

WORLD POPULATION BALANCE

Population education — promoting awareness about stabilization to benefit **everyone!** *

* Pro-life and pro-choice members respectfully agree to disagree in order to promote fair and humane population stabilization.
April, 2002

Scruggs to be *World Population Balance* Lectures Speaker May 7th

Stirling Scruggs, Director of Information and External Relations for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), will speak on "Population: The Challenges Ahead" on May 7th.

The Information and External Relations Division is responsible for UNFPA's publicity and media relations. It also produces publications such as the *State of World Population* report featured in the previous issue of this newsletter.

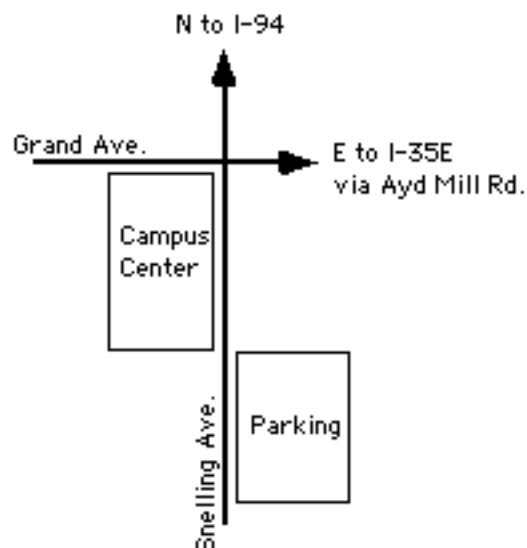
Scruggs joined UNFPA in 1981. He has served at Headquarters in external relations and fundraising. His field work has been in the Philippines, China, Mongolia, and North and South Korea.

A few months ago Secretary of State Colin Powell testified before Congress that "UNFPA provides critical population assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transi-



tion... The activities of the UNFPA are fully consistent with overall U.S. efforts in developing countries to raise the standard of living, reduce poverty and lessen disparities of wealth within and among countries."

We are delighted to bring Stirling Scruggs to the Twin Cities. Please join us and bring your friends!



Burke Lecture A Success

Dr. B. Meredith Burke spoke to an enthusiastic audience at our February 25th *World Population Balance Lecture*: "The United States: A Blueprint for the 21st Century."

She focused on U.S. demographic trends in population growth and our nation's lack of awareness about the facts of the issue. She also spoke about ecological footprints and biocapacity and what they tell us about the sustainable population size of each nation.

More details of her presentation are available on our web site: <http://worldpopulationbalance.org>

Help Needed

We are in dire need of help with our growing data base of membership records. Can you commit to entering data for a minimum of two to three hours a week (in our Richfield office) for at least 6 months?

If you have computer skills and are willing to help, we need you! Please call us and arrange a time to try it out.

Note: you may do this **either** on a **voluntary or paid** basis, whichever you prefer.

Please call now — 612-869-1640.

World Population Balance Lecture by Stirling Scruggs

Join us Tuesday, May 7, at
6:45 PM (Program at 7:00)

Macalester College Campus
Center

Snelling & Grand in St. Paul
(see map at right)

From the President

By David Paxson

Recently, at an event organized by the Mayor of St. Paul, I had an experience I have had hundreds of times in recent years. When someone asked: "What do you do?" I mentioned World Population Balance. Then I turned on the metronome program in my Palm Pilot and said:



"Every time you hear this it represents the addition on the planet of another human being -- in spite of HIV and AIDS, wars, famines, diseases and other problems.

"This is not births we are hearing. Births are far faster than this. This is the net gain (or net increase): births minus deaths ... 140 additional people every minute ... over 200,000 more every day ... 75 million more every year!

"And, in most parts of the world where this growth is the fastest, they are not increasing food, fuel, fiber, or social infrastructure fast enough to keep up! This is why many leaders around the world understand that population stabilization is our greatest challenge."

The response to this explanation is almost universal: people are stunned! They are amazed to actually hear how fast the metronome ticks (set at 140 beats per minute) and to realize that every tick signifies another passenger on the planet, net gain!

During countless conversations with people over the years, I have sensed that their attention to what I'm saying about population significantly increases after I play the metronome and explain its meaning. Before that, they may listen politely, but without much interest. Afterwards, they "get it!" Then when I give some quick examples of growing, grinding poverty and of resources that are in decline, they listen in a deeper, more meaningful way. What a difference!

We want to take what we have learned about how to reach people and create Public Service Announcements for mass media. We are convinced the educational impact of such messages will far outweigh the cost. Instead of reaching a hundred Minnesotans at a time, we will reach hundreds of thousands about the importance of population stabilization.

I hope you support us in this vitally important initiative during the coming year. Help us make the difference!

Why I'm Optimistic

About Population Stabilization

by Ben Stallings

It's easy to get disheartened when talking about population and related problems. The sheer magnitude of population growth, resource depletion, and pollution can be positively staggering, leaving us feeling small and powerless. Yet I'm convinced that we are anything but powerless!



What is an optimist?

There are many who prefer not to think about environmental problems at all, or to dismiss them as unimportant. They may say that the situation is not bad, or that it's not getting worse, or that we don't need to worry because technology or human ingenuity will save the day. These people often call themselves optimists, and they call those of us who are sounding the alarm pessimists.

I consider myself an optimist, but for different reasons. There is overwhelming scientific evidence that the way we live is not sustainable and is getting less so all the time. The list of natural resources in decline is growing longer every year. These are facts, not open to "optimistic" interpretation.

