



Writer's Block

# Biodiversity And The Future

BY WILLIAM KERR  
For the Press & Dakotan

The human race is still arguing about coming to terms with the global warming threat, after 4 or 5 years of open warnings by former vice president, Al Gore, and warnings for more than 20 years by scientists around the world.

Well, here comes another one that has been quietly brewing for many decades.

In 1965, our worldwide population used up 70 percent of the Earth's biocapacity. That's a new word to my computer, let alone my vocabulary. This is the earth's ability to regenerate or repair the land, water and air we humans consume collectively and to absorb the greenhouse gases produced by us. So, in 1965 the Earth could still replace all we used up with a 30 percent balance, or safety factor, according to the *Mother Jones* website.

By 1983 our worldwide population had grown to almost 4.7 Billion and began to consume our natural resources faster than Mother Earth could replace them. That is called "ecological overshoot."

In 2009, 6.8 billion of us consumed 140 percent of what the Earth can replenish in the same year! Topsoil is vanishing 10 times faster than it can be replaced due to mechanized agriculture, runoff and erosion.

The UN predicts that the world population will stabilize at about 9 billion by 2050, assuming that the birth rate continues to drop to 2.02 children per woman by that time.

The good news is that we, as a world population have it in our power to change that consumption figure by continuing to reduce the total number of us consumers. That means reducing our overall birthrate — the average number of children per woman. We've already made unprecedented gains in reducing that fertility rate from 4.92 children per woman in 1950 to 2.56 per woman by 2010. That was accomplished by one woman at a time



William KERR

deciding to have fewer children, often influenced by family planning information.

The bad news is, that was the easiest part of the job, mostly in the rich and developed countries, where women are permitted to be educated. It won't be much easier to make further change in that number than to change our energy sources and utilization to beat global warming.

The biggest job will be where women are not routinely encouraged or allowed to be educated and often are discouraged. Several countries with large populations come to mind, especially India and China. Research tells us that there is a very close connection between education level and child bearing numbers.

Added to that, the current speed (2010) with which our population is growing is against us as well. Every minute, 157 new people join the world's population — 4 in developed countries (27 babies born, 23 people die) and 153 in developing countries (237 babies born, 83 people die).

"Overpopulation combined with over-consumption is the elephant in the room," says Paul Ehrlich 42 years after he wrote his controversial book, "The Population Bomb."

Also, the UN has reported that a target agreed on by governments to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss (loss of animal and plant species) has not been met.

"The abundance of vertebrate species fell by a third between 1970 and 2006. Nearly a quarter of plant species are threatened with extinction," reported *The Economist* earlier this year.

That means that unless we — all of us who live on this planet — make some serious changes, it won't be long until we will not be able to produce enough food for all the billions of us. What do you suppose will happen at that point? What if the battle of Armageddon turns out to be a battle for food and water? That's hard to think about, isn't it?

# Gun Control Won't Prevent Tragedy

BY MICHAEL REAGAN  
CagleCartoons.com

It's not tougher gun control, stupid. No matter how much tougher we make our gun laws we'll never prevent future tragedies like last week's murder of those innocents in Newtown, Conn.

We won't stop future Newtowns if we outlaw every military-style assault weapon in America.

We won't stop future Auroras if we outlaw semi-automatic pistols or rifles, or mandate that no magazine clip can ever hold more than 10 rounds.

We won't stop future Virginia Techs if we make it tougher to buy a gun legally or if we shut down all gun shows on the continent for the rest of time.

Let's get real. America has an estimated 300 million guns. We could make owning a gun a capital crime today and by tomorrow 100 million guns would be hidden in our closets and buried in our backyards.

Good people, bad people and crazy people would still have access to tens of millions of guns and the ammunition they need. All the strict laws Mayor Bloomberg or Sen. Feinstein can dream up won't change that.

Some of the strictest gun laws in the country don't stop the gang-bangers of Chicago from slaughtering each other by the hundreds each year over drug turf.

Connecticut already had tough gun laws. So did Norway, where last year an evil extremist used guns and bombs to randomly kill 77 people — mostly teenagers.

To politicians, banning all semi-automatic weapons or large magazines in guns sounds like a good solution to stop mass murders, but it isn't.

