

GASPED

GASP Education Committee
Update & Resources

Holiday Edition: Hope & Imagination

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Message from Lorraine Green - Together we are strong.

I am feeling hopeful when I see how many other organizations are working together on the climate crisis. Here's a cute video "Together we are strong"

<https://www.facebook.com/bev.boden.9/videos/10157964320267957>

I have hope that our young people WILL get us out of this mess. They are asking the tough questions. I remain hopeful as a result of the AMAZING women who are part of GASP and other organizations I am part of. This "Sisterhood" who remain resilient in the face of so much, gives me the energy to go on.

Carole Holmes celebrates Ecofeminists

GASPs are "Ecofeminists." We are women who are taking the lead in climate change movements here at home and abroad because a sustainable world depends on it. Here is a special quote I like:

"We are either going to have a future where women lead the way to make peace with the Earth or we are not going to have a human future at all."—Vandana Shiva

So honoured and thrilled to be part of this awesome and inspirational group of women activists!

Five Lessons we learned from COVID in 2020 about what really matters:

1. The **importance of family and friends**. Some of us are connecting with loved ones more often via zoom than we ever did before COVID;

2. How much **we need nature** - many folks enjoy the beautiful outdoor trails and waterfront parks. Nature has saved us and is worth fighting for!

3. The **interdependence and interconnectedness of everyone** on this planet. It's been encouraging how well Halton residents have adapted to mask-wearing. We have been taking care of each other. Climate change is another global challenge. Let's hope we can mobilize and put more energy into preparing for the upcoming challenges;

4. For those unfortunate people who have lost loved ones, COVID has shown the **importance of cherishing and appreciating our loved ones**;

5. How much stuff we own! So many have used the lockdown to sort through closets only discover that **we all have TOO MUCH STUFF!**

With this in mind, the chart at right shared by Pat McKee last year offers suggestions for a green holiday season.

- Create a scrapbook of happy memories for ones you love.



- Try newspaper wrapping paper with articles that your loved one would enjoy!
- Consider giving eco-friendly products with no packaging from companies such as The Kind Matter Company on Kerr St. and in Milton or Ecofillosophy on Bronte Road.

Enjoy the beauty of nature during this magical winter solstice and focus on what really matters.

Source: <https://ethicalnag.org/2012/11/21/buy-nothing-day-nov-23-2012/>



New Habits for the Holidays

Erika Abbott



Whatever you celebrate, it's nice to show your loved ones that you are thinking of them. But that doesn't mean we have to go out and buy, buy, buy. As we see in the "Ethical Hierarchy of Gift Giving" there are so many ways to be green during the holiday season! Here are some new habits to embrace as we reimagine our holidays.

Give an experience

Give the gift of an experience: this will have a different look this year. Why not look into virtual classes or events? This year experience gifts might be especially appreciated.

Give the gift of your time

Write down some stories about your life and share them with the younger generation. My kids were surprised to find out that my dad didn't have an indoor toilet until he was a teenager! Now, they ask him for stories about his life all the time. It's a fun way for them to connect and to learn about life in another place and time.

Give green products

Last year, our kids gifted a travel cutlery set and reusable produce bags to both sets of grandparents at their request!

Check out local green shops for ideas. The Kind Matter company delivers and offers curbside pickup!

Support Local!

Many of our local shops and businesses have options to help support them during this challenging time. Why not buy a seat at film.ca for a loved one?

Inspire gift giving to charities



Give an amount to be donated to a charity and let the receiver choose the charity.

Purchase a gift through a charity's website to support a cause close to their heart. With food insecurity being heightened during COVID,

consider donations to: Oakville Fareshare Food Bank, The Lighthouse Shelter, Food for Life and Kerr St. Mission. Supporting local environmental groups is another great cause.

Upcycle or repair something that would be cherished by the receiver.

Avoid wrapping paper! Wrapping paper and gift bags are often not recyclable, even if they are labelled as such. Instead, try wrapping with fabric, or follow Kathy Mason's suggestion of saving glossy flyers to use as wrapping paper.

Remember this doesn't have to happen all at once. If this seems overwhelming, try choosing one thing to change this year. In our house, we've decided to not buy any new gift wrap. Once we are finished what we have in our stockpile, we will consider eco-friendly, reusable gift wrap.



