

THE VILLAGE GREEN

Number Seventeen, February 9, 2020

ACTIVISTS MOBILIZE RE: OWEN SOUND CLIMATE RESOURCE

In what could turn out to be a textbook case of political dithering, Owen Sound Municipal Councillor Marion Koepke will introduce a motion at the February 10 Council meeting to delay hiring a Climate Change Adaption And Mitigation Coordinator until the Council better understands this permanent position and investigates sharing the employee with another municipality – or finds an alternative to hiring someone for the position. The Council authorized this position on January 13 and built its costs into the city's budget. A hiring delay would increase the chances that no in-house climate voice is available to Owen Sound during its strategic planning process.

The Bruce-Grey Owen Sound Climate Action Team encourages concerned residents and their friends to attend the **Council meeting at Owen Sound City Hall at 7:00 pm on Monday February 10** to support, by their presence, one of the few things the City of Owen Sound has agreed to do about climate change. The Council has already refused to declare a climate emergency or crisis, and rejected a proposal from both youth and adults in the city to create a climate advisory committee to assist the Council on climate issues (rejected largely on the grounds that city would have a Climate Change Adaption And Mitigation Coordinator on staff to provide advice). As well, neither the Owen Sound Mayor nor Deputy Mayor serves on the Climate Change Task Force recently created by Grey County.

OWEN SOUND NOT YET COMMITTED TO ORGANICS COLLECTION PROGRAM

On January 27 Owen Sound Councillor Richard Thomas presented a motion to City Council that would direct staff to bring forward a report on the creation of a source-separated organics collection and composting program, focusing on using an increase in the cost of garbage bag tags to fund it, while also providing Council with other options to start the program. Curbside organics pickup and composting would reduce pressure on landfill sites, and the garbage bag tag program motivates residents to be more mindful of the waste they produce.

The Council voted to delay making this decision until April so the city's Operations Committee and staff would have more time to discuss the topic.

At \$2.50 per garbage bag, the Owen Sound waste program runs a \$44,000 deficit for what was meant to be a user-pay incentive program. This means that every Owen Sound taxpayer now subsidizes pickup costs, no matter how hard they personally work reduce their garbage output. Owen Sound Waste Watchers had asked the Operations Committee to increase the fee by \$0.25, which would have virtually returned the program to its original intention of being a user-pay program. The Operations Committee approved this, but city council voted against it.

MARCH 15: CLIMATE STRIKE ANNIVERSARY

Zoë Thurling of Owen Sound recently reminded folks that Saturday March 15, 2020 will mark a year since student-led Friday For Future climate strikes began in Owen Sound and that it will also be the first anniversary of the first International Strike for Climate that drew more than a million folks to rallies world-wide.

Although events in Grey, Bruce and Simcoe to mark these anniversaries have not yet been established, we can assume that **Friday March 14 and Saturday March 15** may be rally days.

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According to Canada's national Fridays For Future website (<https://fridaysforfuture.ca/>) the next national Fridays For Future event is **Friday, April 3, 2020**. The web site also says it hopes that Canadians will participate in the 50th anniversary of Earth Day on **April 22, 2020**.

If dear readers are aware of rally plans or commemoration events in their communities, could you let us know?

GEORGIAN BLUFFS CLIMATE GROUP TO SELF-ORGANIZE AND TO HOST RESILIENCE FILM & DISCUSSION

On Monday February 10 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm at Kemble Sarawak United Church at the main intersection in Kemble, the newly formed Georgian Bluffs Climate Group will hold an information/ organizational meeting – a great opportunity for Georgian Bluffs residents to get involved on the ground floor of local climate activism. All are welcome.

Hosted by Leigh and Megan Grigg of the Georgian Bluffs Climate Group, a screening and discussion of the locally-made documentary ***Resilience – Transforming Our Community*** will be held in Shallow Lake on **Monday March 23 from 7 to 9 pm at the Shallow Lake & District Community Centre, 550 Princess Street, Shallow Lake**. Doors open at 6:30. Liz Zetlin, one of the film's producers, will be there. Admission is free (donations are welcome) and all are invited.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP CREATE CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS?

The Collingwood Climate Action Team's Carbon Conversations Working Group is bringing the "Carbon Conversations" program to Collingwood and area this spring. The program uses Carbon Conversations materials developed by psychotherapist Rosemary Randal and engineer Andy Brown in the UK (see their website at <http://www.carbonconversations.co.uk/>). A similar program created in Toronto will help establish Collingwood's program.

