

Groundswell News Journal

A project of the 501(c)(3) Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice
We are a Global Family. News by and about Climate and Social Justice Activists.

Our Motto: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

Our Slogan: The way forward: cycle back to basics.

A Celebration of Youth. www.groundswellnews.org. Issue No. 63: July 22, 2020

Brazil's Indigenous Seed Collectors in Demand for Forest Restoration

An award-winning seed collection network in Brazil's Amazon is improving incomes and food security – and may be cutting prejudice.

By Laurie Goering
Thomson Reuters Foundation: July 3, 2020

LONDON, UK – By law, builders of roads and dams and others who destroy forests in Brazil's Amazon are required to replant an equivalent area of trees elsewhere.

To do that they need the right seeds – and collecting those has turned into valuable business for indigenous communities in the Xingu basin of Mato Grosso state, as well as for other indigenous groups around Brazil.

Since 2008, more than 560 collectors – most of them women – have gathered almost 250 tons of seeds from 220 native species as part of an effort now known as the Xingu Seed Network.

The work has helped them earn an income, reconnect with their forests and restore more than 6,600 hectares of degraded land, according to Ashden, a British charity that this week awarded the group one of its sustainability prizes for 2020.

The network has also helped protect indigenous communities during the Covid-19 pandemic, as families that once would have shopped in town for food have learned to harvest from their home forests, said its director Bruna Ferreira. “Through the seed network, people have gotten back to their forests to learn the variety of fruits, leaves, and roots the ancients used to know how to eat,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from Brazil after a virtual



Photo: Rogério Assis/ISA

Xavante indigenous people collect seeds in the Pimentel Barbosa Indigenous Land, Brazil.

awards ceremony.

“They are getting that knowledge back and they are eating a lot more of those resources,” she said.

Coronavirus Deaths

Brazil's Amazon is one of the hardest-hit regions in a country with the world's second-highest number of coronavirus cases and deaths, behind the United States.

Brazil has registered nearly 62,000 deaths from Covid-19, with at least 11,000 of those in the Amazon region, which has only 8% of the country's population, according to official data.

Ferreira said three seed collectors in one village she works with have fallen ill, with

one elderly woman dying.

Families may have contracted the disease after an eight-year-old child died at a health facility and was brought home for burial ceremonies, which involve community members laying hands on the deceased.

“A lot of people got contaminated,” she said, noting that in the last 15 days she had seen “a lot of deaths start happening in the municipalities around the Xingu park.”

Dealing with cases of the virus is difficult due to a lack of intensive care units in cities, she noted.

“The one or two beds they have are already taken – and it's a 20-hour drive to

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What is the Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice?

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Our Slogan

**THE WAY FORWARD:
CYCLE BACK TO BASICS.**

Mission of Our Journal

The mission of *Groundswell News* is to be a beautiful, inspiring, uplifting journal which educates and enlightens people about climate change through scientific articles and stories by and about activists who are working to protect life on Earth and preserve natural resources. We are a global family.

What is the Grassroots Coalition?

John and Iona Conner started this non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 1990. The mission was and remains “dedicated to creating the critical mass of active participants needed to being ecological justice to this Earth by providing information and resources to individuals which encourage and assist them to make lifestyle changes beneficial to the environment and to effectively grapple with local and global environmental concerns.”

Who are we trying to attract?

We hope to reach people who are concerned about global warming and realize that they are part of the problem but don't know what to do. We invite them to sign up for our newspaper. Please tell your family and friends about us.

What are we trying to achieve?

We want to rapidly increase the number of serious climate activists in the world and inspire them through stories from other activists. Our goal is to keep their spirits up, their energy strong, their hearts open, and their eyes bright and alive.

Our Values

This journal is based on love for Earth, all people, all forms of life – plus air, clouds, rain, snow, weather, oceans, forests, etc. We love Nature. We respect everyone and are willing to share our experiences, both good and bad, with others who may profit from them.

Guidelines for Submissions

I do not get directly involved in fundraising. To submit a story, you need to write a regular article about your work and submit it in a Word document with 2 or 3 photos, including captions and photo credits and then email it to me at groundswellnews@pa.net. If you need funding, mention that in your last paragraph and be sure to give your contact information.

Please email Iona at groundswellnews@pa.net for the full Guidelines. I'll be eager to see what you submit. Thanks so much.

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Iona's Column:

You Are the Hope for the Future of Everyone



Dearest Precious Global Family,

I know that most of you are doing your best not only to survive the pandemic, poverty, discrimination, and climate change but to help others do so, too.

It remains my greatest hope that my newspaper will help you in some way – maybe simply by inspiring you, maybe by networking with others whose stories and contact information are in these pages, maybe by being able to use your published work to secure funding from some other source since I cannot send money myself. All I can send is love and prayers for your success, health, courage, stamina, and most of all happiness; however, I hope my readers with extra money will send a few dollars your way knowing that American dollars go far in Africa.

As you go through this issue of *Groundswell News Journal*, pay attention to what others are doing and see if you can support each other, help each other to grow, and figure out better ways of doing things.

I hold onto my belief that what many readers in Africa are doing holds the answer to everything. By growing your own food, discovering ways to preserve nature, and by helping those who cannot help themselves, you are the miracle workers we all need.

With Love,

Iona

Climate Emergency

Brazil *continued from page 1*



Photos: Tui Anandi/ISA

(left) A woman shakes a basket of seeds in the Macife Rural Settlement, Brazil. (right) A view of a “cipó de leite” seed collected in the Macife Rural Settlement, Brazil.

the capital, where there are more beds,” she said. “It’s really a catastrophe.”

Seeds Not Saplings

The indigenous collectors have discovered that planting seeds, rather than saplings, is a more efficient and effective way to rebuild forests quickly and help young trees survive drought. Their seeding technique also makes it possible to plant 10 times as many trees per hectare as using seedlings, at half the cost, Ashden noted.

The project got its start when the more than 20 indigenous tribes living in the Xingu reserve – and officials in the region – noticed water quality worsening as farms

replaced forests on the borders of the reserve.

Efforts to restore vegetation around rivers and springs in the Xingu watershed eventually landed on seed planting as the best way forward, said Eduardo Malta Campos Filho, a forest expert with Brazil’s Instituto Socioambiental.

Today there is “huge demand for seed,” mostly from private companies, farmers, and green groups trying to meet restoration requirements, said Campos, an advisor to the network.

The Xingu group works in coordination with other seed networks in Brazil to meet demand and ensure the seeds provided are

adapted to each ecosystem, have good genetic variety, and are selected for resilience to climate shifts, Ferreira said.

One of the network’s unanticipated benefits has been bringing together Amazon farmers and indigenous people, who live in “different worlds,” she said.

Working jointly on water quality projects, for instance, has given farmers exposure to indigenous communities, which at some level has helped alleviate misconceptions, she noted.

Beto Borges, one of the Ashden competition judges and an expert in community forest stewardship with U.S.-based non-profit Forest Trends, said such efforts were particularly crucial as the country faces “challenging times with the Brazilian government we have now.”

Right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro has vowed to encourage economic development in the Amazon to lift indigenous groups from poverty and improve the lives of the 30 million Brazilians who inhabit the region.

But environmentalists say his plans are speeding up destruction of the world’s largest rainforest, which is a crucial bulwark against global climate change and regulates rainfall in South America’s agricultural zones.

“While there’s progress because of our work, there’s still a lot of prejudice” against indigenous communities, Ferreira admitted.

“It’s one of the biggest challenges indigenous people in Brazil face,” she said.



Seed collectors display some of their harvest in Canarana, Brazil.

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200703170237-vx6r6/>

Climate Emergency



Photo: Nigro/Pacific Press

Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protestors at Standing Rock repeatedly stood their ground as rubber bullets and tear gas flew through freezing air.

Pipeline Wins Were Decades in the Making

Submitted by Allen Hengst, Wire Editor

By Heather Hansman, *excerpt*
Outside: July 9, 2020

Over a span of two days earlier this week, there were three big wins for environmental groups fighting controversial natural gas pipeline projects. On Sunday, Dominion Energy canceled the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP), citing delays and rising costs. And on Monday, District Judge James E. Boasberg ordered a shutdown of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) on the grounds that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had violated the National Environmental Policy Act by not adequately assessing the risks. The same day, the Supreme Court stayed an order to halt construction on the Keystone XL Pipeline because it was in violation of the Endangered Species Act.

“It’s a weird time to feel cautiously optimistic,” says Tamara Toles O’Laughlin, North American director of the activ-

ist group 350.org. “You look around, the world is going to hell in a handbasket, and we’re winning on these pipelines.”

Opposition to all three pipelines has largely been led by the Indigenous and Black communities that would be hardest hit by the pipelines’ pollution and risk. For six years, the residents of Union Hill, Virginia, a town founded by freed slaves, fought an ACP compressor station that would have kicked toxic air pollution into their neighborhoods, filing suit against Dominion for the threat. More than a thousand miles away, at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, DAPL protestors repeatedly stood their ground as rubber bullets and tear gas flew through the freezing air, physically holding their right to the land, as their lawyers brought suits about that pipeline’s damages.

The court decisions are a sign that, even in a political climate where the executive branch is pushing an aggressive, deregulated, industry-friendly, energy-production agenda, shoddily planned, dangerous, and

unnecessary fossil-fuel projects don’t hold up in the courts or at the banks. “They’re all wins that wouldn’t have happened if people hadn’t gotten out into the street to make it public,” says Dallas Goldtooth, Keep It in the Ground campaign organizer for the Indigenous Environmental Network. “It shows you that this works. It’s definitely a win for people.”

As the energy industry turns toward renewables, fossil-fuel prices are plummeting. And the courts have leaned into the durability and importance of environmental laws ...

“I think the judges are finally saying, ‘We’re the last line,’” Goldtooth says.

For the ACP, legal battles pushed the cost of an already tenuous, outdated model so high that Dominion had no choice but to give in ... “It’s death by a thousand cuts to a bad business model run by some folks who want to think it’s the eighties and are trying to make money on shortsighted schemes,” O’Laughlin says. This week is a

Pipelines *continued on next page*

Climate Emergency

News Briefs

UK Has 100,000 Modern Slaves But Most Go Undetected

By Kieran Guilbert, *excerpt*
Thomson Reuters Foundation: July 13, 2020

LONDON, UK - Britain is home to at least 100,000 modern slaves according to a new study, 10 times more than the official estimate, as activists warned, 90% of victims may be going undetected.

Anti-slavery charity Justice and Care and think tank The Centre for Social Justice said the real number could be even higher, and warned that the coronavirus pandemic was likely to push more people into forced labor at car washes and brothels.

The study comes in the wake of media and campaigner reports that online fashion firm Boohoo's suppliers underpaid garment workers in Leicester, central England, and failed to protect them from Covid-19. Boohoo last week said it was investigating.

Justice and Care said political leadership to tackle modern slavery had waned in recent years, and that a landmark 2015 anti-slavery law may have created a "false sense of security." . . .

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200713112335-sg139/>

'Privatize the Profit, Socialize the Mess': Abandoned Fracking Wells Left Spewing Climate-Killing Methane Nationwide

By Eoin Higgins, *excerpt*
Common Dreams: July 13, 2020

A devastating new report from *The New York Times* details how, as fracking companies are going out of business, they are leaving behind unsecured wells

Pipelines *continued from previous page*

culmination of decades of work to fight unnecessary pipelines, she says ...

Energy companies are fighting back, arguing that a liberal judge overstepped his bounds and that shutting down the DAPL, which is already running, would cost hundreds of jobs and billions of dollars in lost revenue. But the economic reality is that natural gas is becoming less necessary and those jobs could be better filled in a more sustainable industry, one that doesn't threaten the community that supports it.

spewing methane and other gases into the atmosphere and paying out the same executives that drove them into bankruptcy huge bonuses – drawing condemnation from activists and climate advocates.

"Frackers don't clean up after themselves," tweeted 350.org founder Bill McKibben.

Even before the coronavirus outbreak, the U.S. fracking industry was struggling amid debt obligations, the rise of renewable energy sources, and a price war with overseas oil producers. Since the pandemic hit, critics have been warning against using public relief funds to bail out the polluting industry they argue should be banned because of its impact on local health and the climate.

As the companies filed for bankruptcy, *The Times* reported, they made sure to pay out executives. Whiting Petroleum, a major shale driller in North Dakota that sought bankruptcy protection in April, approved almost \$15 million in cash bonuses for its top executives six days before its bankruptcy filing. Chesapeake Energy, a shale pioneer, declared bankruptcy last month, just weeks after it paid \$25 million in bonuses to a group of executives. And Diamond Offshore Drilling secured a \$9.7 million tax refund under the Covid-19 stimulus bill Congress passed in March, before filing to reorganize in bankruptcy court the next month. Then it won approval from a bankruptcy judge to pay its executives the same amount, as cash incentives.

"The few profit, the rest of us pay," British Green Party politician Natalie Bennett said.

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/07/13/privatize-profit-socialize-mess-abandoned-fracking-wells-left-spewing-climate>

Last month, a study from the University of California at Berkeley found that 90 percent of U.S. electricity could be emission-free by 2035, in part by slashing natural-gas use by 70 percent. That transition is a big part of why the ACP died on the vine. The country is moving on from natural gas.

Patrick Hunter, a senior attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center, says that Virginia and North Carolina, which were slated to receive the gas, already have a glut, and both states recently signed

"No Return to the 'Old Normal' for Foreseeable Future," Warns WHO Chief

"If the basics aren't followed, there is only one way this pandemic is going to go. It's going to get worse and worse and worse."

By Andrea Germanos, *excerpt*
Common Dreams: July 13, 2020

World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus attending a press briefing on Covid-19 at the WHO headquarters in Geneva.

