

*In Memoriam***Garrett and Jane Hardin**

BY LINDA THOM

**Peter Brimelow writes:** *Occasionally, we at VDARE.COM are accused of being too Christian, and specifically too Roman Catholic. This is because of the accident that the Catholic members of the immigration reform coalition seem to be the most articulate about their faith in relation to their nation: the Protestants we've asked are apparently still thinking. Tonight, we mourn the death of a coalition member whose articulate humanism was occasionally used by immigration enthusiasts to smear the whole reform movement as atheistic and leftist: Garrett Hardin, the polymathic ecologist and microbiologist. Hardin's 1968 essay The Tragedy Of The Commons is regarded by economists as the classic demonstration of the need for clearly defined property rights. Or, he himself would add, enlightened government intervention. Hardin's 1974 essay Lifeboat Ethics introduced an important concept into the debate among those genuinely perplexed by the competing moral claims of the national family and the entire human race. Hardin's conclusion in both cases: cool rational forethought was essential. In their eighties, faced with deteriorating health, Hardin and his wife acted unflinchingly on this profound belief. Garrett Hardin was always cheerful. We will remember him that way.*

**A** week ago Sunday, Garrett and Jane Hardin committed suicide. I cried, not for them but for me. Garrett and Jane got my thinking straight on overpopulation. They lived what they believed. I have never met such environmentally conscious people.

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Garrett and Jane lived simply. For example, they collected rainwater for drinking. Jane gardened and preserved and composted. Jane told me they didn't subscribe to the *Los Angeles Times* because it generated too much waste advertising newsprint and the Earth would be better if fewer people subscribed.

She knitted wool socks for Garrett and we shared patterns. Jane believed in Garrett and she



**Garrett and Jane Hardin on their wedding day, September 7, 1941.**

took care of his many personal needs—he was crippled by polio as a child—to allow him to write and think and influence thousands, including me.

Since I was in the eighth grade, I have worried about overpopulation. I read an article in *Time* magazine about India's population problem and the efforts of the government to help people control family size by instructing on the rhythm method. I wasn't exactly sure what that was but I was sure that keeping babies from entering the world and then starving was the right thing to do.

In college I majored in economics and heard that nations should make huge capital investments in infrastructure to reduce family size. According to economic thinking, when folks get money, they quit having children. I couldn't figure this out. Let's see, "Not tonight honey, they are building a dam on the Nile, don't you know." In my simple twenty-year-old mind, people would have more children if they felt prosperous and not fewer.

Despite my misgivings about this thinking, my

heart overwhelmed my mind and I felt that sending billions in foreign aid to save the teeming masses would be the best course. I moved to Santa Barbara where Garrett and Jane lived. In the 1970s, I attended a lecture on overpopulation by Garrett. Bam, pow, whap, no mercy for the bleeding hearts. In a



crowded lifeboat, taking on the drowning people in the water will only result in death for all. If some in the lifeboat feel guilty, then they should

get out and give their place to others. Those in the lifeboat who wanted to live should not be compelled to commit suicide.

The best way to redistribute wealth was not to drain the rich nations to save the poor but rather to help reduce the number of people in the next

generation so that fewer could have more. Numbers matter in an environmentally finite world.

According to Garrett, overpopulation is cruel because Mother Nature's answer is brutal. People must work to agree on a method of controlling their prolific ways. He echoed the theme of Malthus that overpopulation leads to death from starvation and disease or from conflict with others fighting for survival. It's nature's way and the proof is everywhere around us in the world.

Garrett's views caused consternation among Christians, Liberals, immigration-enthusiasts and just plain folks on the street. But numbers matter. In our world, 5 billion people could benefit economically by moving to America. Four billion have lower incomes than our most numerous immigrant groups, Mexicans. Three billion have inadequate food. We cannot save the world by moving millions to America and we will commit suicide if we try.

Garrett administered tough love. I will miss both Jane and Garrett because they loved life and never gave up hope that folks would eventually get it right. ■

It cannot be too often repeated that an extravagantly multicultural nation is poorly positioned to compete with nations that have not succumbed to the siren call for more 'diversity'.



Overpopulation can be avoided only if borders are secure; otherwise poor and overpopulated nations will export their excess to richer and less populated nations.



'Sustainable growth' is an oxymoron.



We are limited by the basic theorem of ecology, 'We can never do merely one thing'.

—Garrett Hardin

