

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

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Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

## GREEN INVENTORY & COMMUNICATION RESOURCE LAUNCHED IN GREY & BRUCE

A new resource has been added to the local climate and environmental fields that allows green folks to share and seek information and communicate with each other. Developed with input from environmental groups and coordinated by Leigh Grigg of the Grey Bruce Sustainability Network (GBSusNet), the resource has two main entry points.

The first entry point is an easy-to-use website, **Grey Bruce Climate Action**, found at [greybruceclimateaction.ca](http://greybruceclimateaction.ca). Through the website, people can:

1. Read and post notices of upcoming green events,
2. Find information on several hundred environmental groups, organizations and businesses in Grey, Bruce and the Collingwood area. This is a searchable database – enter a word or phrase in the search box and a list of relevant services pops up. Entries can also be displayed in alphabetical order or by type of organization. Organizations not on the list can add themselves, to augment the information, and
3. Access the second entry point, described below.

*“This website doesn’t just belong to GBSusNet or the Climate Action Team Grey-Bruce so much as it belongs to every environmental group in Grey-Bruce,”* says Grigg. *“I’d like to thank the Climate Action Team Grey-Bruce and Liz Zetlin for their help and for inspiring us to fill this need in our area.”*

The second entry point is through a free software app called **Keybase**. Instructions for installing it are at <https://greybruceclimateaction.ca/collaborate-online> and a how-to video for installing it is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTpp-etNO8U>). Once Keybase is installed, the user can:

- Join a general chatroom where people can write messages on pretty well anything they want
- Join any of 22 separate chatrooms, each one focused on a separate green theme (and they can create new chatrooms). Users will receive notifications of new messages for each chat room theme they’ve checked off as of interest to them.
- Place documents/files in the site that can be seen by other users of the resource.

**Keybase** lets you get notifications on your device every time a discussion happens on a topic that interests you (notification can be turned off if it distracts you). **Keybase** has fewer distractions than Facebook, no ads, and its users are from Grey, Bruce and area. Conversations are secure and it’s a useful networking tool especially while most of us are working from home.

**Editor’s Note:** For me, installing new software is less fun than getting a tooth pulled – but in this case, the software opened a new world of green communication.

The seed for this set of resources was sowed at a multi-organization regional environmental meeting in Walkerton on October 22 at which participants shared information about each other’s organization and, with help from West Grey councillor Beth Hamilton, decided that an inventory of organizations, and ways these organizations could communicate with each other and with the public, were needed. The number of organizations now listed in the inventory is many more than the number that attended the Walkerton meeting.

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

---

Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

## MONTREAL MAYOR TAKES GLOBAL LEAD IN GREEN PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Montreal's mayor is now a global leader in helping ensure a green recovery from COVID-19.

C40 is an alliance of big-city mayors from across the world working together to create more livable and sustainable cities and to address common threats, including global warming. It recently established an 11 member Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force. Says C40:

*"The Task Force will explore ways for the economic recovery from COVID-19 to get people back to work, while ensuring climate breakdown doesn't become an even bigger crisis for the global economy and the lives and livelihoods of communities worldwide."*

One of its members is Montreal mayor Valérie Plante, the only Canadian on the Task Force. Mayors from Sierra Leone, China, Portugal, Colombia, Italy, Australia, the U.S. (Seattle and New Orleans), the Netherlands and South Korea also serve on it.

Plante was elected Mayor of Montreal in 2017. She is also head of Projet Montréal, a progressive environmentalist municipal political party holding most of the seats on Montreal City Council. Said Plante on the announcement of her appointment to the Task Force:

*"The current situation is difficult for all major cities in the world. Montréal is no exception. Our economy as a whole has been hit hard. And we need more than ever to position our economic recovery in the context of our fight against climate change. It is also clear to me that our economic recovery must go hand in hand with our social recovery. By investing in solidarity, we will have a more resilient population and a more resilient city."*

C40 represents 96 affiliated cities including Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Its website is at <https://www.c40.org/cities>.

## WINDSOR TIGHTENS RECYCLING RULES

Our recycling systems across much of North America are an odd and fragmented mix of public and private sector endeavor that needs to be systematized and made consistent across broad jurisdictions, so what is collected is recycled whether one lives in Kenora, Kitchener or Kalamazoo. Unless this happens, citizens will tire of the effort to recycle, this essential service will come to be seen as yet another government con job, and municipalities will continue to face the kinds of decisions Essex Windsor recently made.