The head of the World Health Organization warned Monday that a "return to the 'old normal'" was not in "the foreseeable future" and urged global leaders to act cooperatively to control the coronavirus pandemic.

"Let me blunt, too many countries are headed in the wrong direction," WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a media briefing.

Tedros's remarks came as the total number of total coronavirus cases continued ticking upward, nearing 13 million globally. More than 570,000 Covid-19 deaths have been recorded worldwide, over 134,000 of which were in the United States.

The U.S., which has the highest number of cases in the world, recorded over 3.2 million cases as of Monday, an increase of over 60,000 Sunday. Infections continue to rise in dozens of U.S. states including Florida, which on Sunday broke the national record for the largest single-day increase in coronavirus cases with over 15,000. . . .

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/07/13/no-return-old-normal-foreseeable-future-warns-who-chief>

sweeping carbon-reduction goals, so there was no need and no desire ...

Goldtooth says he knows that they have to maintain the pressure on the other two pipelines (he's nervously awaiting a final ruling on Keystone XL, which was pushed back to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals for further consideration). So even though he's celebrating, he's not relaxing.

Source: <https://www.outsideonline.com/2415467/acp-dapl-keystone-pipeline-protest-wins>

Climate Emergency

You Have A Calling. An Epic Calling. A Heroic Calling.

By Margaret Klein Salamon
Below 2°C: July 5, 2020

This article consists of excerpts from the online preview of her book, *Facing the Climate Emergency: How to Transform Yourself With Climate Truth*.

An epic calling. A heroic calling. Did you know you have a calling? It's probably grander than anything you had let yourself imagine, outside of your dreams. You are supposed to save the world. That's why you are here, alive in this time of great consequence.

We – humanity – are putting together a team of heroes to cancel the apocalypse, to protect humans and the natural world from catastrophic collapse. You might not realize it, but you are on the roster. Your jersey is sitting in your locker. We need to figure out your position and get you into (emotional) shape. The first step is to show up to practice. We are waiting for you.

Unlike most self-help guides, my goal is not to make you happy, and it's certainly not to help you avoid pain. This is not about feeling good or finding satisfaction – though these will likely be side effects of fully embracing your mission and living in climate truth. My goal is to help you maximize your potential to meet the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced. I will show you how to face your pain with courage and vulnerability, and let it motivate you to become the most effective climate warrior you can be.

Battle Between Knowing and Not Knowing

Inside all of us, a battle rages. It's the battle between knowing and not knowing, between fully facing the truth – emotionally, as well as intellectually – and shrinking from it. We sense we're in a climate emergency and mass extinction event, but we have a deep-seated psychological instinct to defend against that knowledge.

The pain is shouting at us: "Everything is dying!" Somewhere inside, we know that humanity and the natural world are in peril. Indeed, we feel the horrors of civilizational collapse and the sixth mass extinction of species, in our bodies. Our minds attempt to shield us from this pain – we avoid, distract, deny, and numb ourselves. But these defenses work only temporarily: When we fail to process our emotions and mourn our losses, the pain takes on tremendous power. It follows us around like

a shadow, and we become increasingly desperate to avoid what we know.

This pain has several dimensions. It is the fear we feel for ourselves, for our loved ones, and for all humanity; it is the empathy and grief we feel for the people and species already immiserated or killed; it is the crushing guilt that we feel for continuing to let this happen. Our pain is the consequence of our participation in a destructive system.

We have allowed ourselves to become killers – a plague on the rest of life. We share, to varying degrees, guilt and responsibility. Our pain may feel terrible, but it is rational, appropriate, and deserved. It is an internal reflection of external reality: The biosphere – all life – is suffering or threatened. Of course we feel sad and anxious. We are caught in an economic and political system that fosters our collective participation in our planet's daily degradation. Why would we expect to feel good, and good about ourselves, while we are a part of killing all life on Earth, including ourselves and everyone we love?

Our society treats life – human life, plant life, animal life – as if it were a cheap commodity rather than the most precious, sacred thing there is. By doing so, we've not only ensured the coming ecological crisis; we've inured ourselves to it.

It doesn't have to be this way. In fact, we can face climate truth and choose not to commit passive suicide.

We can choose to turn away from illusion and distraction. We can each decide to face climate truth and make the choice that now is the time to do everything in our power to wrest life back from the jaws of extinction. We can each help to initiate a collective awakening to the climate emergency and a World War II-scale response that protects humanity and the natural world and builds a beloved community.

Facing the Climate Emergency

Facing the Climate Emergency is a self-help book, but its goal is not to make you feel less pain. Its goal is to make you



feel your pain more directly and constructively: to turn it into action that protects humanity and all life. In this book, I argue that your pain is a signal – it's telling you something critically important. The pain is demanding to be acknowledged, and I want to show you how to listen to it. I want you to face the pain of the climate and ecological emergency, and to feel it in a focused, conscious way so that you can initiate a process of transformation – first in yourself and then in society as a whole.

This large-scale change must be our goal, as Pope Francis wrote in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si'*. To stop the climate emergency, he says, we must "become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it."

There is a movement being born, and I am proud to say that I helped bring it into existence. The members of this movement are not content to numb our sadness with money and things. We're not willing to ignore the Earth as it burns. We're going to fight for what matters. We know that we can face climate truth and let it transform us.

Margaret Klein invites all of us to become the climate warriors, the climate heroes humanity so badly needs. As normal crumbles, we must do like young people who are turning their grief into action. Watch her short video, The Climate Mobilization, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY20-W0VQfs>.

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Source: <https://below2c.org/2020/07/you-have-a-calling-an-epic-calling-a-heroic-calling/>

Climate Emergency

Dangers of Field Fires in Zimbabwe and Precautions to Take There and Elsewhere

By Jussa Kudherezera, Zimbabwe

Dangamvura Mountain in Mutare, Zimbabwe has gone on smoke from locals who are hunting for firewood and also those who want to clear land for cultivation around the area. Some religious groups and individuals are utilizing the mountain for worship during the day and night. Such individuals or groups end up making fires to warm themselves and end up igniting field fires that spread into Dangamvura residential areas and beyond. Such uncontrolled fires have caused deforestation which contributes to climate change.



Photo: Tinashe Muzama

Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) members at the Dangamvura Mountain.

Onsite observation by Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) revealed several causes of field fires, which can be divided into two categories which are 1) deliberate, and 2) accidental fires. Deliberate fires comprise of fires used for hunting, improving grazing, early burning, and/or back-burning to reduce the fuel load and negative impacts of wild fires, creation of fire breaks, and smoking out bees during harvesting of wild honey. Other deliberate causes of wild fires also include cooking, waste dumps, and carelessness such as throwing out lit cigarettes, religious and the traditional practice of annual burns to improve grazing.

In the smallholder farming areas of Zimbabwe, poor farmers, who have limited resources and equipment to clear and prepare the land using mechanical methods, frequently use fire for land preparation. These land-clearing fires often spread beyond the intended area of burn, and turn into wild fires, thereby significantly contributing to forest fires in recent years.

It is a fact that the damage from these fires has grown to outweigh the benefits of fire on the ecosystem. Frequent burning has implications on carbon stocks and emissions, wildlife habitat, human health and life, as well as livelihoods.

Environmental Impact Assessment and Ecosystems Statutory Instrument 7 of 2007 states that in Zimbabwe no person is allowed to light a fire outside residential and commercial premises during the period July 31 to October 31 of each year. Monitoring the trends related to the common

causes of fire provides invaluable information that helps focus fire prevention efforts.

Field fires lead to severe environmental degradation. More specifically, field fires reduce land cover, thus exposing the land to agents of accelerated soil erosion, changes in the hydrological cycle, increases in overland flow or surface runoff, and modifications in various ecological processes. Soil erosion leads to siltation of rivers and dams, thus reducing their water carrying capacity. This is likely to induce floods in low-lying areas.

Each person or institution has a role to play in the fight against field fires and the following measures are important in preventing field fires, damage of the environment, as well as loss of life and property.

Schoolchildren: In the event that school children come across fire: Quickly report the incident to any adult person nearby. Do not attempt to cross over fire, crossing over fire may result in fatalities. Do not try to extinguish a field fire on your own. Move away from the field fire and never ever try to climb trees in the direction of a field fire.

Bus Passengers: Some people (especially in the rural areas) tend to wake up at odd hours especially very early in the morning to catch buses. During this time it is normally still very cold and passengers tend to light fires at the bus stop for warmth. In this instance, the onus is on them to do the following before their departure: Make sure you completely extinguish the fire. Make sure all the glowing splints and burning coals are completely extinguished using wa-

ter. Put on warm clothes – history has shown that most road fires are left unattended.

Bee Smokers: Use other methods of extracting honey which do not involve the use of fire. Seek advice from the Forestry Commission.

Motorists: Put off cigarette stubs and use ash trays. Assist in fire fighting and always travel with a fire extinguisher. Service car electrical and mechanical systems to avoid sparks which can cause field fires.

Traditional Leaders: Have fire-fighting teams to put off uncontrolled field fires in your areas of jurisdiction. Carry out fire awareness campaigns throughout the fire season. Use cultural ways of punishing those who cause

field fires.

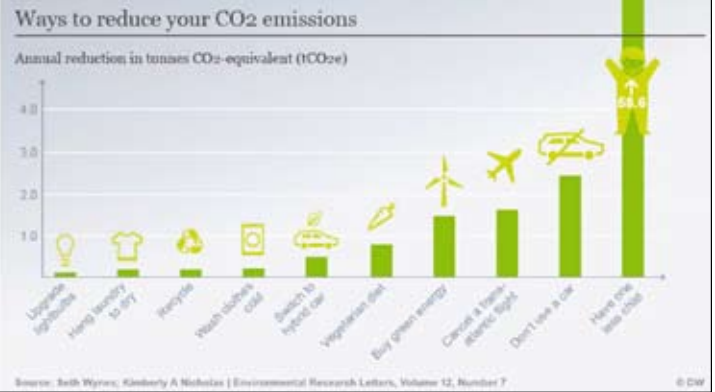
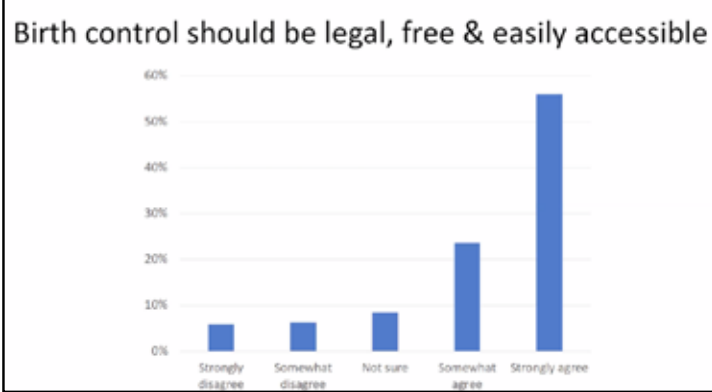
Urban and Rural District Councils:

Establish an environmental committee to oversee environmental issues and sub-committees which are chaired by a councilor in a given ward or wards. Appoint an environmental monitor in the district in conjunction with Environment Management Agents (EMA). Ensure that there are fire-fighting committees in these various wards.

Farmers/Property Owners: Fire prevention is the best option to minimize risks associated with field fires. This can be achieved through establishment and maintenance of fireguards. Fireguards are designed to provide access and a safe environment for the fire-fighting teams to implement controlled burning and effectively manage wildfires. The existing roads and tracks also provide the foundation to implement fire management activities. Construct standard fireguards which are at least 9 meters (30 feet) wide on boundaries and internal fire guards which should be at least 4.5 meters (4.5 = 15 feet) wide. These can be constructed by ploughing using ox-drawn ploughs or tractors, disking, hoeing. Always inspect your fireguards to make sure that they are free of any material that burns. Fireguards are important because they break fire by removing the fuel load from the fire triangle. Ensure that fire-fighting equipment is in place, bowsers/knapsack sprayers are filled with water, during the fire season.

Contact: manicayouthassembly@gmail.com.

Climate Emergency



Charts Courtesy Center for Biological Diversity

These charts are based on figures for people living in the United States who are trying to reduce their individual carbon dioxide emissions.

Summary of Contraception, Consumption, and Conservation Webinar Sponsored by the Center for Biological Diversity on July 9, 2020

By Iona Conner

OK, folks, fasten your seatbelts. I'm going to discuss a controversial but important issue, reproductive rights. This program was designed for people in the United States. The Center for Biological Diversity does not work on an international level but I'm sure our readers in other countries can learn something. Half of the babies born in the United States were unplanned. *[On a personal note, as a 74-year-old woman, I have a lot of experience in*

family planning, contraception, and a strong belief that all babies should be wanted and cared for properly.]

The underlying belief was stated by one of the three women in the program, "We want all kids to be planned for and wanted." Since this is an organization focused on wildlife, they said, "Let's talk about reproductive rights and wildlife." Yes, there is a strong connection. If we ruin the Earth with too many people, especially like us here in America where consumerism is over the moon, then we're in big

trouble. One form of birth control in our country is "abstinence only" (at least until people are married) but abstinence only is "ineffective," one speaker said – twice.

In the world, we were told, "234 million women have no access to contraception." They also said that there is a Global Gag Rule. A fact sheet called "The Global Gag Rule and Human Rights" at the Center for Reproductive Rights website states, "Under the Global Gag Rule, the U.S. is turning its back on the human rights of women and girls around the world. Denying access to abortion does not stop women and girls from seeking abortion services, it just makes the procedure less safe and contributes to maternal mortality. This fact sheet outlines how the Global Gag Rule undermines fundamental human rights to life, health, equality, information, privacy, and expression."