The Collingwood folks are looking for facilitators to help run a Carbon Conversation series, each consisting of 6 weekly group sessions through 2020, starting in early spring. All workshops are co-facilitated in small groups so individuals can explore the relationship between their lifestyles and carbon emissions. Topics include: looking for a low-carbon future, energy at home, travel and transportation, food and water, and consumption and waste.

Collingwood's Carbon Conversations group will train volunteer facilitators in the program before offering it to the public, and will host a train-the-trainer course on the weekend of February 29 to March 1.

If you're interested in becoming one of Collingwood's facilitators, contact Catherine Daw at [ccatcarbon@gmail.com](mailto:cocatcarbon@gmail.com). Catherine can provide a volunteer description to interested individuals and would be glad to discuss your interest, commitment and qualifications

OWEN SOUND WASTE WATCHERS PILOT PROJECT

Owen Sound Waste Watchers recently launched its joint DIVERT research project with the United Way, to examine the impact of low-income life on attempts to reduce waste (DIVERT stands for Determining, Improving, and Valuing Environmental Responses Together). From February to June, ten participant households will take part in Talkin' Trash learning sessions,

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complete a survey, receive support items on garbage, recycling and zero waste, track their household garbage/recycling output using an easy "post it on the fridge" tracking sheet, and provide feedback.

Owen Sound Waste Watchers invites other in the community to "shadow" the this project: by completing the survey and being mindful of a few of their regular routines each month, others in the community can add to its waste reduction information base. Says Waste Watchers:

"All are welcome to participate, no matter your circumstances ... whether you are struggling, striving or surviving. The more the merrier, as we are all in this together!"

If you're interested in being a "shadower", please send an e-mail to Laura Wood of Waste Watchers at oswastewatchers@gmail.com and she will send you a link to the survey and more information on DIVERT.

MEAFORD GRAVITY-FED GENERATING PROJECT STIRS CONTROVERSY

In an earlier issue we mentioned this project, proposed by TC Energy (part owner of the Bruce Nuclear Plant), to generate power at peak periods. In a nutshell, water would be pumped from Georgian Bay to a reservoir on top of the Niagara Escarpment on Department of National Defence property near Meaford, using electricity at off-peak hours to pump the water uphill. The water would later be released to flow back into Georgian Bay, thereby driving turbines, at times when electricity is most needed.

Since then, TC Energy has held several open houses to explain its plan, and it has posted material about the project at https://www.tcenergy.com/operations/power/pumped-storage-project/?utm_source=collingwoodtoday.ca&utm_campaign=collingwoodtoday.ca&utm_medium=referral. As well, opposition to the project has crystallized through the citizens' group *Save Georgian Bay*, which has posted much of its material critiquing the project on its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SavingGeorgianBay/> and on its web page at <https://www.savegeorgianbay.ca/>.

Save Georgian Bay is hosting a "Community Conversation" on the project on **Saturday February 15 from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm at Living Water Resorts, 19 Keith Avenue, RR #4 in Collingwood.**

SIMCOE COUNTY CHANGES WASTE COLLECTION RULES & SCHEDULES

Simcoe County has changed its waste collection rules. It will collect green bin (organic) material every week, but it will only collect garbage and recyclables every second week (i.e., one week will be green bin and garbage collection; the next week green bin and recyclables collection). Said a Simcoe County media release:

"This change to garbage and recycling collection on alternating weeks, with green bin collection continuing weekly will support the environment by growing our green bin program, encourage a reduction in single-use materials, and help to lower emissions with fewer trucks on the road each day."

Simcoe County residents will no longer need to separate their recyclables into several types: the County has instituted what is called "single-stream recycling" – sorting of materials will occur later in the recycling process.

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COLLINGWOOD CLIMATE ACTION TEAM SEEKS ADMIN VOLUNTEER

The Collingwood Climate Action Team (CCAT) is growing and it's now looking for administrative help on a volunteer basis (e-mails, inboxes, google drive etc.) for just a few hours a week. Are you interested or do you know someone who might be interested? If so, please contact Sue V. of the genial CCAT team at collingwoodcat@gmail.com. If you want to know what CCAT does, visit its website at www.collingwoodclimateaction.com.

