



Volume 5, Number 35

<https://planetaryhealthweekly.com>

August 29, 2019

Hi,

Congratulations, we have just been diagnosed with lung cancer...not personally, but on a global scale. We now are all suffering this polluting and destructive disease, turning our world black, void and choking our existence. What is our prognosis, what is our hope for survival when such colossal fires and other destructive are now happening more frequently and the leadership responsible denies it, stigmatizes those working to stop it, and ultimately does nothing? This disease is not just in the Amazon, is not just fire, but it all has metastasized either to or from other areas of our collective body in a variety of ways. The MRI scans (e.g., satellite maps) now show enormous fires and smoke cover in northern Russia, Alaska, Greenland, central Africa, SE Asia and elsewhere. Luckily, we in Canada, are having a bit of a reprieve this year. But Turtle Island collectively (as depicted below) is in sad shape.

Just imagine, too, not just the fate of so many Indigenous peoples being robbed of their lands and livelihood, and all those trees and plants up in flames, but also the millions of animals, large and small, that have been incinerated or displaced.

Our concern for what is going on elsewhere in the world is not motivated by 'colonialism' but rather collective concern, on a global scale, for the "commons" that supports us with every breath we take. And as Greta Thunberg arrives in New York, she reminds us about the need to consider subsequent generations. Tipping points are being approached and positive feedback loops are being set in motion in our race to self-destruction.

Thankfully, many of the world's 'awake at the switch' leaders are observing and understanding what's happening. Some, though, don't and imperil us all by their weakness and ignorance. They keep giving out cigarettes as birthday presents, and tax and other incentives to destructive companies only concerned about making huge profits. How fitting is it, that just this week, one of the world's greatest cancer agents died: David Koch was shown on TV with a big smile on his face, while a few days earlier on August 19 the whole of the sky over Sao Paulo, Brazil went black at 3 in the

afternoon, and many thought that the end times had arrived. Luckily it was just a preview.

You, as a reader of the ***Planetary Health Weekly*** (see below for issue #35 of 2019) understand what's going on. It's upon us all to do our bit to prevent and ultimately find the cure to this and the other 'cancers' attacking our world. Please take a look below.

Best, david

David Zakus, Editor and Publisher

(For more on D. Koch see: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/27/death-destruction-david-koch-legacy>)



Credit: David Zakus

Brian Jungen: Tombstone, 2019

Using Rubbermaid stools, as part of his recent special exhibition, he created a futuristic turtle-shell form, alluding to Indigenous oral histories of a turtle who carries the world on its back - a kind of living globe, and the origin of "Turtle Island," a vernacular term for North America.

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

August 24, 2019

Deforestation In The Amazon May Soon Begin To Feed On Itself



Credit: The Brookings Institution

Since the 1970s, an area bigger than Texas of Brazil's Amazon forest has been lost to logging, farming, mining, roads, dams and other forms of development. Scientists worry this is uncomfortably close to the threshold for tree loss, of between 20 and 25%, beyond which deforestation begins to feed on itself, turning much of the Amazon basin into drier savannah known as cerrado. Under President Jair Bolsonaro, who was inaugurated in January, the Amazon appears to be rushing towards that tipping point. And now, much of the Amazon in both Brazil and Bolivia is in flames. [Read more at The Economist](#)

See Also: [Brazil's New President Is Bulldozing the Amazon Rainforest and Indigenous Rights at Sierra Club](#)

and [Amazon Fires Could Accelerate Global Warming and Cause Lasting Harm to a Cradle of Biodiversity at Washington Post](#)

and [The Arctic is Ablaze at The Economist](#)

Nigeria Just Won A Complex Victory Over Polio



Credit: ANDREW ESIEBO/COURTESY OF THE U.N. FOUNDATION

Nigeria is officially one of three countries, alongside Afghanistan and Pakistan, where polio is still a threat—a full 19 years after the first deadline set by the World Health Organization (WHO) to eradicate it elapsed. But now Nigeria is set to be removed from this unenviable list. Nigeria has reached this point thanks to the concerted efforts of a broad array of vaccine advocates, including northern Nigeria's traditional and religious leaders, a network of 20,000 women who have stepped up to take the oral form of the vaccine door to door, and polio survivors themselves. [Read more at Foreign Policy](#)

