



CURRENT NEWS ON ECOLOGICAL WELLNESS AND GLOBAL HEALTH

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April 9, 2020

Hi,

Since the last issue of the **Planetary Health Weekly**, a week ago, there's been about 500,000 more confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally (a 56% increase), 9400 more in Canada (an 83% increase) and 210,500 in the USA (an 85% increase). That's just in the last seven days. And then there's the deaths, increasing globally by some 50,000 over the week, and now more than 10,000 cases reported in Africa. This is all truly alarming and our Prime Minister told us today that we're just in the early stage and Africa is just beginning. New York is experiencing medieval times. These numbers, of course, tell only half the picture as we are learning that about 50% of cases go undetected. So, there's actually now more than 3 million cases worldwide. Unreal; and while sitting at home I noticed a wall-hanging that seemed to embody this bad now taking, harming and consuming our lives (see End Shots).

In the past (bC19) I would often think of and even get into discussions about the possibility of a future pandemic, that more disease would surely come, but never felt any sense of urgency nor commitment to do anything other than report and discuss. But, now, wow, we're in a full-blown pandemic of a disease that has, once again (like 70% of all new human pathogens) passed from an animal to a person, perhaps someone eating an exotic animal at a special supper or working in a live animal (wet) market. COVID-19 is being experienced in 184 countries around the world.

Now, without taking anything away from the current situation, I'd just like to add a little perspective by mentioning some other infectious diseases still spreading widely and easily from human to human, though mostly all in the poor (or poorest) countries around the world. This is just so we don't forget what's also going on 'out' there, out of our news, out of our general consciousness, and out of our sense of any

responsibility and solidarity other than through some great NGOs, foreign aid programs and multilateral involvement, all of which are now in jeopardy.

These are the numbers of new cases (and deaths) globally per day of:

Malaria: 625,000/day!! (1100 deaths/day);

TB: 27,000/day (4100 deaths/day);

Measles: 26,000/day (380 deaths/day; 7100 deaths/day before vaccination started; this being the most easily spread viral pathogen among humans); and

HIV: 4600/day (2100 deaths/day).

And these are just four in a long list of globally circulating infectious diseases. The current coronavirus is starting to compete.

In today's ***Planetary Health Weekly*** (#15 of 2020) you'll find more, perhaps unusual,

- Updates on COVID-19 including a great piece by George Monbiot, A podcast from UofT's Vivek Goel, Nicaragua's disastrous state of denial, Funding issues, Vaccine hopes, Catastrophe in Bangladesh, Great thoughts from Yuval Harari and Bill Gates, and Whistleblowers in China,
- AND
- Advice from people living with disabilities on working remotely,
- How old growth trees are key to fighting climate change,
- Bailing out the airlines in a green way,
- British Columbia's nurses speaking out on climate change,
- Clamping down on official use of important words in the USA,
- Hope from and for pilot testing a new malaria vaccine,
- A bacteria that eats toxic plastic,
- How all will be different from now on,
- How planning for more suburbs contradicts climate plans,
- Grassy Narrows signs a deal for their mercury care centre **and** a COVID-19 case at an LNG man camp in northern B.C.,
- Australia's 60 Minutes explores COVID-19 responsibility,
- Health effects of screen time on children,
- Attention Deficit Disorder risk from maternal exposure to non-ionizing radiation during pregnancy,
- The potential of geothermal power,
- A new novel by Abi Daré on Nigerian domestic slavery, and

- Great online education resources from Magna Publications.

Do take a look.

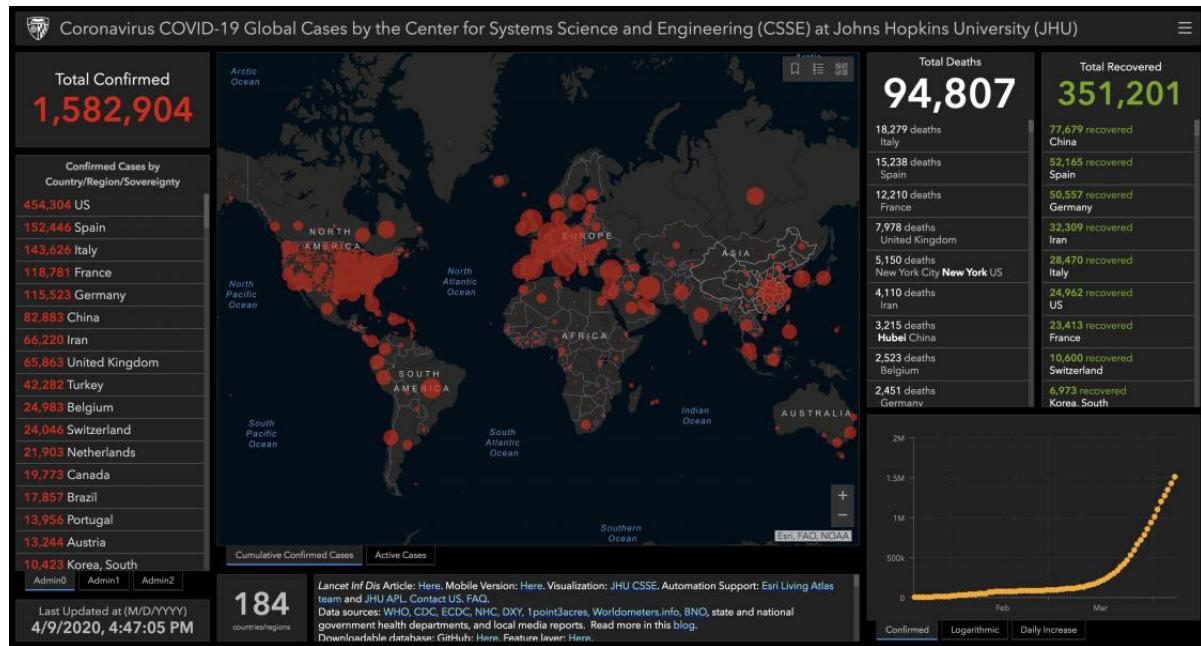
Still keeping my 2 metres...Best and Happy Holy Holidays, david

