

ACTIVISM 2020

DOES ACTIVISM
WORK?

WE ARE ON
FIRE
act now

PATHS FOR
CHANGE

WELCOME

Activism. A word, idea or symbol that has many different meanings. How it manifests for each of us is inspired by our surroundings, personal preferences and capacity.

But why talk about activism now? If evidence that the systems around us, some of them manmade, are starting to crumble is not enough, we're thinking about activism to work toward achieving one of the [Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere's](#) goals; **to foster, fuel and inspire a global dialogue on how interconnected biogeophysical and socio-economic systems contribute to, and are affected by, the existential threats facing humanity and, the threat of collapse as a result of the manifestations of the human predicament.**

When we think about the changes we want to see for the world we imagine how to achieve them through thousands of forms of activism.

Our hope is that this newsletter shares information and perspectives you may not have had before and inspires your own personal consideration of what's going on around us and, possibly informs how you'd like to participate. Perhaps the most important aim is to instill the hope that when we act, we can bring about change.

In line with **MAHB**'s mission we will focus on activism that is concerned with the threat of collapse of the natural world (and therefore, humanity), and the natural and socio-economic systems that either contribute to this threat or are affected by it.

We welcome your thoughts and reactions to this newsletter. Share your comments and plans for action [here](#). And join the **MAHB** in creating a vision and strategies for shifting human cultures and institutions towards practices that promote a future in which people can live peaceful and productive lives.

WHAT IS ACTIVISM?

Broadly speaking, **activism** is defined as “a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue”. It can take many forms, from violent to non-violent and including

judicial, environmental, economic, cyber and artistic activism (to name a few).

Common **methods** used in activism range from community building, lobbying, political campaigning, protesting, to strike action (including hunger strike).



WHAT'S AT STAKE?

With greenhouse gas emissions continuing to rise and nature disappearing fast before our eyes, global efforts to truly reverse these trends are still missing.

Over-consumption by the wealthy and a growing human population are the root causes for changing the Earth systems at a scale and pace that are threatening the resources all species depend upon [1].

Nevertheless, Governments are planning to produce 120 percent more fossil fuels than required for limiting global warming to 1.5°C. Carbon emissions are still rising and no significant action has been taken to halt the ever-worsening biodiversity loss. These trends will also worsen social conflict and migration and harm our physical and mental health and well-being. We need nothing less than a complete overhaul of our economic, social and political systems.

Could there be hope on the horizon? Recent protest movements such as Extinction Rebellion and Friday for the Future strikes have raised the profile of some of the issues, calling for immediate and drastic action by Governments worldwide.

Many demand social and economic systems change. So far, more than 1500 scientists from over 20 countries

have declared support for nonviolent protests against Government inaction over the climate and ecological emergency - and for breaking the law if necessary.

Last November, more than 11,000 scientists from around the world clearly stated that our planet is facing a climate emergency and urgent action is necessary. Yet despite the first World Climate Conference in Geneva in 1979 and many other events up to the present day, progress has been sluggish.

[1] Ceballo, Ehrlich and Dirzo (2017). Biological annihilation via the ongoing sixth mass extinction signaled by vertebrate population losses and declines. PNAS July 25, 2017 114 (30) E6089-E6096



NOT JUST FOR REBELS

It is easy to dismiss the protestors as idealistic and to criticize the disruption and sometimes less peaceful actions protests may have, on the lives of “normal” people. It is convenient to hide behind pre-existing beliefs - right versus left, market versus state, individual versus society. It’s easy to resort to “isms”, including in the liberal and green political spectrum, where there’s a tendency to quickly warn of a rise in “[ecofascism](#)” the moment sustainability or other [inconvenient truths](#) are mentioned. This not only undermines the natural systems and democratic values we seek to preserve but is also creating space for the Trumps and Erdogan’s of this world. However, the climate and ecological crises are real and affect normal people’s lives, regardless of politics. Wildlife and people are getting killed by floods, hurricanes, and [wildfires](#). We are all in it: these crises demand action from all of us. This is even more important as governments criminalize activist groups and [clamp down on the democratic right to protest](#).

DOES ACTIVISM WORK?

Social scientists have devoted a vast amount of literature to activism and it is impossible to even scratch the tip of the iceberg in this newsletter. Under which conditions activism - violent or nonviolent - can be effective or fail, and whether such a generalization is even possible, is a complex issue. [Malcolm X](#) once said "nonviolence is fine as long as it works" but it seems, in the end, Gandhi was right: we have substantial evidence that nonviolent resistance is usually more successful in the long run.

For those who want to gain a deeper understanding, the seminal book "[Why Civil Resistance Works](#)" is a good start.