Those laws might keep the death toll in the single digits, but they won't stop another killing spree like the one at Sandy Hook Elementary from occurring in the first place.

I want to prevent mass murders from happening in schools, not merely reduce their number of victims. I'm not willing to accept six dead first-graders instead of 20. I'm not willing to accept a single dead teacher or principal or schoolchild.

And the only way to bring the death toll down to zero in our schools is to put trained armed guards in



Michael REAGAN

every one of them. Not a retired policeman or a fat guy in a cheap uniform who sits in a chair all day. A real guard with a real loaded gun that he or she knows how to use and is authorized to shoot.

It could be a local police officer or a private security guard. And taxpayers would be willing to pay the price for knowing their kids were being protected by more than security cameras and locked doors.

Security is never foolproof. When my father was shot in 1981, he was the most protected person in America, surrounded by heavily armed and trained bodyguards.

The disturbed man who tried to kill him didn't use an assault rifle or a semi-automatic to carry out his plan. Before he was wrestled to the ground, he got off six shots in 1.7 seconds — with a revolver.

I'll never forget what Mike Luty, the head of the Secret Service detail who was with me the day my father was shot, said to me when I asked, "How can you allow this to happen?" Luty said, "We train 24/7, but we can't stop the crazies."

We can't stop every crazy in America who is intent on committing mass murder, either, but we can try. We need to fix our mental health system so it's better able to identify potential killers before they kill, and we need to find ways parents can provide help to their kids over 18 without needing a court order.

But no matter what we do, evil people, crazy people and troubled suicidal young white males will always have access to guns and they'll plan their lethal attacks in secret and carry them out.

More gun control and gun-free zones won't stop them, but guns will. Putting armed guards — with loaded weapons — in our schools is the only sure way we can keep our future mass murderers from hurting any more of our innocent children.

*Michael Reagan is the son of President Ronald Reagan, a political consultant, and the author of "The New Reagan Revolution" (St. Martin's Press). He is the founder and chairman of The Reagan Group and president of The Reagan Legacy Foundation. Visit his websites at [www.reagan.com](http://www.reagan.com) and [www.michaelereagan.com](http://www.michaelereagan.com). Send comments to [Reagan@caglecartoons.com](mailto:Reagan@caglecartoons.com). Follow @reaganworld on Twitter.*

# THE PRESS & DAKOTAN

THE DAKOTAS' OLDEST NEWSPAPER | FOUNDED 1861  
Yankton Media, Inc., 319 Walnut St., Yankton, SD 57078

OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

# What Will The NRA Really Put Forth?

THE GLOBE AND MAIL, Toronto (Dec. 19): Beware the National Rifle Association. The disproportionately powerful pro-gun lobby group finally broke its silence about the Newtown massacre Tuesday, but only to say that it will hold a press conference on Friday, and that it "is prepared to offer meaningful contributions to help make sure this never happens again." After years of doing the exact opposite, it would be unwise to hope that the NRA's "meaningful contribution" will involve tighter gun controls.

The essential problem for the NRA is that it has spent decades fighting against even the most common-sense restrictions on gun ownership, including background checks, waiting periods, the banning of high-muzzle-velocity assault rifles that come with handy grenade launchers, the prohibition of large-capacity magazines that make it easier to fire large numbers of rounds more quickly, restrictions on concealed weapons in schools, and so on. ...

So it is hard to imagine on Friday the NRA will suddenly become its own worst enemy and declare that it now sides with those who don't believe any law-abiding American can own any gun he chooses, in whatever quantity, or that the Second Amendment is his god-given right to defend himself. It is, frankly, ludicrous to believe the NRA will support those it has demonized as un-American and "socialist," including the NRA's greatest stated enemy of all, President Barack Obama.

Most likely, the NRA will do what it has always done: say something soothing and ambiguous, and then lay low until the shock of Newtown has passed. In due time, it will resume its full-throated defense of unfettered gun ownership and its attacks on the "enemies" of the Second Amendment. The massacres at Columbine, Aurora, Virginia Tech and so many others were not enough to change the NRA's fundamental (and fundamentally wrong) position that tighter restrictions won't prevent future tragedies. In spite of that, we will remain hopeful of a different outcome on Friday, but only in the name of those 20 murdered children.

## OUR LETTER POLICY

The **PRESS & DAKOTAN** encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed.

