

Earth Speaks

Volume 4: January 16, 2025

www.ionaconner.com

1. Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Chaos: Superior to technological solutions.
2. Consumer Liberation: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

The Elephant in the Room: Trump

*Email from Allen Hengst, Washington DC after he sent me the article with this headline: Activists Gearing Up to Counter Boss's Inauguration**

I will rain on Trump's January 20 inaugural parade on Pennsylvania Avenue like I did 8 years ago – with the same protest sign that I managed to save.

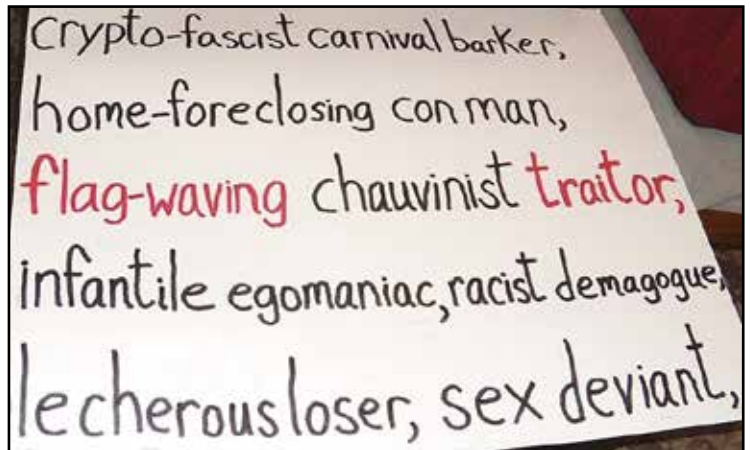
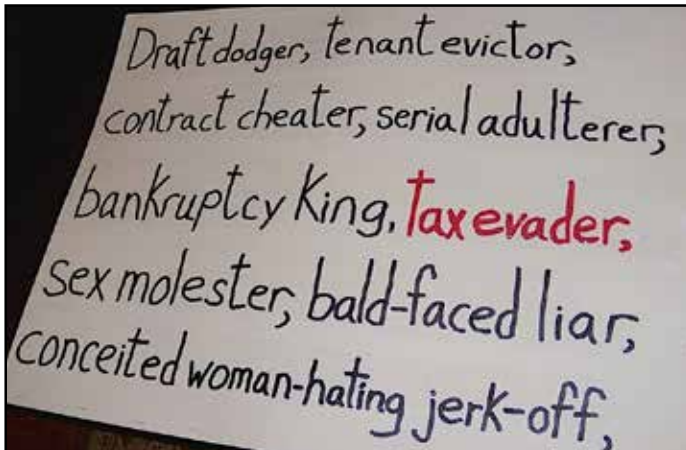
Similarly, like eight years ago with the Women's March, I'll watch the speeches at the January 18 "People's March"

on C-Span.

Allen is the former Wire Editor for Iona's newspapers and long-time tracker of Trump's misdeeds. If you'd like to be on his email list, contact him at ahengst@verizon.net

Photos by Allen Hengst: left is the front of his sign; the back is on the right below.

** See article at <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/trump-inauguration-peoples-march-protest-1235230466/>*



Trump Fumes as Final Jack Smith Report Details 'Series of Criminal Efforts to Retain Power'

By Jake Johnson

Common Dreams: January 14, 2025

The special counsel who investigated and charged Donald Trump over his attempts to subvert the 2020 election said in a final report released by the U.S. Justice Department early Tuesday that the former president would have been convicted for "a series of criminal efforts to retain power" had he not won another White House term in November.

"But for Mr. Trump's election and imminent return to the presidency, the office assessed that the admissible evidence was sufficient to obtain and sustain a conviction at trial," wrote Jack Smith, who resigned from the Justice Department late last week ahead of Inauguration Day.

Smith pointed to the Justice Department's view that, "The Constitution prohibits the continued indictment and prosecution of a president," a position

he said is "categorical and does not turn on the gravity of the crimes charged, the strength of the government's proof, or the merits of the prosecution, which the office stands fully behind."