The women presenting the webinar see reproductive freedom as a human right. They recognize that "difficult and complicated" conversations need to happen at all levels, in all places. I chuckled after a lengthy discussion of condoms when one of the women who is a counselor for family planning and good sex education, pleaded with people to teach young men how to even put on a condom.

In the U.S., there is a law, Title X: The Nation's Program for Affordable Birth Control and Reproductive Health Care (<https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/issues/health-care-equity/title-x>). The website states, "More than four million



Photo Courtesy Center for Biological Diversity

Vasectomies are the most effective form of male contraception. For your partner and the planet, pledge to get whacked for wildlife. With more than 7.5 billion people on the planet and 227,000 more added every day, we're crowding wildlife off the planet. Vasectomies help. https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/population_and_sustainability/world_vasectomy_day/

Reproduction continued on next page

Climate Emergency

Reproduction *continued from previous page*

people rely on federal Title X funding to access contraception and other essential health care. Established in 1970, Title X provides affordable birth control and reproductive health care to people with low incomes, who couldn't otherwise afford health care services on their own." There is a Family Planning section in it stating, "Title X family planning clinics play a critical role in ensuring access to a broad range of family planning and preventive health services."

Here are a few words from a website that

was mentioned, "JUST TALK ABOUT IT. Sexual well-being. Safe sex. Sexuality. It's all out from under the covers at Beforeplay.org, the hub for Colorado's statewide effort to reduce unintended pregnancy and promote honest, open conversation about sexual health."

One last thing. One listener wanted to know why it seems that women have so many options but men don't. The Center for Biological Diversity is, "trying to fine other forms of contraception for men between condoms and vasectomy." They even

had a "Get Whacked for Wildlife" campaign offering T-shirts for men who did have vasectomies, the sale of which raised funds to protect wildlife.

Whew. This was not easy, but necessary. And I didn't even mention sexually-transmitted diseases. That is a whole other issue.

In conclusion, here is a colorful display of condom packaging the Center created to promote safe birth control here in the United States. Last year they gave 1 million of these away.



Photos Courtesy Center for Biological Diversity

Artwork, top left by Endangered Species Print Project, top right by Roger Peet, bottom two by Shawn DiCriscio.

Supreme Court Ruling Denounced as 'Dangerous and Serious' Attack on Women's Right to Contraceptive Care

By Julia Conley, excerpt
Common Dreams: July 8, 2020

Reproductive rights advocates vowed to continue their fight to protect women's access to contraceptives in the U.S. on Wednesday after the Supreme Court ruled that employers can refuse to provide birth control coverage for workers on religious

or moral grounds.

The 7-2 decision in Trump vs. Pennsylvania – in which Justices Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Sonia Sotomayor dissented – could leave 120,000 women without coverage for birth control, more than five decades after the birth control pill became legal nationwide. . . .

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Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/07/08/supreme-court-ruling-denounced-dangerous-and-serious-attack-womens-right>

Regenerative Farming

Donation Helps Permaculture Farmer in Kenya Buy Pump to Irrigate Crops



Fundraiser Exceeds Goal = WATER !

“Happy today to irrigate using money maker pump in Kakayando Organic Farm,” wrote Felix Akicho, founder of Kakayando Organic Farm in Kenya. “Thanks to those friends who helped us purchase the money maker pump. This will help Kakayando organic a lot with irrigation.”

Blake Redding organized a GoFundMe fundraiser hoping to reach \$400 for an irrigation system for Felix and posted this message after they pulled in \$550.

“HUGE SHOUT-OUT to Omar Patel and others who helped Felix reach this goal in a matter of hours. I anticipate the water pump will significantly increase the amount of food this community farm is able to distribute to the people of Kawiya. Feel free to check with Felix, myself, or the farm website to see updates regarding this project. <http://kakayando-organic-farm.business.site>,” Blake wrote.

Notice the man in the background (top

right) pumping with his legs, sort of like being on a treadmill, and the young girl in the foreground watering plants. The photo of the woman’s feet was on the fundraising website.

Contact: felixakicho2000@gmail.com.

Website: <https://kakayando-organic-farm.business.site/>

See more about Felix’s farm on pages 23 and 24.

Photos Courtesy Kakayando Organic Farm

Regenerative Farming

An Adventure Story About Planting Potatoes

By Surnai Ó Maoildhia, Ireland

When planted, potatoes are laid out in a particular pattern, like the five sides of a die. Four corners of a square, each potato a foot apart, and then one potato in the centre. From a distance, you only see three parallel lines, the middle one slightly out of sync with the others. But up close, there are boxes, five potatoes in each, like a stamp, repeated over and over and over.

I was told to lay each potato a foot apart. However, I could stand heel-to-toe in one of my father's footprints at that age, and still have room.

Neither my siblings, nor I, ever showed any particular passion or talent for gardening. Years later, when my brother was caught cultivating a cute little marijuana plant in a flower pot, my dad joked that it was the healthiest thing he'd ever grown. But, being little, the grandness of any task was lost on us. In our muck-stained wellies and our ragged work clothes, we took to the fields with the enthusiasm of any kids getting to spend the day outside.

Sometimes, we'd be left to our own devices, free to play tag through the stone trimmed fields, or feed grass to any donkeys or cows we found. Other times, we'd be given tasks, important enough to keep us entertained, but never particularly draining. My brother might dig the beds, being older than my sisters and me, who lacked the necessary muscle mass. My little sister would do what toddlers do best, which was sit in her buggy and occasionally cry. Thus, me and my twin sister were entrusted with the planting.

Possibly because of the foot-measurement debacle, we usually didn't have to lay the potatoes out. Instead, we were left the crucial task of burying them. This, my sister and I were especially good at. Each potato got a name. You pick the potato up, hold him or her in your hand, named him or her, lift a gap into the soil with a trowel, and bury the potato, wishing him or her well.

At first, the potatoes got buried rapidly, one, two, three... James, Beatrice, Jeremiah... However, the process slowed slightly as our brains ran out of names. One potato could take minutes. We'd sit there, staring at these potatoes clenched in our hands, foreheads furrowed, sweat trickling down our temples...

After the potatoes are named and buried



Photo: Surnai Ó Maoildhia

Einstein and Abraham (left to right). Abraham's only a puppy - maybe three/four months in this photo where they are resting in the family's current potato field. Surnai writes, "We used to sell vegetables but now it's only a garden for the family. The potatoes keep for months after they've been dug up, so they feed us all year round!"

snugly in their beds, seaweed – used as fertilizer – is draped over them. Getting the seaweed for the potatoes was an unpleasant task. Going to collect it was once fun because Dad would let us sit in the trailer as he wove the rocking car in and around narrow, twisting lanes and up to the beach, but Mom had put an end to that when she heard. "Not safe," she said, as if we cared.

The beaches we went to varied, depending on where the sea decided to deposit its gigantic heaps of seaweed. Once located though, an entire day – sometimes a few days – would be spent squelching through its slippery mass, gasping for air that wasn't putrid, and swatting away the 5,000 flies that claimed the space directly in front of your face. If we pestered our parents enough, one of them would eventually relent, sigh, and wave in the direction of the shore where we'd willingly run to. Other times, they needed the extra hands, no matter how small, and so I would be compelled to stab my far-too-heavy fork into the smarmy pile of slippery, eel-like sea-vomit and heave it into the wheelbarrow.

In the potato field, as well as the stink of seaweed, there were the bees to contend with. No one could ever accuse my father of not being innovative. Why did

he choose to buy a beehive, when he knew next to nothing about bees? I do not know. But he did, and he learnt about them, and aside from a few mishaps and everyday hazards, by all accounts it went very well. The honey was always delicious.

The major problem, though, rested in the few wandering bees who sniffed the smell of lovely floral shampoo, and dive-bombed your hair. My sister had it the worst, as her hair, by the time we were 10, flowed well past her backside. And let me tell you, there are few things more terrifying than having a bee stuck in your hair. That might be a contentious statement, I accept that, but if you haven't experienced it, then you can't talk.

All you hear is buzzing. It comes from everywhere at once, from all sides, like someone's pressing two electric razors to your ears. You tear your hands through your hair but you're deathly afraid of actually touching the bee. What can you do?

You shake your head, like you're trying to get the devil out of it (in a way, you are), you sprint around the field, trying to outrun it, you scream heartily for help, for somebody, anybody to help, and the whole time, your Dad is shouting "Don't let it sting you!" as if you'd be happy to let it, as

Potatoes *continued on next page*

Regenerative Farming

Potatoes *continued from previous page*

if you didn't realize the danger .

Eventually, after an eternity, the demonic buzzing recedes, and you drop, breathless, exhausted, to the ground. You feel Dad's semi-sympathetic pat on the shoulder. You hear your siblings' laughter. And you once again pick up the spade, flinching at every minor sound, pale, eyes bloodshot, and you scowl at your father's, the beekeeper's, militarily short hair. Finally, you understand why there's so much emphasis on the *zzz* sound in Beelzebub.

But that's not to say that my father didn't get his own dose of suffering at the hands (feelers?) of the bees. It was an average Summer's day, a day Dad, my siblings, and I had all spent in the potato field. Finally, Dad had said we could go home, but that he had to check the bees first.

He told us to go wait in the car. Worn out, we did, gladly. All four of us squished into the backseats, and we waited. And waited. And waited. Losing patience, my brother turned on his seat and stared out the opened back window, willing Dad to come.

Minutes passed, each excruciatingly long. The windows were pulled down all of the way, the sun lightly roasted the paint-chipped exterior of the vehicle. A breeze, smelling of grass and flowers, drifted in and around us. We waited. Then, suddenly, my brother cried out: "Look!"

Instantly, we spun in our seats and on our knees, we peered through the window. Down the long, grassy, overgrown lane our father had finally appeared and he was running, sprinting, he was waving his hands around his head frantically, he was screaming. He was the spitting image of a madman.

We started to laugh. He kept running. With tears of laughter streaming down his face, my brother asked softly, "What's he saying?" Because he was saying something. Further up the lane, closer to us now, we could hear him, once we'd suppressed our

hilarity, we could hear what he was saying, and there was something else we could hear also. Something diabolical. Buzzing. "Run!"

Like a shot, on either side of me, my brother and sister leapt out of the car. My sister, on the right side, ran wildly down the lane turning right. My brother, on the left side of the car, ran wildly down the lane turning left. Unfortunately for my brother, seconds later I watched the frenetic form of my father, engulfed in a swarm of bees, dart passed the car, and turn left. For myself, I crawled into the front seat with my little sister, and we huddled over, as though we were in a bomb shelter.

The screams, the buzzing, all faded. A passing *bzzz* every now and again made our hearts stop. In a half-daze, we watched one infernal bee wander in through the open window and hover, *bzzzing*, above us, while we held our breaths and wide-eyed, watched it leave through the opposite window.

If my father had been allergic, he surely would have died. Red and bulbous, he sat in our kitchen while my Mom tended to his thousands upon thousands of stings. I realized, dimly, that the time I'd been stung by a batch of nettles when I fell off the trampoline paled in comparison. Like a line of military soldiers, we stood around our father who had been gravely wounded in the line of duty. All four of us were ready to salute. Not one of us mentioned the laughter.

As we grew older, we went to the field less. It didn't seem as wondrous as it once had. A few of us had developed a phobia of the bees. The weather was bad, normally. There were rats. The journey in the car was long. The lanes up passed the sharp, ascending turn (where our Land Rover had once sat overturned for a day), were savagely bumpy.

Still, I tagged along every now and again. I laid the potatoes out, and measured a

foot and a half between each. I brought my book and left it in the car, just in case. I put my earphones in.

One day, possibly out of boredom, possibly just out of an enjoyment of maths, I calculated aloud how many potatoes we would need, as a family, for the entire year, and how many, therefore, we'd need to plant, working all of the variables, from blight to dinner guests, into my sums.

I don't still name the seeds as I plant them. Actually, I haven't planted potatoes in a long time. I went to school, I got a summer job, my parents worked less in the gardens, I went to college. We still have our own home-grown potatoes, and I surreptitiously pack some in my bag whenever I'm back for the weekend. But they weren't planted by me.

I was on the bus coming home the other day, sitting in the back. Listening to music, my mind was wandering, and so were my eyes. At one point I looked up. Above me, there were the dials that are above all bus seats. There were five circles; two lights, two air conditioning vents, and one circle with the switches in the middle. Five circles, laid out like the five side of a die, and they stretched out along both sides of the roof of the bus, like a stamp, over and over again.

And I thought of potatoes.

Surnai Molloy was raised on Inis Mór, a small island off the west coast of Ireland. She was homeschooled there along with her siblings. Homeschooling is certainly a way to encourage creativity. Her parents ran an organic garden and housed volunteers. At the age of 15, Surnai went to school on the island. She is currently studying Creative Writing with English and Mathematics in the National University of Ireland, Galway. When we communicated in March, Surnai was studying on exchange in Ottawa, Canada until she had to return home due to Covid-19.

IT IS EASY TO THINK OF POTATOES, AND FORTUNATELY FOR MEN WHO HAVE NOT MUCH MONEY IT IS EASY TO THINK OF THEM WITH A CERTAIN SAFETY. POTATOES ARE ONE OF THE LAST THINGS TO DISAPPEAR, IN TIMES OF WAR, WHICH IS PROBABLY WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN IN TIMES OF PEACE.

- M.F.K. Fisher -

<https://www.wiseoldsayings.com/potato-quotes/>

Regenerative Farming

Regeneration Generation: Peace December Uganda

By Ali Tebandeke, Uganda

Peace December Uganda is a grassroots organization that was started in 2015 to empower communities through hands-on skills using a permaculture approach to create a resilient and sustainable development. It is found in the Nateete community in Uganda working with orphans, vulnerable kids, youths, women, and homeless children.

