

# Newsletter, Summer 2001

**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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## WORLD POPULATION AWARENESS WEEK: October 21-27, 2001

World Population Awareness Week will be held this October 21-27. The week is an opportunity to educate our elected officials, news media, and the general public about population issues.

Last year, twenty U.S. governors (including Minnesota governor Ventura) and 313 mayors issued official proclamations supporting the week. You can join with citizens across the nation and around the world by urging your mayor, governor, and other elected officials to proclaim and observe World Population Awareness Week (WPAW). The annual event was started 17 years ago by the Population Institute and is now promoted by many organizations around the world.

When you speak or write to your elected officials or the media about WPAW, we encourage you to emphasize the following basic facts:

- The current world population of 6.1 billion is not environmentally sustainable. We are destroying our natural resources -- topsoil, groundwater, forests, biodiversity, and more -- to feed and support the 6.1 billion people we already have.
- Any growth in population will only make the situation worse. Even a 1% annual increase doubles the population in just 70 years.
- Stabilizing the population will not only avert catastrophe in our children's time, it will make solving our environmental and social problems possible in our own time.

- The United States has a huge impact on these problems. Our high consumption -- our "ecological footprint" -- makes us a heavier burden on resources around the planet than any other country. Therefore it is critical to support stabilization of both U.S. and global population.

Our next newsletter will include a sample proclamation and cover letter you can use as a guide. Watch for more details!

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## Welcome to Advisory Board

In April we gained two excellent members to our Board of Advisors. During a speaking trip to Michigan, David had the very good fortune to meet with **former Michigan Governor William Milliken** and his wife, Helen. Both are tremendously concerned about population growth and stabilization, and Gov. Milliken was very pleased to join our Advisory Board.

**Dr. Vajoya Dasgupta, M.D.**, a physician with the State of Wisconsin, also accepted an invitation to join our Board of Advisors. We are most pleased to welcome both of them to this august Board.

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## Learn to Think Environmentally

with Book by Lester Milbrath

Recently World Population Balance purchased the remaining copies of a fabulous book, *Learning to Think Environmentally While there is Still Time*, by Lester Milbrath. For several years we have been distributing copies of this powerful book about environmental fundamentals to teachers, schools and others. We plan to reprint the book -- updating the population numbers-- and promote it widely throughout the entire United States.

*Learning to Think Environmentally* is written as a dialogue between the author and his neighbor. It teaches a number of precepts, including the following: everything is connected to everything else; a planet without suitable habitat for non-human creatures is not a suitable habitat for humans; whatever we do to the rest of the world, we do to ourselves; the more crowded we become, the stricter we must be in regulating what people can do with the commons; sustainable development means learning better ways of enjoying life without injuring the life systems that sustain us and other creatures. Population stabilization is covered early in the book and is interwoven throughout.

If you would be interested to help us republish and distribute this outstanding book, please contact our office at 612-869-1640 or [e-mail us](#).

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## From the President

By David Paxson

Without question, the highlight of my summer has been an incredible -- and all-too-short -- trip to the world's most populated nation: China. What an exciting and fascinating experience! We visited five cities: Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Guilin and Hong Kong.

Current official estimates put China's population at about 1.3 billion. However, some analysts believe it may be significantly higher -- by another 100 to 200 million. And, every year the population of China is *still increasing by over 12 million people*, net gain, in spite of great efforts to stop their growth.



In some of the larger cities things are booming. Our guide joked that their national symbol is the crane -- the construction crane. Places like Shanghai (and, of course, Hong Kong) have incredible prosperity for some of their inhabitants. At the same time, it is important to remember that under 15% of China's people live in cities. The vast majority still exist in rural areas that are little affected by the urban economic boom.

Kevin Sinclair, author of *Culture Shock! China*, sums up China's situation very well. "Since the 1970s, China has been desperately trying to bring down soaring population growth. There's a very good reason for this -- *survival. Projections on unchecked growth are terrifying.*" (Emphasis mine.)

If nothing had been done to check the rising human tide, China would now have some 1.5 to 1.6 billion people. As it is, they claim to have 1.3 billion.

"With an extra 200 million mouths to feed . . . *much of the economic progress made in recent years would have been nullified.*" (Emphasis mine.)

Like many people, I am appalled by the reported widespread use of abortion and infanticide in China. I hope and pray that they will find ways to implement family planning instead of infanticide and abortion.

In April I was surprised when Rev. Pat Robertson of the Christian Coalition said, "I don't agree with it [China's abortion use], but at the same time, they've got 1.2 billion people and they don't know what to do."

Appearing on CNN's *Wolf Blitzer Reports*, Rev. Robertson continued, "If every family over there was allowed to have three or four children, the population would be completely unsustainable."

Of course, already China is not *sustainably* providing for its population! Just like the U.S. and many other countries, China is destroying much of its resource base in order to provide -- in the *short* term -- for its people. They are experiencing unsustainable topsoil erosion, loss of arable land, increasing water pollution and shortages, and the list goes on and on.

All of us in the world who are blessed with *some* understanding and awareness about population growth have special responsibilities. It is imperative that we communicate with our elected officials and members of the media and educate them about the realities of this keystone issue of our time. I am counting upon each of you to join in doing that.

