



CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS AND GLOBAL HEALTH

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Hi,

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2020! It gives me great pleasure to offer you this greeting, believing it will be a great year, with lots of good news, though tempered, even likely overshadowed for many, with our ongoing climate emergency. I am fully convinced that we can all make a positive difference in the world this year, but it requires action, or 'karma' as it was just explained to me. Such action and good karma is within our reach. We can all do personal actions to reduce our carbon imprint, but most importantly we can work to directly influence government, at all levels. They must take the serious policy actions required (and then strictly enforce them) to get our countries and companies on track to reduce the destructive forces already in progress, prevent worse from happening and mitigate the certain coming impacts of our climate neglect and deception that has gotten us where we are now.

The fires in Australia are just so haunting, and the prospects for the continent still seem to bewilder its governance and fail to stimulate the national action that's required, especially for a country still so reliant on coal. This is from exactly one year ago: "It's very serious. Australia has been hit with yet another summer from Hell. The government warns citizens to stay inside as temperatures went over 45 degree C, 113 Fahrenheit in parts of New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria."

(<https://www.ecoshock.org/2019/01/global-heat-alert.html>) When will it end? Never??? They/We can't let that happen.

Here in Canada we must come to understand our responsibility as stewards, that we are going to have to leave much fossil fuel in the ground, most certainly stop all fossil fuel subsidies and tax breaks now (currently at billions of dollars per year) and begin

to show the leadership and grown up attitude that's required to stop us from being the Earth's largest carbon polluter per capita. It's scandalous and a shame. We need to use our wealth and smarts to do what's needed, to do better.

With that optimism, all the very very best in 2020; hoping as you now walk into new light it'll be a wonderful, safe and productive year with lots of happiness, wherever you are in our beautiful world.

And as you start this new year's journey, take a look at some of the great and highly informative stories in today's ***Planetary Health Weekly*** (#1 of 2020!!). Read about:

- The apocalyptic sizzling of Australian land and seas,
- Comparative EU and OECD social justice indicators,
- The continuing giant Arctic melt,
- The gift of an organ donation,
- The New York couple funding the anti-vax movement,
- Danish wind power,
- How Iceland is being remade by climate change,
- Rwanda leading the fight in Africa against cervical cancer,
- Maternal care in Kenya,
- One fracked well in Ohio releases a huge amount of methane
- William Rees on being a climate change realist,
- All about vaping,
- A new app for Indigenous Inuit peoples,
- Humans of the world in numbers and charts,
- How insects are affected by road salt,
- A new book, *Earth Emotions*, by Glenn Albrecht,
- Networking strategies for academics and students, and more...

Best, david

David Zakus, Editor and Publisher



Credit: David Zakus

WALKING INTO NEW LIGHT IN 2020

ONTARIO PLACE, TORONTO

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**On Land, Australia's Rising Heat Is  
'Apocalyptic.' In The Ocean, It's Worse**



Credit: David Gray/Getty Images

The *Washington Post*'s examination of accelerated warming in the waters off Tasmania marks this year's final installment of a global series, which identified hot spots around the world. The investigation has shown that disastrous impacts from climate change aren't a problem lurking in the distant future: They are here now. Nearly a tenth of the planet has already warmed 2 deg C since the late 19th century, and the abrupt rise in temperature related to human activity has transformed parts of the Earth in radical ways, including the way of life of Aboriginal Peoples. [Read more at Washington Post](#)

[See also at WashingtonPost: Australia sizzles through record heat wave as Sydney faces 'catastrophic' fire danger](#)

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## Social Justice In The EU And OECD: Index Report 2019





Credits: Latinalista

With the onset of the economic and financial crisis in 2008, social justice has deteriorated – on average – in the OECD and EU countries surveyed by the Social Justice Index. While the SJI shows a slight but ongoing upward trend since economic recovery began in 2014, the overall score remains below the pre-crisis level. In addition, there are still striking discrepancies with regard to available opportunities to participate in society in the 41 countries surveyed. [Read and see more at Politico](#)