GREY & BRUCE COUNTIES & MUNICIPALITIES PLAN FOR SAFETY & WELL-BEING

An opportunity for consensus-building in this region has emerged – the **Grey and Bruce Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Development Process**, sponsored by the two counties, most of the municipalities in the two counties, eight police services, three boards of education, and 30 health and social service agencies and community committees. The project is described in a *South Grey News* article at <https://www.southgreynews.ca/local-news/cswbp>. The website for the project at <https://cswbp-brucegrey.ca/community-engagement> says that in addition to an on-line survey:

“A total of 34 community engagement sessions will be held across Bruce County and Grey County this spring, and the goal is to collect information from residents about the priority risks identified through the survey. There will be 2 regional sessions - one in Bruce County and one in Grey County - and 2 sessions will be held in each participating Municipality”.

The on-line community engagement survey exploring perceptions of community risks can be filled in via the web site until March 22.

Readers of **The Village Green** may want to help their communities to explore community safety and well-being through a climate change and environmental lens. They can do this by filling in the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BruceGreyCSWB> and by attending public meetings to make their views known. When we have a schedule of these meetings, we'll let you know.

ONTARIO BILL 132 WOULD LOOSEN PESTICIDE RULES

The Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) has critiqued Ontario's Bill 132 – also known as the *Better for People, Smarter for Business Act*, the third in a series of bills in Ontario's Open for Business Action Plan. According to the Ontario Government, the bill “introduces new measures to further ease the regulatory burden to help businesses, people, schools, hospitals and municipalities.”

CELA calls attention to alarming elements in the proposed legislation, including amendments to The Pesticides Act that would allow increased use of certain pesticides for cosmetic purposes (e.g., greener weed-free lawns) and an increased use of neonics (neurotoxic insecticides that kill insects by attacking their nerve cells, and that may adversely affect human health, especially the developing brain of fetuses and young children).

CELA's December 12 letter to Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks concerning Bill 132 is at <https://cela.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CELA-Response-ERO-019-0601-Pesticides-Regulation63-09.pdf>.

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Says CELA:

- The proposed new and revised criteria for adding to the list of pesticides allowed for cosmetic use do not ensure that Class B/Restricted and high risk pesticides will be exempt from consideration.
- The new criteria also includes far too subjective language to guide the Director's decision and introduces opportunities for bureaucratic delay and poor decision-making that could lead to approval of currently banned pesticides for cosmetic use.
- Proposed revisions to reduce tracking of the use and sale of neonicotinoid-treated corn and soybean seeds will likely contribute to increased use, abetting the already dire global collapse of insect populations, including pollinators essential for food production and ecosystem health.

CELA also cites social justice issues related to less stringent pesticide use:

"This is an important matter of equity and social justice. It is well established that greater pesticide use occurs under low-income circumstances and/or sub-standard housing conditions. These circumstances can contribute to greater exposure to pesticides and other chemicals, both to present-day products and to legacy chemicals that have been restricted or banned. These vulnerable populations are also more likely to be challenged with poorer nutrition and greater stresses and chronic disease, potentially related to and also magnifying adverse effects of pesticides."

A dear reader has suggested that folks who oppose relaxation of pesticide rules in Ontario through Bill 132 should write their MPPs to voice their opposition (**good idea!**). A list of contact points for all MPPs is at <https://www.ola.org/en/get-involved/contact-mpp>.

As well, concerned citizens can voice their opposition by contacting Jeff Yurek, Ontario's Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, at 416-314-6790 and at minister.mecp@ontario.ca.

PUSLINCH RECYCLING PLANT CITED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HARM

The Ministry of the Environment has ordered NexCycle, a glass recycling company in Puslinch, near Guelph to clean up of glass piles on its site that discharge contaminants into the environment. NexCycle takes glass from municipal recycling programs, the Ontario Deposit Return Program, post-industrial window plate glass and automotive glass, and processes it into bottles and construction glass.

In October the director of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks issued a total of 15 orders to NexCycle, which allegedly continues to discharge contaminants environment including dust, fine glass particles, toxic stormwater runoff and material that attracts vermin.