The founder, Ali Tebandeke, has two acres of land that needs to be built into a model and educational learning centre for a community based on sustainable agriculture, as well as accommodating volunteers and visitors on the garden farm. The land is found in a rural place of the Butambala District, 35 miles away from the main capital.

Our first campaign was to raise enough money to get them the tools they need to begin building. It was so successful that we decided to make an ongoing campaign to give them the opportunity they need to continue development of the site. We then began to help raise money for a rainwater capturing tank and the seeds they plan to grow this year.

Now we are helping them raise the funds to purchase electronics, such as a camera and laptop, as well as some more basic items such as more shade nets, beehives, and a chain ring. Our goal is to help them get more connected with the world. Thank you everyone for your continued support and please reach out to us if you have any questions.

Thanks again friends, well-wishers. We have become a family to work together towards building sustainable communities. Through your kind donations you're impacting lives of kids, orphans,



Photos Courtesy Peace December Uganda

Ali Tebandeke drawing up plans for the garden project.

and vulnerable groups here in Uganda. I therefore recognize each and every one of you who has made this possible. We still need your donations to reach the goal and, yes, together we can, and every little hand towards this global cause is tremendously recognized and appreciated.

Keep the fire burning.....yes we're the regeneration generation. Follow us on facebook, Google, Instagram #Permaculture learning center Butambala.

Always do the talking to match your actions to effect positive results. When you sweat, your anger releases out to find your soul and how!

The Instacollage on the next page went with this post:

Happy International Permaculture Day (May 3). I will celebrate this with my grandma while helping on herbs that she does grow around her house.

Enjoy this day friends. I just wish that everyone is safe, healthy, and optimistic

even during these strange times the world is going through.

#staysafe #stayactive #hydrate
#immunesupport #loveyourself #instacollage #peacedecemberuganda #Sector39UK #inspiredliving #naturegeography #internationalpermacultureday #permaculturekids #permaculturedesigncourse #ecofriendlyproducts

I couldn't wait to show you the progress of these gardens.... Permaculture helps to learn knowledge and skills on how to sustainably transform your land into a productive land regardless of your garden space. You can see blooming gardens from Lady Irene Kindergarten School Bulenga, a project that we did early this year at #schoolfeedingproject

#schooltohomeproject
#urbanfarming#organicfarming
Please feel free to follow me at @peace-decemberuganda.blogspot.com for more

Regeneration continued on next page



Regenerative Farming

Regeneration continued from previous page

educative and interesting topics in the world of sustainable and Regenerative agriculture using the Permaculture approach.

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PeaceDecemberUganda/>

Instagram: #peacedecemberuganda

#organicfarming #nature #agroecology #nightshadefamily #sustainablefoodsystems #peacedecemberuganda #permaculture #instagood #picoftheday #morning Tag a friend Share to your social networks



(top right) Fresh squeezed juice posted with this message: "Good morning world! Why it's health-wise to start up your day with high water content fruits!"

(Before and After at right) Toilet area in school improvement project. Thanks school management for teamwork to share with me these photos.

(collage) Happy International Permaculture Day (May 3).

(bottom photos) Mother and child working in garden to produce organic pumpkin and cherry tomatoes.



Ending Racism

'A Change That Should Have Been Made a Long Time Ago' – After 87 Years, Washington's NFL Team Drops Racist Name

"This is the result of decades of Native activism, mostly led by Native women."

By Eoin Higgins
Common Dreams: July 13, 2020

Indigenous leaders across the U.S. celebrated Monday as Washington, D.C.'s football team dropped the racial slur that was its name for nearly nine decades.

"The NFL and Dan Snyder have finally made the right call and Change the Mascot commends them for it," Ray Halbritter, Oneida Nation Representative and head of the Change the Mascot campaign, said in a statement.

"This is a good decision for the country – not just Native peoples – since it closes a painful chapter of denigration and disrespect toward Native Americans and other people of color," added Halbritter. "Future generations of Native youth will no longer be subjected to this offensive and harmful slur every Sunday during football season."

The decision by team owner Dan Snyder to change the name of the team came after years of pressure from Native leaders.

"This is the result of decades of Native activism, mostly led by native women," tweeted Cherokee journalist Rebecca Nagle.

In a statement reacting to the news, Rep. Deb Haaland (D-N.M.), with Rep. Sharice Davis (D-Kan.) in 2018 one of the first two Native American women elected to Congress, said it was long overdue.

"With decades of work by organizers and activists, public outcry, a moment reckoning with our country's racist past, and corporate sponsors willing to put more pressure on the Washington NFL team's management to do the right thing, we made this change together," said Haaland. "A change that should have been made a long time ago."

Navajo activist Amanda Blackhorse, who has been fighting the Washington team for years, said in a statement celebrating the long-overdue decision that it was a "truly monumental day. It's been a massive undertaking to push the Washington team



Graphic: <https://illuminatives.org/about-us/>

Created and led by Native peoples, IllumiNative is a new nonprofit initiative designed to increase the visibility of – and challenge the negative narrative about – Native Nations and peoples in American society. "By standing together, taking care of each other, by advocating, and by donating when possible, we can win."

to retire their name and logo," said Blackhorse. "So many sacrifices have been made by Indigenous people in challenging the NFL and the Washington team franchise."

Still, Blackhorse has concerns over how the name change will take effect. "As much as I want to celebrate this day, I am concerned with the Washington team's lack of clarity around their rebrand," she said.

While the team remains silent on the details of the change, dropping the name itself is "a historic win for Native Americans fighting to humanize ourselves as living people in the 21st century," Brett Chapman, a Native American rights attorney of Ponca, Pawnee, and Kiowa ancestry, told Common Dreams.

"We are still here and we are a part of this society," Chapman said. "We are entitled to the same respect and honor as your fellow countrymen. Being reduced to caricatures and stereotypes for entertainment does not honor us and today that message has been sent."

Chapman drew a line between Indigenous rights activism and the Black Lives Matter demonstrations that exploded in May and June, noting the solidarity between the two movements.

"All the credit for this victory goes to those Native Americans first who have been advocating this change for decades and George Floyd, whose murder ignited this historic movement against racist iconography led by people of all backgrounds who support Black Lives Matter," said Chapman.

Activist Bree Newsome made a similar connection, noting that the name change came after economic pressure from companies tied to the franchise.

"When corporations like FedEx threatened to pull their sponsorship, it suddenly became possible for Washington's NFL team to change its name," Newsome tweeted. "This is what I'm saying. \$\$\$ is the only language the owner class understands. There has to be strategic, economic disruption."

Indigenous activists made clear that while the Washington team was one of the most prominent of offensive mascots, there are still many more to be addressed around the country.

"Tomorrow, our fight continues," said Crystal Echo Hawk, a member of the Pawnee Nation and executive director of IllumiNative. "We will not rest until the offensive use of Native imagery, logos, and names are eradicated from professional, collegiate, and K-12 sports. The time is now to stand in solidarity and declare that racism will not be tolerated."

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Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/07/13/change-should-have-been-made-long-time-ago-after-87-years-washingtons-nfl-team-drops>

Ending Racism



Photo Courtesy Movement for Black Lives

The BREATHE Act will: 1) Divest resources from incarceration and policing, 2) Build new approaches to community safety, 3) Invest resources to build equitable communities for all, and 4) Enhance the self-determination of all Black communities.

Black National Convention, August 28

July 12, 2020 email from Jessica Byrd
via ActionNetwork.org

On July 7, the Movement for Black Lives announced the BREATHE Act. As Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA) shared in her launch remarks, we are responding to “a righteous rage moving with urgency and demanding that policymakers at all levels of government begin the work to put an end to racist policies, to dismantle systems of oppression that for too long have allowed for the over-policing of and divestment from Black communities.”

The BREATHE Act is a modern-day civil-rights bill in defense of Black lives.

The BREATHE Act will:

- Divest resources from incarceration and policing,
- Build new approaches to community safety,
- Invest resources to build equitable communities for all, and
- Enhance the self-determination of all Black communities.

We thank Rep. Pressley, along with Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), for answering the call from the streets and championing this historic legislation. We must divest from policing and invest in creating new models of safety.

From Protest to Power to the Polls

We are charting a course from protest to power to the polls, from now until Black

November. We are drawing from our long history of power building and channeling the righteous anger and momentum of the streets to build Black power for the 2020 elections and far beyond.

At the 2020 Black National Convention on August 28, we will engage Black people to uphold our right to vote and hold elected officials and institutions accountable to our visionary demands. We are guided by joy, electoral justice, and abolition as our north stars.

During the 2020 BNC live broadcast, along with hundreds of thousands of you, we will ratify a Black agenda that will include the BREATHE Act at the federal level, along with state and local policies that build toward our vision of true public safety, community investment, radical self-determination, and Black liberation.

We know that no matter who occupies the White House in January 2021, we require sustained struggle to build Black political power that will enact the BREATHE Act and advance a liberatory agenda that makes all Black lives matter.

We Are About All Black Lives

We’ve said it before, and we will keep saying it. When we say “Black lives,” we mean everybody. We want all Black people to thrive. Black people of every gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, ethnic background, class origin, country of birth, region, or religion are included. Everyone

in, nobody out.

We center a queer and trans Black feminist perspective that uplifts all the ways we care for each other and come together to vision and shape our families and our futures.

Are You Ready to Win with Us? Take Action Today

- Register for the 2020 Black National Convention at BlackNovember.org;
- Become a community co-sponsor of the BREATHE Act;
- Share our posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; and
- Text DEFEND TO 90975 to receive our calls to action.

We are moving with power, pride, and love to create spaces and opportunities for all Black people to get involved as agents of change to ensure we not only survive, but thrive. A world where we can all BREATHE FREE.

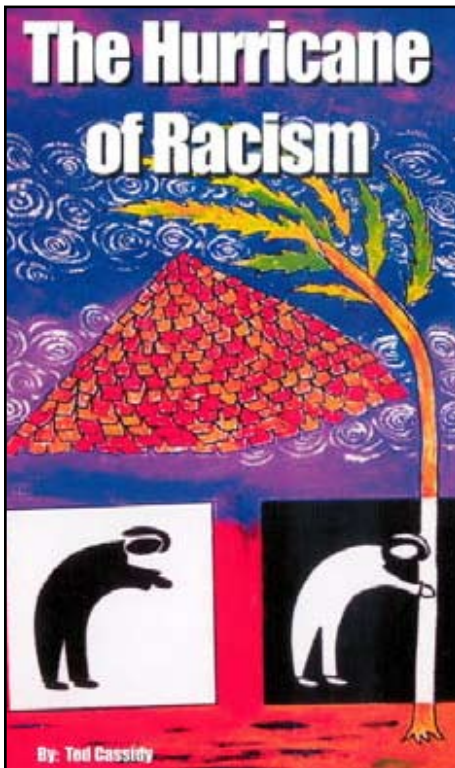
In solidarity,

Jessica Byrd, Co-Founder and Political Strategist, Electoral Justice Project of the Movement for Black Lives



Ending Racism

The Nature of Racism and How We Conquer It



By Fr. Ted Cassidy, SM, Ohio USA
Written in 2006

Chapter 5 Recognizing the Identified Patient as Distinct from the Real Cause of Racism

Note: We published the Introduction to this book in our January 2020 issue; Chapter 1 in our February issue; Chapter 2 in our March issue, Chapter 3 in July 2020, and Chapter 4 in issue #62, July 13, 2020. All back issues are at www.groundswellnews.org.

I have listened to many people of color tell stories of how others have been suspicious of them. An African-American, who chaired the board examining candidates for the bar exam in Maryland shared with me how he was frequently looked at with suspicion when shopping. A Mexican-American woman with a Ph.D., who was leading a conference I attended, shared how she was asked to pay her hotel bill ahead of time, before her Caucasian companion. At the end of a workshop I led, a group of African-American women shared the deep hurt of being barred from lunch

counters when they were young women. I know that there are deep hurts in the hearts of people of color because of these types of experiences.

On the other side I, myself, have feelings of suspicion when I am in a neighborhood of mostly people of color. I remember walking at dusk in Chester, Pennsylvania, where I had taught school for nine years. I noticed a big black man following me, and I became fearful. Finally, the man approached and asked if I was Father Cassidy. It turns out, I had him as a student when he was a junior in high school.

Let's take a look at the social system that creates these fears and suspicions. If we go back to chapters 1 and 2 we recall that racism is a constructed social system. It very strongly tends to stay in place. It is dysfunctional in that it is built not on sharing of gifts and talents and appreciation but on fear and manipulation. To correct the system we need to back away from it and see what is happening. We do this similar to the way a meteorologist examines a *hurricane*. Just as an expert weatherperson can measure wind speed, water temperature, and the other forces that contribute to the strength of the storm, we can examine what is happening in the racist system. Leaders in families, churches, schools, communities, and businesses – in fact anyone who is part of America – can be similar to such a weatherperson by examining racism.

A dynamic of racism is that the person of color becomes the “identified patient.” The racist system is both sick and dysfunctional, and those caught in this system often cannot name the true cause for their racist feelings. Feelings can lead to incorrect judgments. What happens in the racist system is that the person of color becomes the one who is the “identified patient,” the one misdiagnosed as the problem, the brunt of misdirected feelings. However, the member of the system who suffers with an obvious symptom is not actually “the sick one,” but the one in whom the societal pathology surfaces. This is what is happening when the person of color is looked upon with suspicion or when the Caucasian operates out of fear of a black person.

Society avoids the causes of the pathol-

ogy by examining only the individual. If one uses systems thinking, the individual is, rather, an identified symptom of a more involved problem.