A few GASP members have adopted animals for young children during the holidays. The online purchase supports the World Wildlife Fund. The kids get a symbolic adoption kit with a plush animal, adoption certificate
<https://gifts.worldwildlife.org/gift-center/gifts/Species-Adoptions.aspx>



Can you imagine?

- A Canadian Climate Action plan led by a multi-party, multi-gov't level mobilization effort?
- A Canada where scientists, youth, seniors, unions, faith groups, Indigenous leaders, business community, politicians work to address the impacts of climate change?
- A Canada ending dependence on fossil fuels and having 100% renewable energy?
- A Canada in which every person has clean air, clean water, healthy food, and a safe environment?
- A Canada of low-carbon, climate-resilient rural and urban communities.



**GRANDMOTHERS ACT
TO SAVE THE PLANET**

The GASP VISION is to create a green legacy for our grandchildren and their grandchildren.

Audre Lorde

*When I dare to be powerful,
To use my strength in the service of my vision
Then it becomes less and less important
whether I am afraid.*

What does a green future look like to you?

During the recent zoom webinar connecting Sheila Watt-Cloutier in Kuujuaq, Nunavik to the audience in Halton, she spoke about being on a panel with Tim Flannery, the Australian environmentalist. A member of the audience asked: "Given all the science and data-based evidence about climate change, why is nothing being done? Flannery replied: "Lack of imagination."

What is your vision of a green future? As GASP members we share a vision of a society that values a healthier and more equitable society.

Lately there have been a series of excellent documentaries that offer such a vision:

The Biggest Little Farm chronicles the eight-year quest of John and Molly Chester as they trade city living for 200 acres of barren farmland and a dream to harvest in harmony with nature. A GASP favourite of 2020!

2040 - the key theme is that **we have all the knowledge and tools we need** right now to re-green the planet and draw CO₂ out of the air.

Kiss the ground - reveals the first viable solution to our climate crisis - regenerative agriculture.

“Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”

John Lewis - American statesman and civil rights leader who died in July 2020



Message to bankers:

Imagine a new way of doing business

“If you protect the Arctic, you save the planet,” Sheila Watt-Cloutier said. “What happens in the Arctic does not stay in the Arctic. Everything is connected through our common atmosphere, not to mention our common spirit and our common humanity.”

She called on the bankers to reframe debate around climate change away from one simply about economics and into a new approach that looks at the connections between the environment, human rights and the economy. She asked them to imagine a new way of doing business, that aligns its values with the Indigenous world, rather than replicating the values of Western society, which haven’t worked.

She reminded them that the Inuit are not victims — rather they are ingenious and resilient people who can build houses out of snow that are warm enough for a newborn baby.

“We don’t want anyone on a mission to save us ... that’s been part of the problem all along,” she said, adding that the focus should be on the resourcefulness of the Inuit people, rather than on extracting resources from the ground, which will only add more emissions.

Watt-Cloutier is hopeful about the future and says young people among the Inuit are emerging as environmental leaders.

<https://www.nationalobserver.com/2019/02/21/news/sheila-watt-cloutier-urges-bankers-take-bold-risks-fight-climate-change>

Reasons to feel Hopeful for 2021!

1. We have a US administration committed to action on Climate Change.
2. The COVID vaccine is coming!
3. Canada has a strong environmental movement and GASP will connect and collaborate as much as we can.
4. We have all the tools we need to reduce GHG emissions on the planet.
5. Folks like Daniela and Hart Jansson are early adopters of the most eco-friendly “passive house” standard. If all Canadians lived in a house built to that standard, Canada could meet our Paris Accord commitments. We have members leading the way for a healthy planet
6. The little town of Eden Mills near Guelph is closing in on its goal of being the first carbon neutral town in the world, proving what collective action can achieve.

A **Green Future** as Imagined by Christiana Figueres

Christiana Figueres is a founder of the Global Optimism group - <https://globaloptimism.com> and was head of the UN climate change convention for the Paris agreement 2015.

The world that we do want is a world in which we walk out of our homes and the air is fresh and moist. It almost feels like we are walking in a forest, because, very likely, that's what we're doing, because our cities have been planted with just an unlimited number of trees, bushes, flowers, vegetable gardens.

The rooftops are producing either vegetables or flowers. We have many, many more trees, and we have very few cars. So, the parking spaces, those ugly buildings that we used to have as parking, they have actually been converted into green areas or into battery-charging stations.

