

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL



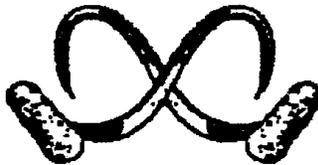
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Pogo Was Right

By Dave Chaddock

In my favorite comic strip many years ago Pogo the Possum once declared: “We have met the enemy and it is us!” Of course, we have good qualities as well. Lots of them. But collectively, humanity is posing a growing threat to the natural world and to the very survival of life on this planet. We all recall the wiping out of the passenger pigeon and the near extermination of the bison. But now we are closing in on the last remaining forms of non-human life in the wild. With food production for ourselves taking up “40% of the Earth’s nonfrozen terrestrial surface, plus all our roads, cities and towns, we’ve claimed nearly half the planet for just one species – us” (COUNTDOWN, Alan Weisman, 41). And still we’re not producing enough food to keep up with population growth. “In the next fifty years we will need to produce as much food as has been consumed over our entire human history” (IBID., 58). Is this possible? “The last thousand years have seen our influences gather like a green wave, scarcely perceptible at first but slowly lifting and steepening over the centuries to burst across the globe” in a cataclysmic tsunami affecting “every layer of the living world” (THE OCEAN OF LIFE, Callum Roberts, 213-14).

Thanks to global warming, the result of our own industrial and exhaust fumes that are still escalating, and may have already set in motion irreversible forces that are on the way to melting the glaciers supplying

many rivers, and the Antarctic ice cap that will flood many low-lying areas; we are posing an increasing threat, directly or indirectly, to our own survival.

Warming of the atmosphere also has a side effect of warming the oceans, which, together with the increase of carbon dioxide, has already caused one quarter of the world’s coral to die, including 70-90% of the coral in the Indian Ocean (Roberts, 2). “Coral ramparts” that formerly “protected islands and coasts from Florida to Panama and South America” have now crumbled away and “left shores open to attack by wave and storm” (IBID., 211-212).

One of the biggest problems in the ocean is that, as a result of overfishing, there aren’t all that many fish left. It is estimated that “most of the world’s major fishery species have been reduced in numbers by 75 to 95% or more” (IBID., 50). Fifty years ago “there were 30 times more Atlantic bluefin tuna swimming wild than now exist” (IBID., 215). In order for the stock to recover it would be necessary to put a temporary ban on their catch. But these fish being greatly in demand, bring astronomical prices, and are being fished into extinction. In the waters off Newfoundland codfish used to lord it over other sea life.

“Lobsters lurked and crabs cowered as throngs of cod advanced.” However, a bit too many of these ferocious creatures have been fished out. Cod eggs and larvae are a feast for herring, jellyfish, and others.

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There used to be so many cod that the loss of eggs didn't matter. But today the few remaining cod can only produce "a tiny fraction of the former abundance of young, few of which survive the carnivorous gauntlet today" (IBID., 224-5). At the mouth of the Mississippi, every spring the river water is loaded with "organic matter and dissolved nutrients that plankton need to thrive." It used to be a bonanza for the fish, but now the region has been so overfished that most of the plankton never gets consumed and is left to rot. Thus a dead zone forms every year that, at its peak, "chokes life from nearly eight thousand square miles of sea." While "corpses of fish, crabs and shrimp litter the seabed," fishermen have to travel further and further offshore, passing through a wide expanse of "eerily empty water" in order to fish out an even larger area (IBID., 121).

In the early 19th century, probably the unfished areas of the sea outnumbered the fished zones by 100 to one. But Roberts suggests that the ratio today has been stood on its head. And he cites an amazing statistic. In the 1880's, a fishing fleet consisting "mostly of sail-powered boats open to the elements" was much more successful at catching fish than current-day fishing craft. He writes: "For every hour spent fishing today, in boats bristling with the latest fish-finding electronics," modern fishermen "land just six per cent of what they did 120 years ago" (IBID., 45).

Speaking of modern fishing equipment, it has a number of negative aspects. New nets and lines made of plastic are much lighter in weight and cheaper in price. In the old days hemp, sisal, and cotton materials were "assiduously maintained and re-used." But nowadays fishermen tend to calculate that much more catch can be accommodated if the nets are just thrown away (PLASTIC OCEAN, Captain Charles Moore, 203). One researcher in Taiwan admitted that "all Taiwanese fishermen jettison their nets at sea after catching all they can" (Moore, 160-61). Unfortunately the resulting casualties of "seabirds and marine mammals tangled up and drowned by fishing gear is far greater than from oil spills." Deepwater Horizon took months to wipe out as much marine life as Gulf of Mexico fishing fleets dispose of in a single day! (Roberts, 135). These abandoned nets also have a tendency to snag ship propellers. In 1993 a South Korean ferry capsized in a heavy storm when a net clump seized its prop and 292 passengers drowned (Moore, 205).