David Zakus, Editor and Publisher

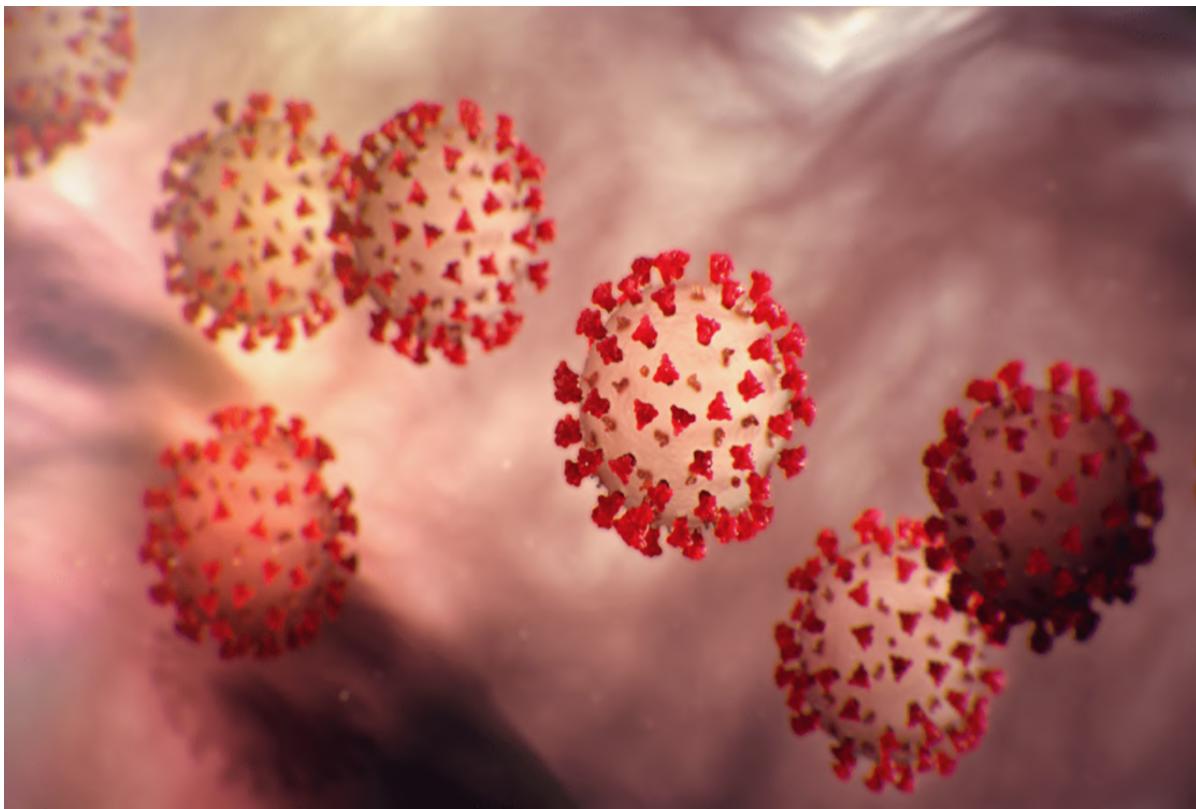


MEXICAN FOLK ART

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS & COVID-19 UPDATES



Covid-19 Is Nature's Wake-Up Call To A Complacent Civilization



Credit: U.S. Government Report 2020

We have been living in a bubble, a bubble of false comfort and denial. In the rich nations, we have begun to believe we have transcended the material world. The wealth we've accumulated – often at the expense of others – has shielded us from reality. Living behind screens, passing between capsules – our houses, cars, offices and shopping malls – we persuaded ourselves that contingency had retreated, that we had reached the point all civilizations seek: insulation from natural hazards.

Now the membrane has ruptured, and we find ourselves naked and outraged, as the biology we appeared to have banished storms through our lives. The temptation, when this pandemic has passed, will be to find another bubble. We cannot afford to succumb to it. From now on, we should expose our minds to the painful realities we have denied for too long.

