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FROM THE CHAIR



There was an interesting article in the Sunday Boston Globe on December 29 entitled "How to Cut Carbon -- and Get Happier, Too." Catchy title. Certainly got my attention. You mean there is a way for us to cut down on our carbon footprint and get an added jolt of happiness? There was discussion of happiness as an "approach emotion," a "positive feeling that spurs us to engage with challenges in novel, creative ways." This was in contrast to the feeling of shame we might feel regarding carbon consumption. "Shame is what psychologists call an avoidance emotion: it makes us want to retreat rather than step up." And this adds to the helplessness that many people feel when confronted with the potential horrors of climate change -- a sense that there is nothing we can do in this situation to make things better.

The article then speaks of examples of how to gain happiness while taking meaningful actions: limit shopping or limit meat consumption so that it feels like a treat when it is done, gain an endorphin high by commuting by bike rather than by car, avoid the hassles of business air travel and its significant carbon footprint by skyping into a meeting instead. But something is missing from this approach. The reality is that the life changes we need to make in the face of climate change require a degree of inconvenience and self-sacrifice. Why sugarcoat this? If we use the lens of happiness to determine what changes we make in our lives to combat climate change, our actions will be few and of little significance. Rather, it is better to think, "This situation is bad, but there are things that I as an individual can do" -- as suggested by Howard Zinn's comment that "Small acts multiplied by millions of people can transform the world." Some of those actions may give immediate happiness, but many will involve some degree of discomfort or inconvenience (for example, turning down the thermostat, avoiding single-use plastics, shopping for food at the farmers' market, driving less). So be it. And if these actions give us satisfaction, great. Personal satisfaction scores pretty high on the happiness scale.

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IN THE NEWS

New incentives build on Governor Mills' 100,000 heat pump goal to help create jobs, save Maine people money, and fight climate change

Author: Erin Keller (NewsCenterMaine), January 13, 2020



Governor Janet Mills visited F.W. Webb Company in Augusta on January 14 to announce new financial incentives designed to expand the use of high-performance, energy-efficient heat pumps in Maine on January 14. The incentives will advance the Governor's initiative to install 100,000 heat pumps in Maine homes by 2025. The initiative was signed into law last year.

According to Efficiency Maine Trust, a high-performance heat pump can help an average Maine home reduce its oil consumption by 270-540 gallons per year; reduce its carbon emissions by an estimated 3,600-7,250 pounds per year per home per high-performance heat pump; and, when the initiative is fully realized, can save Maine people between a total of \$30-\$60 million annually, providing an important boost to the local economy.

Growing the heat pump business in Maine will replace high-carbon fossil fuels with cleaner electricity while lowering heating bills and creating jobs.

YOUTH INITIATIVES

Update on the Youth Initiatives Group

We continue to research curricula related to climate change education. There seems to be much activity in this area both statewide and nationally. We are considering issues, aspects and new ideas that might be valuable to teachers here in York.



Our current focus is to develop a collaborative relationship with York's teachers and administrators. We are aware of their "full plates" and hope we can do some of the time-consuming legwork related to developing curriculum content, perhaps identifying some additional resources related to climate change.

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WASTE REDUCTION AND DIVERSION

Expanding Composting in York

Did you know that food scraps make up at least 50% of the garbage picked up at curbside in York? These food scraps go into a landfill or are incinerated. Either disposal method generates high levels of greenhouse gases, including methane and carbon dioxide, the great culprits behind climate change. Faced with the worldwide effects of climate change, such as forest fires, extreme storms, water scarcities, rising sea levels and other hazards that threaten our and our children's lives and well-being, we have to ask: what can one person do?

There are many answers to that question, but one of the easiest and most immediate personal responses is composting at home. Food scraps are a valuable resource, but we've been throwing them away to our trash bins and kitchen sink disposers. The detritus from disposers moves through our sewers and sewage facility strainers and is deposited eventually in a landfill.

But with composting, we can reduce our contributions to landfill volume and incinerated garbage and thus to production of greenhouse gases. Just like the parts of the food we consume, the parts of food we throw away contain important vitamins and minerals that, when returned to the soil, are recycled back into the ecosystem and taken up by the plants and flowers that grow on the land.

In this new year, let's resolve to reduce our carbon footprint by composting food scraps at home. We can compost in our own backyards, or we can contract with Mr. Fox Composting, a local industrial compost company that turns kitchen scraps into rich soil that is delivered to subscribers in the spring for garden use.



To encourage York residents to start composting, York Ready for 100% is offering a free kitchen countertop (or under-the-counter) bin and a roll of liner bags to the first 50 York residents who sign up with Mr. Fox Composting. When full, the smaller liner bags are tied and deposited in a larger bin provided by Mr. Fox.