■ Please limit letters to 300 words or less. (During political campaigns, letters related to the campaign may be limited to 150 words.) Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

■ In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the **PRESS & DAKOTAN** will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

■ Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue.

■ Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to [views@yankton.net](mailto:views@yankton.net).

## TODAY IN HISTORY

### By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, Dec. 20, the 355th day of 2012. There are 11 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On Dec. 20, 1812, German authors Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published the first volume of the first edition of their collection of folk stories, titled "Children's and Household Tales."

**On this date:** In 1790, the first successful cotton mill in the United States began operating at Pawtucket, R.I.

In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was completed as ownership of the territory was formally transferred from France to the United States.

In 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union as all 169 delegates to a special convention in Charleston voted in favor of separation.

In 1864, Confederate forces evacuated Savannah, Ga., as Union Gen. William T. Sherman continued his "March to the Sea."

In 1912, the play "Peg O' My Heart," a "comedy of youth" by John Hartley Manners starring his wife, actress Laurette Taylor, opened on Broadway.

In 1945, the Office of Price Administration announced the end of tire rationing, effective Jan. 1, 1946.

In 1963, the Berlin Wall was opened for the first time to West Berliners, who were allowed one-day visits to relatives in the Eastern sector for the holidays.

In 1972, the Neil Simon play "The Sunshine Boys" opened on Broadway.

In 1978, former White House chief of staff H.R. Haldeman was released from prison after serving 18 months for his role in the Watergate cover-up.

In 1987, more than 4,300 people were killed when the *Dona Paz*, a Philippine passenger ship, collided with the tanker *Vector* off Mindoro island.

In 1989, the United States launched Operation Just Cause, sending troops into Panama to topple the government of Gen. Manuel Noriega.

In 1999, the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that homosexual couples were entitled to the same benefits and protections as wedded couples of the opposite sex.

**Ten years ago:** Trent Lott resigned as Senate Republican leader two weeks after igniting a political firestorm with racially charged remarks. The nation's ten biggest brokerages agreed to pay \$1.44 billion and fundamentally change the way they did business to settle allegations they'd misled

investors by hyping certain companies' stocks. Ted Williams' eldest daughter, Bobby-Jo Williams Ferrell, dropped her objections to her siblings' decision to have the Hall of Famer's body frozen at a cryonics lab in Arizona.

**Five years ago:** Police used chemical spray and stun guns on protesters outside a New Orleans City Council meeting where members unanimously supported demolition of 4,500 public housing units for redevelopment. Thieves broke into the Sao Paulo Museum of Art in Brazil and made off with paintings by Pablo Picasso and Candido Portinari. (The works were recovered in Jan. 2008.) A British judge acquitted the only man charged with murder in Northern Ireland's deadliest terror attack: the 1998 car bombing that killed 29 people in the town of Omagh. Utah opened the bowl season with a wild 35-32 victory over the Navy Midshipmen in the Poinsettia Bowl.

**One year ago:** Lori Berenson, an American paroled after 15 years behind bars in Peru for aiding leftist guerrillas, arrived at Newark Liberty International Airport for her first visit home since her arrest in 1995. (After a 17-day visit, Berenson returned to Peru to serve out the rest of her parole.) LSU's Les Miles was selected The Associated Press college football coach of the year. Soccer player Abby Wambach was voted the AP Female Athlete of the Year.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actress Audrey Totter is 95. Actor John Hillerman is 80. Rock musician-music producer Bobby Colomby is 68. Rock musician Peter Dinklage is 67. Psychic/illusionist Uri Geller is 66. Producer Dick Wolf ("Law & Order") is 66. Rock musician Alan Parsons is 64. Actress Jenny Agutter is 60. Actor Michael Badalucco is 58. Actress Blanche Baker is 56. Rock singer Billy Bragg is 55. Rock singer-musician Mike Watt (The Secondmen, Minutemen, fIREHOSE) is 55. Actor Joel Gretsch is 49. Country singer Kris Tyler is 48. Rock singer Chris Robinson is 46. Actress Nicole deBoer is 42. Movie director Todd Phillips is 42. Singer David Cook ("American Idol") is 30. Actor Jonah Hill is 29. Singer JoJo is 22.

