

The Avocet

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MATHEMATICS FOR THE BILLIONS

Our world is fairly bursting at the seams with people. It may not seem so as you drive mile after mile through Texas ranch land or fly over the forests and deserts and jungles of Asia. But it is a fact. There are so many people on this globe of ours that thinkers are already puzzling where they all can live decently, and how they can be fed, and how they can make a living. United Nations experts estimate that by the end of this century the world's population may be nearly seven billion. Imagine doubling the world's people in 30 years and increasing them by nearly half again in the next ten years! At this rate, 600 years from now literally the whole world, every inch of it, would be 30 times as crowded as the island of Manhattan is today.

Such a thing would not be allowed to happen--presumably. Even so, population growth on our globe promises to be phenomenal. It will provide the 20th century with several of its most challenging problems: food (2/3rds of the world's people exist now on less food than is considered the absolute minimum; 1/3 of the rest just barely get by); power, education--and natural resources and conservation of wilderness values. Two statistics bring the trouble to a point:

(1) The Twentieth Century world has used up more of the earth's resources than has all previous history.

(2) We now share the earth with one man out of every 10 who ever existed on it--ten percent of all who have lived are now alive!

The defeatist theories of Malthus have long since been disproved. (Have they?....J.T. - Very definitely. C.C.R.) It is possible to break the vicious circle of more-population-more-misery; but steps must be taken to break it, and those steps require courage and vision and money.

--Wm. R. Frye, Christian Science Monitor 2/4/58

--David R. Brower, Sierra Club Bulletin 1/58

COMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Wed. July 9	8:30 a.m.	Portola Valley and Skyline Elvd.
Sun. July 20	10:00 a.m.	Montalvo
Mon. July 28		Board Meeting--details later.
Wed. Aug. 13	9:00 a.m.	Menlo Park