By analyzing both violent and non-violent protests during the 20th and 21st centuries and using statistical analysis with case studies from across the world, the authors provide evidence that nonviolent activism beats its violent cousin: there are fewer moral and physical obstacles for people to get involved; it

has a higher chance of mass mobilization and greater opportunities for tactical innovation and civic disruption. Violent activism is seldom justifiable for strategic reasons. Strategic efficacy, skill, and mass mobilization are among the key factors that determine the success of nonviolent campaigns.



FURTHER READING SUGGESTIONS

[Why Civil Resistance Works](#): The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict, by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. Columbia University Press. Also by Erica Chenoweth: [Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know](#). New York: Oxford University Press, to be published 2020.

Brown, Michael; May, John (1991). [The Greenpeace Story](#) (2nd ed.). London: Dorling Kindersley. [ISBN 978-0-86318-691-2](#)

[Free, Fair & Alive](#) by David Bollier and Silke Helfrich

[Flatpack Democracy](#) by Peter Macfadyen

FAMOUS EXAMPLES OF ACTIVISM

Activism has long historical roots, possibly dating back to the slave revolts in the first century BC against the Roman Republic (and the following fall of Spartacus).

Other famous examples include:

MAGNA CARTA (1215) Great Charter of Liberty

Facing political turmoil, the original [Magna Carta](#) was designed in 1215 as a peace treaty between King John of England and an angry group of barons and clergymen who had been mounting pressure on the king for years. Repealed by the Pope almost immediately and rewritten many times, the Magna Carta - a rally against the arbitrary use of power - recognized for the first time the principle that everyone, including the king, was subject to the law. Although only fragments remain in British law today, this Charter of individual rights and freedoms inspired many other constitutional documents - for example, the 1791 United States Bill of Rights and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT

Early 20th century

Despite working for economic and social equality since the 19th-century, women had no formal right to vote. This changed with the formation of national and international organizations, particularly the [International Woman Suffrage Alliance](#). By the end of the 19th century, women in many countries [had won voting rights](#). When this was still denied for British women in 1913, [Emmeline Pankhurst](#), founder of the British [Women's Social and Political Union](#) (WSPU) decided that women had to [do the work themselves](#). Suffragettes heckled politicians, attempted to storm parliament, chained themselves to railings, were attacked, injured and humiliated during struggles with the police, and faced wrath and ridicule from the media newspapers. They set fires to postboxes and empty buildings and detonated bombs to damage property. They endured imprisonment, hunger strikes, and subsequent force-feeding. Suffragette [Emily Davison](#) threw herself [in front of the king's horse](#) at the [1913 Epsom Derby](#). The outbreak of World War I changed everything. If women could work in arms production, a view of women's inferiority was [difficult to uphold](#). By 1918, British women who met certain age and property credentials could vote but it took another 10 years to gain [full voting rights](#). In the United States, [Alice Paul](#) formed the [National Woman's Party](#) (NWP) in 1916 to pass a national suffrage amendment. In 1917, the police arrested hundreds of NWP supporters during protests at the White House, some having to endure the same hardship, punishment, and humiliation as their British counterparts. In 1920, after very hard campaigning and under the leadership of [Carrie Chapman Catt](#), American women had won the right to vote with the [Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution](#).

MAHATMA GANDHI (1869 - 1948)

The salt marches

Through nonviolent resistance, [Mahatma Gandhi](#) successfully led the campaign for India's independence from British rule in 1947.

The 1930 [Salt March](#) or salt [satyagraha](#) - a nonviolent protest march against the British salt monopoly in colonial India - lasted 24 days and covered 240 miles. Joined by many volunteers, Gandhi broke the salt laws by making salt from seawater and collecting it - sparking acts of civil disobedience against British rule by millions of Indians. Just before arriving at the Dharasana salt works in Gujarat, Gandhi was arrested and imprisoned. Hundreds of [satyagrahis](#) were beaten by soldiers under British command and 60,000 Indians imprisoned. The salt march was one of the greatest challenges to the [British Raj](#). An international outcry against British policy in India followed, driving the Indian Independence movement and starting India's Civil Disobedience Movement. Although the marches did little to end British oppression directly, they swayed global opinion towards accepting the legitimacy of self-rule in India. Gandhi and the salt marches have influenced [Martin Luther King Jr.](#), [Nelson Mandela](#), [Barack Obama](#), and many other leaders and civil rights campaigners.

GREENPEACE (1971)

Operation Cannikin

Greenpeace evolved from the "Don't make a wave committee", to protest against further nuclear underground testing by the United States in a tectonically fragile wildlife refuge at Amchitka, Alaska. The 1964 Alaskan earthquake had raised concerns that the test could trigger earthquakes and tsunamis.