The report, which Trump's legal team sought to bury, is the first of two volumes that Smith's team produced following the completion of its investigations into the former president's unlawful election interfer-

Continued on next page

Continuation from previous page

ence and hoarding of classified documents. Smith dropped the two cases shortly after Trump's victory in the 2024 election.

According to the Justice Department, Smith has urged that the volume on the classified documents probe not be released to the public while the case against Trump's former co-defendants is still pending.

In the newly released report, Smith detailed how Trump and his allies tried to "induce state officials to ignore true vote counts," manufactured "fraudulent slates of presidential electors in seven states that he had lost," directed "an angry mob to the United States Capitol to obstruct the congressional certification of the presidential election," and leveraged "rioters' violence to further delay it."

"In service of these efforts, Mr. Trump worked with other people to achieve a common plan: to overturn the election results and perpetuate himself in office," the report added.

Trump responded furiously to the report's release, ranting on social media



that "Deranged Jack Smith was unable to successfully prosecute the Political Opponent of his 'boss,' Crooked Joe Biden, so he ends up writing yet another 'Report' based on information that the Unselect Committee of Political Hacks and Thugs ILLEGALLY DESTROYED AND DELETED, because it showed how totally innocent I

was, and how completely guilty Nancy Pelosi, and others, were."

In his introduction to the report, Smith rejected as "laughable" Trump's claim that the investigations were politically motivated or influenced in any way by the Biden administration.

"While we were not able to bring the cases we charged to trial, I believe the fact that our team stood up for the rule of law matters. I believe the example our team set for others to fight for justice without regard for the personal costs matters," Smith wrote. "The facts, as we uncovered them in our investigation and as set forth in my report, matter. Experienced prosecutors know that you cannot control outcomes, you can only do your job the right way for the right

reasons. I conclude our work confident that we have done so, and that we have met fully our obligations to the department and to our country."

Source: <https://www.common-dreams.org/news/jack-smith-final-report>

How to Subscribe

Dear Friends,

If you'd like to receive future issues of my newspaper, please email me at grassroots-coalition@pa.net. Also, email me if you have stories and photos you'd like me to consider publishing in future issues. I publish a Messages page similar to Letters to the Editor, so if you want to share your thoughts, please do so.

I'd like this to be a team effort as it has been in

the past, but we need time to develop this project and figure out ways to work together.

This is a labor of love but I always appreciate donations, which you can send to: Iona Conner, 157 Chambersbridge Road 4A, Brick, NJ 08723. If you use Zelle or PayPal, money goes directly to my bank account via dosomething@pa.net. Cash is OK, too. Thank you!

For the Earth,

Iona



Fair Use Symbol <https://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html>



Fair use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances.

Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of

uses – such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research – as examples of activities that may qualify as fair use. Section 107 calls for consideration of the following:

(1) Purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes. . . .

Hear Me Out: In 2025, Climate Activists Should Spend Less Time on Climate

If you're a climate activist who doesn't know what to do for the next four years, the answer is remarkably simple:
Join other movements.

By Sophie Shepherd
Common Dreams: January 9, 2025

Ever since my first foray into climate activism in 2019, I have dreaded the year 2025. In my mind, it's always been the Big Deadline.

The 2015 Paris agreement concluded that greenhouse gas emissions must peak before 2025 if we have any chance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

And yet, now that we're standing at the precipice of this once-far-off deadline, we are still so far from the meaningful climate action necessary to fend off unstoppable climate catastrophe. Indeed, we've just worsened our chances at a survivable future.

We need to build a strong left to fight fascism during Trump's presidency and to build a just green future

in its aftermath.

The U.S. became the largest oil producer in 2018 and continues to expand domestic fossil fuel production. American citizens just elected a fascist president who has promised to gut the Environmental Protection Agency and establish U.S. "energy dominance," but the Democrat who supposedly could have saved us from Donald Trump refused to ban fracking and praised U.S. oil production.

Technically, I should be panicking. I certainly was when my college graduation last May was preceded by some headlines announcing the 1.5°C limit had already been reached. But now, as a climate activist in New York City, I find myself surprisingly calm.

