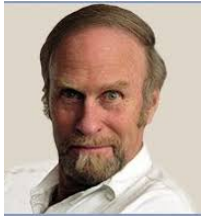


Salvaging Our Plastic Oceans



By Frosty Wooldridge

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“Cultures have long heard wisdom in non-human voices: Apollo, god of music, medicine and knowledge, came to Delphi in the form of a dolphin. But dolphins, which fill the oceans with blipping and chirping, and whales, which mew and caw in ultramarine jazz – a true rhapsody in blue – are hunted to the edge of silence.” Jay Griffiths

In 1963, I began scuba diving in the Caribbean. After nearly 50 years, I dove in the marvelous waters off the Great Barrier Reef, Galapagos Islands, Hawaii, Great Lakes, Mediterranean, Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans.

I personally watched the oceans turn from perfection to a rolling garbage pile ebbing and throbbing with the tides as humanity tossed plastic in millions of forms, glass, tires, chemicals, nets, nylon, canvas and worse into the oceans of the world.

No doubt, you heard about the 100 million tons of plastic floating 1,000 miles off San Francisco, the size of Texas, known as the “Great Pacific Garbage Patch.” It runs from 30 to 60 feet deep with plastic in places. It’s gigantic, it’s sickening and it grows by 2.5 million plastic containers 24/7. Fact: 46,000 piece of plastic containers float on every square mile of oceans of the world.

To see it grow over a lifetime sickens me to no avail. Yet, after Oprah Winfrey exposed the “Great Pacific Garbage Patch” ten years ago, not one single world leader or American leader

or even citizens of the world stepped up to work for a 25 cent deposit-return law on all plastics coming out mercantile stores worldwide.

(Plastic containers ultimately travel to the sea to produce 46,000 containers on every square mile of our oceans.)



Photography by www.huffingtonpost.com

Oceanographer Jacques Yves Cousteau said, “Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans.”

As we poison, plasticize and acidify our oceans 24/7, we will pay dearly at some point.

Enter artist Angela Haseltine Pozzi, director of www.WashedAshore.org , who lives on the beach in Brandon, Oregon. She makes art out of all the plastic that washes ashore from the vast Pacific Ocean at her doorstep.

[Enjoy this four minute video of her work:](#)

“The Washed Ashore Project is a non-profit, community-based organization with a mission of educating and creating awareness about marine debris and plastic pollution through art,” reads her website. “Washed Ashore is a project of The Artula Institute for Arts & Environmental Education, whose mission is to provide opportunities to express and teach

environmental issues through the arts.

“Under the leadership of Angela Haseltine Pozzi, community members of all ages work together to clean up our beaches and process the debris into art supplies to construct giant sculptures of the sea life most affected by plastic pollution. This has resulted in thousands of pounds of debris removed from local beaches and turned into works of art. These unique art pieces are part of a traveling exhibition that includes educational signage and programs that encourage reducing, refusing, reusing, repurposing and recycling.

“As lead artist, Angela Haseltine Pozzi orchestrates the construction of these towering, aesthetically striking sculptures of marine life with the assistance of many volunteers and a dedicated staff. Angela has been an exhibiting artist and educator for more than 30 years and now chooses to use art as a powerful tool to encourage community and environmental action about her true passion...cleaning up the world’s oceans.”

“A frightening 90% of the debris we collect is petroleum-based: plastic items, nylon ropes and net. We are able to use 98% of this trash to create sculptures, including a walk-through replica of an ocean gyre, a Styrofoam coral reef, Henry the fish, a plastic bottle sea jelly, an oil-spill replica, and a musical sea star (tuned to an e-flat scale!). An interdisciplinary environmental arts curriculum and a feature-length documentary are in progress to accompany this work.”

“Many of us ask what can I, as one person, do, but history tells us that everything good and bad starts because somebody does something or does not do something.” Sylvia, Earle, Oceanographer

Pozzi stated, “300 million pounds of plastic is produced annually and less than 10 percent of it is recycled.”

Where does it end up? Answer: humanity considers the oceans as its ultimate toilet.

In her plastic ocean art, she produces seals, starfish, birds, turtles and dozens of other creatures. Ironically, the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" kills millions of those critters and seabirds via suffocation, starvation, snaring them under water, gut stuffing and worse.

At some point, we humans must ask ourselves if we possess moral responsibility and ethical choices toward preserving all life on this planet by respecting its right to exist alongside us. As of today, we fail miserably.

What can you do? Answer: get involved. Work in your state for 25-cent deposit return laws for all plastics leaving every store in the USA and around the world. It takes you at the local level to create "consciousness shift" which leads to "critical mass shift" that moves into "tipping point" whereby give our home planet a chance to function biologically along with all its animals. With strong deposit laws, if anyone throws their glass, metal plastic containers, kids of every description cover the land to pick-up debris.

Contact Pozzi at her website and ask her how you can chip in with money, volunteer and make a difference in your own area. www.washedashore.org

"I had fought on behalf of man against the sea, but I realized that it had become more urgent to fight on behalf of the sea against man." Alain Bombard, Biologist

"If man doesn't learn to treat the oceans and rainforest with respect, man will become extinct." Peter Benchley, author of Jaws.

As a lifelong scuba diver, I attest to those statements.

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E-Mail Frosty: frostyw@juno.com