

# Newsletter, Summer 1997

**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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## Food Summit Ends: High on Hopes But Low on Probable Results

By Roger Bengston

A well meaning four day World Food Summit has just concluded in Rome. Coming out of the meeting, which was sponsored by the United Nations and attended by 194 nations, was a non-binding resolution calling for a reduction in the number of hungry people in the world -- from 840 million now to half that number by 2015. The United States and other developed nations recognized this as a goal or aspiration, but not as an obligation.

The essential dilemma, however, is that a world population of six billion people by 2000 is projected to rise to nine billion by 2030, an increase of fifty percent in three decades. The lion's share of the increase will be in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Interestingly, no one seems to dispute these numbers; they are taken as a given.

While birthrates are falling slowly worldwide and usage of reproductive health care is increasing, the projection of nine billion people by 2030 still seems likely. Other than among a small minority of people, there is little awareness of population issues and the implications of an additional three billion people on the planet. It is rare when either government officials or the media even mention the issue of population.

Other than a much more crowded world, there are three major implications related to a rise in population from six to nine billion people. First is greater competition for the world's resources, both renewable and nonrenewable. With current strains on many resources, including land and water shortages as well as problems of environmental pollution, a fifty percent increase in population will only cause greater pressure on all these resources and problems.

A second source for concern is increased world migration. Data clearly indicate a growing tide of world migrations today, as people move to areas and countries offering more hope for their future. For example, ten percent of France's population now are Muslims from Algeria. Mexican immigration in Texas and California makes the evening TV news. If the United States is experiencing a loss of border control now with a Mexican population of 90 million, what will it be like in 2030 when Mexico is projected to have 150 million people? Remember, the extra three billion people on the planet by 2030 will be mainly in developing, poor countries where many people will want to migrate to developed nations, either legally or illegally.

The potential for greater social chaos is a third implication of having nine billion people. Africa, where many countries are doubling their population in the short space of twenty to thirty years, offers a recipe for growing social and political chaos. To date, we've seen the results in Somalia, Liberia, and Rwanda; other African countries are ripe for social explosion. While the media tend to report these stories as ethnic conflict -- Hutus versus Tutsis in Rwanda -- population growth is a significant element adding to the problem.

Rwanda, for example, doubled its population in the past twenty years, having the highest birthrate in the world. Prior to the recent turbulence, the average Rwandan woman was having 8.5 children in her lifetime, virtually a biological maximum for a nation. And, unlike several decades ago before the age of modern medicine when the vast majority of those children would not live to even their fifth birthday, today most of them do live and contribute to their ongoing rapid population growth. In contrast, birth rates in countries like Italy are low, and their population growth has stopped. But the point to be emphasized is this: with the world now experiencing social turmoil with six billion people, what will it be like with nine billion?

Unless world population is stabilized, the prospects for reducing the number of hungry people below the 840 million figure appears doubtful. A more likely scenario is a rise in the number of hungry people, creating greater human misery! World leaders and scientists should surely address ways to increase food production and distribute it more equitably. And they also must augment efforts to stabilize population.

*Roger Bengston, a former Advisory Board member, now serves on the Board of Directors.*

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## **Are you a Realist or a Happy-Go-Lucky Optimist?**

by Walter Breckenridge

It is not just my opinion but that of a rapidly increasing group of concerned citizens that our society is moving, not so slowly, but surely toward a catastrophe of an only partially known nature. Naturally those of us with this view of the future are considered by many as being pessimists of the first order. But I think that when we examine our population growth and certain technological developments, critics will admit that we are actually pessimistic realists.

We might expand briefly on the one field of population growth. Few biologists dispute the fact that humans are simply one of the many species of the world's mammals and that nearly all existing mammals have reproductive potentials well beyond that needed to sustain their optimum populations. Excess individuals of all these species have been, and still are being, eliminated by nature through disease, predators, parasites, starvation and direct competition thus keeping their numbers within the carrying capacity of their habitats. The human race is not a separate and distinct form

of life that can continue to reproduce indefinitely far beyond the carrying capacity of its finite habitat -- the Planet Earth. The human is the only animal that realizes that this is true, and we are the only animal capable of planned control of its reproductive rate. The tragedy is that we appear to be unable to put this knowledge into action.

It is true that some groups of humans are recognizing that our numbers are threatening to exterminate many species of plants and animals that our Creator has placed here to share the space and resources of our Planet. Almost daily I am receiving mail requests for contributions to save the gorillas; save the Florida manatees; save the fish populations of the Newfoundland Banks; save the remarkable lemurs of Madagascar; save the California Condors; save the rhinos of Africa; save the Swainson Hawks wintering in Argentina and save the albatross and other sea birds. The list of species threatened by humans goes on and on, emphasizing the fact that we humans, beyond any doubt, are occupying a great deal more of our world's space and resources.