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## Meet the New York Couple Donating Millions To The Anti-vax Movement



Credit: Bertrand Rindoff Petroff/Getty Images

Two of the city's wealthy residents have played a significant role in funding the anti-vax movement: Bernard and Lisa Selz have given more than \$3 million to organizations that question the safety of vaccines, a review of their tax returns by The Washington Post revealed. The couple's donations have been used to fund government lobbying by anti-vaccination activists and the controversial 2016 film "Vaxxed." [Read more at The Washington Post](#)

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## Climate Change Is Ravaging The Arctic



Credit: Nanna Heitmann

The money Iceland earned from commercial fishing helped the island, which is about the size of Kentucky, become independent from Denmark in 1944. But warming waters associated with climate change are causing some fish to seek cooler waters elsewhere, beyond the reach of Icelandic fishermen. Ocean temperatures around Iceland have increased between 1.8 and 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit over the past 20 years. For the past two seasons, Icelanders have not been able to harvest capelin, a type of smelt, as their numbers have plummeted. The warmer waters mean that as some fish leave, causing financial disruption, other fish species arrive, triggering geopolitical conflicts. [Read more at The New York Times](#)

[See also on BBC: Climate change: Greenland ice melt 'is accelerating'](#)

[See also on EcoWatch: Greenland's Ice Sheet Is Melting at Rate That Surpasses Scientists' Expectations, Study Shows](#)

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## "The Gift" Of An Organ Donation



Credit: Krisanapong Detraphiphat/Getty Images

I walked into my shift that night like I had every other day that week. “No admissions today, so hopefully it'll be a quiet night. The only thing I have to sign out to you is Mr C. The family wants to withdraw, and he's a candidate for organ donation. So you have to go with him to the operating room (OR) to declare him.” This was my sign-out from my co-fellow. I have to admit, I was relieved that this was your decision. Your son would finally be at peace, without the burden of innumerable needles, tubes, and aggressive hourly examinations. It was the right choice. [Read more at The Lancet](#)

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## **A Single Fracking Well In Ohio Vented More Methane In 20 days Than Whole Nations Do In A Year**





Credit: Getty Images

A new paper in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* shows an example of a single well venting methane in a way that was not only highly visible, but almost unbelievable. As in, this single well released more methane in three weeks than most entire nations do in a year. So much methane that this single well, venting over a period of about 20 days, may have been a significant contributor to altering the climate. [Read more at Daily Kos](#)

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## Denmark, Already A Clean Energy Leader, Plans To Build Artificial Island For Wind Farms