Despite 7000 people protesting at the U.S. - Canadian border (carrying flags with the slogan "Don't Make A Wave. It's Your Fault If Our Fault Goes"), the U.S. went ahead with the five Megaton detonation project Cannikin. In autumn 1971 on an old fishing vessel, the Phyllis Cormack, protesters sailed to the testing zone in Amchitka to face the U.S. Navy Ship Confidence. On this first attempt, the activists were forced to turn back, but they repeatedly sailed to the test site until the U.S. detonated the bomb. Though no earthquake or tsunami followed, international opposition grew and five months later the U.S. abandoned the Amchitka tests. The island is a bird sanctuary today. This first Cannikin protest led to the formation of Greenpeace, who today is perhaps the most visible and broad environmental organization worldwide.



ACTIVISM NOW, A FEW ISSUES AND EXAMPLES

Historical activism examples show that people have always been through periods of transition, uncertainty and faced many struggles - sometimes paying the ultimate price. These examples are as relevant now as they were then - showing that humanity has been able to achieve decisive social transformations, and sometimes, failed. Because of this, more than to describe what's happening, it is important to understand the stage and problems that activism is facing and the chances it has. A few well-known issues were selected and examples shown, but, the focus is the description of the stage and potential of activism related to each issue.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Awareness of the risk of climate change due to the use of fossil fuels is very high worldwide. A recent [poll](#) of 10,000 young people worldwide show they believe this is the most important problem of our times. It is amazing to see how awareness and acceptance have [grown](#) in a very short time.

Rebellions, protests, meetings, publications, and action groups, all around the world are conducted mainly by people, working through non governmental organizations and the UN. At the same time nation states are trying to avoid action due to its impact on economic growth and vested interests.

The recent COP 25 meeting, and related [events](#) are good examples of what is happening at the opening of 2020 in terms of activism in this area. The [Extinction Rebellion](#), the UN climate change panel ([iccc](#)), [anti-fracking protests](#) and the [divest movement](#) are other notable ones as well.

Ironically, with international protest growing, the US became the world's [top oil producer](#) mainly due to fracking. Protest and activism have raised awareness but have yet to produce substantial political action on the issue. And what is worse, just suppose the wonderful possibility that suddenly the world abandons all fossil sources of energy and converts to clean ones? Yet without a [drastic reduction in demand](#) relying solely on renewables would come at high environmental and social costs: Biomass, solar and wind require large areas of land mass which isn't available, destroying habitats and competing with food crops. Moreover, renewable technologies are hungry for rare earth metals which face their own shortages and social problems. Large-scale hydropower is displacing rural communities and emits methane due to flooding. Unlimited growth, even if "green", is not compatible with a finite planet.

SUSTAINABLE POPULATION

The last [UN population forecast](#) is dramatic. Africa is expected to reach 4.15 billion in 2095. China will peak at 1.46 billion in 2027 and India at 1.65 billion in 2059. The world as a whole will reach in 2095, considering the medium projection, 10.85 billion. Policies similar to China's former "One family, one child" policy are neither desirable nor applicable. In addition to a strong and persistent increase in the level of education, health, nutrition, housing, and poverty alleviation it requires governments in all countries that are aware and embrace the social, economic and environmental benefits of smaller populations, and effective family planning policies (see for example, [Thailand](#)).

MAHB and many other organizations have a wealth of information on population issues. A few examples of this work can be seen [here](#). Unfortunately, this topic remains restricted and difficult to address. Strong opposition comes from religious beliefs, cultural practices and from those who profit from a growing market. However, in many places public opinion on sustainable populations is changing. Organizations such as [Population Matters](#) have been instrumental in shifting opinion and in lobbying Governments and there are [many more ways to get involved](#).





RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

The [World's consumption of materials](#) hit a record of 100 billion tonnes in 2017 (the last year reported). The unsustainable use of resources is wrecking the planet and at the same time recycling rate of waste is falling, from 9.1% in the previous year to 8.6% in 2017. But, for the billions of people living in poverty and desiring the same standards of living as the middle class worldwide, a sustainable resource use is difficult to accept.

Even the so called Circular Economy models (i.e., increased reuse and recycling of materials) cannot achieve a reasonable quality of life for all without further degrading the earth's

limited resources. It's important to note however, that [some countries](#) are already planning towards making their economies more circular to reduce the resource consumption, waste and pollution. Their experience will be, for sure, part of a possible ample solution to the problem.

Now, just [imagine a world](#) with a sustainable population (around 3 billion) that practices responsible consumption (American or European low middle class standard for all). How could this happen? Something between a [slow adaptation along the next centuries](#) or one or more occurrences of intense destruction (intentional or not)

like wars (WWII is a classical example), epidemics, natural disasters and more, that may have unpredictable consequences. Although many activists and organizations aim to raise awareness, few achieve major results. However, one case of success is Annie Leonard who has devoted more than 20 years, and continues, denouncing superfluous waste and planned obsolescence by industries. Her [Story of Stuff](#) series has influenced and inspired millions. The article published by The Guardian "[Overconsumption is costing us the earth and human happiness](#)" gives a more detailed description of her work.