Primitive humans striving for survival placed a high value on the individual, and rightfully so. In many cases the loss of just one more person meant that their community was declining in numbers. If that trend continued, the eventual result often was death for everyone and extinction of the group. Today the loss of several individuals in a community poses no threat to the survival of the group. And our present "success" with continuing, rapid population growth is actually detrimental to the welfare, if not the survival, of the human race. For the first time in human history the world's population is exceeding the carrying capacity of its habitat. If family planning techniques such as continence, contraception, and sterilization were more universally used, population could be reduced humanely, and the use of abortion could be eliminated.

In the face of all these detrimental developments, is it not realistic to feel pessimistic about the future of our society? Norman Borlaug, the "Father of the Green Revolution" and Nobel Peace Laureate, has spent much of his life developing better producing grains to feed the world's populations. He now considers that relatively soon it will be impossible to produce sufficient food in a sustainable fashion that will support our increasing human populations.

Thus, it would appear absolutely essential that we reduce our rate of population growth to eventually arrive at a world population of three to four billion instead of our present 5.8 billion. This three to four billion range is suggested by several of our most competent ecologists as a world population that would have the best chance to survive indefinitely, without serious damage to our environment, and assure future generations much healthier, happier and safer lives.

*Walter Breckenridge is a member of the Advisory Board and will soon celebrate his 94th birthday.*

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## **Major Population Conference Set -- Fall of '97**

World Population Balance, along with the Science Museum of Minnesota and other organizations, is planning a major population conference for next fall at the Humphrey Institute. We are hoping to have several national and international population experts as presenters. One of our top priorities is to have this become a major, annual population event in the upper Midwest. If you would like to help organize this important conference, please call our office soon.

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## **Internet and Computers**

Although our Web page is yet to come, we do have e-mail capacity. You can communicate with us at [WPBdPax@tc.umn.edu](mailto:WPBdPax@tc.umn.edu).

We also have a second computer in our office, thanks to the generous contribution of Bill Nord. Not only has Bill provided the hardware, but he has spent zillions of hours during the past several years helping us with our computer/database organization and actually writing a customized program for our membership list. That's a feat I will never fully understand ... his tremendous dedication and help have been essential. Thank you, Bill.

In order to operate on the World Wide Web, we need a newer computer. Often when businesses upgrade their

computer systems, they welcome the opportunity to make a tax-deductible donation of their old computers. Individuals can also take advantage of a tax deduction. If you know of any available computers, please call our office.

## Recent Presentations

Recent presentations include several church and civic groups, as well as radio interview/call-in programs. David did an hour-long call-in program on 17 stations on The Kathleen Dunn Show on Wisconsin Public Radio, and listener interest was very high. Phone lines filled up almost instantly and remained full during the entire program. Listener questions and discussion were thoughtful and informative.

During a fall trip to Michigan David did two radio interviews and a Rotary Club program. All of these were the result of member **Dorothy Goize** in St. Joseph. The last time she and David had seen each other was in Egypt two years ago at the International Conference on Population and Development. Our most sincere appreciation to Dorothy for her wonderful (and last-minute) efforts to arrange these programs.

At a recent church presentation, former U of Minn. Intern and now enthusiastic volunteer, **Kari Olson**, joined David in making the presentation. She did an outstanding job, and a great many were impressed. Thank you, Kari.

## Nine Things You Can Do To Make a Difference

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help arrange a World Population Balance talk at your church, school, club (Rotary, Lions, Optimist, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus).</li> <li>• Help arrange an interview with a TV, radio, newspaper or magazine reporter. (See "Join <i>Active Team</i>" article.)</li> <li>• Help arrange an appointment with your congressperson, state legislator and other elected official so that they can be educated about this most critical and fundamental, driving issue.</li> <li>• Help your teachers and school leaders to have population education materials and to use them in their classrooms.</li> <li>• Have World Population Balance provide population information to help educate members of your club, church, environmental organization, etc.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join with others to write letters and cards to elected officials about this critical issue. This really is a highly productive activity, especially when several people are doing it!</li> <li>• Contribute time working in the World Population Balance office -- filing, typing, organizing information, responding to requests for information. We need your help.</li> <li>• Contribute some <i>additional</i> dollars to World Population Balance -- to help us maintain and expand our vital educational activities.</li> <li>• Volunteer to host a World Population Balance speaker for a night or two when he or she comes to your community to speak.</li> </ul> |
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## Officers Elected

At the July meeting of the Board of Directors, the following officers were elected:

- President: **David Paxson**

- Secretary: **Dale Anderson**
- Treasurer: **Tom Breckenridge**

**Roger Bengston**, a longtime member of our Advisory Board, now serves on the Board of Directors. In recent months Roger has written several excellent articles about the population issue. If you would be interested in a copy, please call our office.