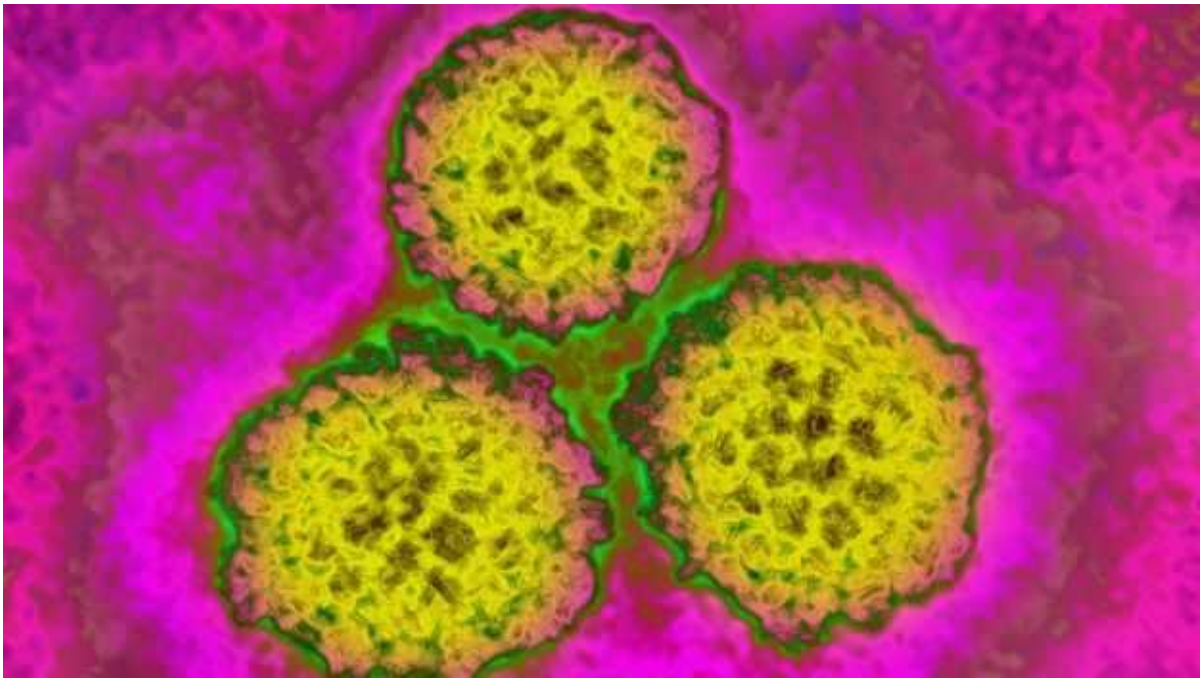


Credit: Jens Dresling/Polfoto via AP

Denmark has set ambitious targets in its part to fight climate change — and its plans include building one or more artificial islands that will store power from offshore wind farms. Signe Munk, a member of Danish parliament's left-green party Socialistisk Folkeparti, says the island would be the nexus of "a huge wind farm" generating and storing 10 gigawatts of energy. That's roughly the same amount of energy required to supply 10 million households, according to Reuters. [Read more at CBC](#)

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## Rwanda Leads Fight Against Cervical Cancer In Africa



Credit: Getty Images

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women worldwide. But in Africa it is far deadlier than elsewhere, despite being a preventable disease. An ambitious health campaign in Rwanda has set an example which other countries on the continent are now starting to follow. [Read more at BBC](#)

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## OPINION

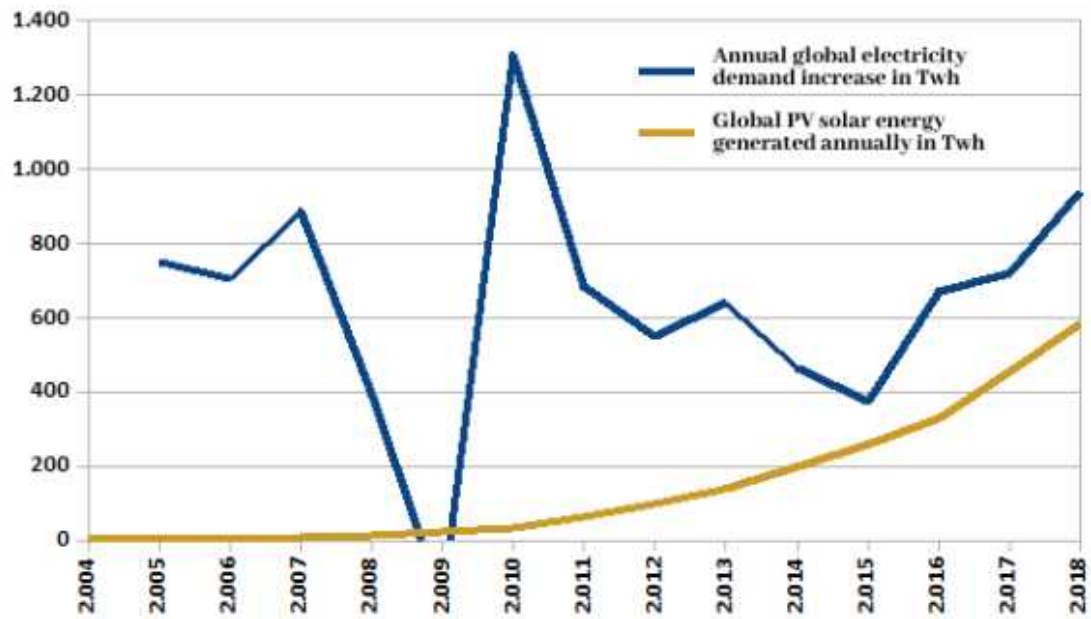
# Don't Call Me A Pessimist On Climate Change. I Am A Realist (Part 1 of 2)



