

Letter

Redistribution can't solve population problem

The July 8 editorial in the Daily Nebraskan is an interesting response to the news that our world population has now passed the five billion mark. It seems very reassuring that our U.S. farmers' ability to feed people has doubled in the past 19 years (Feb. 1986, Econ. Res. Rept. U.S.D.A.). I agree that our present world food distribution should be greatly improved. It would certainly benefit our farmers. I would say we need to better distribute all resources. Incidentally, at the present growth rate the world population will double again in 35-46 years. Can the farmers double their productivity again by then?

If the world food supply were fairly and equitably distributed we would have much less quantity and quality. China is doing just that with their available supplies. There is a marked absence of the famines which just thirty years ago were a regular part of the news from China. We naturally applaud the better nourishment of the general population of China (and the fact that they buy Nebraska grain), but usually fail to notice that the few formerly affluent Chinese people now get

their small allotment of meat along with everyone else.

However, in the meantime the world population has continued its inexorable course. There is a formula for calculating the world population at any given date, developed by some statisticians, published in Science (Vol. 132, p. 1290 in 1960). For the mathematically inclined the formula is: $N(\text{population}) = (1.79 \times 10^9) / (2026.87 - t)$. The letter "t" in the formula may be any given date.

There are several interesting things about this formula. One is that it calculates the population of the world for 1492 as 350 million (roughly 100 million more than the present U.S. population). Another interesting thing about this formula is that during the year 2026 the figure in the divisor becomes zero. At this point the formula predicts the population will become infinitely large. Obviously, we will not reach that point. If we even come close the best distribution plan will not serve our needs. Therefore, it is clear that within the lifetimes of the members of the present student body the population crisis will have arrived and the population will have either leveled off or

started to decline as rapidly as it rose. But wait, there is still one other interesting item in connection with the formula. If we calculate when the population will reach 5 billion, we find that the formula predicts the population will reach that level in 1989. So the formula and I join the chorus of the "doom sayers." No matter how many people there are to produce more jobs and society's wealth, there is only a finite amount of resources on the earth. The population is more rapidly moving toward infinity than the statisticians determined. Where will it end? I firmly believe that the scenario to come will depend on what the present generation does, particularly the United States. The population rise will be checked either by famines, wars, massive plagues (is AIDS the beginning?) or there will be rational plans to distribute information about ways to humanely limit the population while fairly distributing our resources to the people already here. The choice is with your generation. I am only sorry my generation failed to bring such plans to fruition.

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Some running to lose

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and lost, so now must organize a full slate for a third party. His new "Solidarity Party" must run a full slate, but he does not want the pro forma candidates of his party to take votes from regular Democrats, such as Sen. Alan Dixon.

Stevenson smiles wanly as he says his woes have given him "millions of dollars worth of attention." However, but for the honor of it, he would as soon dispense with the attention he has received in the New York Times this morning.

"There goes my money again," he says imagining the depressive effect of the Times catalog of the misadventures during his recent foray into central Illinois. On his ill-timed visit to the University of Illinois he missed the class break and got only two signatures for his petition to get his party on the ballot. At a meeting of auto workers, when asked about owning a Japanese pickup truck, he said his farm is hurt-

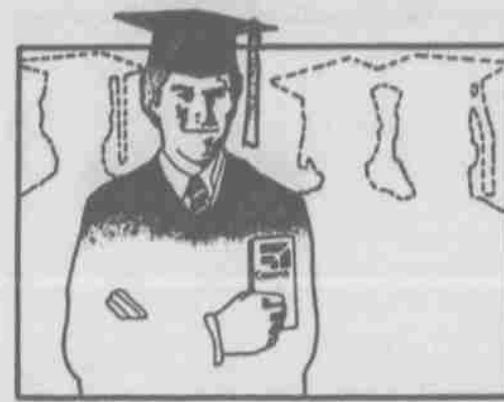
ing, the truck saved him \$1,500, but "if I had known I was running then, I wouldn't have done it."

In politics, them that has — has money, has momentum — gits: gits money, momentum. Big Jim radiates energy and, says Stevenson, "has never in his life taken an unpopular position." Of course, neither has Big Jim apologized for his pickup.

Besides, there is a natural attrition in governing. Thompson's 10 years of governing have been 10 years of choosing. Choosing means pleasing some people but aggravating others, and people have longer memories for aggravations than pleasures. Furthermore, Stevenson, a representative of one of America's most distinguished political families, may now have an appealing kind of anti-charisma: stoicism in the face of unkind Fate. The contest may yet be a contest.

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Will is a Pulitzer prize-winning columnist and a contributing editor to Newsweek.

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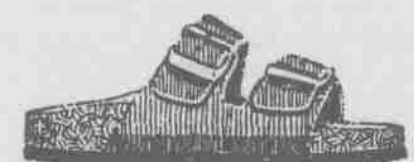
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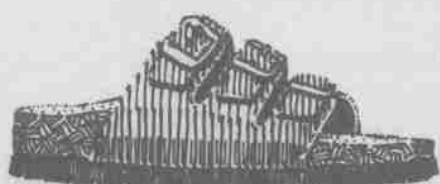
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"IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME TO HAVE MY CONTACT LENSES FITTED PROPERLY."

Like most people, I'm on the go alot. I tried contact lenses a few years ago and was never really happy. Wearing contacts helped my vision but they became a hassle because of the mild discomfort and occasional fuzzy vision.

I asked several of my friends who wear contacts to recommend a specialist, and most of them recommended Dr. Powell at the International Contact Lens Clinic.

I went to their clinic for a no charge consultation to talk about new contact lenses. Their office offers complete contact lens services and complete optical services including:

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I decided to have them fit my eyes, and I was very comfortable with their professional approach, their fees, and their thoroughness.

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