Our thanks to Roger, Dale and Tom for their many hours of dedicated service. Each of them brings tremendous strengths to World Population Balance to help expand our activities and impact.

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## Population Issue Priority -- Lamm

In October David Paxson had a meeting with former Colorado Governor, Richard Lamm, during a Minnesota visit. Both Lamm and his wife, Dottie, have been active on the population issue, and a year ago David followed her as a speaker during World Population Awareness Week at Ft. Lewis College in Colorado. At their recent meeting Lamm explained that he and Dottie first decided to prioritize the population issue during a 1967 trip to India. Coincidentally, that was the same year as Paxson's India trip that helped awaken him to the population issue, as well.

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## Special Note to "Snow Birds" and College Students

Would you please help us to hold down our mailing costs? Since our newsletters are sent at a discounted, nonprofit rate, the postal service adds a stiff charge if we want to receive your new address.

Snow Birds -- could you please let us know your seasonal address as well as the approximate dates you will be there?



Students -- could you please give us a home address where we could send the newsletter?

You are welcome to send this information either by letter, e mail or phone. You will be helping us keep our mailing costs lower so that we can invest more precious dollars for programming activities. Thank you very much.

### Population Booklet Available

We have another printing of our popular booklet, *"World Population: What's Really Happening,"* co-authored by Roger Bengston and David Paxson. If you would like to have a copy and are a current member, please call or write and let us know. Any nonmember can receive a copy upon receipt of a contribution of \$5.00 or more. We thank Burgess Publishing Company for their generous assistance in printing.

### Our Mission

World Population Balance is a nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to raising awareness about the benefits of population stabilization. We present our message through conferences, personal programs, appointments with elected officials, written articles, our newsletter, and TV, radio and newspaper interviews.

We welcome your membership and participation. Basic membership is \$35 per year. Some reduced memberships are available, as well. We welcome your contribution at any level.

## Join Active Team

Some of you have asked what you can do that will help to make a real difference without taking very much of your time. Here is your answer, and you can do this one whether you live in Minnesota, Montana, or Maine: call your favorite radio station and ask them to please do an interview with World Population Balance President, David Paxson. That's it! It only takes one and a half minutes, and you've done something *significant!*



If you have a bit more time, please call a second station and urge them to do the same. Add to that some TV stations, your local newspaper, or however many more calls you are willing to make. And, if they don't do it within a few days, call them back and ask them again. Minor variations upon this highly effective and important activity are endless. Remember, be polite but persistent. It works.

By joining our active team, you -- in accord with dozens of other World Population Balance callers -- will make a difference. After raising a station's interest, you can pass the ball to "team member" Paxson to do the heavier lifting of the actual interview.

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## Volunteer Thoughts

By Marit Nelson

I have always been concerned about human population growth, noticing its effects on the environment since childhood. I remember a vast, open area near my family's house that we called "the weeds", where Great Horned Owls hooted at night and where we'd see the remnants of a rabbit that an owl had feasted on the night before, where the songs of crickets and frogs echoed through the field all day, and where a bike path, a single line of sand, meandered through this vast field. Our family enjoyed this field for several years.

By the time we moved, when I was 12 years old, development was already beginning in that special field. First to emerge was an apartment complex near an elderly woman's house on five acres of wooded land. Then a few restaurants emerged on the far end of that field, next to a frontage road. Our family then moved. Soon after moving we returned to visit "the weeds" and found the field dotted with business buildings, hotels, more restaurants and other structures. Our little field was gone ... forever!

Since that time I have been affected by rapid development at most of my homes. In 1991 I moved to an apartment complex near White Bear Lake. I was familiar with the area and knew I was moving to a quiet neighborhood near vast, open spaces and woods. I could hardly wait to listen to crickets again. For the rest of '91 -- plus all of '92 and '93 -- I enjoyed watching the Canada Geese return each Spring to raise their young. They had plenty of wetlands for nesting. The cars at a nearby intersection would often stop and let the geese cross. Each time this happened I held my breath, hoping no geese would get hit.

During 1994 all the fields and wetlands across the street from my apartment complex started to give way to houses -- one, then two, then five and so on -- the rolling open fields became dwellings for people. Almost simultaneously new video stores, restaurants, a day-care center and a large supermarket came up in what seemed like a few days. Not long after, a large complex of new townhomes emerged right next to the houses. Every day I see increasing numbers of cars racing past my apartment complex. I now have to wait longer to turn onto this busy road. Originally there was not even a stop sign at the intersection. Now there are four sets of traffic lights. And, we have many more accidents here, as well. All of these are examples of how increasing human population affects an area.

I feel badly for the lady who owns a small plot of land and horses next to my apartment complex. Her horses graze right near the busy road, and Cub Foods is just across the street from these grazing horses. I commend this woman for keeping her land despite the rapid development occurring around her.