COASTAL GASLINK PIPELINE STANDOFF: RCMP MOVES INTO WET'SUWET'EN LAND

Last week RCMP officers moved farther into Wet'suwet'en First Nation territory in northern B.C., arresting demonstrators and dismantling a fortified gate as a standoff continued with opponents of the Coastal GasLink pipeline. Protesters there have defied a B.C. Supreme Court order to clear the way. Hereditary Chief Na'moks says those arrested were on their own territory, not blocking pipeline construction. Said Na'moks, *"We were living there before the exclusion zone. You can't abandon your home."*

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Said a February 3 media release from the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs:

"Canadian law recognizes Wet'suwet'en traditional governance, as the Supreme Court explicitly stated... The Wet'suwet'en people, under the governance of their hereditary chiefs, have never consented to the Coastal GasLink pipeline project... the BC Environmental Assessment Office failed in its legislated duty to properly consider the facts, abdicated its responsibility to interrogate newly identified potential harms of this project, and has made a decision that is unjustified and unjustifiable... This legal challenge comes at a time when Canadians at large are increasingly concerned about the growing epidemic of violence against Indigenous women. The final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls urged immediate action to address Canada's 'race-based genocide of Indigenous peoples,' and found that 'work camps,' or 'man camps,' associated with the resource extraction industry are implicated in higher rates of violence against Indigenous women at the camps and in the neighbouring communities."

The \$6.6-billion, 670-kilometre pipeline would carry natural gas from northeastern B.C. to a massive liquefied natural gas export plant being built near Kitimat.

Protests in support of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation are being held across the country. On February 8 protesters in Toronto blocked a rail line for about five hours in the northwest end of the city to show support for the Wet'suwet'en. In eastern Ontario, Tyendinaga Mohawk protesters camped at the CN/Via Rail tracks, blocking the rail line

On February 8, Regina Police opened an investigation after a car drove through a group of about 100 Wet'suwet'en supporters who were blocking Albert Memorial Bridge. Their protest, meant to last for an hour, ended after 15 minutes because of safety concerns.

FEDERAL COURT: TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE CAN PROCEED

On February 4 the Federal Court of Appeal sided with Trans Mountain Corporation (owned by the Canadian government since 2018), upholding its pipeline approval and dismissing a case launched by First Nations that argued they were not meaningfully consulted on the project. Opponents say the project will increase west coast oil tanker traffic by 700%, could destroy the southern resident orca whale population, and would violate the rights of First Nations.

The pipeline would triple the amount of oil and refined products that can be shipped from Edmonton to Burnaby, B.C. The Trans Mountain project is slated to cost CDN\$12.6 billion, a 70% increase since the project was approved by the Federal Government less than four years ago.

OIL TRAIN DERAILS AND BURNS

On February 6 a CP crude oil train derailed and caught fire near Guernsey, Saskatchewan, resulting in the village's evacuation. Thirty-one cars left the track. Saskatchewan's Public Safety Agency said a dozen of these cars caught fire. This is the second oil train to derail and burn near Guernsey. A derailment in December caused a fire and oil spill of 400,000 gallons. The Canadian oil industry is moving record volumes of oil by rail to the U.S. Last week the CEO of Imperial Oil (Esso), an ExxonMobil subsidiary, said *"With the current differentials and arbitrage, it makes good economic sense for us to ship barrels on the rail."*

It may not, however, make good economic sense to the people of Guernsey.

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ALBERTA'S TECK OIL SANDS MINE PROJECT MAY NOT BE VIABLE

Teck Resources CEO Don Lindsay has said that in light of persistently low oil prices, his company may not move forward with its huge Frontier Oil Sands project in northern Alberta even if Canada approves its pending permit application – a statement that may be a ploy to extract greater government subsidies for the project for the sake of job generation. A host of environmental and climate action groups oppose the project because of its environmental impact and because it perpetuates Canada's reliance on fossil fuel mega-projects.

Last year the Canadian Joint Review Panel gave interim approval to the project, assuming an estimated price for oil of us\$95 per barrel – enough to produce jobs and other economic benefits – but forecasts put oil's price at less than us\$95 per barrel for the foreseeable future. Brent oil now at about us\$60 per barrel. The interim permit approval ignored price forecasts from the Canadian Energy Regulator, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and fossil fuel industry groups.

If the project proceeds and turns out to be an economic dud, The Federal Government may feel politically obliged to spend billions to bail out a disastrous oil venture. The Federal Cabinet has until the end of February to decide on the project.

