribe to our newsletter.**

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## Fall Conference October 16th

The Board of Directors of World Population Balance invites all members, supporters and friends to our Fall Conference October 16, 1999 at Augsburg College. Please join us as we celebrate our exciting achievements of the past year. Our special guest speaker will be long-time friend, Al Bartlett, of Colorado. In addition to a delicious luncheon and highly informative presentation by Dr. Bartlett, members of the Board will update you on the highlights of our many recent population activities in the Upper Midwest. Since October 12th marks the arrival of the six billionth person on the planet, of course we will be acknowledging that unprecedented event, as well. The conference will be from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm in the Christensen Center at Augsburg College.

Since this is on a Saturday when Augsburg's weekend college will NOT be in session, parking will be readily available in the area. We invite you to set aside this date on your calendars now. If you would like, please include friends and family in your reservation. This will be an exciting event as we celebrate our progress to educate and raise awareness about population issues throughout the region. Enclosed is a reservation form for your convenience. Please join us on the 16th!

### Conference Schedule

9:30 Coffee and Registration

10:00 "Arithmetic, Population and Energy" - Dr. Al Bartlett

11:00 Break

11:15 World Population Balance Activities - Board members

12:00 Lunch

1:00 "Infinite Growth in a Finite World?"

- David Paxson (For those who have not had the opportunity to hear David speak.)

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## Bartlett Featured at Conference

Dr. Albert Bartlett, professor emeritus of the University of Colorado, will return to Minnesota to present his compelling talk, "Arithmetic, Population and Energy" October 16 at our Fall Conference. You will not want to miss

this widely acclaimed presentation that was a highlight of the highly successful population conference at the Science Museum of Minnesota last November. Everyone who attended gave his talk rave reviews. And others were sorry they missed it. This is another opportunity to take in his outstanding program. Dr. Bartlett has given it over 1300 times to audiences from coast to coast.

We are certain that some of you who had the pleasure of seeing him last November will want to bring family and friends to hear his compelling message. Please do so. We will have room for you and your friends, especially if you send in your reservation early. Mark your calendar for October 16th and come help us celebrate our exciting achievements of the past year.

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## **School Education Project a Success**

by Frank Babka

Since my full-time volunteer involvement with World Population Balance began, we have greatly expanded our speaking engagements. I have concentrated on high school and middle school students and their teachers. During February and March, I visited every one of the 80 or so high schools in the Twin Cities metro area, leaving literature and introducing myself to teachers and administrators.

The result during March, April and May was a total of 72 separate classroom and lecture hall presentations made in 23 high schools and middle schools throughout the metro area. Most programs were given for individual teachers' classes. Some classes were combined, and talks were given in front of as many as 100 students. In several cases, return visits were made to the same school to speak to additional classes.

I have enjoyed the nostalgia of returning to high school again after graduating 20 years ago. It has been fun talking with young people about the world population issue, especially fielding questions and listening to students' views. The majority of young people seem to know little or nothing about the issue. A few are very well versed about it, based on things they have learned in class or seen on the Internet. Most teachers gave high ratings on our evaluation forms. They have been tremendously interested in the issue and appreciative of the opportunity to learn more about it.

I am using a number of audio-visual materials including slides, a video depicting population growth from 1 A.D. to the year 2020, a metronome that illustrates how fast the world's population is growing (2.5 ticks per second!), and a glass bowl that is used to illustrate gripping examples of exponential growth. Also, I bring a number of books, magazines, and newspaper articles to use as supplemental teaching aids.

Many young people are very interested in hearing about the population issue. They realize that this is going to be "their issue" in the coming years. I am excited to be educating these young people - our future, to be sure - about the realities of population growth and the benefits of stabilization. And I am eagerly looking forward to being "back in school" full time this fall!

Frank Babka, Public Educator for World Population Balance, retired from Cargill, Inc. last year. He works full-time to raise awareness about the population issue.

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## **The Key: Educate Next Generation**

by David Paxson

During recent years massive resources have been expended to provide population and family planning education around the world. Due in very large part to these monumental efforts, birth and growth rates have slowed down a bit. This is "good" news. It means that we have avoided reaching six and a half to seven billion people by the year 2000. So, while the struggle to feed, clothe, educate and provide social infrastructure for 78 million more people per year goes on right now, at least it's no longer 90 million per year like it was!

This "good" news means that the United Nations reduced their population projections for 2050. During the next fifty years, if the world's "elders" continue to educate every new generation of young people about the importance of having fewer children with a similar degree of success to the present, then we may increase by "only" four billion more people. So, we will increase to about 10 billion people if we are able to maintain family planning education efforts at levels similar to the present.

However, the U. N. also projects that if we slip in our efforts, if we fail to remain as diligent and successful as we now are, population could increase to around 12 billion during these same 50 years. And on the low end, their "best case" projection would put us to 8 billion by 2050. Please note that this best case addition of 2 billion more people in the next 50 years is still an increase by one third over present numbers.

Think of some of the major challenges in Minnesota and in the world with which you are familiar. Now add a third more people to the situation, and envision how that would look. For most issues, I see increased strain on resources, strife, misery or suffering, not less. Clearly, this "best case" population increase is not a prescription for a more healthy, viable planet with current "quality of life" maintained.

Further, with regard to this "low" projection of 2 billion more people by 2050, it astounds me that the anti-population stabilization people -- so-called "cornucopians" -- have received such incredible amounts of media coverage of their views. In most cases their first "dishonesty" is that they ignore the high and middle (most likely) projections of the U.N. entirely! They focus on the low, 2 billion increase. Then they paint a rather rosy picture about it.

Another dishonesty is their failure to explain that, according to the U.N., the "low" increase of 2 billion will happen **only** if the world community becomes much **more** concerned and active with regard to family planning. But, with puffy articles and interviews like theirs, they are reducing the possibility of building the necessary, greater awareness that is required! So they are actually undermining the outcome they tout as being the most likely one!

Here are some other dishonesties, things they fail to address. Right now, with "only" six billion of us: (1) We are driving over 50 species of plants and animals to extinction per day! (2) We are destroying rain forests many times faster that they can regenerate. (3) We are consuming stored solar energy (fossil fuels) at rates thousands of times faster than it is regenerating. (4) There are regions in the U.S. where we are consuming fresh water at least 10 times faster than it is being replenished. (5) We are causing soil salinization and erosion several-fold faster than rates of restoration. (6) We have over-fished our oceans, radically changing the species balance in many places.

These are only a few of the unsustainable things that one species -- ours -- is doing on the planet, our only home. We must help people understand and think in terms of sustainability, carrying capacity, impact and ecological footprint.

I am highly encouraged to observe young people at our presentations as they make many of these critical connections. They "get it!" They are our future leaders. May we do whatever we can to help them develop an educated, "earth wisdom" worldview rather than one of "planetary extraction." Clearly, the quality of life of our great grandchildren depends upon it!

David Paxson is President of World Population Balance.

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