But this is just one of our impending crises. Antibiotic resistance is, potentially, as deadly as any new disease. One of the causes is the astonishingly profligate way in which these precious medicines are used on [many livestock farms](#). Where vast numbers of farm animals are packed together, antibiotics are deployed prophylactically to prevent otherwise inevitable outbreaks of disease. In some parts of the world, they are used not only to prevent disease, but also as growth promoters. Low doses are routinely added to feed: a strategy that could scarcely be better designed to [deliver bacterial resistance](#).

In the US, where 27 million people have no medical cover, some people are now treating themselves with [veterinary antibiotics](#), including those sold, without prescription, to medicate pet fish. Pharmaceutical companies are failing to invest sufficiently in the [search for new drugs](#). If antibiotics cease to be effective, surgery becomes almost impossible. Childbirth becomes a mortal hazard once more. Chemotherapy can no longer be safely practised. Infectious diseases we have comfortably forgotten become deadly threats. We should discuss this issue as often as we talk about football. But again, it scarcely registers.

Our multiple crises, of which these are just two, have a common root. The problem is exemplified by the response of the organisers of the [Bath Half Marathon](#), a massive event that took place on 15 March, to the many people begging them to cancel. "It is now too late for us to cancel or postpone the event. The venue is built, the infrastructure is in place, the site and our contractors are ready." In other words, the sunk costs of the event were judged to outweigh any future impacts – the potential transmission of disease, and possible deaths – it might cause.

...Money becomes more important than life.

There are two ways this could go. We could, as some people have done, double down on denial. Some of those who have dismissed other threats, such as climate breakdown, also seek to downplay the threat of Covid-19...

Or this could be the moment when we begin to see ourselves, once more, as governed by biology and physics, and dependent on a habitable planet. Never again should we listen to the liars and the deniers. Never again should we allow a comforting falsehood to trounce a painful truth. No longer can we afford to be dominated by those who put money ahead of life. [Read More by George Monbiot at The Guardian](#).

See More:

At University of Toronto: [How Will This End? Podcast by Vivek Goel](#)

At Capx: [A State of Denial: Is Nicaragua the World's Worst Coronavirus Response?](#)

At Devex: [Who's Funding The COVID-19 Response and What Are the Priorities?](#)

At Healthy Debate: [When Will We Have a COVID-19 Vaccine?](#)

At New York Times: [U.N. Issues \\$2 Billion Appeal to Combat Virus and Urges Aid for Other Crises \(GET UPDATE\)](#)

At The Guardian: [Retailers Allegedly Cancelling £2.4bn Orders in 'Catastrophic' Move For Bangladesh \(Coronavirus Cutbacks Amount To A 'Wholesale Abandonment' Of Garment Workers\)](#)

At FT: [Yuval Noah Harari: The World After Coronavirus](#)

At Futurism: [Bill Gates: U.S. 'Missed the Opportunity' to Prevent Catastrophe](#)

At India Times: [Israel's Health Minister and Wife Diagnosed With Coronavirus](#)

At India Times: [World Bank Approves Initial \\$1.9 billion in Emergency Coronavirus Funds](#)

At YouTube: [Whistleblowers Silenced by China Could Have Stopped Global Coronavirus Spread | 60 Minutes Australia](#)

Disabled People Have Worked Remotely For Years, And They've Got Advice For You And Your Bosses



Credit: iStock

When Alaina Lavoie, Boston-based communications manager for We Need Diverse Books, starts her work day, she keeps a strict schedule. She feeds her cats, makes herself breakfast, checks in with her boss from home and then tackles the most time-sensitive tasks first.

As the nation races to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, more and more employers are asking their employees to work remotely. But for disabled and chronically ill workers such as Lavoie, remote work isn't a foreign concept; it's a hard-won necessity. Now these workers are sharing their tips, as well as their hopes that, once the pandemic is contained, businesses will have learned the benefits of telework and will be more willing to make it available.

According to Eve Hill, a disability rights lawyer with Baltimore-based firm Brown Goldstein Levy, guidance issued in 2002 under the Americans With Disabilities Act specifically identified remote work as a reasonable accommodation employers are required to offer to their employees with disabilities, as long as it doesn't impose an undue burden on the employer, such as cost. However, it wasn't until the past decade, when new technology made remote work more feasible, that employers began to widely offer the accommodation. [Read More at The Washington Post](#)

Why Old-Growth Trees Are Crucial To

Fighting Climate Change



Credit: Cody Cobb

Ken Bible steps over a carpet of bracken and vanilla leaf to get closer to the big Douglas fir. He gives its furrowed bark an affectionate slap, as if introducing a prize racehorse.

“It’s about 70 meters tall and 2.6 meters in diameter,” Bible says, leaning back to take in the behemoth stretching above him. From way down here on the shady floor of the forest, he has no hope of seeing all the way to the tree’s top. But thanks to a 279-foot-high tower that rises above the [trees](#), Bible, who helps manage this site on behalf of the US Forest Service, has had the chance to know this old Doug from above as well as below. At around 500 years of age, it isn’t the oldest tree in the forest, but a lucky location near a wetland has made it one of the biggest.