The question is no longer whether we human beings have gotten ourselves into a mess. The question is whether we can get ourselves out of it. I'm certain that we can — but only if we work together.

What can we undo?

First, the very fact that we've had such an impact on the planet is a testament to what we can accomplish. We can destroy rainforests -- and we can replant them, as in Gaviotas, Colombia. We can pollute the air and water -- and we can stop polluting them, as in Pittsburgh and Cleveland. We can exterminate bison -- and we can reintroduce them, as in Oklahoma. We can increase our population beyond the carrying capacity of the land -- and we can reduce our numbers, as many European countries are now doing.

Other trends cannot be reversed: we know of no way to make nuclear waste harmless, for example, or to bring extinct species back to life. If we want to keep living here, we must stop those irreversible trends as soon as possible. Can we stop depleting aquifers,

Public Radio and TV Members!

Several of our members have suggested that we discuss the population issue with the staff of Minnesota's public radio and television stations and request that they regularly point out population growth's impact upon nearly all other major issues we face today -- including many they cover on a regular basis. In order to establish a more meaningful dialogue with them, we would like to inform them of how many of their members also support World Population Balance.

If you are a member of Twin Cities Public Television and/or Minnesota Public Radio, would you please either **call 612-869-1640 or e-mail David@world-populationbalance.org** and tell us which one(s) you support.

After we have heard from many of you we will approach the public radio and television people to help them understand opportunities where they could more effectively include information about the population issue -- for everyone's benefit.

United Nations Population Links

www.unfpa.org: United Nations Population Fund

www.un.org/popin: Population Information Network

www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm: U.N. Population Division

Office Space Needed

We are looking for inexpensive office space in the South Minneapolis-Richfield area. If you know of a small space that could be rented or donated, please call us. Thank you.

LECTURE REGISTRATION FORM

Stirling Scruggs, May 7, 2002

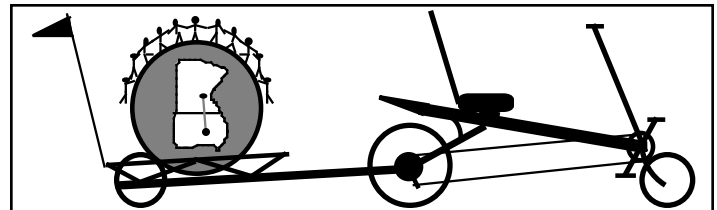
PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN with a **check for \$10 payable to World Population Balance.**

(Macalester students free with a student I.D.)

Our address appears on the back page.

If the address we used on the reverse of this form is correct, you need not write it again. If it is not, please take this opportunity to correct it.

You may also register and/or make a donation online at WorldPopulationBalance.Org.



Stallings to Tour Minnesota, Iowa

World Population Balance's own Ben Stallings will bicycle solo from Minneapolis, Minnesota to Grinnell, Iowa at the end of May and return in early June. He plans to speak about population growth and stabilization in communities along the way.

If you have contacts in SE Minnesota or north-central Iowa and could help Ben line up speaking engagements or media interviews, please contact him at Ben@WorldPopulationBalance.org or 612-870-4584.

Volunteer Opportunities

Please call our office if you would be interested to help with either of the following activities.

Media Monitoring

We want to research Minnesota media coverage of population-related issues to strengthen our discussions with media leaders in the future. This project could be done entirely from your home on your own time schedule. We estimate it will take between ten and fifteen hours.

Survey Volunteers

We would like to conduct two very brief surveys (only 3-4 questions) of people in public places. We estimate it will take two to three hours -- at your convenience.

Please print clearly:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phones: W _____

H _____

E-mail: _____

Thank you!

Why I'm Optimistic continued from page 2

eroding topsoil, and producing toxic wastes? I believe we can — but only if we try. It's foolish to expect that some new technology or legislation will save the day if we don't create that technology or write that legislation.

The power of ideas

Population growth and other environmental trends persist because of ideas (sometimes called memes) that shape the way we think. One of the main causes of the population explosion around the world was the idea, "People don't have to die young if they drink clean water and stay away from germs." That's a wonderful idea -- unless it's paired with the old idea, "You should have lots of kids, because most of them will die young." In countries where this second idea has been replaced by another new idea -- "Have only as many children as you are able to raise" -- population has stopped growing, and in some places it has even begun to decrease toward a more sustainable level.

We need to identify the harmful ideas in our society and replace them with sustainable ones. This may seem like a hopelessly large task, but look at the

power of an idea that spread across the United States in less than a generation: "Nonsmokers shouldn't have to breathe other people's tobacco smoke." How about this one: "Useful information should be available for free on the Internet." When an idea's time has come, it can spread very quickly!

Education is the key

Some old ideas are not easily replaced. Look at the conflict that was required to change people's minds during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. Lecturing alone could not have accomplished the goal any more than bus boycotts alone could have done it.

However, education is the necessary first step. Before those of us concerned about population will be taken seriously, before legislation will pass the Congressional floor, before bumper-sticker slogans will be understood, many more people must understand that population stabilization is a valid and important issue. I'm proud to be part of an organization that focuses on that crucial first step.

I'm also optimistic about our success. Change the world? No problem!

Ben Stallings is COO of World Population Balance.

*Join us to meet Stirling Scruggs
May 7th! Details inside.*

WORLD POPULATION BALANCE
is published quarterly. Ben Stallings, Editor
(ben@worldpopulationbalance.org)

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 media interviews.

Our Mission

April, 2002

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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