

Mary Alsager's Climate Report

I have been aware of climate issues for many years. While in high school in the 1970's, I wrote an essay on the effect of fluorocarbons on the ozone layer. Years later, our two daughters bemoaned not being allowed to have aerosol hair spray! In more recent years, I have become a proud owner of a Prius, as has our younger daughter. I call mine my green machine or my Al Gore-mobile.

Not too many months ago, maybe 8, I attended a film showing during the CMU film festival. It was a documentary by Michael Moore. It is not on his web-site, so I believe it is still in the final production stages. So I don't know the name of it! But the subject matter was climate actions. Through-out the film, he was talking about the bio-fuel industry. He showed images of mountain tops in Maine being de-forested to a degree that laid them bare. The locals had not expected such a drastic result following the promises made. He ended with showing the rain forest, and areas that were also stripped of all vegetation. The final picture of a monkey high in a dead, bare tree, with no other trees around, was haunting.

While attending the virtual GA, I was very moved by the Saturday night Ware Lecturer, Naomi Klein. So I checked out her book [On Fire: The Burning Case for a Green New Deal](#). Just reading the introduction blew me away. She wrote that the Solomon Islands have already lost 5 small islands, with 6 more at the same risk of disappearing. Naomi reflected back to March of 2019 when there were massive student protests during the Global School Strike for Climate. Students in Australia had just months earlier experienced a Southern city, Port Austin, reach 121 degrees F. They had seen the Darling River, due to extreme temperatures and poor management, clogged with a million dead fish. The U.S. barely noticed the student protest.

Ms. Klein tells the tale of Greta Thunberg, young Swedish girl who is on the Autism spectrum. Greta became a warrior for climate action. At age 15, her fears about the climate came to the public eye, and this has energized children worldwide.

Every continent is witnessing the effects of climate change. Our interconnected web of life shows these impacts: economics, livelihoods, food sources, health, and quality of life.

Ms. Klein says we need many tools to cut global emissions. These include:

- Carbon taxes
- Changes in how we produce energy
- Change how we produce food
- Change how we transport ourselves
- And a big one: to change the thinking of society as a whole

A chapter in the book discusses the effects of the explosion of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico. Another chapter lays out how the climate change issue has become political. Any progress that was started in the U.S. was paused, leading to years of fracking, pipeline development, and the re-development of coal fields in Montana and Wyoming. (One of my daughters has lived in both of those states and talks of returning!)

When we talk about needing to drastically decrease our consumption of fossil fuels, our "Green" solutions must provide jobs that replace the lost ones. A good example of this comes from Germany.

They created over 400,000 green energy jobs in slightly more than a decade. Energy grids are now owned by cities and towns. Other countries have also made positive steps. New Zealand no longer allows off-shore drilling. Norway, Germany, France, along with 12 other countries now have goals of having no internal combustion cars after 2025. California has introduced the same idea for 2035.

We need major countries to join in promoting less consumption and forcing fossil fuel companies to clean their own messes. One U.S. metropolis, New York City, has plans to bring people out of poverty by 2025 by raising the minimum wage, investing in affordable housing, and GREEN, GREEN, GREEN improving mass transit.

Climate change does not stand alone. It connects with pollution, poverty, racism, colonialism, and despair. Naomi says, "Only a fearless and holistic approach, which sacrifices no issue on the altar of any other, will deliver the deep transformation we need."

I salute Karen Turnbull, our water warrior, and Gisela Moffit, a climate change champion! There are others among us with our own passions about the climate. When we are able, I would love to hear about your thoughts, your dreams, your passions and about your actions!