Credit: W. Rees

**The chill of reality. UBC ecological economist William E. Rees, co-creator of the ecological footprint concept, has some bad news for techno-optimists.** Despite rapid growth in wind and solar generation, the green energy transition is not really happening. The chart below shows that in most recent years (except 2009, following the 2008 global financial crisis), the uptick in global demand for electrical energy exceeded the total output of the world's entire 30-year accumulation of solar power installations. Between 2017 and 2018, the demand increase outpaced total solar supply by 60%; two years' demand increase alone absorbs the entire output of solar and wind power combined. [Read more at The Tyee](#)





**The annual increase in demand for electricity exceeds the entire output of photovoltaic electricity installations.** Graph courtesy of Pedro Prieto, with permission.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

# What's New: The Vape Question – UofT's Tobacco Policy Expert Robert Schwartz Breaks Down The Risks And Regulation Debate



E-cigarette use, commonly known as vaping, is on the rise and it is increasingly popular among young Canadians. This growing trend is concerning to researchers like Professor Robert Schwartz of the Institute of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto who studies tobacco control and smoking cessation as Executive Director of the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit. We can't lose focus on the need to curb cigarette smoking. In 2019 it is still an issue that 1 in 5 Canadians continues to use tobacco. [Read more at UToronto](#)

[See also on WashingtonPost: What We Know About The Mysterious Vaping-linked Illness and Deaths](#)

[See also at NYTimes:en Marijuana Vaping Soars, Displacing Other Habits](#)

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## SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS

### Inuit Using New App To Share Information About Ice, Sea And Land



Credit: Arctic Eider Society

A social media app geared towards the outdoor lives of Inuit launched recently with features that tie traditional knowledge to smartphone technology. The Siku app and web platform, named after the Inuktitut word for sea ice, allows users to trade observations about dangerous conditions, document wildlife sightings and trade hunting stories. It also integrates modern weather, sea ice and satellite imagery, while

allowing travellers to add in the traditional terms for potentially perilous conditions using their own language. The app was created by a team of developers assembled by the Arctic Eider Society, a charity based in Sanikiluaq, Nunavut, and launched at a conference in Halifax. [Read more at National Observer](#)

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Credit: K.Berlin/Twitter

## Quote Of The Week

**“If we leave our children and their children a world where ongoing climate catastrophe is the new normal, it won’t be because we didn’t know. It will be because we didn’t act.”**

**Ken Berlin, President and CEO, The Climate Reality Project**

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## Upcoming Events

- February 19th - 20th, 2020: [2nd World Congress on Primary Healthcare and Medicare Summit](#) (Paris, France)
  - March 31 - April 2, 2020: [World Public Health Nutrition Congress 2020](#) (Brisbane, Australia)
  - 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)
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## **FYI#1 SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA:**

# **3 Multimedia Stories From Devex: A Closer Look At Kenya's Maternal Care**





Credit: Devex

Kenya has made significant progress in the past few years when it comes to improving maternal care but many challenges keep women from accessing reliable information and quality health services. In a new multimedia series, Devex reports

from Nairobi and takes a look at the technology bridging information gaps on sexual health, digital innovations improving the quality of care, and financing mechanisms to help women give birth in the safest environment for them.