For \$16 a month, Mr. Fox will provide an 8-gallon container to be kept in a garage, basement or outside. This larger container is fitted with an inner liner and a secure easy-access lid; Mr. Fox will empty this container and provide a new liner every other week.

To sign up, go to mrfoxcomposting.com, or call 855-673-6926. The 'get service' tab at the top of the page connects to the registration page. To receive the free counter-top bin or with any questions, send an email to composting@yorkreadyfor100.org. Just let us know that you're registered, and we'll make sure the free kitchen bin and liners are delivered along with the larger bin.

Let's do the right thing and take another step to help reduce greenhouse gases. It's a small personal act that ultimately can make a big difference. And let's also tell our neighbors about composting.

York Ready for 100% is a citizens' group that advocates for clean, renewable energy. For more information, please see yorkreadyfor100.org or info@yorkreadyfor100.org.

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YORK ENERGY STEERING COMMITTEE - UPDATE

2019 was a big year for climate action in York.

Thanks to the work of AmeriCorps member Lucy Brennan last year, a Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHG) was completed for the entire York community. This benchmark of York's carbon footprint led the Energy Steering Committee to propose three actions to the Board of Selectmen: First, to join the Global Covenant of Mayors; Second, to set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 and to zero% by 2050; and Third to create a Climate Action Plan (CAP) to help York achieve these ambitious goals. After a strong showing of citizens — the result of the work done by York Ready for 100% in getting the word out — the Select Board approved all three recommendations in the fall of 2019, and agreed to place on the May ballot a \$150,000 budget for a robust, community-involved climate planning process.

In recognition of the urgency of cutting our emissions and addressing how to adapt to the effects of climate change that are already underway, the Board additionally agreed that we should begin preparing immediately so York will be ready to get started as soon as the climate plan budget is approved by voters in May. The Energy Steering Committee has begun laying the foundation through the work of our Vista Volunteer,



Christine Seibert and citizen volunteer Skip Schnable, with the assistance of York's energy consultant, Chris Lotspeich of Celtic Energy/NV5.

We have refined our vision of a planning process that will place at the forefront the goal of deep engagement of community members — not just Town officials but also residents, businesses and organizations, representatives of neighborhoods and other interested groups. A special effort will be made to reach out to hard-to-reach groups: students, older citizens, the low-income community. Community

members will help create the action plans, and they will be especially helpful once the overall plan is complete and we implement its goals.

As we saw in Lucy Brennan's presentation to the Selectboard in 2019, York's greatest emissions are not in Town Government facilities, the Schools or other public institutions; they are in our homes and cars and our places of business. The task is simple but not easy: To reduce energy consumption through efficiency in buildings and processes, convert the power for our building heat and automobiles to electricity, and provide that electricity using clean, renewable energy sources. York simply cannot reach its goal of zero carbon emissions without the full support of its citizens. Our planning process requires deep citizen involvement.



Christine and Skip have interviewed other towns on how they have conducted their CAPs with maximum community engagement. The tips we've heard from them will help us create a more effective process and tell us what we are looking

for in a consultant who will guide our planning. Many innovative ideas have emerged. For example, Concord, MA and Austin, TX both used ambassadors (or "street teams") to go out and engage their neighborhoods in one-on-one discussions. This helps gather quality feedback from people who might otherwise be difficult to reach. Jersey City, NJ created a "Meeting in a Box" that includes a slide presentation, surveys, and other tools that can be used at house parties and community and neighborhood organization meetings. Cincinnati, Ohio signed up over 100 citizen volunteers who each took responsibility for implementing an aspect of an action plan such as a neighborhood group-purchase program of home-weatherization services.

We have also been learning about the consulting firms that have assisted other communities in their planning. Climate action planning is a relatively new

field and experts go about it in a variety of ways. By becoming somewhat familiar with who the consultants are in the field and what their respective specialties are, York will be more prepared to make a choice once the Request for Proposals (RFP) is issued.

That RFP will be issued as soon as possible after the May vote, and all of this background work is leading to the task of creating an RFP with the right scope of work (SOW) to achieve the goals that York has: a roadmap for getting to zero emissions that guides Town officials and citizens alike for the next 30 years.

While there is much still to do, York's Energy Steering Committee's early preparation work will build a strong foundation for the community's climate action plan next summer.

Christine Seibert

Goodwill AmeriCorps VISTA

York Energy Steering Committee

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EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

If you are interested in participating in the planning of York Ready for 100% educational events, join us on Thursday, January 23 at 4:30 PM for our monthly Educational Team Meeting at the York Public Library.