We are speaking here of a triangular emotional process through which two people or systems gather their forces against a third. The third becomes a patient who receives from the other two a type of self-sacrificing righteous attention. The anxiety of the two produces an anxiety reaction in the patient, which makes the problem more severe. In the racist system in which we are living, it is a false solution to project onto African-Americans in our cities the notion of being patients for which we need to care.

The person of color becomes the “identified patient” and is not treated as a true human being. Also the person of color loses his or her perspective and develops false projections of white people. Racism creates a two-way street where both white and black (because they are not seeing clearly) operate from misjudgments.

The basic dynamic causing the “identified patient” is two or more people in an anxious situation getting together to enhance their own functioning by forcing their way on a third. By keeping the focus on one of its members, the group denies the very issues that contributed to making one of its members symptomatic. The individual may have many problems, but in systems thinking one must keep one's eye on the power of the system.

Because we have a decreasing functioning level of ego-differentiation, as was treated in Chapter 3, society allows persons of color to be mistakenly stigmatized. Society projects false stereotypes on groups of people, emotional over generalized images on categories on human beings. Problem projection in society grows. “Society is creating more ‘patients’ of people with functional dysfunctions whose dysfunctions are products of the projection process.”¹⁹

Murray Bowen, in *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice*, cites the example of criminals. At first, society tries the Band-Aid approach to antisocial behavior. Society hopes the problem will go away.

Racism continued on next page

Ending Racism

Racism *continued from previous page*

Rehabilitation programs are sought for repeat offenders.

During the past 20 years, an over-lenient society has passed laws and made rules that further foster the development and preservation of criminals. The total trend is seen as the product of a lower level of self in society. If, and when, society pulls up to a higher level of functioning, such issues will be automatically modified to fit the new level of differentiation.²⁰

The same projection process happens when we scapegoat vulnerable minority groups. Bowen explains how the black person was the main object of the projection process for more than a century. As this is modified with blacks, other groups, such as welfare recipients and the poor, become the same recipients of this projection process. "Just as the least adequate child in a family can become more impaired when he becomes an object of pity and over-sympathetic help from the family so can the lowest segment of society be chronically impaired by the very attention designed to help it."²¹

Bowen maintains that no matter how good the principles in these programs are, because they have built in a projection process, they are doomed for failure.

He tackled the question of whether family patterns tend to influence society or vice versa. The evidence, he maintains, supports the thesis that the emotional orientation is set by society. Public officials are forced into continuing the functioning level, which is generally operating.

Racism is the emotional system that allows false projections to dominate. If society allows itself to exist in this false and often entrenched consciousness, good judgments will not be made for building up a humane and enjoyable community.

Look at the way we still allow the separation of white and black communities in America. The fear of back people dominates still in so many communities. Whites have fled good communities and leadership is not present to prevent the fear and projection to take control.

One study I read of the city of Cleveland showed how the whites fled from the East side of the city to the suburbs. There was an enormous cost to build a highway to help them get to work back to the city. The neighborhoods they left became a burden for the government to find a tax base to keep schools, libraries, and other facilities operating. Then there was the cost of the new communities they built up. The emo-

tional system of racism was a great part of this dysfunction. Society let itself be dominated by this *hurricane*.

Rather than stigmatizing a person of color as a problem, people need to get to know each other's value.

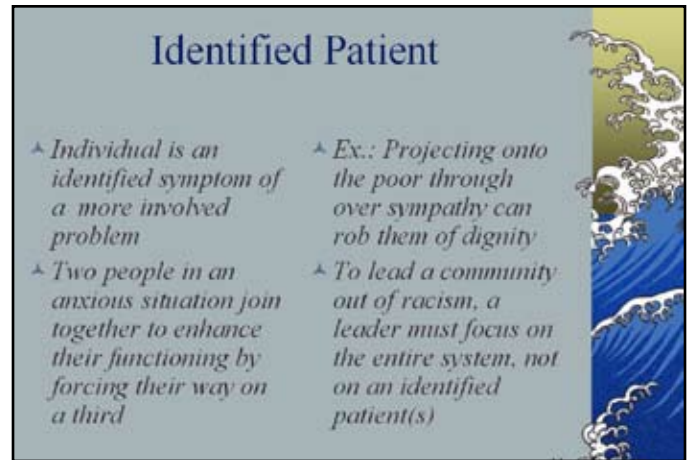
Cornel West describes the way the person of color in America has been falsely identified. He says that to be black in America is to be a person who is a problem.

It is not just to have a problem. In America today, the black person is an identified patient, a person who is a problem, someone who is basically seen as inferior, "sick," not normal.

Referring to W.E.B. DuBois' words, West states: "*This seminal passage spells out the basic components of black invisibility and namelessness: black people as a problem people, rather than people with problems; black people as abstractions and objects, rather than individuals and persons; black and white worlds divided by a thick wall (or a "veil") that requires role-playing and mask-wearing, rather than genuine human interaction.*"²²

When I was in Mexico for two weeks, I noticed that the main actors and commentators on television were Caucasian. The racism that considers people of color to be somehow inferior seems to be operating in that country, also. As I travel in the United States, I see numerous Mexicans working on gardens and in hotels. The same system is operative in both countries, albeit, on different levels.

Gary, Indiana, is one of the most segregated cities in America. Because of this, the bishop of the Catholic diocese there, Bishop Dale Melcik, invited Father Clarence Williams to give a workshop on racism and how to become racially sober to the priests and other leaders of the diocese. Also, an educational program on this same subject was initiated in all the schools and religious education programs. All who took this program were taught what happens in the racial social system and were given tools to take positions against it. As a result, the Catholic population (as well as many other people in the area) is beginning to recognize a new non-racial way of relating.



Bishop Melcik, thinking outside the box, had a better idea when he took the lead to show people what is going on in the racist system. This is leadership, teaching people what is really happening and training them not to act out of fear.

In the religious order to which I belong, we have had a number of workshops about racism and multiculturalism. We have discovered that an organic process is needed to change an implanted system like racism. Change can't be forced. Rules may be needed; however, much more powerful is the coming together to share stories and learn what is really happening in a racist system. Then people begin to change. The differentiated leader is one who can provide opportunities for this type of exchange in his or her family, business, church, or civic community. It is not only interesting and wholesome; it is creative, rich, and life giving in so many ways.

Just as a child in a family needs to be nurtured and educated and not stigmatized in an inferior way, leaders in society also must not allow minorities to be relegated to positions of being identified patients, but rather treated as productive agents worthy of rights and responsibilities.

Footnotes:

19 Murray Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice* (NY: Jason Aronson, 1983), p. 444.

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 444-45.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 445.

22 Cornel West in "Black Strivings." Cornel West and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Future of the Race*, (New York: Vantage Books, 1996), pp. 84-85.

A pdf of The Hurricane of Racism is available for free at <https://www.nacms.org/epubs/special-articles/hurricane-racism>.

Ending Racism

Call for Prayers Now: Iona and John's "Adopted" Son Being Released Soon After 14+ Years

By Iona Conner, written in 2015

How on Earth Did I Get a Third Son at Age 66?

Just before shutting down my *Earth News* newspaper, I received the saddest letter of my life from a prisoner. He had written it for publication but it arrived too late. Many prisoners had loved my newspaper and circulated it. Exactly how he discovered it remains a mystery. Remember, my background included Suburban Housewife and Newspaper Publisher; I had had no prior contact with the problems of inner city people, poverty, or prisoners.

Here is his letter:

Dear Reader, I'm 31 years old. I've been in jail for about 12 years. I came to jail when I was young, foolish, and ignorant. Unfortunately, that got me a long sentence.

Jail is very depressing. There's nothing to do. Everything is monotony, habit, and routine. The average person's day is spent in idleness with nothing positive or constructive to do. After being here so long, you start to feel empty and void inside. You start to feel like life don't have no meaning or significance no more. I've been in seclusion for six months. I've got three months to go. Seclusion is very unbearable and the living conditions are inhumane. The way this place is set up it's like it's designed for you to go insane. They got this one method they use against us called sensory deprivation. What they try to do is deprive you of anything that stimulates and activates the mind and senses. It's all designed for you to go insane.

The methods they use against us isn't nothing but psychological warfare at its best. These tactics have been proven to destroy, not only you, but your spirit. This is the reason why a lot of us walk around here feeling hopeless.

It's like they've destroyed and crushed our spirits. To be honest with you, jail don't care if you're blind, crippled, or crazy. All they want is your body and if you're not strong your mind will follow.

Another thing I want you to realize is that the actual pressure of isolation can take a man or woman down faster than a 350-pound line backer. This is the reason why I've lost 15 pounds. When you're in seclusion, you're in your cell 23 hours a day and most times 24 when it's cold outside. You go to the yard in something analogous

to a dog cage. When you're in your cell your lights are illuminated all day and that's even when you sleep. If you try to cover them up, that gives them the justification to put you in in-cell mechanical restraints. I've actually seen people develop mental illnesses after enduring all of this.

Since I've been here everybody that meant something to me the most, including my most loved and cherished ones, all left and disowned me. So basically I'm here doing this by myself. Look, I know it's not your responsibility and you're not obligated to do nothing for me but I would like to ask you out of generosity and kindness if you can send me something to read.

Also, I'm asking you this out of the bottom of my heart because I've got nothing!

Truly yours,

Andrew

Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see!

(I sent Andrew a letter and the December/January *Earth News*. That started a long exchange of letters.)

A couple of months later, my husband John and I visited Andrew and found that he has a very sweet nature. I liked him right away. It was hard to imagine how he had ended up in prison. Before too long, he was referring to me as "Mom" since his own mother hadn't ever visited him; actually, he had had no visitors in 12 years of incarceration. We kept writing to each other and John suggested that I send him some money every month, which I do to this day, although it isn't much.

By Christmas, I was floundering in figuring out what to give him for a present so the idea of helping get his story published seemed like a good one. He thought about it for a while and started writing. Have you any idea what it's like to grow up in a ghetto with lousy schools and rampant crime surrounding you? And dark skin on top of it all? My heart was touched and my mind opened by knowing Andrew.

One of my friends who had done a lot of prison min-

istry suggested we tell the warden what we were up to so I called him. We had 100% support for our project, initially called *Time to Care: A Young Prisoner Finds A Friend, a "Mom," and Hope*. I thought that the simple exchange of our letters, if published, would help other people reach out to "adopt" a prisoner and bring more satisfaction and joy to their lives but Andrew wanted to write more. His stories are very powerful; he's good at expressing himself so this title may not be our final one and the book has taken a new direction.

Andrew was moved recently to another, stricter prison in a large swap so that those in his new prison with medical and mental issues could receive better care in his former prison after they all switched places. Work on our book came to a gradual halt. Andrew is still working hard to get his GED and comes up for parole in December.

We write often and I visit Andrew occasionally. We both enjoy those visits. I find it frustrating to try to help him from the outside and I can only imagine how frustrating it must be for someone on the inside to accomplish much.

Recently, Andrew has gotten in touch with his mother, cousin, sister, and a former girlfriend and, after struggling together to find a reasonable way for him to get phone cards, he is finally able to call all of us! I feel so happy for Andrew now that his family and friends are back in communication with him.

He is a dear man; now I have three sons.



Andrew Henley and Iona during one of her visits.

Ending Racism

Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society, William Lloyd Garrison (1833)

In 1833, the same year that Lydia Maria Child published her appeal, a group of abolitionists gathered together to found the American Anti-Slavery Society. A number of the representatives had been involved in the creation of the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1832 and the New York society that followed, but they believed that there should be a national organization. Prominent among them was William Lloyd Garrison (1805–1879). Garrison gave his first public address against slavery in 1829, and soon thereafter, in 1831, began publishing the *Boston Liberator*. Over the next three decades he vigorously fought slavery with words even as he opposed violence to free the slaves. Besides his public speeches and *Liberator* editorials, Garrison helped to draft the New England society's constitution as well as the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He also served as president of the latter society from 1843 to 1865.

The Convention assembled in the city of Philadelphia, to organize a National Anti-Slavery Society, promptly seize the opportunity to promulgate the following Declaration of Sentiments, as cherished by them in relation to the enslavement of one-sixth portion of the American people.

More than fifty-seven years have elapsed, since a band of patriots convened in this place, to devise measures for the deliverance of this country from a foreign yoke. The corner-stone upon which they founded the Temple of Freedom was broadly this—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY, and the pursuit of happiness. . . .

We have met together for the achievement of an enterprise, without which that of our fathers is incomplete; and which, for its magnitude, solemnity, and probable results upon the destiny of the world, as far transcends theirs as moral truth does physical force.

* * *

Their principles led them to wage war against their oppressors, and to spill human blood like water, in order to be free. Ours forbid the doing of evil that good may come, and lead us to reject, and to entreat the oppressed to reject, the use of all carnal weapons for deliverance from bondage; relying solely upon those which are spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.

Their measures were physical resistance – the marshalling in arms – the hostile array – the mortal encounter. Ours shall be such only as the opposition of moral purity to moral corruption – the destruction of error by the potency of truth – the overthrow of prejudice by the power of love – and the abolition of slavery by the spirit of repentance.

Their grievances, great as they were, were trifling in comparison with the wrongs and sufferings of those for whom we plead. Our fathers were never slaves – never bought and sold like cattle – never shut out from the light of knowledge and religion – never subjected to the lash of brutal taskmasters.

But those, for whose emancipation we are striving – constituting at the present time at least one-sixth part of our countrymen – are recognized by law, and treated by their fellow-beings, as marketable commodities, as goods and chattels, as brute beasts; . . . For the crime of having a dark complexion, they suffer the pangs of hunger, the infliction of stripes, the ignominy of brutal servitude. They are kept in heathenish darkness by laws expressly enacted to make their instruction a criminal offence.

These are the prominent circumstances in the condition of more than two millions of our people, the proof of which may be found in thousands of indisputable facts, and in the laws of the slave-holding States.