In 1990 it was estimated that 17,500 Laysan albatross perished in drift nets. These nets were banned two years later, replaced by long lines that "can be up to sixty miles long and strung with as many as thirty thousand hooks." The result was a vast increase of albatross deaths, the death toll rising to hundreds of thousands as the birds dove for the bait and got hooked. More recent modifications have reduced the deaths to some extent by "employing rounded hooks or bait covers" but some fishing fleets are "completely and unscrupulously rogue" (Moore, 203). Roberts tells us of one longline bycatch from a mahi mahi expedition that, in order to net 211 mahi mahi, using 54 long lines, with 43,000 hooks; managed to destroy 460 sharks, 488 turtles, 455 rays, and 177 assorted fish! (Roberts, 323) Roberts also relates how scallop dredges, looking "like the harrows farmers use to break up clods of earth" leave the bottom "littered with the bodies of dead, dying and injured animals" and he cites a "widely regarded estimate" that "nearly six million square miles gets hit by trawls and dredges every year" (208-9). All around the world, he says, trawlers have "obliterated habitats formed over thousands of years" (231). The bycatch of prawn trawlers often outnumbers the prawns by a ratio of 10-1 or even 15-1. Roberts focuses on four days of prawn trawling near Scotland which netted 28,300 prawns but had a bycatch of 12,500 fish from 38 species "and all of them were thrown away, the vast majority of them dead" (313). Recently the European Parliament voted to ban bottom trawling in areas "most at risk" but it rejected a motion to phase out deep sea trawling altogether by a vote of 342 to 326 with 19 abstentions (NYT, 12-11-13).

Still another growing menace to marine life is the plastics industry. Several dead or dying whales found near shore have had "shocking quantities of plastic bags" in their guts (Moore, 172). In August of 2000 a baleen whale stranded on an Australian beach "clearly suffering." After it died, "nearly six square yards of compressed plastics, mostly shopping bags" were removed from its intestines (IBID., 228). And a sperm whale found stranded alive on Galveston Island died eleven days later in a holding tank. Its first two stomach compartments were "completely occluded by various plastic bags" that proved lethal (IBID., 229). In one study nearly half of adult Leatherback turtles had ingested plastic, and in a second study, of Leatherbacks found dead, 70% had "digestive tracts blocked

by stuff like Mylar balloons and trash bags” (VOYAGE OF THE TURTLE, Carl Safina, 51). Incredible quantities of plastic objects accumulate on the ocean surface. Albatross are fish eaters but they are also scavengers hunting by sight and are attracted by colorful and shiny objects that have a resemblance to crustacean parts. As a result albatross chicks are fed an increasing proportion of bottle caps and cigarette lighters, and dead starved albatross chicks contain an average of 76.7 grams of ingested plastics! (Moore, 217-220).

Plastic items in the ocean are insidious because they are practically indestructible. They break down into smaller parts but they hang around. They make up an increasing proportion of beach sand. Plastic pellets not only resemble plankton but in samples of the ocean surface they outnumber the plankton by as much as 46 to one in some areas and if toxic chemicals happen to be in the water they have a tendency to adhere to the plastic. Thus “commingled plastic and plankton” may form a witch’s brew for “indiscriminate surface feeders” (Moore, 324).

Turning from the ocean to the land, we find a disturbing estimate that 35,000 to 50,000 elephants were slaughtered last year. Heavily armed gangs “shooting anyone that gets in their way and machine gunning any elephant they come across” are even using helicopters and rockets. Several countries with stockpiles of ivory persuaded international officials to allow a “one off” sale to Japan and China “on the theory that flooding the market would reduce the price and thus reduce demand.” It didn’t work. The 62 tons of legal ivory allotted to China only stimulated greater demand for ivory, increasing the price, and creating vast opportunities for the entrance of illegal ivory (CHINA DAILY, 11-15-13).