The Doug is lucky in other ways too. Once upon a time, its particular seed happened to fall from a particular drying cone into what, hundreds of years later, would become a small section of protected old growth inside the Wind River Experimental Forest, a research area in southern Washington state originally created to study the best ways to exploit forests for human use. Just outside the confines of this 1,180-acre remnant of old forest, the trees of the Doug’s generation are long gone. Some were killed by fire, others by pests, and others were removed by foresters who, for more than a century, had been using the area as a testing ground in their attempt to find the best ways to turn the great forests of the Northwest into profit. [Read More at Wired](#)

If We Bail Out Airlines, It Better Come With Climate Rules



Credit: Boeing 767 Spotting in June. Stuttgart Airport (STR / EDDS)

This story was originally published by [HuffPost](#) and appears here from the [Climate Desk](#) collaboration

Even before air travel took a serious hit from the novel coronavirus pandemic, the airline industry was in trouble.

Profit forecasts in 2019 [plunged](#) to the lowest in five years as fuel costs rose and the trade war between the United States and China tanked the cargo business. Airline bankruptcies increased at their [fastest ever rate](#) last year, with [at least 18](#) companies going under, and Boeing, the top U.S. plane manufacturer, grounded its new 737 Max jetliner after two deadly crashes. Meanwhile, airlines had to apologize [over](#) and [over](#) and [over](#) and [overagain](#) for mistreating customers in bizarre, humiliating or discriminatory ways.

Now, as the COVID-19 pandemic causes the industry's worst economic shock since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, airlines are asking Congress for a \$50 billion bailout, while Boeing [requested](#) a "minimum" of \$60 billion to keep the aerospace manufacturing sector afloat. Experts say such aid packages are a golden opportunity to reform an industry whose surging emissions of planet-heating gases threaten to inflame the world's other deadly crisis: climate change.

"Any use of taxpayer funds to bail out any industry should come with conditions that are going to advance the broader public interest," said Brad Schallert, director of carbon market governance and aviation at the World Wildlife Fund for Nature. "This is a moment to put the industry on a sustainable pathway.". [Read More at The National Observer](#)

Engaging B.C. Nurses With Climate Change Issues



Credit: American Nursing Association

The Association of Nurses and Nurse Practitioners of British Columbia (NNPBC) Position on Climate Change:

NNPBC aligns with the Government of Canada's recommendation on championing "intersectoral collaboration on monitoring and surveillance of climate change health outcomes, addressing root causes that limit preparedness (e.g. poverty), identification of vulnerable populations, reducing uncertainty through increased research on impacts, and educating the public and decision makers about potential disasters" (Government of Canada, 2017, p.11).

- NNPBC supports the need to address climate change at regional, provincial, and national levels.
- NNPBC is committed to raising a unified nursing voice on matters of climate change in the province.
- It is recognized that BC's Indigenous population has a unique and very close bond to these lands, for

which reason they must be engaged at all levels of decision-making and care-planning when combating climate change in the province.

- Nurses have a moral obligation to uphold social justice and health equity in a manner that contributes to support the social structures needed to deal with an ever-challenging, complex environment.
- NNPBC supports the need to address gaps in knowledge related to climate change and human health through distribution of informational links and educational resources for current nursing students and practicing nurses in all healthcare settings on its website. [Read More at NNPBC](#)

USDA Clamps Down On Staffers Using The Term 'Climate Change'



Credit: Pete Ryan/Getty Images

Staff at the US Department of Agriculture have been told to avoid using the term climate change in their work, with the officials instructed to reference "weather extremes" instead. A series of emails show that the Trump administration has had a

stark impact on the language used by some federal employees around climate change.

A missive from Bianca Moebius-Clune, director of soil health, lists terms that should be avoided by staff and those that should replace them. "Climate change" is in the "avoid" category, to be replaced by "weather extremes." Instead of "climate change adaption," staff are asked to use "resilience to weather extremes." The primary cause of human-driven climate change is also targeted, with the term "reduce greenhouse gases" blacklisted in favour of "build soil organic matter, increase nutrient use efficiency." Meanwhile, "sequester carbon" is ruled out and replaced by "build soil organic matter." [Read More at Wired](#)

GOOD NEWS

The Trials And Tribulations Of The World's First Malaria Vaccine



Credit: Malaria No More UK / Tom Pilstor

Despite impressive global results in the fight against malaria, worryingly, some parts of the world have seen a recent increases in cases. The spikes are linked to mosquito and parasite resistance to insecticides and antimalarials, as well as changes in land use, demography, and climate. For this reason, trials of the world's potentially first

malaria vaccine have been welcomed in Ghana despite concerns and shortcomings — including ethics, side effects, and the feasibility of implementation. Almost a year into the pilot of the world's first malaria vaccine, [Devex visits Ghana to find out how it's going.](#)