As of June 1, The Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority will not collect recycling boxes or carts that contain plastic bags, tubes, wrap or packaging, even if they have a recycling symbol on them. The Authority has been dealing with up to 20,000 plastic bags and similar items in its recycling plant every day. Plastic bags have never really been allowed in these Windsor program. However, the collectors were lenient – but no longer. The ban includes plastic shopping bags, plastic used to wrap fruits and vegetables, or plastic packaging that deliveries or toys come in, for example. However, containers such as drink bottles, where the neck is smaller than the base, are acceptable.

The crackdown comes because buyers of recyclables demand a cleaner product.

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

---

Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

## INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND: INVEST GREEN

With more than 100 countries knocking on its door for emergency financing because of the pandemic, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has indicated it will lend its planned us\$1 trillion infusion to governments that are willing to use the money to tackle climate change, not to subsidize fossil fuels, according to IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva. Said Georgieva:

*“We are about to deploy enormous, gigantic fiscal stimulus and we can do it in a way that we tackle both crises at the same time... If our world is to come out of this [coronavirus] crisis more resilient, we must do everything in our power to make it a green recovery.”*

It isn't clear yet, however, if IMF financial support will come with binding green conditions.

## CALIFORNIA STUDY CITES GAS COOKING HAZARDS

Researchers in the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Fielding School of Public Health have released a report on the impacts of residential natural gas appliances on indoor and outdoor air quality and human health, and potential benefits of residential electrification. The report was commissioned by the Sierra Club. The indoor air quality analysis found that concentrations of carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) during cooking events can exceed the levels set by national and state air quality standards, occurring much more often for NO<sub>2</sub> than CO. CO and NO<sub>2</sub> levels from gas cooking are the highest for apartments because they are smaller. This presents an additional risk for renters, who are often low-income.

But what is produced indoors by these appliances ends up outdoors. Researchers calculated that about 2,000 tons of CO and 15,900 tons of nitrogen oxides were emitted to outdoor air from the use of residential gas appliances in California in 2018. The study estimates that if all residential gas appliances were immediately replaced with clean electric alternatives in California, the reduction of outdoor nitrogen oxides and particulate matter would result in 354 fewer deaths, 596 fewer cases of acute bronchitis and 304 fewer cases of chronic bronchitis annually – equivalent to about us\$3.5 billion in monetized health benefits over the course of one year. These numbers only account for exposures from outdoor air as a result of residential electrification; a full exposure assessment accounting for indoor exposures would increase the total health benefits and associated economic benefits of residential electrification.

The full study report, entitled *Effects of Residential Gas Appliances on Indoor and Outdoor Air Quality and Public Health in California*, is at <https://ucla.app.box.com/s/xyzt8jc1ixnetiv0269qe704wu0ihif7>.

## WHERE TO PUT THE CRUD? PIPELINES FOR OIL STORAGE

U.S. pipeline giant Energy Transfer has ask Texas regulators to allow it to idle two Texas pipelines and turn them into storage for 2 million barrels of oil. U.S. oil producers are struggling amid collapsed demand and very low prices while inventories across the U.S. are growing. Producers in Texas struggle to place their barrels with the U.S. Gulf Coast refineries, which are cutting crude processing rates in response to plunging fuel demand. The massive global oil demand drop due to lockdowns in the COVID-19 pandemic has had U.S. oil producers scrambling to find storage for their produced barrels when no one wants more oil. In April, Enterprise Products Partners applied to open the northbound capacity of its Seaway pipeline, offering U.S. oil producers struggling to place their oil near the Gulf Coast to ship their barrels to the primary storage hub at Cushing, Oklahoma.

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

---

Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

## MORE CRUD: SEABED PLASTIC DRIFTS FOUND

Scientists have identified the highest levels of microplastics ever recorded on the seafloor, in sediments pulled from the bottom of the Mediterranean near Italy. The analysis of the sediments, led by the University of Manchester, found up to 1.9 million plastic pieces per square metre. These items likely included fibres from clothing and other synthetic textiles, and tiny fragments from larger objects that broke down over time.

The researchers' investigations led them to believe that microplastics (smaller than 1 mm.) are being concentrated in specific locations on the ocean floor by powerful bottom currents that create drift deposits – underwater silt dunes that contain plastics and that can be tens of kilometres long and hundreds of metres high. They are among the largest sediment accumulations on Earth.