SHORTER WORKING WEEK

"There is no natural law determining the amount of time we spend in work. History shows us that when people come together they can reduce the working week in order to provide more time for life – indeed that was how the weekend and the eight-hour day was won."

The citation comes from [NEF - New Economics Foundation](#), a good example of activism in this area. For years it has centered part of its work on the issue of shorter work

weeks. Recently it has expanded its effort and helped to form an [European network for the Fair Sharing of Working Time](#) together with 3 european organizations. The network site reports several initiatives around Europe towards a reduced working week. Some of them are the result of activism, especially from unions. It should be noted that a continuous shortening working week may be one answer to the growing

unemployment trend caused by the increasing presence of technology and artificial intelligence in the workplace.

More than that, it's one of the doors for the economy to adapt to the pressures of our times, as partially referenced above.

One can expect that as unemployment grows, activism around this issue will become stronger and the possibility and need much widely perceived by workers and the public in general.

THE COMMONS

"The Commons is about sharing and bringing into being durable social systems for producing shareable things and activities." "It's a germinal vision for reimaging our future together and reinventing social organization, economics, infrastructure, politics, and state power itself. The Commons is a social form

that enables people to enjoy freedom without repressing others, enact fairness without bureaucratic control, foster togetherness without compulsion, and assert sovereignty without nationalism."

"The Commons is not a utopian fantasy and is not just about small-scale projects for everyday life.

And, has nothing to do with the misleading idea of the "tragedy of the commons" that became a cultural buzzword endlessly repeated by economists, social scientists and politicians".

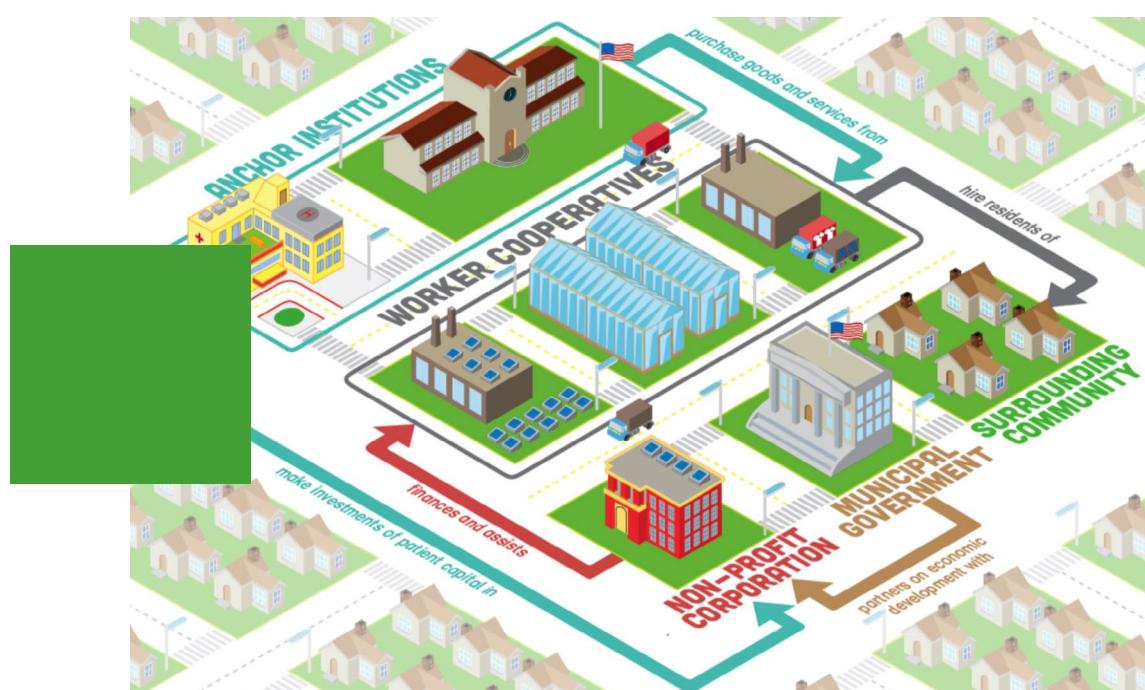
(citations from the book: [Free, Fair and Alive: the insurgent power of the Commons.](#))

One example of Commons is [The Cleveland Model](#): The City of Cleveland, the city's major hospitals and universities and many more are helping to implement a new model of large-scale worker-owned and community-benefiting businesses. It clearly aims to retain and improve wealth within the community. It should be noted in regard to the previous example that cooperatives may or may not be a Commons depending on adherence to the principles expressed above.