MORE GOOD NEWS

Scientists Find Bug That Feasts On Toxic Plastic



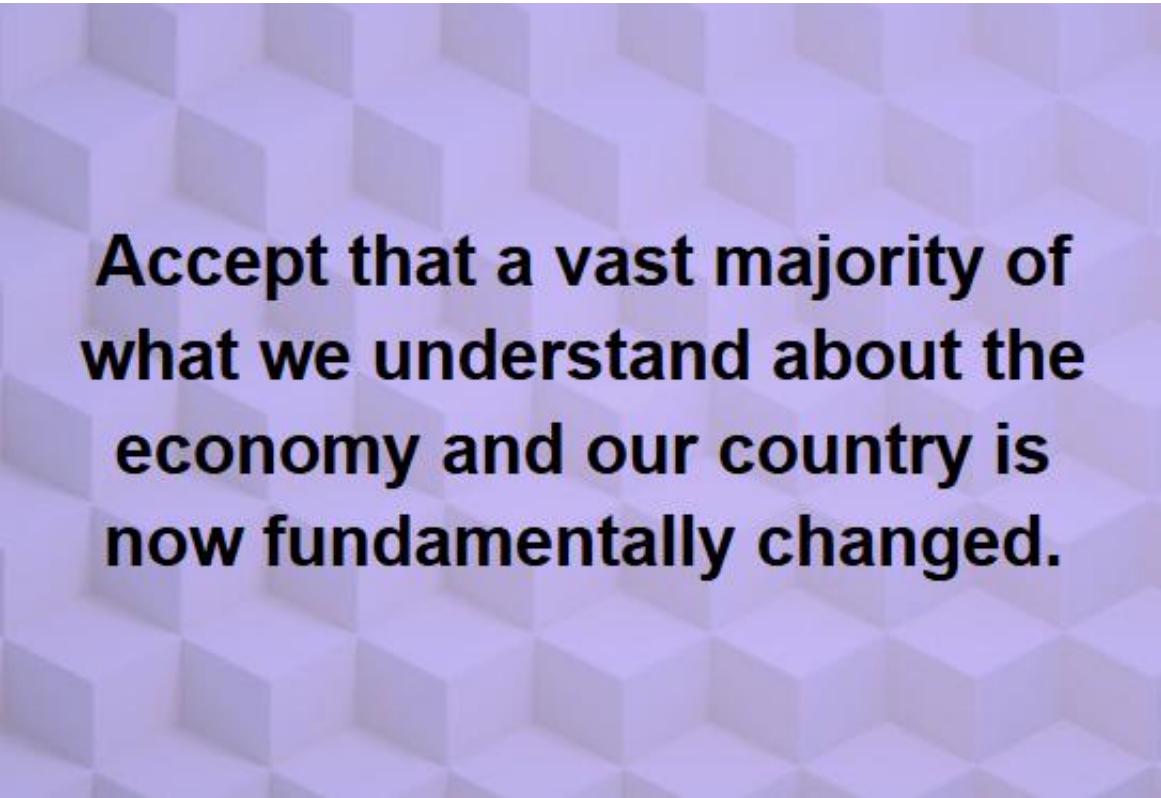
Credit: imageBroker/Alamy

A bacterium that feeds on toxic plastic has been discovered by scientists at the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research-UFZ in Leipzig, Germany. The bug not only breaks the plastic down but uses it as food to power the process. The bacterium, which was found at a waste site where plastic had been dumped, is the first that is known to attack polyurethane. When broken down it can release toxic and carcinogenic chemicals which would kill most bacteria, but the newly discovered strain is able to survive. While the research has identified the bug and some of its key characteristics, much work remains to be done before it can be used to treat large amounts of waste plastic.

More than 8bn tonnes of plastic has been produced since the 1950s and most has ended up polluting the world's land and oceans, or in landfill dumps. Scientists say it threatens a "near permanent contamination of the natural environment". [Read More](#)

OPINION

Accept That Everything You Understand About The World Will Fundamentally Change



Accept that a vast majority of what we understand about the economy and our country is now fundamentally changed.

Credit: Ryan Snook

I've spent a great deal of time trying to develop a way to understand exactly what is happening. At times I'm remarkably calm about things; at other times, I think we're in the opening scene of a post-apocalyptic movie where the world is falling apart and society is desperately trying to maintain order and stability but to no avail.

Yesterday morning I finally hit the nail on the head and realized the following (which is from my Facebook feed): Accept That Everything You Understand About the World Will Fundamentally Change.

I got the idea from a governor Cuomo press conference (God bless that man, BTW). He noted that we will get through this but that it will forever be with us — we'll look back in 10 years and say, "I was doing 'X' during the pandemic." This statement implies that this is a world-defining event much like WWII or (I hate to say it) the Great Depression. It's something that will change, well, everything.

Here are some of the things that are going to fundamentally change.