## OXFORD DIVESTS FOSSIL FUEL INVESTMENTS

Universities across the world have lots of donated money to invest, and they have student and alumni bodies that pressure universities to invest their endowment funds in green investments, not fossil fuels. But until recently two prestigious universities – Oxford and Harvard – resisted efforts to force their endowments to go green. This has started to change.

The University of Oxford has agreed to divest from fossil fuels and commit to a net-zero investment strategy following extensive student-led campaigns and protests. In a motion passed by Oxford's governing body made up of 5,500 academic and administrative members, the university is now required to cut all ties with fossil fuel firms and end future investment in these companies. The resolution also requires managers of the university's immense endowment fund to acquire evidence of "net-zero business plans" from companies within Oxford's portfolio of investments.

The campus divestment movement scored a smaller victory in the U.S. last week when Harvard University announced it will aim to achieve a net-zero endowment by 2050, though it stopped short of formally vowing to divest from oil, gas, and coal companies.

## U.S. CONSERVATIVES TRY GREEN PLOY VIA AMERICAN CLIMATE CONTRACT

In the last two years there has been a movement among young conservatives in the U.S. to acknowledge human-induced climate change and to propose ways to deal with it. The movement seems to be part of an awareness of climate change among youth in general, but it also springs from the realization that climate change denial or minimization by conservative politicians will increasingly lose votes for Republican candidates. As their stab at being green, American conservatives have now produced an *American Climate Contract*, accessible on-line at <https://www.climatesolution.eco/climate-contract-in-action> with a sign-up feature that allows people to "join our movement." It establishes its conservative credentials by its rejection of other American and international initiatives:

*"Proposals like the Paris Accord and the Green New Deal have failed thus far. Whether you support those proposals or not, it's time for a new approach to climate change that brings people from across the political spectrum together behind policies that will make a real difference – now."*

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

---

Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

Ignoring years of U.S. obstructionism in the climate movement, the *Contract* wraps itself in traditional American messianic hyperbole about its leadership role:

*“The United States is the global economic powerhouse, innovation hub, and leader of the free world. As a result, it is our moral responsibility to play a leading role in the response to the threats posed by climate change... The United States should engage with partner nations to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and develop climate adaptation practices. By developing, promoting, and deploying technologies and resources to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, the United States will be a leader and an example to the rest of the world.”*

In essence the *Contract* echoes much of what has already been embraced by Canada’s Conservative Party (but not yet by the electorate) – a reliance on the unfettered private sector to drive change, persuasion rather than enforcement, reluctance to sacrifice economic growth for the sake of planetary health, a belief that free enterprise will create technologies that will solve the climate crisis, and trees.

## GLOBAL HEATING JEOPARDIZES FARM WORKERS

U.S. farm workers continue to feed a nation that is largely sheltered in place, and the onset of summer presents them with a new set of risks that could be dramatically exacerbated by climate change in the coming decades, according to a new study published in *Environmental Research Letters*.

Researchers from the University of Washington and Stanford University analyzed increasing temperatures in agricultural hotspots across the country. The average agricultural worker currently experiences 21 days each year in which the daily heat index surpasses workplace safety standards. However, based on new climate models that assume 2 degrees Celsius of global warming, the study shows that the average number of unsafe work days in crop-producing areas will nearly double by 2050, to 39 days each season. By 2100, farmworkers can expect 62 unsafe work days in a world that has warmed by an average of 4 degrees Celsius. That’s triple the exposure they currently experience. U.S. crop workers are already twenty times more likely to die from illnesses related to heat stress than U.S. civilian workers overall. In the U.S. there are over a million hired crop workers, not counting the self-employed and unpaid (family) work. More than three-quarters are foreign-born, predominantly in Mexico, and only half are legally authorized to work in the U.S.

Says the Abstract of the study:

*“We find that the average number of days spent working in unsafe conditions will double by mid-century, and, without mitigation, triple by the end of it. Increases in rest time and the availability of climate-controlled recovery areas can eliminate this risk but could affect farm productivity, farm worker earnings, and/or labor costs much more than alternative measures. Safeguarding the health and well-being of U.S. crop workers will therefore require systemic change beyond the worker and workplace level.”*

The full study is at <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ab86f4/pdf>.