Explore three interactive stories of local Kenyan women and midwives:

[1. Access to contraception](#)

[2. Improving the quality of maternal care](#)

[3. Overcoming the financial barriers of birthing costs](#)

See More at Devex

## FYI #2

# Humans Of The World: A Story In Numbers



Credit: Juliana Pedemonte

Humanity has undergone a remarkable shift since the end of the 19th century, when it was common for parents to live through the death of a child—often several

children. As better nutrition, sanitation and advances in medicine decreased child mortality rates, the global population grew swiftly. At the same time, in countries where women had access to education, good jobs, and birth control, the rate of growth began to decline. But in many parts of the world, access to education and contraception has been slow to arrive. While the human population grew from 3 billion to 7.7 billion between 1960 and today, the rate of population growth halved—there are now more people, but they have fewer children. According to the United Nations, the human population will peak around 2100, at 10.9 billion, before leveling off, at 1.9 children per woman.

Read more and see great graphics at Sierra Club

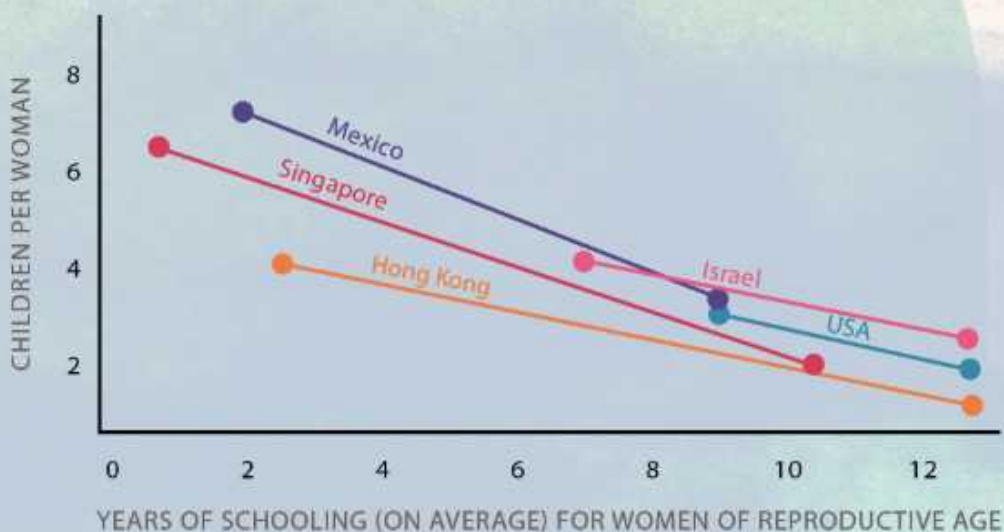
### HOW LONG IT TOOK FOR BIRTH RATES TO FALL

FROM 6 TO 3 CHILDREN PER WOMAN



### WOMEN'S EDUCATION & NUMBER OF CHILDREN

FROM 1950 TO 2010



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### FYI #3

## Pass On The Salt: New Study Finds Insect Health Affected By Road Salt



It may help keep your car on the road in the winter, but new research from the University of Toronto, Mississauga Campus reveals that road salt is creating problems for wildlife. Researchers from the McCauley Lab investigated the impact of road salt exposure on larvae of *Anax junius* dragonflies. Their results show that long-term exposure to high levels of salinity suppresses the immune response of the aquatic insects, negatively impacting their ability to fight infections and recover from injuries.