While I have become increasingly upset watching development crowd my neighborhood, I also had been frustrated at my inability to locate any organization concerned with population growth.

My frustration soon changed while I was watching a local cable access channel and saw David Paxson speak to a group of naturalists about the population issue. I was all-attentive to the facts that he was presenting regarding global human population growth, and I took many notes. Fortunately a phone number was given, and I called to get more information. I was thrilled that someone was actively doing something regarding the population issue by working to educate people about its future implications.

Because I believe that population growth is a major cause of decreased quality of life for humans and other species, including accidents and environmental problems, I wanted to join World Population Balance and actively do whatever it takes -- writing or speaking -- to get this vital message across to people.

*Marit Nelson has been an energetic volunteer for several months and is expanding her involvement to include more activities.*

## A World of Thanks

Our special appreciation to the following individuals and companies for their very generous contributions of time and materials:

- Burgess Publishing
- Betty Firth
- Larry and Pat Gottschalk
- Steven Hardy
- Laura Kelly
- Marit Nelson
- Bill Nord
- Kari Olson
- Nancy Paxson

Also, we thank each of you who have joined World Population Balance. And a special appreciation to those of you who contributed funds above our membership amount. Your generous support is what keeps us going, allowing us to raise awareness to growing numbers of people. Since some of you wish to remain anonymous, we have not listed individual names. However, please know that we sincerely do appreciate your wonderful support. Also, be assured that we do not share your address with any other organization.

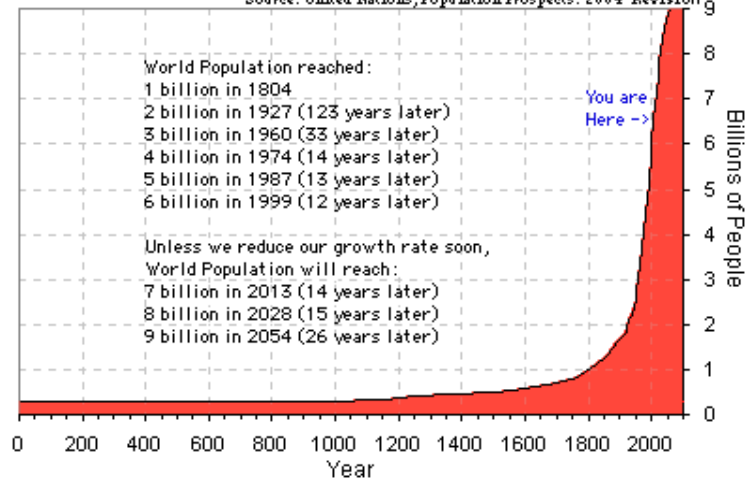
## Become an "Instant Expert" with your Portable Population Pocket Primer

Many of you have asked to have a small fact sheet that would be easy to carry in purse or wallet as a reference or as a handout to others. Here it is! Please let us know what you think of it and experiences you have using it. If you would like more of them, please send a business-sized, self- addressed, stamped envelope. For larger quantities, please call our office.

<b>Facts</b>	<b><i>What you can do</i></b>
World population now...almost 6 billion. Doubling time..... less than 45 years. Annual increase..... 90,000,000 (another Mexico). Numbers of poor .....a billion & increasing. Food per person ..... dropping in recent years. Fish catches ..... dropped in recent years. Fresh water supplies .... dropping in recent years.	While other issues may seem more important, none can be <b><i>permanently</i></b> solved unless population growth is stabilized. "No matter what your cause, it's a lost cause unless we come to grips with population." Therefore, get involved! Join an organization that stays <b><i>focused</i></b> on the population issue. Help others learn the <b><i>facts</i></b> about population growth and its negative effects.

Prime farmland ..... decreasing, lost to other uses.  
U.S. population ..... over 265 million.  
U.S. doubling time ..... about 65 years.  
U.S. annual increase .... over 3 million people.

Source: United Nations, Population Prospects: 2004 Revision



To get involved or for more information, contact:

**WORLD POPULATION BALANCE (612) 869-1640**  
**PO. Box 23472, Minneapolis, MN 55423 U.S.A.**  
**WPBdPax@tc.umn.edu**

*What are the biggest world problems?*

Too much government? Threat of war? Loss of family values? Disease? Political unrest? Terrorism? Crime? Abortion? Violence? Drugs? Corruption? Pollution? Poverty? Famine and starvation? Rain forest loss? Ethnic cleansing & wars? Loss of personal freedom?

Each of these major issues is being worsened by one core problem -- continuing rapid population growth. Today population is increasing faster than ever before in history! Every second, global numbers increase by three more people. Population growth is making all of the above problems bigger and harder to solve in humane ways!

*Population Balance -- to maintain the quality of everyone's life!*

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