Hence we maintain – that, in view of the civil and religious privileges of this nation, the guilt of its oppression is unequalled by any other on the face of the earth; and, therefore, that it is bound to repent instantly, to undo the heavy burdens, and

to let the oppressed go free.

We further maintain – that no man has a right to enslave or imbrute his brother – to hold or acknowledge him, for one moment, as a piece of merchandize – to keep back his hire by fraud – or to brutalize his mind, by denying him the means of intellectual, social and moral improvement.

The right to enjoy liberty is inalienable. To invade it is to usurp the prerogative of Jehovah. Every man has a right to his own body – to the products of his own labor – to the protection of law – and to the common advantages of society. It is piracy to buy or steal a native African, and subject him to servitude. Surely, the sin is as great to enslave an American as an African.

Therefore we believe and affirm – that there is no difference, in principle, between the African slave trade and American slavery:

That every American citizen, who detains a human being in involuntary bondage as his property, is, according to Scripture, (Ex. xxi. 16,) a man-stealer:

That the slaves ought instantly to be set free, and brought under the protection of law:

That if they had lived from the time of Pharaoh down to the present period, and had been entailed through successive generations, their right to be free could never have been alienated, but their claims would have constantly risen in solemnity:

That all those laws which are now in force, admitting the right of slavery, are therefore, before God, utterly null and void; being an audacious usurpation of the Divine prerogative, a daring infringement on the law of nature, a base overthrow of the very foundations of the social compact, a complete extinction of all the relations, endearments and obligations of mankind, and a presumptuous transgression of all the holy commandments; and that therefore they ought instantly to be abrogated.

We further believe and affirm—that all persons of color, who possess the qualifications which are demanded of others, ought to be admitted forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges, and the exercise of

Anti-Slavery *continued on next page*

Ending Racism

- 1. In a fight between a rewind and a revolution, revolution's gonna lose**
- 2. 'Don't mourn, organise' is the wrong mantra for our times. We need to do both**
- 3. Think global, act local has come of age – but we need to buttress it**
- 4. An imperfect message that gets heard is better than a perfect one that doesn't**

Quote from The Exec Sum at <https://oxfamblogs.org/jp2p/effective-activism-in-a-time-of-coronavirus-what-are-we-learning-six-months-in/>

Anti-Slavery *continued from previous page*

the same prerogatives, as others; and that the paths of preferment, of wealth, and of intelligence, should be opened as widely to them as to persons of a white complexion.

We maintain that no compensation should be given to the planters emancipating their slaves:

Because it would be a surrender of the great fundamental principle, that man cannot hold property in man:

Because slavery is a crime, and therefore is not an article to be sold:

Because the holders of slaves are not the just proprietors of what they claim; freeing the slave is not depriving them of property, but restoring it to its rightful owner; it is not wronging the master, but righting the slave – restoring him to himself:

Because immediate and general emancipation would only destroy nominal, not real property; it would not amputate a limb or break a bone of the slaves, but by infusing motives into their breasts, would make them doubly valuable to the masters as free laborers; and

Because, if compensation is to be given at all, it should be given to the outraged and guiltless slaves, and not to those who have plundered and abused them.

We regard as delusive, cruel and dangerous, any scheme of expatriation which pretends to aid, either directly or indirectly, in the emancipation of the slaves, or to be a substitute for the immediate and total abolition of slavery.

We fully and unanimously recognise the sovereignty of each State, to legislate exclusively on the subject of the slavery which is tolerated within its limits; we concede that Congress, under the present national compact, has no right to interfere with any of the slave States, in relation to this momentous subject:

But we maintain that Congress has a right, and is solemnly bound, to suppress the domestic slave trade between the several States, and to abolish slavery in those portions of our territory which the Constitution has placed under its exclusive jurisdiction.

We also maintain that there are, at the present time, the highest obligations resting upon the people of the free States to remove slavery by moral and political action, as prescribed in the Constitution of the United States. They are now living under a pledge of their tremendous physical force, to fasten the galling fetters of tyranny upon the limbs of millions in the Southern States; they are liable to be called at any moment to suppress a general insurrection of the slaves; they authorize the slave owner to vote for three-fifths of his slaves as property, and thus enable him to perpetuate his oppression; they support a standing army at the South for its protection; and they seize the slave, who has escaped into their territories, and send him back to be tortured by an enraged master or a brutal driver. This relation to slavery is criminal, and full of danger:

IT MUST BE BROKEN UP.

We shall organize Anti-Slavery Societies, if possible, in every city, town and village in our land.

We shall send forth agents to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of entreaty, and of rebuke.

We shall circulate, unsparingly and extensively, antislavery tracts and periodicals.

We shall enlist the pulpit and the press in the cause of the suffering and the dumb.

We shall aim at a purification of the churches from all participation in the guilt of slavery.

We shall encourage the labor of free-men rather than that of slaves, by giving a preference to their productions: and

We shall spare no exertions nor means to bring the whole nation to speedy repentance.

Our trust for victory is solely in God. We may be personally defeated, but our principles never. Truth, Justice, Reason, Humanity, must and will gloriously triumph...

Done at Philadelphia, December 6th, A.D.1833

[From *Selections from the Writings and Speeches of William Lloyd Garrison*. Originally published in 1852 by R. F. Wallcut. (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), pp. 66–71.]

A free pdf version of Garrison's 416-page book — excerpted in "Declaration of Sentiments" is here at http://www.lincolngroup.org/documents/fierytrial/Selections_from_the_writings_and_speeches.pdf.

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"A people without education is a people with no future."

By Akouete Yawo Galé Simon, Togo

Since its creation DRVR-TOGO works alongside the most vulnerable, especially women and children. Its purpose is to promote social, health, agricultural, economic, and educational development.

It was really difficult and it is sad sometimes when you meet these kinds of realities in our communities.

How can we study in this condition, there in this photo? I turned the questions all over the place and I have no answers.

You will have tears in your eyes when you will be in front of this enclosure which was made for a building in which the children study.

Help this community, or at least these children, to have an ideal framework, an adequate space for a quality education, and for their offspring, who are not only theirs but the only hope for their community.

It is said that a people without education is a people with no future.

I really need financial and technical support of all kinds to be able to build this building for this community and especially these children in the near future and I really need you more than ever.

Donors who want to accompany us or help us build this building can contact us directly for their donations support.

Address:

170.BP: 65 Vogan-Togo

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Association-Drvr-TOGO-2416153845331332/>

Email: simonakouete@gmail.com

Phone: +22897149010 (WhatsApp)



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Photos Courtesy Kakayando Organic Farm

"We should always allow our small kids to enjoy working in the farm. Look at how the kids are happy with the productive kales in key hole garden."

So Many Ways to Create a Beautiful World

By Felix Akicho, Kenya

Kakayando Organic Farm is a center to learn more about organic farming using permaculture methods in Kawiya, Homa Bay County, Kenya.

We are planning to start a poultry farming, so far we have bought five chickens. We are calling for support to help us buy more chickens, build the structure for the chickens, and fencing materials. Please support our mission of supporting our community.

Kakayando Organic Farm is also giving young kids a chance to work on the farm

and also producing organic seeds from the farm which is very important to the members of the community since they get food from the farm without any difficulties.

We should always allow our small kids to enjoy working in the farm. Look at how the kids are happy with the productive kales in key hole garden.

The biggest success in Kakayando Organic Farm is that food which has been produced is given to the members of the community without any payment.

Kakayando Organic Farm has served the Kawiya community since 2018 when it was

founded by Felix Akicho, despite facing many challenges such as lack of proper tools.

The main mission of Kakayando Organic Farm is to do away with poverty through sustainable food production and to follow permaculture rules of practicing organic farming.

Felix Akicho has learned farming and permaculture from teachers in the local community, through training from permaculture educator Steve Jones, and through his own research. He believes that helping people learn to grow their own

Future continued on next page

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Future continued from previous page



(top left) Five baby chicks to start poultry farming. (top right) Worm compost. Making liquid organic manure through worms, no chemicals in Kakayando Organic Farm. (bottom two photos) Mandala garden and spiral garden best permaculture design, productive farms.

food is an important part of eliminating poverty.

“Permaculture is important to me because it helps me feed members of the community through sustainable agriculture and also it enables me to do away with poverty

through simple and easy ways of farming.”

Kakayando Organic Farm has been contributing almost 1 hectare (2.47 acres) of vegetables and fruits to the Kawiya community. Members of the community have been glad and appreciative the farm for all

the hard work.

If you would like to help contribute to these projects, please donate via PayPal to felixakicho2000@gmail.com.

Website: <https://kakayando-organic-farm.business.site/>

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Photo: Awah Pulcheria

The Network of Agric and Sustainable Leaders for Africa holds its first Capacity Building workshop in Bamenda with team of volunteers plus participants.

Group in Cameroon Wants to Help Youth and Those Who Are Suffering

By Tendong Denis Ngweh, Executive Director & Social Business Consultant of Network of Agric and Sustainable Leaders for Africa, Cameroon

The Network of Agric and Sustainable Leaders for Africa (NASLA) is a Youth Initiative founded in 2016 by Tendong Denis and recognized by the government of Cameroon in 2018 with an overall vision to create a supportive and enabling environment for Sustainable Development of young people and the society. We are a youth-led and Africa-based organization. Our principle is, "Paving the way for an Improved Livelihood."

We believe in the hearts of our Team of volunteers. We believe in the Will of our Donors and funders to empower young people, serve our Mother Earth, and build resilient livelihoods and communities.

Our work is focused on:

1. Training, Promoting, and nurturing the interest of young people into sustainable Agriculture, Agroforestry, Agroecology, and Permaculture;

2. Empowering and supporting the youths to be able to discover their full potentials in Leadership and Entrepreneur-

ship Development; and

3. Building youth capacity to adapt to climate change while formulating strategies to mitigate the risk.

We believe that through this path, and through the skillful potentials of young people, we are going to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by fighting poverty, food insecurity, Youth unemployment, Climate change, and Environmental degradation.

But because I am bent on transforming the lives of young people in my community in Cameroon, Africa and the World, I have to move from my comfort Zone to do what am not happy doing which is: TO ASK PEOPLE TO HELP.

Agriculture is my thing and my way of life. Through this, I believe lives will be improved and Mother Earth will continue to be Mother for Humanity and all Beings.

We are happy to receive any comments or questions you may have.

And so, with the help of my Friend Morten, I have succeeded to launch my Campaign to raise money for my First Agroforestry project.

New Project: Community Resilient Initiative

This is a sub program which will run under www.naslainitiative.org. It has been designed to meet the current needs of the community living in social, economic, and political crisis.

So, it is not a new group, but a program under the former. Just that I have a desire to bring in a management team (committee) for this program that involves foreigners that could help foster our fundraising actions abroad to kick off the program.

My wife and I have been thinking for the past month. We have been reaching out to our friends and family to get out of an uncontrollable condition we find ourselves in. So grateful we are blessed to have friends like you who could respond to our mail with either a desire to help us financially or morally.

Yes, we asked for help and we were able to find it from our networks of friends. The problem in our country (Cameroon) has been a very challenging one causing a lot of damage and many lives being affected,

Cameroon continued on next page

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Cameroon *continued from previous page*



Photo: Kicha Linda

Tendong Denis teaching basic computer skills in NASLA's training program for IDPs youths in Bamenda.

especially youths and young couples like us struggling for survival.

To a greater extent, through our friends, we found the help we needed to move on. But the question we keep asking ourselves is, what about those who don't have the means, the networks, or the know-how to ask for help? How do they save themselves in times like this??

Many, if not all, are challenged in one way or the other and thinking there is no way out.

Two weeks ago, while we were returning from church, my wife and I had a pathetic discussion on how life in Cameroon could seem to many out there at this time, and who cannot find the help to survive. Many go for days with little or no food, some are battling with unpaid basic accrued bills, others die or struggle to meet their health needs for lack or limited financing, while many continue to live under very poor housing conditions risking the all-knowing Coronavirus pandemic. All these lead to high exposure to many societal ills: armed terrorism, early marriages, rape, and teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, crime waves, kidnappings, and lots more.

In our own little way, we wish to be of

help, and we are looking for kind people with hearts of love, care, and concern for this generation that is highly losing its hope for a brighter future. We have been living in this condition for over four years since November 2016, till date and no signs of any betterment from the Government and those in grief.

Out of a heart of love, we decided to come up with this program: "Community Resilience Initiative (CRI-CAMEROON)," created by my wife and myself.

Through this program we will raise the hopes of vulnerable youths, IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons), and orphans who have lost their families in the war, unemployed youths affected by the war, young girls, and single mothers, by empowering, counseling, supporting, and training them with life skills for self-reliance and development.

Should you be Interested? Then we will love to hear from you soon. Our goal is to have a team of 5-6 persons (3 girls + 3 boys) to get started. For now, we are three: myself, my wife, plus Nelon, who is a family friend.

With you joining our team, we will work to design the model of the program

together and we can work to get others to reach the goal of six persons. We have the following positions hanging in the team: Marketing and Communications Assistant, Program Development Assistant (Fund-raising Assistant), and Human Resource Assistant.

We look forward to you considering to be part of the aim of CRI, a pathway out of suffering and poverty. Thank you in advance.

Here are my contact details for anyone willing to be part of our work either financially or technically.

Name: Tendong Denis Ngweh

Email: info@naslainitiative.org

Telephone: +237670907899 or +237672770415

Address: Bamenda, North West Region, Cameroon

Website: www.naslainitiative.org

Money transfer options: Bank transfer or Western Union service or MTN Mobile Money transfer.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/NASLAyouthinitiative



Photo: Ndeh Mabel

NASLA's Executive Director (Tendong Denis) at a Community Vegetable Project in Mbengwi, established by NASLA in November 2018.