In many parts of the world there is a growing shortage of water. “Australia’s legendary Murray and Darling rivers . . . lose so much water to irrigation that they now reach the coast as mere trickles” (Roberts, 91). Our own Colorado River has a similar problem. In Pakistan, where the Indus River no longer reaches the sea, ocean water is creeping up the delta, killing the protective mangroves, the trees, and the crops (Weisman, 261). In nearby Gadap Town, where fields of wheat and corn were among the most productive in the world, wells reached water in 25 feet. Now even 350 feet down the wells are dry (IBID., 246-7). Karachi, which had a population of half a million in 1947, now has 21 million people. Altogether, Pakistan, a country just a bit bigger than Texas, which has 26 million people, is jam packed with 185 million, and is on course to outnumber the 248 million souls

in Indonesia in two decades. (IBID., 248-9).

There are forces at work with the potential to stabilize and even reduce the population on earth to a manageable and comfortable level. Women, when they are free from religious superstition and have ready access to contraceptives, do not really want to have 15-20 children. The population in Japan is not growing and in Singapore, lavish baby bonuses did not have the desired effect. But unfortunately, there are areas where women do not have this freedom. In northern Israel, where the population is denser than any other place in the Western world at 740 persons per square mile, ultra-Orthodox Jewish families average 7 children and frequently reach double digits. When asked what they will do when the population doubles in 2050 they reply: “God made the problem and He will solve it” (IBID., 12). In Niger, where the population has increased fivefold and farmlands and pastures are being destroyed, an Imam is willing to admit: “We are doomed!” But then he adds: “Man cannot hold back doomsday . . . God has pre-ordained its time” (IBID., 234).

In the United States and Europe there is a fundamental belief that the only workable economy is one that is dependent on growth, on more housing starts, more customers. We need to challenge that assumption. There will be plenty to do in an economy free of cancerous growth, plenty of things to get paid for. We just might have to have shorter work days, however, and a higher rate of pay per hour. We can live with that. As Weisman puts it: “Picture a world where economic decisions are made not to benefit the cleverest financial whizzes . . . but according to what’s best for the most people and for the planet that sustains us all” (317).

One way or another, we on Planet Earth are going to have to scale back. It can be done in a relatively peaceful way by persuasion. Or it can be done by running headlong into a crisis of large proportions that will force our hand. Or maybe by a combination of the two. But it cannot be avoided. Weisman tells us: “On a finite planet, constant growth is like a pyramid scheme”(306). Shattering bedrock in order to wring more fuel from sand and shale “seems impressive from a short-term perspective” but in the end it will “buy us relatively little extra time, and may cost much more than” it gives. These new harvesting techniques “make alarming messes” and when we burn the extracted fuel we turn “the skies even more uncontrollable and the oceans increasingly corrosive” (314).

Conversations With Harry

By Ian Kennedy

It was a cold fog, almost like a fine rain last night, when I entered the Bar. Harry was already seated at his usual table. Almost the only person, with the exception of a old guy at the bar with his head buried in his beer. Sue had joined Harry and they were having a jolly old laugh. I shed my topcoat and rubbed my hands together to try to warm up. "I hate this freezing fog." I remarked. They looked at me and shrugged.

Sue pored me a beer as I sat down. "Have you heard about the goings on with Boeing?" I asked. Sue looked puzzled and Harry smiled and said, "Last time I was up that way, Seattle was a one company town."

"I'm sure you know that has all changed with the hi tech and the biotech industries going full bore." I pause to have some beer. "Boeing was made on the backs of organized labor in Seattle. When the Company was controlled by the Boeing family, an agreement and hand shake were as good as gold. Even when management first changed, they came from the ranks."

"Today, management are all MBAs and have no real knowledge of the work required. They just look at the bottom line and ask how can we make even more money?" I continued, "Then they came upon the idea of outsourcing as a way to improve profits and cut the strength of the Union. The outsourcing made the Union nervous, and so they sat down and gave the Employer a five year extension that was less then favorable, but kept, or brought back some of the work on the 787. Of course, this was work the suppliers were screwing up." Harry is nodding while Sue asks, "If the suppliers were screwing up, why didn't they just give all the work to the folks up there?" "Well," I responded, "They knew if they gave the work back to the Union, it would strengthen the Union, and they didn't want that. The desire was to weaken the Union such that the Company could dictate to the Union. They want the skills the Union brings but with the power of the shape-up." As I finish my beer, I let Sue know it was time for a fresh pitcher. I continue, "With the new plane, the 777x, The Company felt this was a good time to go after the Union again. So, they got the International Union into secret talks on a long term extension of the contract. It was full of take backs." I was still feeling the dampness and the cold in my bones as Sue brought a fresh pitcher. As she was setting it down, I asked, "Could you get me a hot toddy while you're on your feet?" And Harry pipes in, "Make that two."