- A big return of Keynesian economics. Almost overnight, Republicans ditched their austerity mantra and quickly voted for a \$2 trillion stimulus. There was no talk of “we need to balance the budget;” instead there was talk about keeping people whole.
- A return to government expertise. Watching Dr. Fauci and other experts during this crisis has been very comforting because they tell the truth (which stands in stark contrast to Trump). Polls show that the public trusts them. Once this is over, expect the public to become a lot more comfortable with expertise.

[Read More at the Daily Kos.](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON POLICY

Sprawling Our Way To Climate



Credit: Alamy

There's a hole in British Columbia's climate plan big enough to drive a subdivision through. While civil servants in the capital, Victoria, diligently seek emissions reductions throughout the province to hit [climate targets](#), the people working in B.C.'s municipal governments routinely approve more suburban sprawl, meaning more drivers in private vehicles pushing emissions up. More frustrating is that local

governments are ultimately creatures of the provincial government. This means the B.C. government is essentially working against itself.

The [CleanBC plan](#) includes all kinds of policies, from efficient buildings to promoting electric vehicles to workforce training. But it's strangely silent on the number one municipal climate issue: suburban sprawl.

Transplantation accounts for the most emissions at the [city level](#), and those emissions are driven by development patterns. If municipalities approve dense development close to services, people can walk, bike or be well served by transit. If they approve spread-out subdivisions far from services, people have no choice but to get in their vehicles every time they leave the house. [Read More at The Tyee](#).

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS WELLNESS

Grassy Narrows Signs Deal With Ottawa To Build Mercury Care Home



Credit: The Star

Grassy Narrows First Nation moved closer to its goal of building a care home on reserve for those sickened by industrial mercury poisoning after the federal

government signed an agreement to cover the entire projected cost of construction. The agreement, reached April 2 between Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller and Grassy chief Rudy Turtle, commits Ottawa to spend \$19.5 million to build the home, which is expected to offer palliative care, physiotherapy, counselling and traditional healing.

The federal money commitment was a sticking point in a previous, failed attempt to reach an agreement. Last summer, then-minister Seamus O'Regan went to Grassy Narrows with a draft agreement that called for \$10.5 million toward construction — far less than the total cost to build, according to a feasibility study — and that said Ottawa could walk away from the deal for any reason with 60 days' notice. This bothered Turtle, who said the proposed agreement did not offer the certainty that O'Regan had been promising. [Read More at The Star](#)

SEE ALSO at Alaska Highway News: [LNG Canada Worker Tests Positive For COVID-19](#)



Credits: Stephen Lam / Reuters

Quote Of The Week

"The coronavirus pandemic currently raging throughout the United States has brought into sharp focus many extraordinary truths about our society: the insufficiency of the American safety net, the catastrophic failure of the Trump Administration to protect its citizens from a foreseeable threat, the ease and speed with which the human body can founder. It has also, more quietly, prompted a striking awakening to the relentless labor of domestic life, including the job of feeding ourselves."

Helen Rosner, The New Yorker

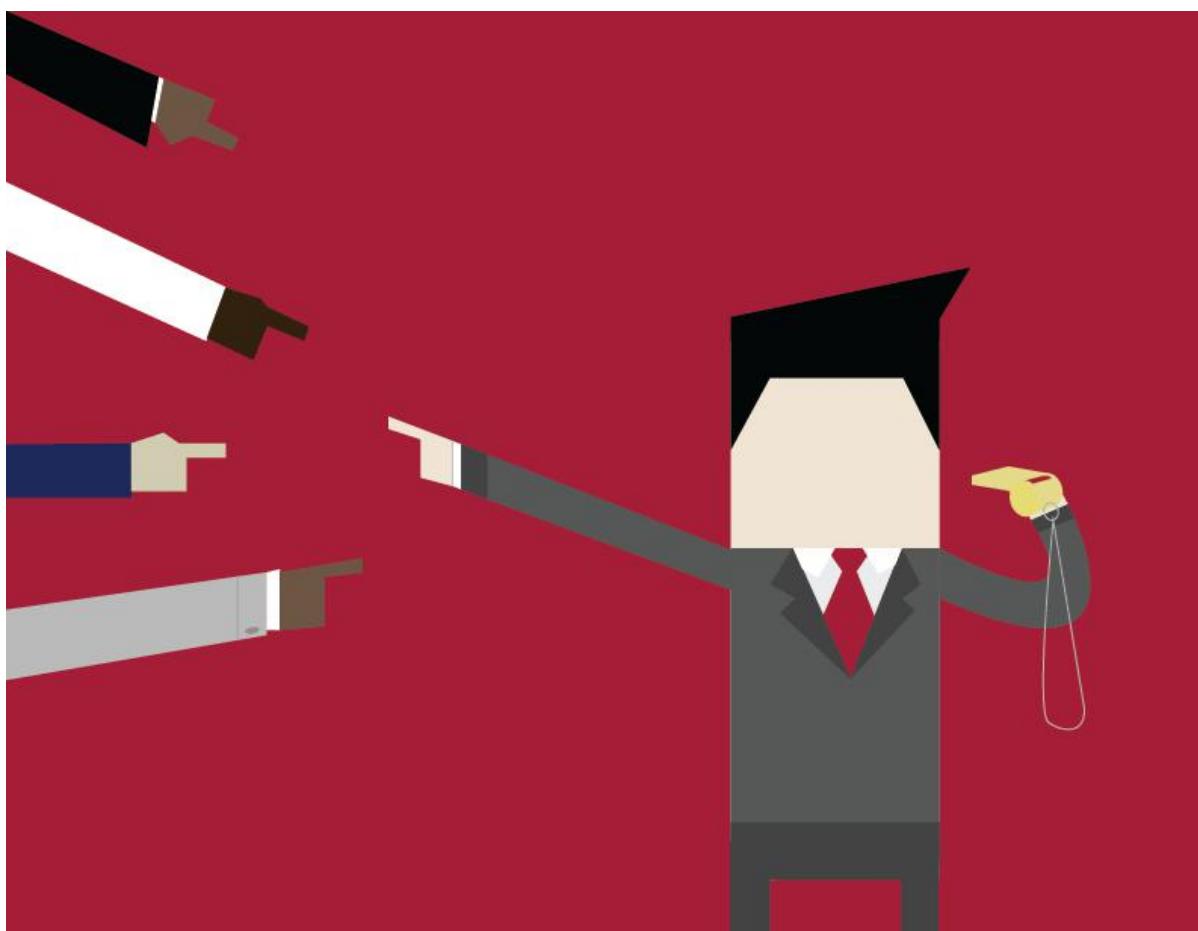
For more see at The New Yorker: [Pick Up the Damn Phone, and Other Thoughts on Ordering Restaurant Delivery](#)