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Disclaimer: I have grown to trust the people whose stories I publish from multiple chats and emails, but I suggest you get to know them yourself before sending money. I was scammed badly about two years ago and I don't want that to happen to you. Please be careful and please be generous once you feel comfortable. Thank you.



Photo Courtesy Friday for Future Lusaka, Zambia

Friday for Future Lusaka, Zambia website: "We are youths around Lusaka, trying our level best to make sure our leaders act on climate change."

Funding Help Request for Food Parcels, Facemasks, and Hand Sanitizers in Zambia

By Precious Kalombwana, Zambia

Funding assistance is needed for purchasing food parcels, facemasks, and hand sanitizer for a project sponsored by the youth group Friday for Future Lusaka Zambia.

My name is Precious Kalombwana from Friday for Future, a non profit organization. We are fundraising to assist us in

purchasing food parcels, facemasks, and hand sanitizer. Recently the lockdown and strictly-enforced movement due to Covid-19 has impacted very badly on the well-being of orphans and the elderly in poor communities. Our aim is to raise funds that will buy food parcels, facemasks, and hand sanitizer to reduce the threat's that

are faced by the orphans and elderly of the crisis. Together, we can pave the way for a thriving greener future.

You can make donations at <https://open-collective.com/citizens-netw-for-community-development>.

Best regards,

Precious Kalombwana

**LOVE INTENTIONALLY, EXTRAVAGANTLY, UNCONDITIONALLY.
THE BROKEN WORLD WAITS IN DARKNESS FOR THE LIGHT THAT IS YOU.**

- L.R. Knost -

<https://www.swiss-miss.com/2020/03/love-intentionally-extravagantly-unconditionally.html>



Photo: Herbert Bagyeni Kajoki

Elephants are one of many beautiful animal species one can see on trips sponsored by One Village Tours & Travel in Uganda.

Tours in Africa: Wildlife, Community

By Herbert Bagyeni Kajoki, Uganda

One Village Tours & Travel is based in Kabale, Uganda. This company is dedicated to serving clients or tourists from the world over by promoting Uganda. We take pride in our expertise to provide the most memorable vacations/trips that answer your interests, timeframe, budget, desire, wonder, and realities of visiting Uganda, the pearl of Africa.

One Village Tours provides tailor-made tours/trips within Uganda. We offer unforgettable experiences combined with the opportunity to interact with the people who call Uganda home (the friendliest people in the whole world). Our knowledgeable guides, custom-designed tours, and commitment to both customer service and giving back to the community will ensure a memorable adventure.

This experience brings you to supporting a community indirectly whereby the profit made out of travel goes to community development through education and agriculture or directly through supporting a family in need.

Voluntourism in relation to agritourism is a unique way through which tourists are subjected to home stay events, seasons,

household experience, community project development as well as classical tourism combined. Travel volunteers/tourists will have enough time with the community, families, projects, learn a language, teach a language, feed an animal, participate in the garden, learn how to plant a seed/crop, and experience a culture or country that is different from theirs.

Our Goals/Objectives and Vision

1. To donate profit share to community development projects in areas of education, agriculture, and conservation, to create a sustainable tourism thereby raising income in rural communities.

2. To organize trips/tours which would give our clients the best possible Africa experience.

3. To put into practice the requests of our clients to arrange some of the best trips in Uganda, Africa.

4. To make sure that our trips/travels are personalized with clients' own interests, budgets, timeframes, and other requirements.

We are specialists in the following:

- Student trips/experiential
- Bird watching
- Agritourism that outweighs ecotour-

ism and community tourism

- Gorilla tracking
- Chimpanzee tracking
- Wildlife and game drive safaris
- Volunteer opportunity trips
- Mountain Hiking
- Photo safaris
- Nature/jungle walks
- Cultural heritages
- Water cruises
- Hotel/accommodation bookings
- Car/vehicle hire or rental

Contact us at:

www.onevillagetours.com
info@onevillagetours.com
Herbert@onevillagetours.com
Onevillage2013@gmail.com
Whats App: +256701233725
or +256772692569



MAY I BE LOVING, OPEN, AND AWARE IN THIS MOMENT; IF I CANNOT BE LOVING, OPEN, AND AWARE IN THIS MOMENT, MAY I BE KIND; IF I CANNOT BE KIND, MAY I BE NONJUDGMENTAL; IF I CANNOT BE NONJUDGMENTAL, MAY I NOT CAUSE HARM; IF I CANNOT NOT CAUSE HARM, MAY I CAUSE THE LEAST HARM.

- Larry Yang -

<https://shundo.org/2020/02/16/larry-yang-3/>

Consumer Liberation

Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

Email Iona at groundswellnews@pa.net and she will put you on our email list to receive monthly issues of our climate activist journal. "Every new one makes us stronger," sings Pete Seeger.



Groundswell News

An activist publication bringing readers struggles and successes as well as climate-change news in the U.S. and around the globe. People everywhere are working to make change. Our beautiful journal will inspire and encourage you. Learn more at www.groundswellnews.org. Email groundswellnews@pa.net to be put on our e-list.. It's free but donations are gladly accepted. A project of the 501(c)(3) Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice. Photo <https://www.google.com/search>

Groundswell News Now Accepting Ads

Please consider placing your ad with us. As we are an alternative source of news, we have an alternative ad policy. Send me your material and pay what you feel is reasonable, depending on how much space your ad needs. If your ad requires some of my time to create it for you, there will be an extra charge. If you can afford \$50 for half a page and \$100 for a full page, that will be wonderful. Our distribution is small now but we hope to grow quickly and our readers are wonderfully supportive people!

Thank you.



Remember your dreams.



Messages from Our Friends

(For many, English is not their native language.)



I am in Kajiado County, Kenya. We give sanitary towels to girls in schools. We do counseling sessions in schools, both primary and secondary schools. Right now due to the pandemic we are raising funds to give food and masks to needy families.

Ene Kasaine, Kenya
Nkasaine@gmail.com
Touchtransformation9@gmail.com

Thank you very much for appreciating our work. First and foremost these bulletins are created by a well-wisher who desires to see us execute our mission and vision of the organization. There is no exact number of people who have received the bulletins but we will be more grateful if you spread them in your networks. I have fallen in love with that expression.

Please tell me more about your franchise idea. And feel free to let me know if you have any questions or concerns or any partnership.

Thank you for raising an important aspect of giving credit to the photographer. We will definitely implement it. We are overwhelmed by your benevolence to send our bulletins to your subscribers. Please feel free without any hesitation. We would love to know and learn more from you and also cross-pollinate ideas. Your journals are brilliant as well. We would like to be your Zimbabwe journal country representative.

Together we can work together.
Your suggestions are welcome.

[After I shared Jussa's Bulletin with everyone on my 600+ email list, he wrote, "Thank you guys, we are also learning. Together we make a great team."]

Kind regards,
Jussa Kudherezera, Zimbabwe

[After sharing Jussa's beautiful Bulletin, we got the following responses.]

Aunt.. This is very beautiful... Your write up just explains the process, experience, the planning and all of the ideas you have in mind for the future of your newspapers... I am really glad to be a part of this Movement, I really am... I am just checking my emails today and realized that I've

missed out on a lot... There's a project I'm working on myself and it's draining time for me as well. I hope you are doing well, taking care of yourself? I'm sorry I haven't reached out in a while ma... Pardon me. I hope to hear from you soon.

Olusanya Temitope Prince (Prince Timmy), Nigeria

(Re: Jussa's Bulletin) Love it! Magnificent idea.

Ekwe Chiwundu Charles, Nigeria

(Re: Jussa's Bulletin) Awesome. Thank you, Mommy. I must say I love the presentation about MAYA you just shared. They are doing amazing work over in Zimbabwe.

Denis Tendong, Cameroon (See pages 25 and 26 for his story)

(Exchange of emails between Valerie Wood-Gaiger in Wales and Smith Nwokocha in Nigeria shared with Groundswell.)

(Valerie) Re: Black lives Matter & the current attempt to re-write history.

We can't re-write history but we can learn from it!

Of course Black lives Matter; All Lives matter! Granny saying – skin is just the wrapping! The present – the person – is inside! When we treat everyone – whatever their viewpoint – their religion (or lack of religion) – whatever their job (or lack of a job); Man & Woman; Black & White; Rich or Poor; Young or old; Disabled or not; Gay or straight – with the same level of courtesy & respect – then we are respecting them as our fellow human beings. We are respecting them & their Human Rights.

I spoke at a Woman's Day Conference a few years ago about how Slavery is a total violation of Human Rights and reminded people that there are many more slaves in the World today than there were when Slavery was legal. Also that today's slaves have less protection because they are hidden away and killed when they are no longer useful. They cannot be set free because their abusers know that what they are doing is illegal.

(Smith) Grandma, together we can promulgate actions that will defile and decimate #Slavery of any form. Mental or Physical. I believe in championing such causes that affects humanity. I assure you Grandma in no distance time, it will be highly minimized. Let's keep speaking out without fear or favour. #BlackLivesMatters. God bless you greatly and thank you so much for Celebrating me.

(Valerie) I am not so optimistic. No one knows how many people have been enslaved – or where they are – it is not a colour issue! Many young people from poorer eastern European countries are offered jobs (which do not exist) and when they arrive their phones, money, and passports are taken from them and they are forced to become sex slaves. No one knows how many people are involved but it is HUGE all around the world – a vast, highly-profitable trade. Throughout history, people have been sold into slavery. I am too old to take up another challenge – all I can do is remind people that slavery is not history. I must concentrate on my project to promote Intergenerational Learning & Active Ageing.

God Bless & Keep safe!

Mrs. Valerie Wood-Gaiger, Founder of Learn with Grandma, Wales

All suggestions are Achievable; Affordable and Sustainable!

Thank you for sharing this! It is so good to see the polar bear on the front page!

I love the compilation of articles and the design and layout is always excellent.

Best wishes and see you soon.

[Note from the Editor: I really goofed. I forgot to include the author's name; I've never done that before. If you remember writing this, please let me know so I can print an apology next time.]

Greetings from Assam. It is wonderful to read through this edition (July) of the newspaper. Thank you for including the sections related to racism; these have helped me understanding the challenges.

Messages continued on next page

Messages *continued from previous page*

I will look forward to contributing to the next issue of the newspaper and also the next meeting. Until then, take care of yourself and enjoy the retreat.

Regards,
Rituraj Phukan, India

Great issue Iona!

Your retreat time sounds exceptional and your brief account of the Underground Railroad was most evocative. A tragedy, then, that there are more slaves in the world now than at any previous time in human history and yet so little is done about it....

Still so much to do, hey?

Sincerely trust the meeting goes well too. I will be there in spirit.

Love to you all,
Robert Burrowes, Australia

I hope am not speaking out of the box as a result of pressing needs and imperative challenges.

I applied with Bio4Climate. I clicked on the "work with us" button. First one must be an intern, which I gladly accepted, as an opportunity to acclimatize to the global fellowship of regenerative development in line with planetary health. A feeling I have nurtured for several years, scanning for like mindedness people to synergies with, though tough to express alone, happy am I with Bio4Climate in my projection in the future of the world, worth my potent energy. Am an assistant writer and intern with Bio4Climate.

Ajibona Tolulope, Nigeria

Good morning, my beautiful lovely Aunt... I read your email yesterday and downloaded the pdf file for the newspaper... Aunt it was beautiful, and very inspiring... I was encouraged to continue my work and never give up... To see myself making moves like this really Inspires me aunt... And I love the rest of the stories. It's incredible, several people doing incredible stuffs.. just amazing. Thank you so so much Aunt... I shared the pdf with friend and groups.. It's just amazing... Thank you...

I have a project to talk to you about soon... I just started and it's incredible, the energy I started with and speed.... I'm not slowing down...

I just really wanted to thank you ma. God bless you greatly.

Olusanya Temitope Prince (Prince Timmy), Nigeria

The *Groundswell* journal is very interesting, every word, every page, am just seeing it, it cools and calms my nerves. The *Groundswell News Journal* July 2020 edi-

tion is a great improvement of the March edition. Its magnificently crafted and very soft to read, am glad I was mentioned in the edition. Thank you for projecting my work, I can actually be hopeful of sponsor. Friends of fireflies can gain momentum.

"Revolution" by Sumai Molloy is an extraordinary inspiring write up. She's kind of a Da Vinci, using letters to create fascinating pictures. I appreciate the beauty, just like the other article by Sandra Lubarsky which emphasis on beauty. I think men appreciate beautiful women. I know of someone who quit smoking because he got married to a beautiful woman. I remember him saying, "My wife fulfilled all my desires. I felt contented with her."

I feel shy over it, like its difficult to trust the world. But MOST Trustworthy feelings from the inside, that, which does not defile the heart only exonerates and edifies the Father of Creation and Mother Earth. You are welcome to share every feeling expressed, though with much tears of joy, to be appreciated.

We see the world better than when we see only ourselves in it.

The Covid-19 issue is global, perhaps climate change in a new direction.

However it has given us an opportunity to get to know ourselves, and a chance to retrospect, why we need to right our ways, and see the world beyond ourselves.

A time that teaches us that the technology of today must be fully utilized to renew ourselves in doing the right thing and to fraternize with like minds around the world.

Cheers to a beautiful day!
Great Love and regards,
Ajibona Tolulope, Nigeria
(for: friends of fireflies)

Yeah Mom. I am doing better. Keep safe and strong to keep inspiring our generation. Have a nice weekend.

Amb. Hanson G. Blayon, Liberia

Today I decided to get garden supplies from Home Depot since the locally-owned garden center is permanently out of essential stuff. But soon I realized there was way too much stuff at Home Depot – pages and pages of seeds and stuff – overwhelming.