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## Earth Odyssey:

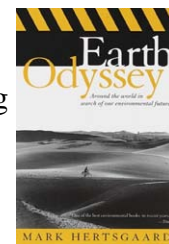
### Around the World in Search of our Environmental Future

reviewed by Ben Stallings

When David Paxson encouraged me to read this book by Mark Hertsgaard, I figured it must focus on population issues. I was surprised to find instead that population is just one of many major resource depletion and environmental issues the author addresses.

Hertsgaard spent several years traveling around the world visiting some of the most crowded, polluted, and impoverished places on Earth. Accompanied by guides and translators, he interviewed politicians and peasants, celebrities and cabbies, corporate CEOs and street vendors about the environmental crises facing their regions and the world at large. The result is a breathtakingly comprehensive portrait of our world in the late 1990s.

Each chapter takes on a different topic in a different setting. The population chapter focuses mainly on Brazil, where the author lived with a family whose attempts to escape poverty were being stifled by their large number of children.



However, he points out that developed countries are at least as responsible for our global problems due to their high resource consumption. "A baby born in the United States creates thirteen times as much environmental damage over the course of its lifetime as a baby born in Brazil... My San Francisco friend had one child in diapers and a second on the way, thus giving him the Brazilian equivalent of twenty-six children... Needless to say, however, he did not feel that he and his family were part of the global population problem."

Hertsgaard ends the book with a call for a worldwide effort to solve our environmental problems not by fighting the market forces of our economies, but by leveraging them. He calls his plan a "Global Green Deal" and wrote about it in the May, 2000 issue of *Time Magazine*.

For more information about *Earth Odyssey* or the Global Green Deal, visit [www.GlobalGreenDeal.org](http://www.GlobalGreenDeal.org).

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## Babka Crosses Borders

In his two years with World Population Balance, Frank Babka has talked to 24,610 students and 320 teachers in almost 100 different schools all around Minnesota and several other states. Recently he's been looking further afield -- traveling once to Haiti and three times to sub-Saharan Africa!



During these trips, Frank has had extensive opportunities to learn more about the developing world and the impact of rapid population growth on problems such as malnutrition, water shortages, violent conflict, AIDS, and wildlife decimation, among others.

Some of his travels have been independent, while on others he volunteered with various charity projects. Additionally, he has shown the slides and videos from these trips to thousands of high school and middle school students in the U.S.

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## Active Members

**Judy Bjork** has been concerned about population growth and stabilization since the 1970s. She learned about World Population Balance when David Paxson came to speak at her church, and she was very pleased to see someone involved locally on the issue. Judy has been a tremendous help in the office with data entry, typing and other tasks. She looks forward to doing more in the future. She says she is most interested in the environmental hazards of population growth.

**Bill Nord** met David at an Earth Day event many years ago. He believes population is one of the most important issues facing society today, certainly the most important environmental issue, and he appreciates David's approach. Bill designed and maintained the membership database that we used for many years. He also helped with mailing lists, newsletters, and "odds & ends."

With deep regret, we report that Bill Nord was killed in a bicycling accident a few days after this newsletter went to press. His life touched many of us, and he is greatly missed.

**Neil Clark** became interested in population issues after reading Garret Hardin's essay, "Living on a Lifeboat." He then heard David speak at his church, became convinced of the problem, and offered to volunteer. He now does data entry of new members. Neil believes population growth is of paramount importance to the survival of the human race. "If we continue," he says, "we'll stamp ourselves out like bacteria in a petri dish!" He believes the reason we don't move on this issue as a species is that doing so could reduce our standard of living.

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## Our Mission

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN WITH YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO:

World Population Balance is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to raising awareness about the benefits of population stabilization.

We present our message through public presentations and conferences, appointments with elected officials, written articles, our newsletter, and TV, radio and newspaper interviews.

WORLD POPULATION BALANCE  
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Minneapolis, MN 55423 U.S.A.

Please print clearly.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\$35 (Supporting Member)

\$100 (Sustaining Member)

\$500 (Sponsoring Member)

\$\_\_\_\_\_ (Other)

We welcome your membership and contribution at any level.

## Population & Environment Index

by Ben Stallings, with respect to *Harper's Index*. For citations, visit [WorksCited.Net](http://WorksCited.Net).

- Percentage of the world's population living in the U.S.: **5**
- Percentage of the world's fossil fuel consumption that occurs in the U.S.: **22**  
...of CO2 emission: **24**  
...of paper and plastic use: **33**
- Percentage of the world's population whose drinking water was dangerously polluted (in 1990): **23**
- Percentage of U.S. streams, lakes, and estuaries judged too polluted for fishing or swimming (in 1998): **40**
- Cubic meters of water pumped each year from the Ogallala aquifer in the central U.S.: **12,000,000,000**
- Year when the Ogallala aquifer is expected to become non-productive due to overpumping: **2030**
- Percentage of today's U.S. agricultural land that will be lost to suburban sprawl by 2050 if trends continue: **15**
- Anticipated percentage increase in U.S. population during that time: **40**
- Additional billions of dollars per year necessary to enroll every child in primary school worldwide in ten years: **7**
- Billions of dollars per year spent by Europeans on ice cream: **11**
- Estimated number of years necessary to reduce the world's population to 2 billion if all women average 1.5 children apiece: **100**

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