While Canadian farm workers won’t face the number of very hot days expected in the U.S., the study offers lessons on how Canada can protect its agriculture and its vulnerable farm workers.

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

---

Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

## WORLD REDISCOVERS EUNICE NEWTON FOOTE

Heroes and heroines – particularly heroines – get submerged by the world for a time, but they are sometimes rediscovered when the world realizes that it needs them as parables. Such is the case for New Yorker Eunice Newton Foote, the teacher and scientist who first discovered, 162 years ago, that carbon dioxide is the principal cause of global warming, the first person to demonstrate that CO<sub>2</sub> is a greenhouse gas and the first person to recognize that an atmosphere with more CO<sub>2</sub> would lead to an earth with a higher temperature. Says renowned Canadian environmental scientist Katharine Hayhoe, describing the scientific paper Foote presented through a male proxy to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1856:

*“In two brisk pages, Foote’s paper anticipated the revolution in climate science by experimentally demonstrating the effects of the sun on certain gases and theorizing how those gases would interact with Earth’s atmosphere for the first time.”*

Foote conducted a series of experiments that demonstrated the interactions of the sun's rays on different gases. She measured temperature variance of different gases in glass cylinders once heated and under different moisture conditions. She performed the experiment on CO<sub>2</sub>, common air, and hydrogen. Foote concluded that carbonic acid (CO<sub>2</sub>) trapped the most heat, reaching a temperature of 125 °F (52 °C). Foote then theorized that:

*“An atmosphere of that gas would give to our earth a high temperature; and if, as some suppose, at one period of its history, the air had mixed with it a larger proportion than at present, an increased temperature from its own action, as well as from increased weight, must have necessarily resulted.”*

Foote was a women’s rights activist, serving as a member of the editorial committee for the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, the first national women's rights convention held in the U.S. She was one of the signatories of the convention's *Declaration of Sentiments*.

Foote was also an accomplished portrait and landscape painter.

In 2010, retired petroleum geologist Ray Sorenson encountered Foote's work in an 1857 volume of *Annual Scientific Discovery* and realized that she was the first to make the connection between carbon dioxide and climate change, and that her work had gone unrecognized. In 2011, Sorenson published his findings on Foote.

A two minute animated biography of Eunice Newton Foote prepared in 2019 by Oxford University’s Hertford College as part of its *Unsung Heroes of Science* series is on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfRkWOHvHEs>.

## ROB’S REALS: EYEWITNESS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

A dear reader, Rob Smith, has kept a small and lucky group of people apprised by e-mail of new and interesting film and video presentations on climate analysis and action. As I’ve viewed these, I’ve regretted that more folks aren’t aware of Rob’s finds – so at my request, Rob has agreed to let me cite some of the gems he has uncovered, through an occasional section in ***The Village Green*** called ***Rob’s Reals*** – a play on words because the visual reality of climate change often transcends what words deliver.

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

---

Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

Rob was the first of two readers to introduce me to the new climate change film produced by Michael Moore and directed by Jeff Gibbs, **Planet of the Humans**, accessible on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk11vl-7czE&feature=youtu.be>. The film has generated a great deal of controversy, with some in the climate movement even suggesting it be withdrawn or banned (please see *In My Humble Opinion* in this issue of **The Village Green** for my thoughts on the film).

Rob also draws our attention to an excellent hour-long conversation between Environmentalist David Suzuki and Linda Solomon Wood, Editor-in-Chief of The National Observer, on COVID-19 and its climate impact, on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=276&v=OaFnZ2rt1hw&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=276&v=OaFnZ2rt1hw&feature=emb_logo).

Ro (and I) also recommend to you a three hour series of news items, interviews and discussions on food and agriculture produced for Earth Week by **We Don't Have Time**, a Swedish-based organization that describes itself as “a movement and a tech startup that leverages the power of social media to hold leaders and companies accountable for climate change.” It's at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=pDlImA1c-PY&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=pDlImA1c-PY&feature=emb_logo). Many climate resources are at the **We Don't Have Time** website: <https://www.wedonthavetime.org/>.

We also recently encountered an odd but interesting 12-minute film called **Extinction**, starring Emma Thompson. Monty Python-esquely funny in parts, the film fictionalizes the story of a group of climate activists meeting with the U.K.'s Environment Minister in the midst of an ongoing Extinction Rebellion mass action in London that prodded the government to declare a climate emergency. It's is on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzNSrnSCPi4vz6Muwsy-SJg/featured%5D>.

