

I offer my congratulations to petty officer Scott Higgins and to all those whom the Coast Guard recognizes today. His achievements have brought honor both to him and to his home state of Rhode Island.

ARTICLE BY RABBI MICHAEL COHEN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of the Senate an article by Rabbi Michael Cohen who is director of special projects at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies. Rabbi Cohen recently submitted the article entitled "The Genesis of Diversity" to the New York Times. In this article, Rabbi Cohen eloquently reminds us that environmental and biological diversity is not simply a thought or something we simply sit back and observe. Rather we are constant participants in the act of diversity and as such it is our responsibility as human beings to protect our environment. This article serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving environmental and biological diversity during this holiday season.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Rabbi Michael M. Cohen's article entitled "The Genesis of Diversity" be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

THE GENESIS OF DIVERSITY

(By Rabbi Michael Cohen)

In 1968 Hanukkah and Ramadan ended on the same date. The next day was Christmas Eve. That evening, one quarter of the world's population saw, for the first time, images taken by the Apollo 8 astronauts of the earth from a lunar orbit. The earth, a beautifully colored marble ball floating across the black backdrop of the universe, also looked lonely and vulnerable. Those pictures captured the imagination of the world, triggering something in the consciousness of humanity that gave birth to the environmental movement and, two years later, the first Earth Day.

To frame that moment, a shared historic moment that would transcend all the divisions of the world, the Apollo 8 crew read from the beginning of the Bible, the first ten lines from the Book of Genesis. The opening chapters of Genesis not only include the account of the creation of the earth but over and over tell us of the importance of diversity.

All of creation is called "good," reminding us of the value of the multiplicity of the world that we live in. The text also teaches us, by describing everything that is created before humans as "good," that all things have intrinsic value in and of themselves beyond any value that we may place on them. Once humans are created, "very good" is the adjective applied by the text. An anthropocentric reading of the text would say this is because the world was created for our needs, and once we are in place we can do what we want with the world. A biocentric reading of the text says that "very good" only means that creation as described in the text was complete, and that we humans were the last piece of the biological puzzle.

This reading is supported by the reality that if humans were to disappear from the face of the earth all that had been created

before us would go on quite well, actually better, without our presence. However, if a strata of the diversity of life that had been created before humans were to disappear, we, and all that had been created after it, would no longer exist. In a bit of Heavenly humor on Darwin's survival of the fittest, it is actually the smallest and least physically strong species, like the butterflies, bees, and amoebas, that hold the survival of the world in place. Unlike the other species of the planet, we have the power to commit biocide if we do not protect and preserve those smaller forms of life.

The importance of diversity is emphasized a few chapters later, in the story of Noah, where Noah is told to bring pairs of each species onto the ark so that after the flood they can replenish the earth. After the flood, God places a rainbow in the sky as a reminder to never again destroy the world. It is both a symbol and a metaphor: a single ray of light refracted through water, the basic source of all life, produces a prism of colors. As with the Creation story, we are again reminded that the foundation of diversity is that we all come from one source. On its most profound level, this understanding should give us all the awareness that we have a relationship with and are connected to the rest of humanity and creation.

Immediately following the story of Noah we read about the Tower of Babel. The whole account takes up only nine verses. The conventional reading is that its message is one against diversity; the babel of languages at the end of the story is understood as a punishment. The Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz presents a different reading of the text. For Leibowitz, Babel represents a fascist totalitarian state where the aims of the state are valued more than the individual. In such a society, diverse thought and expression is frowned upon. The text tells us that everyone "had the same language, and the same words."

We read in the genealogies that link the Noah and Babel stories that the "nations were divided by their lands, each one with its own language, according to their clans, by their nations." Leibowitz sees the babel of languages not as a punishment but a corrective return to how things had been and were supposed to be.

That is still our challenge today. Diversity is not a liberal value; it is the way of the world. We know that the environment outside of our human lives is healthier with greater diversity, coral reefs and rain forests being prime examples. It is also true for humanity. We are better off because of the different religions, nations, cultures, and languages that comprise the human family. The Irish Potato Famine was caused because only one variety of potato was planted. Without diverse crops, the disease spread easily on a large and deadly scale.

In one of his State of the Union addresses, former President Bill Clinton said, "This fall, at the White House, one of America's leading scientists said something we should all remember. He said all human beings, genetically, are 99.9 percent the same. So modern science affirms what ancient faith has always taught: the most important fact of life is our common humanity. Therefore, we must do more than tolerate diversity—we must honor and celebrate it."

The opening of the Bible understands diversity not as a noun but as a verb; diversity is the basic action for life as we know it on this planet. Its importance is underscored by the fact that three accounts in its opening chapters highlight diversity as a foundation of the world we live in. Such an orientation is essential for our survival as a species.

DONNA ANTHONY: IN MEMORIAM

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, we have a saying in my Senate office: Once a member of the Harkin family, always a member of the Harkin family. On Monday, with the passing of Donna Anthony, a longtime staffer in my Des Moines office, we lost a very valuable and dear member of our family.

It seems like just yesterday that I was presenting Donna with a pin recognizing her 20 years of service to the people of Iowa as a Senate employee. In Donna's case, that wasn't "service to the people of Iowa" in the abstract; it was service to thousands of individual Iowans whose lives she touched in very real, concrete ways.

Donna was one of those people who give bleeding-heart liberals a good name. She was always on a personal mission to save the world, or at least as many people as she could.

She was constantly taking up the cause of people who are down on their luck, whether it was a senior citizen getting stiffed by Medicare, an immigrant family who desperately needed a visa, a victim of domestic violence, you name it. Her title may have been "caseworker supervisor," but these were not just cases to her, they were people—and she took each one to heart. She put the passion in compassion.

I remember in Catholic school being taught that Saint Jude was the patron saint of lost causes. Well, I was blessed to know Saint Donna, the patron saint of people in dire need. Saint Jude intercedes with God. Saint Donna interceded with the Federal Government—which may be more challenging. She was constantly working her little miracles.

Donna certainly came through for me—again and again. I long ago lost track of the number of people thanking me for the work that Donna did. And her personal loyalty was just extraordinary. She was always looking out for my best interest and for ways to make me look good.

I remember when I was in Iowa Falls this past August, meeting with the economic development group. They had heard about the great work Donna had done for Marshalltown, and they wanted her to do the same for Iowa Falls.

In fact, what she did in Marshalltown was typical of Donna Anthony going the extra mile, going the extra 10 miles. She worked closely with the Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce when they started making their trips to Washington to lobby for assistance. She drove back and forth to Marshalltown for countless meetings and served as an all-round counselor and advocate for their projects. The Marshall County sheriff, Ted Kamanches—a prominent Republican—became a big supporter of mine because of the great work Donna did for his police force, including having a Federal drug task force placed in Marshalltown.

Twenty years ago, Donna started out in my Des Moines office as receptionist