TCI FUND MANAGEMENT PRESSURES BOARDS TO GO GREEN

Pundits hawking the myth that climate action equals economic doom might want to chat with Chris Hohn. His \$30 billion hedge fund, TCI Fund Management, is pressuring the boards of companies it invests in to fire CEOs who don't make "credible" emission reduction plans. If they don't, Hohn says, TCI will sell its shares.

TCI still profits from clients with large carbon footprints, like the Madrid-based airport conglomerate Ferrovial SA, but Hohn says keeping that inside influence is part of the point. He's pushing Ferrovial's board to pledge even more aggressive carbon reductions (it has already committed to reducing emissions by nearly a third by 2030). Hohn has also personally donated us\$260,000 to Extinction Rebellion, the decentralized climate activist group that promotes civil disobedience.

TROPICAL VS. BOREAL FORESTS AS CARBON SINKS

Tropical forests are losing their ability to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, while boreal forests are absorbing emissions at an increasing rate, a study finds. Boreal forests grow in cooler high-latitude regions like Canada and largely comprise pines, spruces and tamaracks. The study, whose results were published as *Recent Divergence in the Contributions of Tropical and Boreal Forests to the Terrestrial Carbon Sink* in the January edition of the journal *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, used remote-sensing data and modelling to create a detailed picture of carbon loss and gain across all of Earth's biomes from 1992 to 2015.

The chief driver of carbon loss in tropical forests over the study period seems to have been deforestation, particularly in the Amazon, Indonesia and southeastern Asia. Since the study period ended in 2015, tropical deforestation has accelerated. Carbon loss in the tropics was also affected by droughts and high temperatures that kill trees and worsen the risk of wildfires.

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It's not clear what drove carbon gains in boreal forests, but a likely driver is "CO₂ fertilization" – a term describing how increased CO₂ levels in the atmosphere boost plant growth, since plants absorb atmospheric CO₂ as part of photosynthesis – the more CO₂ in the atmosphere, the more the plants grow. However, this enhanced "carbon sink" phenomenon may not last. If trees grow faster, they could die younger, releasing increased CO₂ into the atmosphere in 10 or 20 years.

IN MY HUMBLE OPINION: WHEN GOOD PEOPLE DO BAD THINGS

I have long been an admirer of Rex Murphy, Newfoundlander extraordinaire, insightful essayist, courteous radio host, adept and sprightly player with the English language.

But he has changed. Now, as columnist for mildly right-of-centre publications, he rails angrily (and with inaccurate logic and evidence) at those who oppose fossil fuel projects, particularly projects in Alberta. He doesn't seem to be an overt climate change denier, though he savages people who propose policies to deal with climate change. He seems much more interested in touting any fossil fuel project that produces jobs, no matter how vile the outcome of those projects. He also seems near-obsessed with not offending Alberta by espousing fossil fuel reduction policies, lest we seem ungrateful to that province and thereby drive it closer to western-province separatism. In a recent column he condemns the very idea of an aid package for Alberta to deal with the loss of oil patch jobs, calling it something we do for third-world countries but not for our fellow citizens – it might demean them. Better, he says, for Canadians and their governments to embrace fossil fuel mega-projects like Alberta's Teck oil sands mine.

Rex Murphy has one thing right – the scale of the issue is enormous. Vastly curtailing – even eliminating – the fossil fuel industry in western Canada will be necessary if Canada is to play its fair role in combatting global heating. Part of that involves drying up the insatiable demand by the rest of Canada – and the world – for fossil fuels. Part of it should also involve concerted national investment in developing green energy jobs in Alberta to compensate for lost oil jobs (easy to say but hard to do since it involves sacrifices on the part of non-Albertans to make those investments. It also involves Alberta's willingness to be converted).

It will be tempting to make quiet exceptions, to appease oil appetites and industries – a pipeline here, an oil sand extraction plant there – to stanch the blood. Every nation with regions that rely on fossil fuel revenues faces the same temptation. A little exception here, there, everywhere, forgetting that ultimately there is no such thing as a "little catastrophe".

Rex Murphy's argument seems to be a call to loyalty and gratitude – western fossil fuels have enriched all of Canada, so it would be ungrateful and disloyal of us to turn our backs on a part of the country that has done so much good for us.