➤ **“Climate Change Discussions”, Friday, February 21, 3:30 - 5:00 PM in the York Public Library.**

The discussion topics and format are still being discussed. Join Debby Ronquist on Feb. 21 and take part in developing a program of meaningful conversations on climate and energy that will be held on the third Friday of the month.

➤ **“ Meet the U.S. Senatorial Candidates: Regional Environmental Town Hall Event” (Date to be determined), Community Auditorium, February 2020, 6 PM - 9 PM. (Tabling from 6 - 7 PM; Town Hall Meeting 7 - 8:30 PM.**
So far, four of the six U.S. senatorial candidates will be participating. This event will be publicized throughout Southern York County.

➤ **Maine Bicentennial Event - March 2020. Program being developed.**

➤ **Earth Day Event - April 2020. Program being developed.**

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- The York Select Board is reconstituting the Town Recycling Committee. It will be a committee of 9 York residents. Volunteers interested in participating in setting policy are encouraged to pick up an application at the Town Manager's office. Speak with Steve Burns if you'd like more information. <sburns@yorkmaine.org>
- We need help designing the monthly newsletter template. Contact *Bob Brisebois*, briseboisb@gmail.com.



HONORABLE MENTION

We like to call attention to our fellow travelers and collaborators.

York Land Trust

York Land Trust provides important benefits to our community, including protection of the natural environment and preservation of the scenic character of our town. They safeguard water quality and protect farmland and forests in York and the surrounding area. They collaborate with other environmental organizations and educate adults and youth on care and protection of our natural world. They promote understanding of the relationship between a healthy environment and the well-being of the people and wildlife that depend on it.



York Land Trust is effective also in their support for town committees like the Energy Steering Committee and the Select Board as they take steps to reduce York's carbon footprint and develop a Climate Action Plan. The Land Trust has worked with York Ready for 100% on several occasions, such as the Electric Vehicle Fair, which was held on the grounds of their headquarters, and the presentation of the film "Tomorrow." Also, they endorsed our program "Combating Climate Change: Maine Strategies and Initiatives", and they often provide space and furniture for our meetings and events.

York Land Trust is in the forefront of efforts to protect our environment and our town into the future. Honorable mention, indeed: the York Land Trust is a local treasure.

POEM: An experiment: translating the climate crisis into 18 lines of verse. . .

What is the Price at the Pump Today?



By James Kences

Alas we can't see it, in these azure blue skies
So while one half knows the dangers, the other denies
Barrels of oil, those vast piles of coal
The fruits of our progress, has finally taken its toll
A rise in the temperature by just mere degrees
Is more than enough to bring rising seas
It's all of that carbon that's daily choking the air
Each of us in our own way contributes our share
The cars that are driven, the planes that are flown
The excessive consumption for which we all must atone
We must quickly grow wiser in the choices we make

Have you not heard the message, the future's at stake
To show little notice of the voices that warn
Is to cheapen the lives of generations unborn
And what is the world they are likely to know
Will it be of drowned coastlines, and the two Poles without snow
And how do we answer, when they've learned what they've lost
Our gratifications, were they worth this great cost?

BOOK REVIEW

101 Ways to Go Zero Waste

By Kathryn Kellogg, The Countrymen Press, New York, 2019

Minimalism Meets DIY in an Accessible Guide to Household Waste Reduction

We all know how important it is to reduce our environmental footprint, but it can be daunting to know where to begin. Enter Kathryn Kellogg, **who can fit all her trash from the past two years into a 16-ounce mason jar**. How? She starts by saying “no” to straws and grocery bags, and “yes” to a reusable water bottle and compostable dish scrubbers. And from there she continues on her quest to eliminate waste from her household.

In *101 Ways to Go Zero Waste*, Kellogg shares these tips and more, along with DIY recipes for beauty and home; advice for responsible consumption and making better choices for home goods, fashion and the office; and even secrets for how to go waste-free at the airport. **“It’s not about perfection,”** she says. **“It’s about making better choices.”**

Can just one person really make a difference? Yes! Every day we make decisions that impact the planet. You get to decide if they are positive or negative. How do you get to work? How do you buy groceries? What are you eating? Where is what you are eating coming from? From your town, another town in your state, from across the country or from across the world? Every purchase you make is a vote for the kind of world you want to live in.

This is a practical, friendly blueprint of realistic lifestyle changes for anyone who wants to reduce their waste. The first recommended step is to **get to know your trash**.

[Available at Amazon:](#)

About the Author

Kathryn Kellogg is a recognized spokesperson for the zero-waste movement; she blogs at goingzerowaste.com. She has been featured by National Geographic, The Guardian, CNN, Refinery 29, Bustle and other outlets. She lives with her husband, Justin, and her dog, Nala, in the Bay Area of San Francisco.

Review by John Werner,
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York Ready for 100% Education Committee and Core Team member