Other examples are [Welcome to Buurtzorg](#): "a pioneering healthcare organisation established 13 years ago with a nurse-led model of holistic care that revolutionised community care in the Netherlands", with more than 10.000 professionals, and, [Community Supported Agriculture \(CSA\)](#): A partnership of mutual commitment between a farm and a community of supporters provide a direct link between the production and consumption of food, that has intensive and worldwide presence. The Commons is clearly a bottom up type of activism and can be classified, using

the criteria exposed at the beginning of this newsletter, as community building method. There are, like those referred to above, countless experiences around the globe. But, they have not reached yet a transformative scale when it could become a complementary alternative for the production of goods and services, inducing a systemic change and widening the opportunity for people to relate in worthwhile activities. This is well explained and detailed in [Principles of a Pluralist Commonwealth](#).

[Community Wealth.org](http://CommunityWealth.org)



Special thanks to Christopher Paterson for his research and development of this section.

WHAT DO WE DO?

PERSPECTIVES FROM JONATHAN STAUFER
- HOLISTIC ACTIVISM

"SENTIMENT WITHOUT ACTION IS THE RUIN OF THE SOUL."

- EDWARD ABBEY

Nicole Rosmarino founded and is the Executive Director of the Southern Plains Land Trust, an organization that has purchased and permanently protected 25,000 acres - 40 square miles - of shortgrass prairie in Southern Colorado to benefit the wildlife that depend on the habitat it provides and on each other.

Nicole Rosmarino once described herself as a holistic activist. It took me a long time to understand what she meant by that but I think I am close to understanding now.

I believe the key to successful activism is building community, not only between like-minded individuals, but between people from all walks of life. We tend to think of activism and resistance as the same thing but while resistance to oppression or injustice requires activism, resistance to a single threat eventually ends, activism does not. I recently became friends

with a woman who works on human trafficking issues in the Midwest. She served in the United States Air Force in Afghanistan and is deeply Christian. Raised Lutheran, she recently started attending another church that was more welcoming to refugees and the homeless, rather than the suburban and mostly white Lutheran church in her neighborhood. You might think a tree-hugging, dirt-worshipping conservationist would have little in common with her, but we hit it off straight away, comparing notes on organizations doing work in each other's states. Our differences might very well have driven us apart, but being respectful of each other's beliefs, we built community between us based on what we had in common and found we had a great deal to discuss. I am not a human trafficking activist but I've helped that cause by contributing what

I can to it. My new friend is contributing to the core of my activism by reaching out to conservation activists in her community. We have both become "holistic" activists.

Phillip II of Macedon is attributed with coining the phrase διαίρει καὶ βασίλευε "Divide and rule." We are constantly told in America divided into "red" and "blue" states. In the United States and in Britain, the media constantly portrays the situation as dire, that our politics have never been more divided and that we are practically on the verge of civil war. Disparate groups live in echo chambers, listening only to those with similar viewpoints, watching only newscast that conform and inform a narrow worldview. This has proven toxic to democracy. That people hold strong, differing opinions, tend to find each other and gravitate toward news that informs and encourages deeply seated opinions is nothing new. The more recent development is the constant barrage of these opinions. They are constantly with us unless we make a concerted

effort to filter them out. The din emanating from the radio, the TV, smartphones and social media is drowning out all possibility of meaningful conversation and rather than moving together toward solutions to the multiple crises facing humankind, we are becoming entrenched in our differences to such an extent that we disagree not only on the solutions to those crises, but also on their causes and frequently on whether something actually constitutes a crisis or not. Seeking the commonalities necessary to activism begins a conversation, a face to face discussion between people defining problems and what might be done to solve them. For too long, citizens of Western liberal democracies have behaved as though our democratic institutions were inviolable. In Britain and the US, we can now attest to the ease with which they can be unbalanced. It remains to be seen if institutional structures meant to constrain and dilute power are resilient enough to withstand the current assault, but we understand that the forces that have been unleashed against them are the reaction of people who

have felt powerless to shape their own destinies politically or economically. Activism reminds us of the crucial fact that democracy is built from the ground up. The Clean Water Act is as important to Western conservation activists such as myself, as it is to social justice activists in Flint, Michigan. We therefore find common cause with each other in defending the integrity and objectives of that law. Respect for other beliefs, backgrounds and faiths is essential. The injustices and inequalities of our societies tend to fall on minorities, the marginalized and on women, not to mention other species who speak in voices we don't hear. If we are to bring about the cultural sea change necessary to bring humanity and the biosphere back from the brink of collapse, what is created will by necessity be as inclusive and as democratic as possible. As my mentor, the writer [Amy Irvine](#), frequently says, "We want these voices, we need these voices." We have excluded cultural contributions from marginalized people to the detriment of society as a whole. In times demanding change and resilience, these

voices can help us find our way and help us to change the stories being told. Diverse voices are helping us find our way through the anachronistic myth of the "Tragedy of the Commons" as promulgated by Garrett Hardin and promoted by neoliberalism, as discussed above. These voices can help guide us toward a world in which resources may be more fairly distributed among humanity and our non-human fellow occupants on Earth. Those voices can help us remember we are a part of a larger whole rather than apart from each other and everything else, offering a more holistic vision of what it means to be human. In becoming activists, we can not help but to find commonalities with other activists, even if they're not acting in our sphere. Holistic activism, then, is inevitable when approached with an open heart and open mind and when we treat each other with respect and dignity.