Imagine your brother opened a factory next to your house. For a long time it made a profit and he shared it with you because you are family. But the factory produced toxic by-products that poisoned both your properties and the people on them. For a long time neither you nor your brother noticed this insidious poison. But now you see it, smell it, taste it. Now you know. Your brother says, *"If I close the factory I will starve. For old times' sake and the sake of the family, let's keep quiet about the poison. It will eventually kill us and others, but don't interfere with my operation of the factory."*

That kind of family loyalty kills people and their planet.

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So Canada faces an enormous challenge. The very existence of Canada as a single political entity is at stake. The lives of its citizens and its ecosystems are at stake. By extension the rest of the world is at stake.

It's time for the family to reject the short-sighted loyalty that Rex Murphy espouses. It's time to stop poisoning each other.

It's time to rebuild the family compound. Together

Respectfully submitted to the *Polis*,
John Butler

TOGETHER

I am not a kindness to the earth:
Enwrapped in my desires
Dull in distant vision
Prone to think I am exceptional
Just like everybody else.

But I am monkey-bred,
Made to warp and woof the world
With monkey-kin.

We can be a kindness to the earth:
Enrobed in aspirations
Sharp in distant vision
Knowing we are exceptional
When we are everybody else.

John Butler

OUR READERS KNOW A THING OR TWO

On The Shoulders of Our Past

Lynn Silverton, a former Grey Highlands Councillor and popular Gray Highlander columnist for the *Dundalk Herald* and the *Flesherton Advance*, sent us a glimpse of past activism, via this article first published in the *Flesherton Advance* thirty years ago and reprinted in the February 5 2020 edition of *The Advance*:

"Grey /county has formed a 'global education' committee to address how the world's people can address environmental problems. The 1990s have been termed the 'turn-around decade.' The committee has identified six projects to complete by June 1990: enhanced recycling, awareness information, Earth Day, Arbor Day, outdoor ed and a resource distribution system. Members include Scott Cameron of GHSS [Grey Highlands Secondary School] and Gael Tickner, County co-ordinator."

Do any of our readers know if Gael Tickner and Scott Cameron are still part of our community?

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Oil + Politicians = Oily Politicians?

David McLaren, essayist, social analyst and social activist from Neyaashiinigiing (Cape Croker), sent the media (including **The Village Green**) an essay, *Tits on a Bull*, that describes the devastation Big Oil wreaks on ordinary folk and on the integrity of our political leaders:

“The man was sitting down. He did not rise when his Prime Minister entered the room. He would not look him in the face. He refused to shake his hand. Never mind that his country was burning ... that a billion animals had perished in the flames ... that 30 people lost their lives and 2000 homes burned. The PM will forge full steam ahead to dig the largest coal mine in the country, displacing Aboriginal title as he goes.

Australians have some interesting terms for useless men: tits on a bull, a third armpit, ashtray on a motorbike, a dry thunderstorm (especially ironic given the number of rainless storms spawned by the bushfires). Now they have another one: Scott Morrison.

On the other side of the world Dwight Popowich looks out over his fields at an idle pumpjack. It's one of over 6,000 orphaned wells in Alberta. Dwight gets no rent from the company – they're bankrupt. He can't sever that section and sell it. It's one of many 'places where nothing grows.'

Further south, in Taber, the town has had to lay off workers and scrap plans for new equipment, road improvements and a recreation centre. It's because the oil corporations who operate there are either refusing to pay their land taxes or they're bankrupt.

But never mind all that. And never mind that the cost to the public to clean up orphaned wells is in the neighbourhood of \$260 billion. Or that Big and Little Oil owe millions in property taxes; or that they have polluted the lands and waters of First Nations downstream; or that oil sands oil is still deeply discounted on the world market; or that Alberta has single-handedly pushed Canada into the top 10 biggest per capita polluters in the world.

Never mind all that, because the Premier wants to dig the biggest oil mine yet – the Teck Frontier mine – on the boundary of Wood Buffalo National Park. And the PM has bought him a pipeline to the west coast.

Add Jason Kenney and Justin Trudeau to the names for useless men. Screen doors on a submarine, all of them.