**Thought for Today:** "Fairy tales are more than true; not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten." — G.K. Chesterton, English poet-essayist (1874-1936).

## FROM THE BIBLE

*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. 1 John 3:1. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis*

### CONTACT US

PHONE:  
(605) 665-7811  
(800) 743-2968  
NEWS FAX:  
(605) 665-1721  
ADVERTISING FAX:  
(605) 665-0288  
WEBSITE:  
[www.yankton.net](http://www.yankton.net)  
EMAIL ADDRESS:  
[news@yankton.net](mailto:news@yankton.net)

### SUBSCRIPTIONS/

CIRCULATION:  
Extension 112  
CLASSIFIED ADS:  
Extension 108  
NEWS DEPARTMENT:  
Extension 114  
SPORTS DEPARTMENT:  
Extension 106  
ADVERTISING OFFICE:  
Extension 122  
BUSINESS OFFICE:  
Extension 119  
NEW MEDIA:  
Extension 136  
COMPOSING DESK:  
Extension 129

\* \* \*

### MANAGERS

Gary L. Wood  
*Publisher*

Michele Schievelbein  
*Advertising Director*

Tonya Schild  
*Business Manager*

David Jeffcoat  
*Circulation Director*

Tera Schmidt  
*Classified Manager*

Kelly Hertz  
*Editor*

James D. Cimburek  
*Sports Editor*

Beth Rye  
*New Media Manager*

Kathy Larson  
*Composing Manager*

Bernard Metivier  
*District Manager*

\* \* \*

### DAILY STAFF

Andrew Atwal

Derek Bartos

Brett Beyer

Cassandra Brockmoller

Rob Buckingham

Randy Dockendorf

Jeannine Economy

Jeremy Hoeck

Nathan Johnson

Muriel Pratt

Sheldon Reed

Noelle Schlechter

Jamie Selves

Cathy Sudbeck

Kelsey Thomas

Brenda Willcuts

Jackie Williams

\* \* \*

### Published Daily Monday-Saturday

Periodicals postage paid at Yankton, South Dakota, under the act of March 3, 1979.

Weekly Dakotian established June 6, 1861. Yankton Daily Press and Dakotian established April 26, 1875.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078.

\* \* \*

### MEMBERSHIPS

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan is a member of the Associated Press, the Inland Daily Press Association and the South Dakota Newspaper Association. The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to use of all the local news printed in this newspaper.

\* \* \*

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES\*

(Payable in advance)

CARRIER DELIVERY  
1-month . . . \$12.09  
3 months . . . \$36.27  
6 months . . . \$72.53  
1-year . . . \$133.09

MOTOR ROUTE (where available)  
1 month . . . \$14.51  
3 months . . . \$43.53  
6 months . . . \$87.05  
1 year . . . \$139.14

MAIL IN RETAIL TRADE ZONE  
1-month . . . \$16.93  
3 months . . . \$50.79  
6 months . . . \$101.57  
1-year . . . \$148.82

MAIL OUTSIDE RETAIL TRADE ZONE  
1 month . . . \$19.35  
3 months . . . \$58.05  
6 months . . . \$116.09  
1-year . . . \$186.33

\* Plus applicable sales tax for all rates

## YOUR LETTERS

### A Big Hurrah!

Linda Stephenson, Yankton

Big hurrah and thank you to all who helped make the "Hometown Christmas" at the McVay-Gurney home a successful fundraiser for Mead Building windows — future home of Dakota Territorial Museum.

Special thanks to florists: Monta's, Country Cupboard, Pied Piper, Pantry, and Pretty

& Prims. Special thanks to friends who shared time, helping with table settings, decorations, and cookies. Very special thanks to my daughter Anne, the "cookie goddess"; Rob, who never fails to help out; and my husband who let me buy this old house and doesn't mind me sharing it! The newspapers, radio and print shops got the word out.

But most of all, thank you to the public who supported and enjoyed it.

### Political Motivation

Flora Knodel, Yankton

It is appalling that our President and Democratic lawmakers advocate that we should ban big clips, drums and strips of more than 10 bullets (*Press & Dakotan*, Dec. 17). Are the 1-9 lives less worthy than 10 or more?

In the Benghazi tragedy, was political gain more worthy than the lives and the truth of our three slain Americans?