[Read More at UToronto](#)

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### FYI #4

## Warming Waters, Moving Fish: How



# Climate Change Is Reshaping Iceland



Credit: Nanna Heitmann

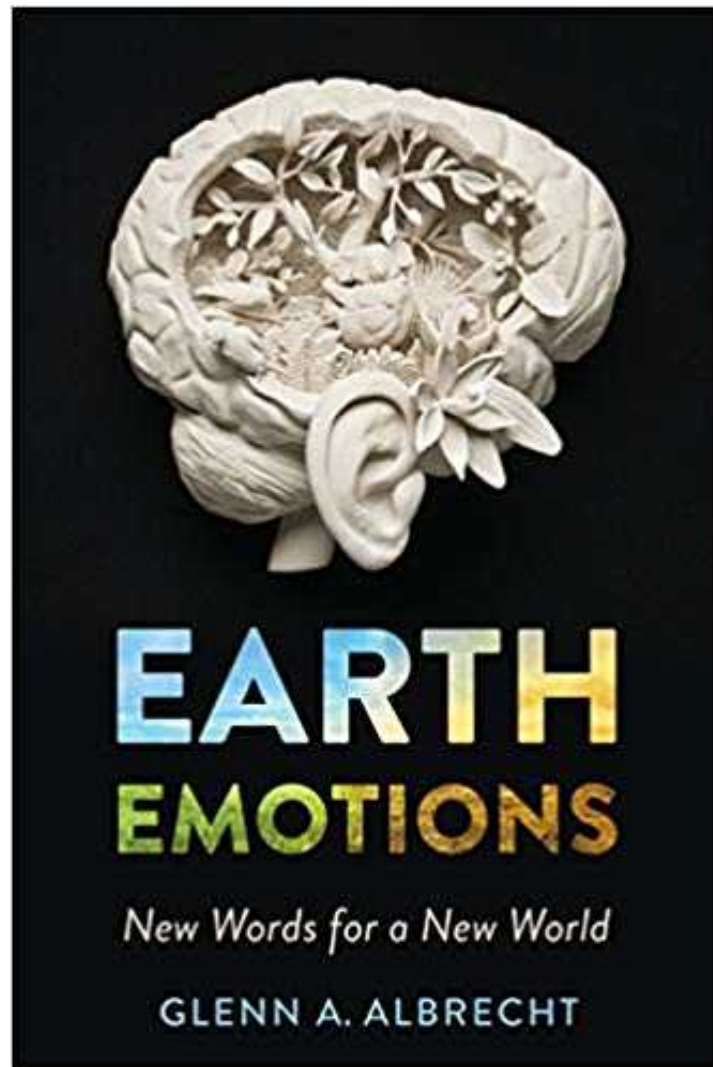
Worldwide, research shows the oceans are simmering. Since the middle of last century, the oceans have absorbed more than 90% of the excess heat trapped by greenhouse gas emissions. To beat the heat, fish are moving toward cooler waters nearer the planet's two poles.

[Read More at The New York Times](#)

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## FYI #5: WINTER READING

### Earth Emotions: New Words For A New World by Glenn Albrecht



Credit: Nathaniel Rich

*Earth Emotions* examines our positive and negative Earth emotions. It explains the author's concept of solastalgia and other well-known eco-emotions such as biophilia and topophilia. Albrecht introduces us to the many new words needed to describe the full range of our emotional responses to the emergent state of the world.

[Read More on Amazon](#)

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**FYI#6: SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION**

# Networking Strategies For Academics Who Are Bad At It



Credit: Shutterstock

Networking is often critical to success in higher ed, writes Bedelia Nicola Richards, so how should junior professionals and those with a “psychological resistance” to the activity approach networking? The author encourages higher ed professionals (and students) to rethink their definitions of networking to become clear about one’s reasons for wanting to connect with others. More specifically, Richards offers several tips toward successful networking:

- develop authentic relationships,
- deepen connections outside of and within one’s institution,

- consider engaging in service work as a form of networking, and
- organize conference panels.

Redefining networking has allowed her to be intentional about cultivating genuine connections with colleagues. She has also co-edited *Clearing the Path for First-Generation College Students*, published in May 2018.