*David McLaren
Neyaashiinigiing*

FACTS THAT HELP YOU TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Nearly 600,000 people in South Florida face extreme or high risk from sea-level rise. The sea level around Florida is eight inches higher than it was 70 years ago. Over the past decade, the rate of acceleration has increased. Florida seas now rise an inch every three years. Floods inundate low-lying cities like Miami even on sunny days.

source: Fourth National Climate Assessment,
U.S. Global Change Research Program (revised 2019)

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Shares in the Tesla, the electric-car manufacturer, were worth \$887 each when the stock market closed on February 4, up from \$650 two trading days earlier, a 36% gain. Since the start of the year, the price has more than doubled. ARK, an investment management firm, says it expected Tesla's share price to soar to \$7,000 in five years based on a belief that Tesla can increase profits, decrease costs and build a fully autonomous taxi network.

source: *New York Times*, February 4, 2020

Temperatures in Antarctica reached a record high on February 6, reaching 18.3 °C, the highest since records were first kept in 1961. The record was set at midday at the Esperanza research station, the Argentinian meteorological agency said. The station is located at the northernmost part of the Antarctic Peninsula, 1,100 km from the Argentinian city of Ushuaia. A study released in the summer of 2019 revealed that sea ice levels in Antarctica have plummeted since 2014. It found that the southern polar region has lost as much ice in four years as the Arctic did in 34 years. According to the UN's World Meteorological Organization, the Antarctic Peninsula is one of the fastest-warming regions of the planet with temperatures rising by almost 3°C over the past 50 years.

source: *Euronews*, February 7, 2020

SHE SAID / HE SAID

"Yesterday I posted on social media to ask people what eco thing (or things) they were going to change this month. And had some really fab replies. But also one that seemed to resonate with a lot of people:

'I'm going to try and keep going doing what I do after being completely dispirited in January by seeing some young men throw their McDonalds detritus out of their car which made me wonder why we're even trying at all. Am I the only one who gets like this?'

The simple answer is 'No', I'm sure we all feel like this sometimes, I know I do. But it got me thinking. You know how as humans we seem to be very much better at remembering the one thing that went wrong, or the one less than nice comment, whilst being pretty good at disregarding all the things that went well (or at least DIDN'T go wrong..!) and the compliments, I wonder if it's the same with eco stuff?"

Jen Gale in her newsletter *Sustainable(ish)*, February 3, 2020

"Never seen so many old white men afraid of a 5 ft. 100 pound teenaged girl in my life."

professional baseball player Mookie Betts,
in a tweet commenting on Greta Thunberg's appearance
at the World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland

"We cut the trees; we kill the animals or cage them and send them to markets. We disrupt ecosystems, and we shake viruses loose from their natural hosts. When that happens, they need a new host. Often, we are it."

science journalist David Quammen,
We Made the Coronavirus Epidemic, *New York Times*, January 28, 2020
(describing how human activity makes outbreaks of pathogens such as coronavirus more likely)

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“The International Monetary Fund makes regular estimates of worldwide subsidies to fossil fuels – subsidies that partly take the form of tax breaks and outright cash grants, but mainly involve not holding the industry accountable for the indirect costs it imposes. In 2017 it put these subsidies at \$5.2 trillion; yes, that’s trillion with a ‘T.’ For the U.S., the subsidies amounted to \$649 billion, which is about \$3 million for every worker employed in the extraction of coal, oil and gas. Without these subsidies, it’s hard to imagine that anyone would still be investing in fossil fuels... Given the scale of subsidies we give to fossil fuels, the industry as a whole should be regarded as a gigantic grift. It makes money by ripping off everyone else, to some extent through direct taxpayer subsidies, to a greater extent by shunting the true costs of its operations off onto innocent bystanders. And let’s be clear: Many of those ‘costs’ take the form of sickness and death, because that’s what local air pollution causes... In a sane world we’d be trying to shut this grift down. But the grifters – which overwhelmingly means corporations and investors, since little of that \$3-million-per-worker subsidy trickles down to the workers themselves – have bought themselves a lot of political influence.”

economist and Nobel Prize laureate Paul Krugman,
New York Times column *Greta Versus the Greedy Grifters*, January 27, 2010

“Eco-spirituality could be considered another gift of Franciscan alternative orthodoxy. Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of ecology because he granted animals, elements, and the earth subjectivity, respect, and mutuality. In his Canticle of the Creatures, Francis the mystic describes a participatory universe in which God loves and cares for us through Brother Sun, Sister Moon, Brothers Wind and Air, Sister Water, Brother Fire, and “through our sister, Mother Earth.”

Franciscan Father Richard Rohr,
Centre for Action and Contemplation, February 7, 2020

**The winter wind
flings pebbles
at the temple bell**

Yosa Buson (1716-1784)

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