As we confront widespread ecological collapse, it is not enough to "whistle in the dark", pray for technological solutions or expect Damascene conversion of political leaders to initiate acts needed to save our world. How can we avoid gloom and doom scenarios and function within the constraints of the imperfect world full of imperfect people? While science and empirical observation justify our fears, the chronology and extent of this collapse are not known.

Under the circumstances we are justified in assuming that our work to mitigate climate change and prevent biodiversity loss is necessary, valuable and beneficial. Whatever action we take will either improve the present condition of some humans or animals or prevent harm. Indeed, if the climate crisis did not exist, we would still have to function with this mindset, understanding that we will not be around to see who wins or loses.

Looking back at the 1970s, post-Earth Day, one sees today the result of that immense activism: an assemblage of laws, academic curricula,

FIGHTING THE BATTLE IS A MEASURE OF OUR OWN STRENGTH, MORALE, VALUES, AND A CALL TO BEING NOT JUST WITNESS BUT ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS.

regulatory bodies and public support for the environment numbering tens of millions. Environmental activism is a public benefit and simultaneously strengthens the individual activist.

Activism can overcome the sense of futility that many experience. It is an intellectual enrichment and a socially beneficial one. It enables one to set an example for others by overcoming a sense of despair. It is no different from the dissidents, iconoclasts and irreverent critics who lost their reputations and often their lives defending principles hundreds, even thousands, of years ago.

It is principles, not ideology, that can erase bleakness that comes with imagining defeat. Becoming an agent rather than a victim brings emotional stability and political clarity. A deficit of true activists is perpetual but that in no way determines the outcome of individual battles. It is these, not the salvation of the whole planet, that contribute to personal and public security and happiness and must be our focus. We are being called not to save the world but to save a part of it.

We must base our activism on science, not ideology. The corollary of an ecological paradigm is that the social justice movement's goals of equality and equity will be subsumed because the paradigm is founded on non-arbitrary facts that are not subject to a vote. It is arguable that our biggest obstacles to bringing the social justice movement over to the ecological one.

PERSPECTIVES FROM MAX KUMMEROW

Experiences make us activists. You see a problem and conclude, "I've got to do something." During the 1960s I came to the conclusion that the Vietnam War was morally wrong, based on lies and that the USA would eventually lose because China could more than match any escalation short of all-out nuclear war, which even McNamara realized was a bad idea. Now, however, although I marched in effective demonstrations with Dr. King in Mississippi, I

don't think demonstrations are accomplishing much except adding to polarization. It is time for a new way of activism, something different from what I experienced in the 60s and 70s, more disciplined, knowledgeable, organized and serious, less confrontational, better funded. Less feel good venting, more effective persuasion. Organizing to the same extent as the political right (read Anne Nelson's Shadow Network)

will require enormous effort and investment, and new ownership for Americans mass media and social media. As I personally look into 2020, my limited activism (I am older and retired) will be simply to talk to a few on the other side. If enough of us did that (starting by listening) we could begin to bridge the gap that exists between opposing sides of the conversation. We need to think long term and not crisis to crisis.



C PATHS FOR CHANGE

PATHS FOR CHANGE

OSCAR DE URIARTE

Historically, activism has sought to bring about social or political change for sub-groups of the population who have been disenfranchised or suffer injustices from the status quo. In contrast, modern environmental activism seeks change for the global common good. The global climate crisis and subsequent ecological collapse will affect all people. Whether rich or poor, atheist or devout, conservative or progressive, we all have a stake in global environmental health. It is therefore time for a global "common effort". It is time to come together, put aside our differences and unite.

Therefore, we must respect different opinions such as those among us who sincerely believe global warming is a fraud. Nevertheless, this is not about Celsius or carbon dioxide metric tons. It's simply about breaking an ecological limit that we all depend on for our health, food, clean air and for the sake of a healthy biodiversity humanity truly depends on.

Biodiversity is like a large clock with millions of hardware pieces such as rods, pendulums and nuts. Each one of these numerous parts represents a species of animal, plant, fungus or bacteria who all work together for the clock to tick at the right speed. Every time human

activity removes a piece of hardware, the clock may slow down or speed up. As of now, science knows the ticking rate is in danger but certainly doesn't know when the whole mechanism will just stop ticking. Let us come together to respect and protect the planet's hardware for a global common good.