And the walls, the vertical walls of buildings that used to be, you know, not very attractive cement have actually all been transformed into either solar energy-gathering areas or they're completely covered with verdant vines.

So, we have a very different city experience that is actually much more enjoyable. And if we go to developing countries, the 800 million people who today in developing countries have no access to electricity, hence, they're in extreme poverty, they would all have electricity in their homes. Every person would have electricity. That means that children will be able to study at night. It means that women can stay home and have a little cottage industry, and it also means that clinics, no matter how remote they are, they will have a little refrigerator where they can keep medicines refrigerated, and women can have safe births. That's a very different world.

Visit:

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/amanpour-and-company/video/what-will-earth-look-like-in-2050-without-climate-action/>

Life On Our Planet - Netflix documentary by Sir David Attenborough offers hope

The film gives us plenty of hope with stories of successful re-wilding. In order to build a more sustainable future for ourselves, Sean Youra (<https://medium.com/climate-conscious/david-attenboroughs-witness-statement-59a2c86f5ec>) summarizes the film's recommendations - familiar to GASP members:

- Utilize natural forces (e.g. solar, wind, geothermal, tidal) to power our society
- Divest from fossil fuels
- Implement "no-fish" (or "no-take") zones to restore marine life, which would still leave plenty of fish for consumption
- Slow human population growth by working to eradicate poverty and improving access to education and healthcare
- Adopt a more plant-based diet to reduce our need for large-scale animal agriculture. Eating meat uses up too much land which the planet can't afford.
- Move towards regenerative and sustainable agriculture that improves crop yields while reducing emissions as well as water and pesticide use
- Halt deforestation and reversing this trend, to reforest natural habitats and restore our natural carbon sinks in the process

We need to bring back biodiversity so that future generations can enjoy wild nature. The wilder and more diverse a forest - the more carbon it can absorb from the atmosphere. As Attenborough says:

"If we take care of nature, nature will take care of us."

Frame the Climate Change Issue with Hope

The only way to convince people to act on climate change is to paint a positive picture of a green future. Tell a story of how we are on our way to a much smarter society, where we get better quality of life with less resource use.

Going green *is* the future. Norwegian psychologist Per Espen Stoknes suggests four ways for communicating GASP's vision for the future:

1. Social Approach

Profile Halton families and the changes they are making to reduce GHG emissions. If these strategies are seen as something that friends, neighbours and your network are doing - it will make the concept more personal. A powerful tool is using emotions to motivate change. If a resident sees his/her neighbour installing solar panels, driving an electric car etc, he/she will want to match the actions and maintain **"green status."** Humans are herd or social animals - our behaviour is collective.

2. Supportive Framing of the Climate Change Issue

It is a **health issue** - it's about your family's health, clean air and clean water - a safe future for all. It's about change towards a smarter, more effective way of

getting business done and living our lives.

3. Story Telling

We need to tell better stories that create a longing and a vision for where we want to go for a low-carbon society. It's fun, it's smart, it's more conducive to human interactions. Hart and Daniella Jansson created eco-friendly home that they love.

4. Signals and Feedback

To keep the momentum going, there should be updates about how families are adapting to climate change and the successes they are achieving. Everyone wants to save money and live in a healthy environment. Well built homes will deliver on both of these desires.

For example we installed a high efficiency air conditioner this summer and watched our hydro consumption fall compared to the previous summer. After building their home to the highest quality Passive House standards, Hart and Daniella have had great results in terms GHG and energy reduction. Stay tuned for an upcoming issue of **GASP ED on green buildings.**

https://www.ted.com/talks/per_espen_stoknes_how_to_transform_apocalypse_fatigue_into_action_on_global_warming?



The Electric Vehicle Revolution

Today, less than 2% of cars purchased in Ontario are electric. But hopeful changes are being made around the world:

- A ban on the sale of new gas-powered vehicles in Quebec as of **2035** stands to be the flagship of the Legault government's green economy plan.
- Norway's goal is for all new cars sold in the country after **2025** to be electric. When hybrids are included, 89% of new cars sold in Norway are electric.
- California says it will ban the sale of new gasoline cars by **2035**. The state becomes first in U.S. to set hard zero-emissions-vehicles mandate.
- New cars and vans powered wholly by petrol and diesel will not be sold in the UK **from 2030**, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said. It is part of what Mr Johnson calls a **"green industrial revolution"** to tackle climate change and create jobs in industries such as nuclear energy.