## OZYMANDIAS

**Editor's Note:** My Grade 6 teacher, Miss Rynard, entered me in a poetry recitation contest. I recited **Ozymandias**, a sonnet written in 1818 by Percy Bysshe Shelley. I lost, but I was left with an appreciation of the poem's critique of self-satisfied and unreflective overconfidence. Since I felt the need to re-learn that lesson, I retrieved the sonnet and I share it with you.

I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”

Ozymandias (Ὀσυμανδύας) was the Greek name for the Egyptian pharaoh Rameses II.

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

---

Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

## IN MY HUMBLE OPINION: MOORE & GIBBS “PLANET OF THE HUMANS” WARNS US

The film *Planet of the Humans*, found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk11vl-7czE&feature=youtu.be> is flawed and inaccurate in parts. It's also absolutely necessary.

Gibbs et al. seem to be making four key points:

1. Much of current green technology such as wind turbines and solar panels relies very heavily on fossil fuels, and hasn't lived up to our expectations. Since these technologies haven't reduced the inexorable growth of greenhouse gases, we can't rely on them to solve the climate problem – we must look for other solutions
2. Fossil fuel industries, and those who hold opinions espoused by fossil fuel industries, have infiltrated the climate movement, both through funding and through influencing the unarticulated as well as the articulated assumptions of the climate movement.
3. Biomass combustion to generate energy, which isn't green energy, shows how corporations have seduced green organizations into portraying a dirty technology as clean technology.
4. Demonic capitalism's emphasis on endless growth underlies the first three points.

The film can be faulted for citing outdated assessments of the efficacy of technologies. It may underplay the role of technologies altogether. It may be unclear about how to achieve the end of growth. It may have unduly attacked climate action leaders. But we need this film anyway.

The entire film is a polemic, and an excellent polemic. It doesn't try to provide nuanced analysis or identify extenuating circumstances. It lies within a great tradition of muckraking (in the best circa 1900 sense of the word). It lies within the even older tradition of Methodist exhorters – laypeople whose skills at enthusing a congregation through their rhetoric transcend their lack of a theological education. And in a post-release interview about the film found at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bop8x24G\\_o0&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bop8x24G_o0&feature=youtu.be), Michael Moore describes the film as a “warning siren”, the kind of alarm that “only a friend” can deliver.

Some climate minimizers, oversimplifying the film's own oversimplification, have seen it as an indication that climate action isn't worth the effort. Some climate activists have seen it as an unexpected stab in the back from filmmakers they thought were their allies. The film was neither. As polemic, its purpose is to condemn. and to convert condemnation into warning. And its conclusions can be operationalized either as condemnation or as warning.

So, at the very least, it makes sense to act on the basis of these warnings derived from the film:

1. Every “green technology” must be examined to determine whether it is actually green, and must evolve to become greener – keeping in mind that the proponents of each technology will lie about how green it is.
2. Every green initiative needs to be scrutinized to be sure it is not co-opted by corporate interests opposed to green goals – on the premise that corporate interests will try to lie and fund themselves into destructive subterranean roles in the movement.
3. Biomass burning is not, and never will be, clean or green energy.
4. To the extent that capitalism and its growth ideology remain within our societies, those elements must be tracked, understood and strictly controlled by both civil society and political processes and structures. *Homo sapiens* must control *homo economicus*.

respectfully submitted to the *Polis*  
John Butler



# THE VILLAGE GREEN

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Number Twenty-three, May 2, 2020

## SHE SAID / HE SAID

***“We mostly spend our lives conjugating three verbs: to Want, to Have, and to Do... forgetting that none of these verbs have any ultimate significance, except so far as they are transcended by and included in, the fundamental verb, to Be.”***

Anglo-Catholic theologian Evelyn Underhill

***“We don’t talk about the importance of trust in relation to issues like climate change, but trust is the foundation of most healthy relationships. One critical question we should start asking when we notice racial groups steering away from certain topics is, ‘What happened that may have created distrust in this relationship?’ If I had to answer this question about people of color and climate change, I would argue that the lack of diverse voices in the climate change movement, or any global movement, creates distrust among members of the community who are not represented...”***