Upcoming Events

- April 18th -20th, 2020: [CUGH Conference 2020: Global Health in a Time of Worldwide Political Change](#) (Washington, D.C., USA) - **Cancelled**
- April 24th - 26th, 2020: [PEGASUS IV: Migration - Climate Change - Sustainable Development](#) (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada) - **Cancelled**
- April 28th - 29th: [Global Health Impact Expo + Exchange](#) (Ottawa, Canada) - **Postponed**
- April 28th - 30th: [CPHA's Public Health 2020](#) (Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada) - **Postponed**
- May 2nd - 4th: [RESULTS CANADA National Conference: From Action to Impact - Working Together to End Extreme Poverty](#) (Ottawa, Canada) - **Cancelled**
- May 21st - 23rd: [Indigenous Health Conference: Building Our Future](#) (Niagara Falls, Canada) - **Postponed**
- November 9th-19th: [2020 UN Climate Change Conference \(UNFCCC COP26\)](#) (Glasgow, Scotland) - **Postponed for one year!**

FYI#1 SPOTLIGHT ON MEDIA:

Whistleblowers Silenced By China Could Have Stopped Global Coronavirus Spread



Credit:Image from the web. Probably from the illustrated book of Renn C. Fowler and Samuel A. Vitaro, "A Guide to the Whistleblower Protection Act & Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012"

It was mid-November in Wuhan, China, and cases of a strange new flu start surfacing. In a sprawling city of 11 million people, the coronavirus, our invisible brutal enemy was born - festering at least a month and a half before the world was told. In January President Xi Jinping made a decision that would ultimately condemn the world: allowing 5 million people to leave the epicentre of the virus without being screened. Watch on.

Watch at Youtube

FYI #2

The Health Effects Of Screen Time On Children: A Research Roundup



Credit: Pixabay

Gone are visions of idyllic childhoods spent frolicking in fields and playing in pastures; for many kids, green grass has been replaced with smartphone screens. In fact, recent research finds that [63% of kids in the U.S. spend over two hours a day on recreational screen time](#). This is in spite of [official guidelines](#) from the American Academy of Pediatrics, which recommends less than one hour per day of screen time for children between the ages of 2 and 5, and, for older children, “consistent limits” on screen time and prioritization of sleep, physical activity and other healthy behaviours over media use. Just last month the [World Health Organization issued guidelines](#) on

the subject, stressing that children between the ages of 2 and 4 should have no more than one hour of screen time per day.

The ubiquity of screens and their prominence in everyday life has drawn criticism and concerns, with Microsoft veteran and philanthropist [Melinda Gates](#) writing about not being “prepared for smartphones and social media” as a parent and news headlines questioning whether smartphones have “[destroyed a generation](#).” But what does the research say? This roundup looks at the effects of screen time on children’s health. Studies range from childhood to adolescence and focus on topics including sleep, developmental progress, depression and successful interventions to reduce screen time.

Read More at Journalists Resource

FYI #3

Association Between Maternal Exposure To Magnetic Field Nonionizing Radiation During Pregnancy And Risk Of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder In Offspring



Credit: Rostislav_Sedlacek; iStock by Getty Images

Question: Could human exposure to magnetic field nonionizing radiation be associated with increased risk of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in children?

Findings: This birth cohort study found a statistically significant association between a high level of maternal exposure to magnetic field nonionizing radiation, as captured with a monitoring meter, during pregnancy and an increased risk of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in offspring. The association was stronger for children who received a diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in adolescence (≥ 12 years of age) than for those without such a diagnosis in adolescence, and primarily for children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder with immune-related comorbidities.