It didn't take long before Sue returned caring three hot toddies, "You guys aren't the only ones to feel the cold." She said as she sat down. "Go on with your story." She said.

So I did, "In the mean time Boeing went to the governor, wanting all sorts of breaks from the State. They walked away with a package worth over eight billion dollars if they agreed to build the 777X in State."

"In the negotiations with the International Union, Boeing handed them a final offer. It was for an eight year extension that included a \$10,000 (Ten thousand dollar) signing bonus, a promise to keep final assembly and the wing manufacturing in State, and, If I remember correctly, small increases in wages, And what did they want in exchange, you ask? Not much, they say. Just a strike free period of the life of the contract. The workers to pay more on the health coverage, and the defined pension plan would be frozen and a 401K would be set up in it's place. New hires would only get the 401K and advancement up the pay scale would be stretched out from the present six years to sixteen years, (again, if I remember correctly.) And, to the credit of the rank-and-file, it was voted down by a margin of 2 to 1."

Sue is sitting on the edge of her seat, while Harry nods in approval. "Has anything else happened, did Boeing make another offer?" Sue asks. I had finished my toddy and was holding the glass, looking at it as I turned it in my hands. "Do you want another one?" Sue asks. I smile as I hand her my glass, Harry gets his to her first.

When Sue returns with our drinks, I continue, "Boeing put out requests from States for bids to set up plants, and in the meantime, The Governor and his people started leaning on the Union membership. The Union and Boeing again went into secret negotiations and Boeing again made them a 'Last-and-final' offer that was only slightly better than the first. Boeing upped the signing bounce to \$15,000 and added some dental to the health care. In the mean time, the Governor's office and the local press has been doing all they could to scare the membership into voting up the contract.----" Harry interrupts, "The Union brought it back for a vote? He asks. I respond, "The local leadership didn't want to, claimed it was to similar to the previous, but the International was adamant and the pressure from outside was making the rank-and-file nervous and many members were calling for a vote."

Final Dispatch

Pensioners

John Wikene 19
Bruce Norton 19 Active
Ray Nelson 98
Dallas Bogert 19
Larry Harn 19 active
Dave Vigil Sr. 19

Survivors

Barbara Morris 19
Bennie Byrd 19
Elizabeth Kaul 52
Cecilia Kuaimoku 98

Conversations With Harry

Continued from page 4

"And isn't your Governor a pro-labor man? Harry then asks. "So we all thought." I answer. "So," Harry continues, "The Governor's office is pressuring for a 'yes' vote even though the workers will lose the pension. Doesn't he understand what that means for the future of these men and women?" He sits back, waiting for my response. I shake my head as I'm finishing off my toddy. "I personally think he's looking for a big feather in his cap, not what the future would be like for these workers." Then Harry asks, "And what do you think should be done? Will Boeing really pull out?"

"Will they pull out? That's a good question, They moved the headquarters to Chicago a few years ago. They have been spreading the work all over the place, usually with poor results and had to bring some back. The top management did not work their way up through the company and only look at the bottom line and the stockholders. But it will cost a ton of money to re-establish someplace else. And how long would it take to train a work force. The Airlines that have put in orders for the 777X have stated they wouldn't put up with the problems that Boeing had with the outsourcing as they had with the 787." Sue has brought us another round of Hot Toddies and I stop for a drink. "So, it doesn't make sense for them to go elsewhere, but who can say." "And what about the contract?" Harry again asks.

"Personally, I think the Union should skip the vote and Boeing will, after a break, reopen talks. Again, that's my opinion, and as for a vote, I don't think they should hold one, but if they do, vote NO." Harry nods his approval, as he slips into his topcoat, pats Sue on the arm, then tells me, "Take care of things here, will ya?"
And out the door he goes.

P. S. As I prepare to send this on, I read that the Union has agreed to hold a vote in early January. ---
-----VOTE NO-----

AAADD - Classic Retirement Syndrome

By Steve Adore

Recently, I was diagnosed with A. A. A. D. D. - Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder.

This is how it manifests itself:

I decide to water my garden.