***But the minute I started to mend my relationship to the climate movement – another gut punch. In January, climate change activists Vanessa Nakate, Greta Thunberg, Luisa Neubauer, Loukina Tille, and Isabelle Axelsson spoke at a news conference in Davos. After the talk, the women took a group photo together. But when the Associated Press (AP) published the photo, they cropped out Ugandan activist Vanessa Nakate, leaving only her white counterparts in the frame. We are not far enough removed from legalized racism for me to wholeheartedly trust any predominantly white institution, even one that is trying to save the world. This is where a line needs to be drawn. I cannot allow my pain to blind me from seeing the good people involved in the climate movement or stop me from being a part of the much-needed change. ”***

Jasmine Leyva, *Why the Climate Movement Is Failing Us: From A Black Woman Who Doesn’t Trust Science*. Sentient Media, April 24, 2020

***“People from Africa are suffering as a result of the climate crisis and we have not heard African voices fully represented on the world stage. So, it was really hard to see I had been cropped out because it was a form of silencing me.”***

Ugandan climate activist Vanessa Nakate, referring to her exclusion from a photo of activists at Davos

***“I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last dingdong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking.”***

William Faulkner, Nobel Prize speech, 1950

***“Fascism acts from below, but it is legitimized from above... In Brazil, Bolsonaro, who is called ‘the Trump of the Tropics,’ has similarly demonized journalists, glorified the country’s dictatorial policies, and subscribed to despicable lies about the environment. Against the facts of climate change, both Trump and Bolsonaro have supported fabrications that are directly linked to one of the biggest crimes on the planet now – the rapid destruction of the Amazon. As with fascist lies about ‘blood and soil,’ populist falsehoods are tied to violence not only against people but also against the earth.”***

Federico Finchelstein, *A Brief History of Fascist Lies*, April 2020

# THE VILLAGE GREEN

---

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**“Nature is the metaphoric goddess of all things in the universe outside of human control.”**

sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson

**“[Edward O.] Wilson has argued that if we don’t soon change the way we live we will leave behind the Anthropocene and enter the Eremocene, or the Age of Loneliness, a term Wilson has popularized that defines an epoch marked by an existential and material isolation resulting from having extinguished so many other forms of life. To his point, a new study published in Nature suggests that mass extinction will look like a cliff rather than a slope as previously predicted. Ecosystem collapse in tropical oceans could begin as soon as next decade, followed by collapse in tropical forests – the most diverse ecosystems on the planet - in the 2040s. In other words, as Wilson writes, the biosphere will be reduced to ‘our domesticated plants and animals, and our croplands all around the world as far as the eye can see.’... Scientists conceive of time differently than us layfolk. Millenia rather than days, centuries as opposed to minutes. Wilson is no exception. He says it isn’t too late to avoid an Age of Loneliness. He also popularized the term biophilia, or the innate pleasure we take in the presence of other organisms.”**

Caleb Johnson, *A Way Back: E. O Wilson’s Big Ideas for Saving Nature and Humans Along With It*, The Bitter Southerner, April 21, 2020

**“The logic of private interest – the notion that we should just ‘let the market handle it’ – has serious limitations. Around the world, the free market rewards competing, positioning and elbowing, so these have become the most desirable qualifications people can have. Empathy, solidarity or concern for the public good are relegated to the family, houses of worship or activism. COVID-19 reveals a further irrational component: the people who do essential work are often the very people who earn the least, without benefits or secure contracts. On the other hand, those who often have few identifiably useful skills – the pontificators and chief elbowing officers – continue to be the winners. Simply put, a market system driven by private interests never has protected and never will protect public health, essential kinds of freedom and communal wellbeing. Every private accomplishment is possible only on the basis of a thriving commons – a stable society and a healthy environment. From dust bowls in the 1930s to the escalating climate crisis today, from online misinformation to a failing public health infrastructure, it is the insatiable private that often despoils the common goods necessary for our collective survival and prosperity. Who, in this system based on the private, holds accountable the fossil fuel industry for pushing us to the brink of extinction? What happens to the land and mountaintops and oceans forever ravaged by violent extraction for private gain? What will we do when private wealth has finally destroyed democracy?”**

economic historian Dirk Philipsen, *Private gain must no longer be allowed to elbow out the public good*, Aeon Magazine, April 24, 2020

an iris  
whiter at twilight  
in spring

Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902)

For information about *The Village Green*, or to subscribe to it (free),  
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