[Read more at Inside Higher Ed](#)

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## END SHOTS

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### A PEACEFUL COLD NEW YEAR WALK

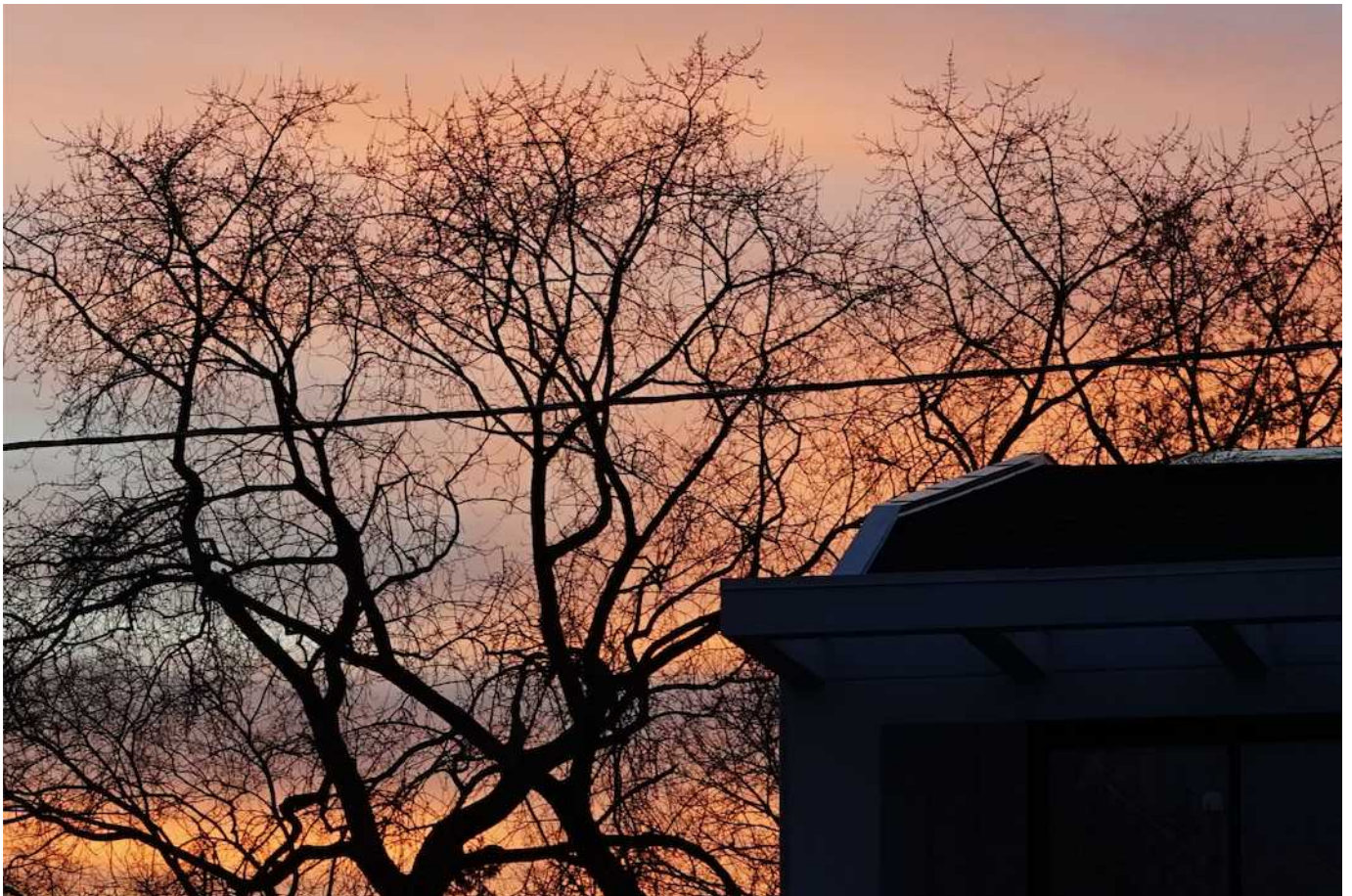
SWANSEA, TORONTO, ONTARIO

JANUARY 1, 2020









Credits: David Zakus



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