One of many paths that must be taken is to use democracy to demand power to the people. At times it seems we forget that the people are the boss, not the governments. A government is purely responsible to execute our authority and protect our interests.



SELF CARE FOR ACTIVISTS

SUSIE KINCADE

The physical, mental, emotional and spiritual challenge for those working for a healed planet is holding our sense of purpose in a political and social paradigm that seems hell-bent on stopping forward progress and undoing the environmental accomplishments of an entire generation. It's enough to blow a gasket, and indeed, Environmental Depression is now an actual psychological diagnosis and rising sharply, especially among children and young adults. Who can blame them?

Susie Kincaid, an environmental activist and community leader for the past 40 years, states "caving in is not an option." We are needed now, whole, healthy and present, to lead and help the next generation, so that they can lead the next and so on. So, how does one hold hope, enthusiasm, equilibrium, and build deep resilience in the face of environmental chaos?

Kincaid shares her personal and professional advice for maintaining our sanity and a needed positive outlook in dark times, offering Joanna Macy a spiritual leader for environmentalists, a pioneer in deep ecology, systems theory, social activist, and Buddhist philosopher, whose sweeping work addresses the disconnect between humanity and nature. Kincaid states that Macy helped her understand that, while she can feel immense Anger, Fear, Powerlessness, and Grief about the situation of the world, the depth of those emotions comes from the same source as her Passion, Trust, Capacity, and Love. It's up to us to choose where to focus our source energy. We can avoid a lot of suffering and stay more effective in our work if not wasting energy wringing hands, being ticked off and cynical. Kincaid says that bearing this in mind makes her a "lot more fun to be around."



Kincaid offers her personal and professional advice for activists in more detail [here](#). We've extrapolated some of the key points:

CONNECT VS. SEPARATE:

We each have gifts and networks to share those gifts. Find your stream and work in the flow of it.

BUILD BRIDGES:

Embrace your curious "beginner's mind" in conversations with those who don't agree with you. Ask questions that help broaden the conversation. As Joanna Macy says, "Watch out for thinking that there is a correct dogma. There isn't. Instead, we have to find a way to live in mutual respect in a field of uncertainty."

REFRAME RESILIENCE:

Kincaid points to Climatologist, Dr. Jem Bendell whom, she says, laid out a pretty devastating picture of the future in his paper [Deep Adaptation](#) (2018), but he advances resilience, relinquishment and restoration as a framework for dialogue and pathways forward in the face of the climate crisis.

TAKE SPIRITUAL SUSTENANCE:

Joanna Macy posits that during these times, which she calls [The Great Turning](#), there are three kinds of activism, all valid, necessary and interconnected. These are:

- 1) Actions to slow the damage to Earth and its beings.
- 2) Analysis and transformation of the foundations of our common life.
- 3) A fundamental shift in world-view and values ([Learn more](#)).

«There is a fourth that I've found on my personal journey and this is Spiritual Activism. A dear friend, and spiritual mentor recently wrote to me, "The notion of effective activism devoid of spiritual underpinnings is a recipe for burnout, arrogance and self righteousness, leading to empty positionality and failure. Spirit must be part of the equation."»

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CARE FOR VISITS

OUTLOOKS FOR ACTIVISM

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS OF THIS NEWSLETTER
SHARE THEIR PERSONAL CONCLUSIONS ON ACTIVISM.

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The overuse and degradation of natural resources, population growth, over consumption, social injustice, wars, pandemics, famine migrations, nuclear weapons risk, no concern for well being and more will require, one way or another, sooner or latter, in peace and harmony or not, deep changes on our society. These changes can be in favor of humanity and the biosphere or not. It all depends on the existence of correct proposals that can be implemented when “time has come” and people’s awareness raises to a critical point in terms of depthness and amplitude and the balance of forces becomes favorable and an imperative for change. For such, activism is essential. - **Christopher Paterson**

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The existential threat to our life support systems and all the injustices this brings demand a shift from an unlimited growth society to one that is a life-sustaining civilization. For this transformation to happen we have to remember that society and economy are subsystems of the environment - they are not equal parts. Therefore, activism in the sense of this newsletter ultimately needs to be aligned with the biophysical realities - otherwise, it may be short-lived.

Throughout history, social transformations were marked with immense uncertainty, struggle, and personal cost. We can expect this next transition to be no different but on a much larger, global scale. Today, we need increasingly smarter, strategic action from the bottom up to compete with the vested interests around us - but also the necessary policies and frameworks from the top through buy-in from governments and corporations. In the end, we are all in it; no one profits from a degraded planet.