As I turn on the hose in the driveway, I look over at my car and decide my car needs washing.

As I start toward the garage, I notice that there is mail on the porch table that I brought up from the mail box earlier.

I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car.

I lay my car keys down on the table, put the junk mail in the rubbish bin under the table, and notice that the bin is full.

So, I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the rubbish first.

But then I think, since I'm going to be near the mailbox when I take out the garbage anyway, I may as well pay the bills first.

I take my check book off the table, and see that there is only one check left. My extra checks are in my desk in the study, so I go inside the house to my desk where I find the can of coke that I had been drinking.

I'm going to look for my checks, but first I need to push the coke aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. I see that the coke is getting warm, and I decide I should put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold.

As I head toward the kitchen with the coke, a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye: they need to be watered.

I place the coke down on the work surface, and I discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning.

I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers.

I set the glasses back down on the work top, fill a container with water and suddenly I spot the TV remote. Someone has left it on the kitchen table.

I realize that tonight when we go to watch TV, I will be looking for the remote, but I won't remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the lounge where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers.

I pour some water in the flowers, but quite a bit of it spills on the floor. So, I set the remote back down on the table, get some towels and wipe up the spill.

Then, I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day:

The car isn't washed.

The bills aren't paid.

AAADD - Classic Retirement Syndrome

Continued from page 5

There is a warm can of coke sitting on the work surface.

The flowers don't have enough water.

There is still only one check in my checkbook.

I can't find the TV remote.

I can't find my glasses and I don't remember what I did with the car keys.

Then, when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day long, and I'm really tired. I realize this is a serious problem, and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I'll check my e-mail.

PS. I just remembered, I left the water running

Why Unions Matter More Than Ever

By EDWARD M. SMITH 9/3/12 4:27 AM EDT

When I travel across the country, I often hear from business leaders, politicians and even union members who say unions don't matter anymore.

They say there was a time and place for unions — but that has passed. They cite the fact that union membership in the U.S. stands at less than 12 percent. They cite the Wisconsin recall, the passage of right-to-work laws in Indiana and the 2012 Democratic National Convention taking place in Charlotte, N.C., a city with one of the lowest union membership rates in the country. Unions don't count, they say.

They are wrong. Unions matter today more than ever.

If we want to rebuild the American middle class, we need strong unions. It's no coincidence that the decline of the middle class began with the decline in union membership. From one-third to one-fifth of the growth in inequality can be explained by the decline of unions, according to a 2011 study in the [American Sociological Review](#) by Bruce Western of Harvard University and Jake Rosenfeld of the University of Washington.

We see the result of this decline every day. More Americans are working in low-wage jobs and are without health care and the means to save for retirement.

Union jobs can still offer workers good salaries, pensions and health care benefits that give families the economic security to send kids to college or trade schools, to invest in their communities and to have a secure retirement. This is not some socialist ideal. It is the American dream — and unions have helped ensure that more Americans have a chance to live it.

Unions also matter if we want to retool and retrain our workforce for the global economy. Employers regularly talk about not being able to find skilled workers. New union training programs are a critical component of the answer to this problem. At their own expense, unions and union contractors provide training and apprenticeship programs that teach the latest construction and building techniques with a focus on safety.

This training allows U.S. workers compete with anyone in the world. These union training programs should be encouraged, and the workers who graduate should be put back to work rebuilding the nation's infrastructure — and our economy.

More importantly, unions matter because who else will speak on behalf of workers? The U.S. Chamber of Commerce speaks for the interests of business, and AARP speaks for the interests of the elderly. But without unions, who would speak for workers?

If workers are to have a share in our future prosperity, they need unions to advance their issues. Otherwise, the voices of corporations, the rich and the well-connected will drown out the voices of average American workers.

For unions to remain strong, we must remain united at the ballot box. We must support each other's causes and leaders and support the common interests of organized labor — the right to collectively bargain for wages and benefits. Union members must vote in their self-interest, not against it.

Unions matter. They mattered in the past; they matter today; and unions must remain strong if they are to matter in the future. If unions do not stand united and do not fight for the needs of working Americans, then Labor Day is meaningless. It will be just a day off in September.

That matters to me — and it should matter to you. *Edward Smith is the president and chief executive officer of Ullico Inc., the only labor-owned insurance and investment company. He has been a member of Laborers' Local 773 for 44 years.*



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Correspondence

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