Icy Waterfalls Are Roaring As A Heat Wave Sizzles Greenland



Credit: Jason Gulley

Jason Gulley, a geoscientist at the University of South Florida has spent the past three summers on the ice exploring moulines with remote instruments. He is one of the foremost explorers of melt caves, or moulines. The meltwater forms rivers and lakes, and then drains into subterranean channels that dive from the surface thousands of feet down to the base of the ice sheet, where it meets bedrock. With the near-record melting this summer, the moulines will be roaring like icy waterfalls. [Read more at Wired](#)

Mental Toll Of Climate Change Hits Women 60% More



Credit: GETTY IMAGES

For low-income women, the incidence of mental health cases is twice that for high-income men. According to the report, mental health issues increase across the board the moment temperatures rise above 30C (86F). Studies in Canada and Australia in the past decade have found an association between extremely high temperatures and increased hospital visits for mental and behavioural disorders. Helen Berry, professor of climate change and mental health at the University of Sydney says that while women don't tend to develop different disorders from men, they experience more distress, and more often. [Read more at Ozy](#)

As Ocean Temperatures Rise, Photographer Seeing More Warm-Water Fish Off Nova Scotia



Credit: Llyod Bond

Canadian scientists agree ocean temperatures have increased over the last century due to climate change caused by humans. Llyod Bond, who has been scuba diving around Nova Scotia for 23 years, says in the last three years he's seen increasing numbers of not only butterfly fish and seahorses, but cornet fish, trigger fish, puffer fish and many other species rarely seen in Canadian waters. The fish are often vibrantly coloured or have fluorescent markings, and some have ranges that include the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico to Brazil. [Read more at CBC](#)

Birds Are Adapting To Climate Change, But Maybe Not Fast Enough



Credit: PublicDomain

Ecologist Victoria Radchuk and her colleagues at the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research in Berlin, Germany, evaluated whether changes found in birds were associated with increased offspring, and assessed their adaptation to climate change. Birds are flexible animals: They can fly to new territory and adjust behaviour patterns such as their nesting periods. Because birds have short life spans, adaptive changes can accrue quickly. However, the current pace of change within these species is not enough to keep pace with the expected rate of a changing climate. [Read more at Sierra Club](#)

Cholesterol Medication Can Lead To Diabetes



Credit: ConsumerReports

Patients who were prescribed cholesterol-lowering statins have at least double the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes suggests a new study. The study published in *Diabetes/Metabolism Research and Reviews* analyzed health records and other data from patients to provide a real-world picture of how efforts to reduce heart disease may be contributing to another major medical concern. [Read more at Economic Times](#)

See Also: How Diabetes Can Increase Cancer Risk: DNA damaged by high blood sugar <https://www.sciencedaily.com/r...>

How Apple, Google, Amazon Want To 'Fight' Diabetes



Credit: Emre Eldemir/Getty Images

During the last five years or so, the impetus on healthcare from tech companies has grown multifold. Be it through hardware, software or a combination of both, tech behemoths are doubling up their efforts when it comes to people's health. Now, companies like Apple, Google and Amazon are taking steps to work on diabetes tech. According to a report by CNBC, Alphabet (Google's parent company), Apple and Amazon are working and exploring on ideas that could help people with diabetes better manage the disease. [Read more at Economic Times](#)

OPINION

The Dangerous Delusion Of Optimal Global Warming



Rather than relying on apparently sophisticated models, climate-change policy must reflect judgment amid uncertainty. Current trends threaten major but inherently unpredictable adverse impacts. Limiting global warming to well below 2°C will cost at most 1-2% of GDP, and those costs will come down if strong commitments to reduce emissions unleash technological progress and learning-curve effects. Given these realities, zero by 2050 is an economically rational target. [Read more at Project Syndicate](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

How Politics And Institutions Shape Poverty And Inequality



Credit: Abdul Khan

This article explores the influence of politics and institutions on poverty and inequality. It first considers the general contention that poverty is shaped by the combination of power resources and institutions. The article goes on to discuss the theoretical arguments of power resources theory and the evidence for key power resources (that is, collective political actors like labor unions and parties). It also reviews institutional explanations, focusing on the key concepts and theories and as well as the evidence linking the most salient institutions to poverty. Finally, it

examines how state policy influences poverty and presents several challenges for future research. [Read more at Oxford Handbooks](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS

“Our Territory, Our Body, Our Spirit”: Indigenous Women Unite In Historic March In Brazil



Credit: Hivos

In a great demonstration of feminine unity and strength as part of the indigenous movement across the Amazon, thousands of indigenous women recently mobilized in Brazil's capital city as part of the country's first Indigenous Women's March. Carrying banners with the slogan *"Territory: our body, our spirit"*, women have taken to the streets to make their voices heard and to denounce the policies of Brazil's far-right president Bolsonaro, which have set the stage for escalating violations of Indigenous rights, racism, violence and the most alarming Amazon deforestation rates in recent memory. [Read more at Amazon Frontlines](#)



Quote Of The Week

"When it comes to addressing epidemics the world has attention deficit disorder. When there's a crisis resources flow in. But when the headlines fade resources recede. It's hard to get the sustained commitment to building health systems to work and respond to health threats."