Meaning: The findings should spur more research to examine the biological association of in utero magnetic field exposure with risk of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in offspring.

Read More at JAMA Network

How Long Could the World Run on Geothermal Power?



Credit: MARTIN ZWICK/GETTY IMAGES

Of all the different ways of generating electricity or getting things (like cars) to do work, which of them *don't* use energy from the sun?

Fossil fuels? Nope. Millions of years ago, primeval plants drew energy from the sun to grow. But alas, those plants died and turned into stuff like oil, and then you burned it in your car. So, from a certain point of view, that gasoline is liquid solar energy—with a really long build-up time.

Wind energy? Well, where does wind come from? A major contributor is the uneven heating of Earth's atmosphere. That makes the air in one place expand and push out to other places, and that motion is what we call wind. As the moving air pushes on the blades of a wind turbine, it turns a generator to produce electricity.

Hydroelectric? This uses a decrease in gravitational potential energy as water moves down a river to turn a turbine. But the water gets that potential energy from the sun: Solar radiation heats up water, mostly from the sea, so it evaporates. Eventually that turns into rain and runs into lakes and rivers to repeat the cycle. (OK, water can also evaporate without sunlight, but the sun is a major player here.)

That leaves just two major energy technologies, nuclear and geothermal, that aren't beholden to the sun. A nuclear power plant makes steam to spin a turbine. The energy comes from breaking apart high-mass atoms like uranium into smaller pieces. Since the mass of the products is slightly less than the mass of the starting atom, you get energy. We know that from Einstein's famous $E = mc^2$ equation.

But where does the starting atom get this energy? The answer: an exploding star. The extreme energy of a supernova creates conditions to fuse smaller elements into heavier ones. Then, billions of years later, we get that energy back in a nuclear reactor.

Now for geothermal. Maybe this is the best power source we have—it uses the thermal energy from the interior of the Earth to create electrical energy. It's like free money. But you should always question free money (or free energy). So, here are two things to consider: Where does this thermal energy even come from? And how long would this energy source last before we used it up? This is the fun part. How about a short explanation along with an estimation?

[Read more at Wired](#)

FYI #5: SPRING READING-NEW BOOK BY ABI DARÉ

Nigerian Child Domestic Slavery Exposed In New Novel "The Girl with the Louding Voice"



Credit: Freedom United

The widespread issue of domestic slavery in Nigeria is brought to light in Abi Daré's debut novel "The Girl with the Louding Voice", which has won awards and attracted praise from activists including Malala Yousafzai since its release last month. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are as many as 15 million workers under the age of 14 in Nigeria, many of whom are "house girls": domestic servants whose labour is often forced and underpaid.

Daré argues this practice is a longstanding part of the country's patriarchal culture, making it difficult to challenge. According to Daré, nearly all of her neighbours in Nigeria employed domestic servants, some as young as eight. House girls have been known to suffer routine physical and sexual abuse, but few are willing to speak up about their suffering and unexplained deaths and disappearances are common.

Daré writes about one of the girls that inspired her novel in *The Guardian*: "Mariam arrived in our neighbourhood one summer when I was 13. She was 11 and small, with a shaved head. When she laughed, which was often, the house would seem to vibrate with her laughter. I had no sister, so I found a sister in Mariam. But Mariam was not like me. While I played and spent the summer visiting amusement parks and hanging out with friends in their palatial homes, she worked every day. I watched as a girl younger than me tirelessly cooked, cleaned and, even though she was not employed by my family, washed my clothes and tended to me. I attended an all-girls boarding school in Lagos, but Mariam did not go to school. She spoke in Yoruba and broken English. She was intelligent and brilliant, and we would play together until the woman who employed her (her "madam") would return."

The Nigerian government took steps to tackle the issue in 2004 with the anti-trafficking agency NAPTIP, but the practice of domestic slavery remains widespread; according to Daré, this is partly because of a lack of legal clarity on the issue.

Read more at Freedom United

FYI#6: SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION

Online Education Resources From Magna Publications



Credit: Faculty Focus Website

Magna Publications offers a free newsletter and website that's dedicated to higher ed and instructors. *Faculty Focus* publishes articles on effective teaching strategies for the online and college classroom. *Faculty Focus* was the winner of the 2017 MERLOT Faculty Development Classics Award and is currently ranked #6 in the [Teach100 daily ranking](#) of education blogs. Faculty Focus has been an important tool for instructors to share what they are implementing in the classroom and to learn what other instructors are doing worldwide.

Read more at Faculty Focus

END SHOTS

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS AS EMBODIED IN MEXICAN FOLK ART

APRIL 8, 2020

















Credits: David Zakus



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D&D Education Services, Inc.

49 Beresford Avenue, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada M6S 3A9

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

Production: Aisha Saleem & Eunice Anteh
Social Media: Evans Oppong

Website and Advisory: Gaël Chetaille, Dr. Aimée-
Angélique Bouka & Elisabeth Huang

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