Generally, this is what the big box stores are like, this is what the Internet is like – an unmanageable, growing amount of everything. This cannot go on forever. Rich nations already have too much of everything even though half their citizens are struggling for basics. To save the planet we have to end growth, end capitalism, and redistribute wealth by 2050. Politically very hard to do.

We have geometric growth of stuff and

it will soon be even more overwhelming including packaging waste.

<https://theconversation.com/ive-seriously-tried-to-believe-capitalism-and-the-planet-can-coexist-but-ive-lost-faith-131288>

I think, basically, Americans are affluent and the problem is our lifestyles that drive environmental destruction. But in some areas of the world people degrade the environment just to stay alive – lacking better options.

Here is a site with global data on ecological footprint:

<https://data.footprintnetwork.org/#/>

I am sure I can find all kinds of ways to help save our planet and its living things as I keep at it.

Bill Boteler, Maryland USA

Iona, hope you are well. Loved reading your magazine and the impactful stories you have written.

Cindy Cunningham, Village of Hope Uganda

Great edition! I hope you enjoy your retreat.

Best,

Melissa Reams, Georgia USA

(After our annual membership meeting on July 11, 2020) Congratulations! Successful efforts in an adorable direction. I liked all the people I met, though am yet to tag names by face, and really love to ask for a meeting often even if unofficial. I don't think I assimilated in full the great minds and love they wished to express.

On my group, we are friends of fireflies, though fascinated by friends of butterflies like we are tagged on my proposal in *Groundswell* publication where our contact is, on the last paragraph is boldly written. Please express my delight to all members that participated in today's meeting and for a chuckle I think we are making right what was wrong in the Covid and lockdown, perhaps adaptation and mitigation.

And to our ecological kindred that couldn't make today's meeting section, please, you are always welcome to join us.

For those who wished to know why the name "friends of fireflies," there is this quiet place I was used to hanging out, quite a bush, so people don't hang out there when its dark. But on this particular night and afterwards I noticed the fireflies like never before and fell in love with them. That was when I realized they are harmless ornamental creatures to be cherished and adored.

A time that teaches us that the technology of today must be fully utilized to renew ourselves in doing the right thing

Messages *continued on next page*

Messages continued from previous page

and to fraternize with like minds around the world.

Ajibona Tolulope, Nigeria
friends of fireflies

Hello President,

Your will to act in favor of help for the development can only cause admiration on behalf of the recipients to this noble action [and hope] that you don't stop bringing everywhere to the poor and vulnerable populations in the world.

We are a non-profit association named Défi et Révolution de la Vie Rurale (DRVR-TOGO) created in October 2005 and her receipt of registration is under the number 0676/MATDCL-SG-DLPAP-DO-CA and published to the official newspaper of the Republic Togolese.

Our association promotes Social, health sector, agriculture, economic development, and education for poverty people and vulnerable communities, especially women and children in our country.

Since her création, the DRVR-TOGO association works to the side of the poor communities with actions programmed in documents of projects every year.

- Project of hold and support of the schooling of the orphan and resourceless children;
- Project of equipment in tables, benches;
- Maintenance project and of construction of the school building;
- Project of celebration of the Feast of Noel to the orphan resourceless children;
- Project of right and health of reproduction of the girls and women;
- Project of the kind and the maternal and infantile health;
- Project of raising and responsibility economic of the women;
- Project of sewing machines to the young tailors and seamstresses at the end of formation;
- Project of production and transformation and merchandising of cassava; and
- Project of drinking water for vulnerable populations in the villages in lack of water.

We are in search of organizations, foundations, associations, donors, non-profit societies or companies, religious, and others for a collaboration, of sharing of experiences and projects, to participate in workshops of formations and backing of capacities of our members and groups' targets, and so possible to sustain technically and financially our projects to help and come with our communities for food and economic self sufficiency and to be able to come out of misery and poverty for a world without hunger, livable, and to an-

swer the objectives of lasting development.

However, we wanted collaboration in the future with your organization to be able to acquire some knowledge and to be capable to face the stakes and problems of our communities.

I am interested very much to working with your organization, what to do?

Address: 170.BP: 65 Vogan-Togo

Phone: +22897149010 (WhatsApp)

Mail: simonakouete@gmail.com Please, our official language is French, the all documents projects are in French language.

Facebook: Association Drvr-TOGO. In the waiting of a favorable continuation, received my Dear Friends, our distinguished greeting.

Best regards,

Akouette Yawo Galé Simon, President association DRVR-TOGO (See page 22.)

Most [white] People are Racist, they just don't realize it. White Privilege has shielded most of us to the role we play in how it effects minorities. I continue to struggle trying to explain White Privilege to my white friends. I continue to refer people to "Trevor Noah's" show and previous recordings. "Unless you can walk in a Black Man's Shoes," you can't truly understand.

For Us All,

Your Friend,

Jeannette Bartelt, Maryland USA

[Note: Jeannette forwarded GNJ to her

friends with this email: "Hello Everyone, I hope this finds you Safe and Well. We All need some good news to read these days. I hope you'll find this Environmental Newspaper uplifting. Please subscribe so you can receive it monthly."]

The usual fine selection of relevant articles, lovely letters, and other features such as "75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice."

In sincere appreciation of the work that you put into this.

Enjoy your retreat.

Love,

Robert Burrowes,
Australia

Greetings from
Iganga Women and
Youth Resource Centre.

How are you there? We are very happy to receive the *Groundswell News Journal*.

Ezekiel Kulaba, Uganda

The way forward.

Solomon Oluwaseun Samson, Nigeria

Thanks to you too for always believing in me and Team. Thanks for the beautiful stories in *Groundswell* newspaper.

Mohammed D. Konneh, Liberia

Thank you Iona for this wonderful issue. I am sharing a screenshot on Facebook with the link to the website. We will continue to do our best for the planet. Take care.

Regards,

Rituraj Phukan, India

Thanks Iona, I'll share this in our network. Keep going! We freedom fighters have to stick together!

Respectfully,

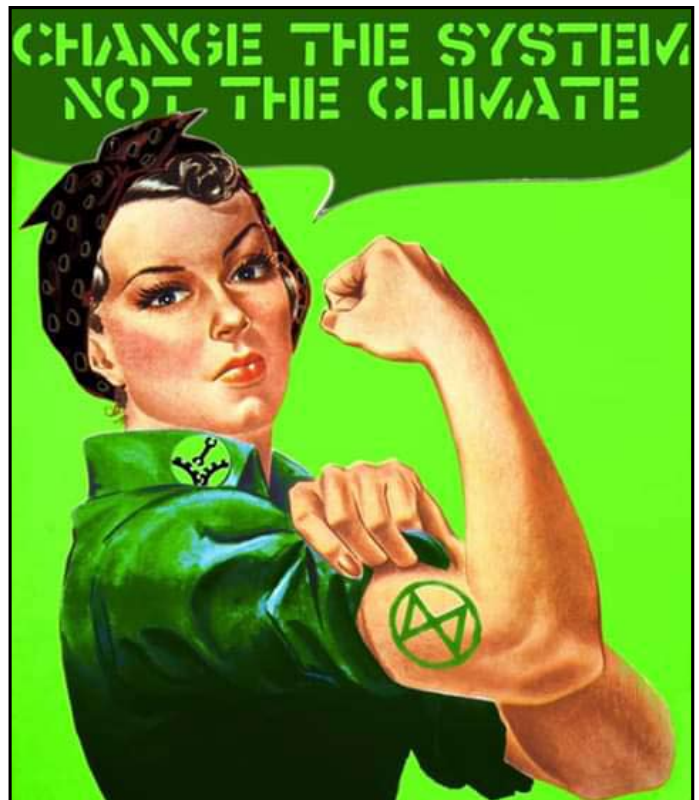
Kevin Annett, Canada

Thanks Iona,

Your newsletter looks good. Please add us to your mail list & we will help circulate it.

We are glad you are feeling a little better. We are sure John is smiling down on you and is pleased that you are continuing the important work of Climate Justice.

John and Maureen Sheehan, Massachusetts USA



Submitted by Precious Kalombwana, Zambia

Rituals

By Surnai Malloy, Ireland

We race in between the borders of the labyrinth, stretching out our small hands to wallop high-fives, hard as we can, when our paths parallel. Within the stone-trimmed lanes, the curving, turning path, we run. In, around, around again, looping and turning, to stop and start, be finished; yet no, not yet. Another turn, another circle, another lap, stretching out our hands...

For a long while, every Sunday, we had Mass. Down below our house in the centuries-old ruin of Teampall Chiaráin, our parents would host a small gathering of people. Our father, once a Catholic priest, now a Celtic one, led the simple ceremony, a circle of people sitting in the grass. However stillness was not our means of finding presence. Deciding to let spiritual wisdom come to us, we'd soak up adventure instead. These sunny afternoons of ritual were spent climbing up the bumps and clods of earth on the hill at the side of the field and finding hideouts within the hollows of Hawthorn. Or we'd swing our legs above the bar within the narrow entrance of the church and use the church altar as a throne, or as a stool so as to squeeze our heads out of the crevice-like window. We'd pick up the sea-smoothed pebbles that filled the church floor and aim and toss them into the hollowed shelves at the top of the church walls (an ancient form of basketball), dodging when they ricocheted, wincing when they clattered. We returned to the circle sometimes when a guitar was pulled out, but always when the wine and bread was passed around. A long awaited mouthful, a sip, and we would be off again, twisting around the cow pats and the wild flowers and the brambles, finding our way, blessings sounding behind us.

In the labyrinth, by the circle of sand that fills with ocean, we race and chase our way to the centre. The right-angled turns cause sand and moss and rabbit pellets to spray up beneath our soles. We never cross the borders, those made of the same jagged stones as the perforated walls that divide the island. The next lane will bring us to the centre. It brings us out instead. The next will...

When we were older, on Sundays, we squashed inside our knackered Jeep with a baseball bat, a ball, and a glove. In the side of the island that is entirely rabbit warrens and sand dunes, we played rounders, once a week. Too small to hit the ball very far (if we hit it at all), there was an immense pressure to run the roughly outlined circle in the mossy grass as fast as lightning. My brother could hit a home run, sending the ball far into the next field. I would launch myself over the wall and stoop to take hold of it, but it was always too late. By the time I returned, he was standing on the enormous boulder that marked first base, tall and triumphant. I'd give the ball to Dad to throw and the bat would hit again and in slanted circles we'd run.

In the heart of the labyrinth, my mother kneels and plants lavender for her mother, whose son, when she died, cried "Quick! Open



Photo: Kevin O'Meara or aranphotography_ on Instagram

The labyrinth in Ireland that Surnai's family goes to regularly as a ritual and for fun.

the window?"

At home, every Thursday, the table was moved from the centre of the kitchen and our two-man pop-up tent was set up on the floor, rocking the light bulbs on the ceiling. Inside, in a pod of cushions and blankets, Mom read aloud "His Dark Materials." Safe within a familiar world, we lay on our backs and listened to Lyra and Pantalaimon and wondered what our daemons were. They changed often, and lived in the tent with us, wandering in its glowing shade: a monkey, a dolphin, a wolf, a deer...

We pile stones high beneath the car seats and they roll over our toes and bang against the floor as the car threads its way through the looping island roads. In secondary school uniforms, we walk along the pressed moss of the labyrinth's path. The original labyrinth is disappearing under a blanket of grass. Soon, it will disappear entirely. Balancing the shore's stones against our bodies, the sand and dirt of them staining our grey polo T-shirts, we circle and search for a place where time has pulled moss over the labyrinth. The sea-smoothed stones, pale against the green, rest like beads on a necklace. Another layer is added to extend the lifetime of a beautiful thing. Week by week, we tend the labyrinth, so gradually as to doubt it ever being complete.

In a Summer where we were all unexpectedly home and idle, every Sunday afternoon, we would pack the dog and the puppy into the car, along with a Frisbee, a ball, swimming togs, and Dad's bird-watching scope. Mom would pack snacks, though she'd try to keep that secret. The puppy would sleep. We were all technically, theoretically, adults. In a line, on the white crescent beach carved out underneath the sand dunes, we'd sit. It was always sunny. Terns would div-bomb the water; we would

add sound effects: Pew! Pow! Bam! The water would be cold, but full and deep. Over and over, the ball would roll down the sloping beach and it would have to be raced then; chased, before it disappeared into the water. Sand would get in eyes and food and the dogs' water bowl. Not for the first time, my sister would try to teach me how to do a cartwheel, a vertical rotation across the sand. My other sister would determinedly dip the puppy in the ocean, to teach him how to swim. My brother would walk around the sloped corner of the shore, to find space. Mom would watch the sea curling. Dad would watch the birds circling.

Scattering the rabbits, we walk the labyrinth with only small stones now. The places time had worn thin are almost entirely mended. Only small spaces between the sphere-like stones remain. For whatever length of time we're all home on the island – a summer, a week, a day – we've made our way to the labyrinth to travel it. We run, sometimes; we walk, others. At the centre, we stand and face the sea. Shell ducks travel across the pool of ocean. Lapwings brush the air above us. Ebullient skylarks choose a point in space and sing. In the mossy field hollowed by rabbits, one by one, we weave our way to the centre and wish. Each of us have grown, struggled, thrived, risen, fallen. Each of us are at different stages. Each of us, at the centre, close our eyes and wish. For what? For light. "There's the sense that soon it will be grandchildren we'll be bringing here," Mom says. And they will stretch their hands out and wallop high fives when their paths parallel.

Surnai Molloy was raised on Inis Mór, a small island off the west coast of Ireland. She is currently studying Creative Writing with English and Mathematics in the National University of Ireland, Galway.