Dr. Tom Frieden, president and chief executive of Resolve to Save Lives working with Ebola outbreaks

[Read More at The Telegraph](#)

Upcoming Events

- September 14th - 18th: [Latin American Summit of Sustainable Communities](#) (Intikamari, Azulay, Ecuador)
- October 7th - 11th: [Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power](#) (Vienna,

Austria)

- October 15th - 18th: [Global Symposium of Citizenship, Governance and Accountability in Health](#) (New Delhi, India)
- November 4th -5th: [International Conference on Global Healthcare](#) (Tokyo, Japan)
- November 7th - 8th: [Global Experts Meeting on Healthcare and Nursing](#) (Melbourne, Australia)
- November 7th - 8th: [Global Summit on Healthcare and Nutrition](#) (Melbourne, Australia)
- November 13th - 14th: [World Congress on Mental Health](#) (London, UK)
- November 22nd -24th: [2nd International Symposium on Community Health Workers](#) (Dhaka, Bangladesh)
- February 19th - 20th, 2020: [2nd World Congress on Primary Healthcare and Medicare Summit](#) (Paris, France)
- April 6th -7th, 2020: [17th World Congress on Paediatrics and Neonatology](#) (Tokyo, Japan)
- April 18th -20th, 2020: [CUGH Conference 2020: Global Health in a Time of Worldwide Political Change](#) (Washington, D.C., USA)
- April 24th - 26th, 2020: [PEGASUS IV Migration - Climate Change - Sustainable Development](#) (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada)

**FYI#1 SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA: NEW BOOK by
ALVIN FINKEL**

**Compassion: A Global History of
Social Policy**



Credit: Macleans

"Who knew it was possible to write an epic panorama of the welfare state?" writes Peter Baldwin in his review of my new book, ***Compassion: A Global History of Social Policy*** (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)

This is a book that traces social determinants of health and welfare throughout human history - but in only 300 pages. It is, as far as I know, the only book to pull together all of human history's efforts to care for the vulnerable, providing a detailed global overview of welfare from 200,000 BCE to the present day. From India to Tanzania, Scandinavia to Vietnam, I analyze why different countries and regions have diverged in their ways of dealing with inequality and with what results for the health and welfare of their populations. The book focuses on the role of social struggles in producing (or failing to produce) greater equality and the role of gender, race and class in the development of social policy and understandings regarding social determinants of health.

I am the author of the most-used survey history of social policy in Canada, and while researching and writing that book, observed the lack of any comprehensive text on social policy and policy borrowings at a global level. Though I had a 40-year scholarly career, I began my adult life as a journalist and I think that ***Compassion*** is about as free from jargon and confusing language as a general history can be. Indeed I honed my writing skills as co-author of Canada's best-selling survey Canadian history textbooks (pre-Confederation and post-Confederation), now in their seventh editions.

This recently published review of Compassion in Canadian Dimension summarizes what the book is all about.

In solidarity,

Alvin Finkel,

[Read the Review on Alberta Views](#)

FYI #2

Researchers Find Differences In End-Of-Life Care Between Male And Female Patients With Dementia



In their final month of life, many people with advanced dementia — and men in particular — have received medical interventions that researchers deem burdensome, according to [a new study](#) in *JAMA Network Open*. The study looks at data collected on 27,243 nursing home residents in Ontario, Canada. All participants had advanced dementia and died between June 1, 2010 and March 31, 2015. The researchers looked at administrative data about the residents' care, including hospitalizations, use of mechanical ventilation, rates of invasive procedures such as intravenous hydration and non-ventilation forms of breathing assistance, and use of physical restraints and antibiotics. At the end of life, such interventions are considered medically questionable by some clinicians and, in some instances, harmful.

Read More at Journalist's Resource

FYI #3

Why Would A Doctor Take A Bribe?