Recently we have seen much needed and promising activism directed at reversing environmental destruction and injustice. Hopefully, in the spirit of Joanna Macy, future generations may look back on us and say: "look at our ancestors - they were involved in the great turning". - **Sibylle Frey**

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While we were working on this newsletter, the Washington Post published a very funny - and sadly true - editorial about the World Economic Forum in Davos. While the theme of this year's summit was climate change, and while delegates pledged to plant 1 trillion trees, the signs of conspicuous consumption were everywhere. My mother is kind enough to send me articles regarding various institutions' divestments from fossil fuels, and this company's or that country's plans to get off fossil fuels by 2030 or 2050. These are steps forward but it has taken literally decades of scientists sounding the alarm and activists pushing for change. As Greta Thunberg told the elites at Davos "Our house is still on fire," and meanwhile, humanity and the biosphere face, not just climate change but myriad anthropogenic threats to habitability on the only planet we know for certain can support life. It is easy to lose heart, and there is frequent temptation to join the millions of others who seem to be sleepwalking into the abyss. If we are to save anything, we must persevere. Hopefully, this newsletter has provided inspiration and stoked determination while at the same time providing some tools for keeping sane and healthy while building the networks and communities we so desperately need. - **Jonathan Staufer**

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There are many issues in which we, citizens of our communities and this one planet, need to raise our voices on. However, often without connection to the causes we're fighting for our efforts struggle to gain momentum and reach tipping points. One of my goals in my work with the **MAHB** is to support individuals' journey in understanding the human predicament and finding their chosen form of activism to fight for our planet. To act is to make a choice or a change, I hope that the **MAHB** and, possibly this newsletter, have supported and inspired a form of action within your journey to connect with the human predicament.

- Brittany Ganguly

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Sibylle Frey is an environmental scientist and consultant. She is a former research fellow at the Stockholm Environment Institute and has been a peer reviewer for the Journal of Industrial Ecology. She has over 20 years of experience of working on sustainable consumption and production models, including carbon and ecological footprint assessments, as well as scenario modelling and strategy development. Sibylle is the author/co-author of numerous publications for government, academia and industry. She has a keen interest in population and consumption issues.

Christopher Amaral Paterson is a Systems Engineer and a MS in Operations Research. He lives in Rio de Janeiro and has worked as a teacher, researcher, consultant, manager and entrepreneur. With a strong interest in social issues he dedicated the last 10 years to the need of a fundamental change in the economic system in order to preserve the environment, reduce inequality and improve well being.

Jonathan Staufer is a writer and activist from Vail, Colorado. He lives with his wife, five year old daughter, two cats, and a chihuahua blend he is certain his daughter conjured from her imagination. Like his father, Josef, Jonathan has been active in Vail's community, co-founding Trees for Vail, an effort that has planted thousands of trees in the Gore Valley. With his wife Wendi and others, he co-founded the Vail Farmers' Market, the largest farmers' market in Colorado. In wildlands conservation, he has worked with Ancient Forest Rescue, Wilderness Workshop, and was involved with the founding of Colorado Wild! (now Rocky Mountain Wild). He has recently been involved with a group of people trying to save the local herd of bighorn sheep from rapacious development. As well as the MAHB, he has written and edited for the Sierra Club's Colorado Chapter.

Lorna Salzman's environmental career began in the 1970s with a ten year stretch as regional representative of Friends of the Earth, where she focused on habitat preservation, coastal zone protection and anti-nuclear work. Later she worked as an editor on National Audubon Society's magazine American Birds, followed by two years as director of Food and Water, an anti-food irradiation group. From 1992 to 1995 she was a natural resource specialist at the NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection. She co-founded the NYS Green Party, ran for the U.S House of Representatives in 2002 on the Suffolk County Green Party and in 2004 she sought the U. S. Green Party's presidential nomination. Her writings on energy, nuclear power, climate change and habitat protection have been widely published here and abroad. She is the author of "Politics as if Evolution Mattered: Darwin, Ecology and Social Justice".

Max Kummerow spent most of his career as a real estate professor and consultant. Since 2009 he has studied Demography and Ecology while advocating for a global fertility transition. So far, despite slowly declining fertility rates and "overshoot" of sustainable human numbers, population growth continues at over 80 million per year and ending growth remains contingent on greater support for family planning.

Susie Kincade is an environmental activist of 40 years, a sacred arts practitioner, a nature-based personal coach, and freelance writer living in Colorado, who loves to drink deeply the elixir of life.

Brittany Ganguly is the **MAHB** Communications Director and also works in California statewide mental health care programs. She has masters degrees in Public Health and Social Work and is passionate about developing public health responses to the mental health crisis caused by human induced climate change and other existential threats and more adequately addressing women's health needs across the world.

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