Credit: Jordan Rowland

Earlier this month, Transparency International released the *Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) — Africa report*, which surveyed more than 47,000 citizens from 35 countries in Africa about their views on and experiences of corruption, including in the health care system. The research revealed that **14 per cent of citizens who accessed health care services paid bribes to health care workers** in the last year. However, bribery in the health care system varies from country to country.

Health care workers operating in underfunded health systems experience poor infrastructure, inadequate supplies and equipment, and dissatisfaction among patients. It's no wonder that some health workers, who are chronically underpaid and overworked, sometimes turn to bribery to support themselves and their families.

FYI #4

Jollof Rice



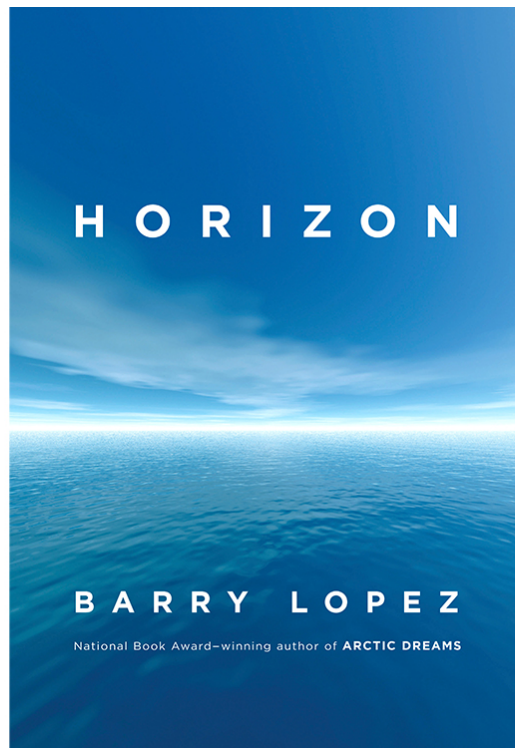
Credit: Konbini

Jollof rice is the dish of West Africa. There are as many versions of it as there are West African cooks, and the debate over national variations is so heated it even has its own Twitter hashtag: [#jollofwars](#). At its most basic, jollof is rice simmered in tomatoes, onions, peppers, and different seasonings. Meat, fish, and vegetables are often added. Some cooks swear by Maggi stock cubes, others add a hefty amount of spice in the form of hot peppers. It's both an everyday staple and a celebratory dish.

[Read More at Quartz](#)

FYI #5: SUMMER READING

"HORIZON" How To Maintain Hope In The Face Of Climate Catastrophe By Barry Lopez



Credit: Sierra

Barry Lopez discusses his new book "Horizon".

Oh, there is a hell coming that is incomprehensible to people—we're going to lose a lot of people. And the government is not going to get us through, and the business mind is not going to get us through. We'll have to learn to take care of each other locally and wait for that to spread from one community to another. But I think it's possible. I don't know how to develop policy around that, but that's really not my bailiwick—what I'm trying to do is make people aware of the world outside the

American bubble, and to write about it in a way that makes people feel a sense of hope. A lot of reaction to the book outside of reviews and things like that has been, *"This book was scary and also comforting. I felt an uplift and also an enhanced sense of capability."*

[Read More at Sierra Club](#)

FYI#6: SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION

School Has Been A Right For Girls In India Since 2009. So Why Aren't They Going?



Credit: Getty Image

In August 2009, the Indian parliament passed the landmark Right to Education Act

that made education free and compulsory for children between the ages 6 and 14. Ranjana Kumari, director of the New Delhi-based Centre for Social Research says that in the past decade, it's become increasingly acceptable to educate girls, especially in rural India. "Young girls are also more aware of what they want to wear, what they want to do with their lives," Kumari told TIME. However, the most pressing reason why girls have been unable to go to school in India is housework.

[Read more at Time](#)



Credit: David Zakus

Backyard Flower Garden

Toronto, Ontario

August 25, 2019

THANK YOU FOR READING
PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

Weekly News on Ecological Wellness and Global Health

To Subscribe and for Archives of all Past Issues and Yearly Indexes

See: planetaryhealthweekly.com



PLANETARY HEALTH WEEKLY

Publisher and Editor: Dr. David Zakus
david.zakus@utoronto.ca

Production: Aimée Bouka & Eunice Anteh

Design: Elisabeth Huang

Social Media: Evans Oppong

Website: Gaël Chetaille

CONTACT US AT: planetaryhealthweekly@gmail.com

Copyright © D&D Education Services, Inc.

[Unsubscribe](#)

mailer lite