This calm isn't simply due to local climate wins, though I have celebrated those. Gov. Kathy Hochul just signed the Climate Change Superfund Act into law, which will require fossil fuel companies to pay billions into a fund to help New Yorkers recover from climate disasters. In other words, New

York will force polluters to pay to clean up their own messes. This is a huge step in holding fossil fuel companies accountable.

Yet my optimism arises out of a different trend in the climate movement: Climate activists are (finally) showing up for other movements.

Historically, the climate movement has attempted to isolate itself from other political and social issues, arguing that climate policy is "just science." This majority-white movement has failed to see that fossil fuel emissions are part of a larger history of the Global North colonizing and exploiting both people and the planet for decades. The climate crisis is a symptom of a broader exploitative system. To change that system, we need a united left that will fight for all people – not just those who identify as environmentalists.

In 2020, climate activists were rightfully berated for not showing up enough for the Black Lives Matter movement. Thankfully, I think many

Continued on next page

"The world was a different place, once," Niall says into the microphone. "Once there were creatures in the sea so miraculous they seemed straight out of fantasy. There were things that loped across plains or slithered through tall grass, things that leaped from the boughs of trees, which were plentiful, too. Once there were glorious winged beasts that roamed the sky-world, and now they are going. . . ."

"They aren't going," he corrects himself. "They are being violently and indiscriminately slaughtered by our indifference. It has been decided by our leaders that economic growth is more important. That the extinction crisis is an acceptable trade for their greed."

~ Migrations (a novel): Page 165 ~

Continuation from previous page

climate activists heard that message because today, they have come out in droves for Palestine.

Many of the college students who organized campus encampments last spring to urge their school administrators to divest from Israel and the U.S. imperial war machine were students who had previously organized for climate justice. I witnessed this firsthand at the Claremont Colleges when I was a senior: The student organizations demanding fossil fuel divestment fell to the wayside as the crisis in Gaza intensified. Globally, many climate organizations chose to speak out and take direct action to call for a cease-fire in Gaza.

But none of these climate activists had stopped caring about the climate. In fact, they often pointed out that Israel's actions were not just genocide, but ecocide as well. The onslaught of bombs dropped on Gaza will contaminate the soil and groundwater in the region for decades. And the destruction has produced at least 54.5 million tons of carbon dioxide, equal to the annual emissions of 16 coal-fired power plants.

Climate activists cannot claim to fight for a just future and stay silent about genocide. "If we, as climate activists, aren't able to see and speak up against the current marginalization and oppression and killing of people today, then I don't think we should be able to call ourselves climate justice [activists],"

climate champion Greta Thunberg told *Al Jazeera* in early December 2024.

As Trump prepares to enter the White House, we will undoubtedly see more people oppressed and killed. Among the many groups who are vulnerable under his administration are undocumented immigrants, whom Trump has vowed to round up and deport.

Migrant justice has long been intertwined with climate justice. As climate change makes many areas around the world uninhabitable, climate refugees have no choice but to leave their home.

In response to Trump's election, climate organizers Jeff Ordower and Ahmed Gaya called on their fellow activists to bring their experiences of shutting down pipelines and coal plants to fight the incarceration and deportation we can expect under Trump. Climate activists should answer this call. The struggles for migrant justice and climate justice are intertwined, and we must meet the needs of the current moment.

"[Climate is] *not* more urgent than kids being ripped away from their families and dying in the desert – anyone who tries to win that argument is monstrous themselves. We either merge, join forces, or we lose," writer and activist Naomi Klein said in 2019.

With Trump as president, things will undoubtedly get worse before they get better. We need to build a strong left to fight fascism during Trump's presidency

and to build a just green future in its aftermath. To do so, climate activists must put their words into action when they say they fight for every living being.

On January 20th, it begins...

Political revenge. Mass deportations. Project 2025. Unfathomable corruption. Attacks on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Pardons for insurrectionists. An all-out assault on democracy.

Republicans in Congress are scrambling to give Trump broad new powers to strip the tax-exempt status of any nonprofit he doesn't like by declaring it a "terrorist-supporting organization." Trump has already begun filing lawsuits against news outlets that criticize him.

At Common Dreams, we won't back down, but we must get ready for whatever Trump and his thugs throw at us.

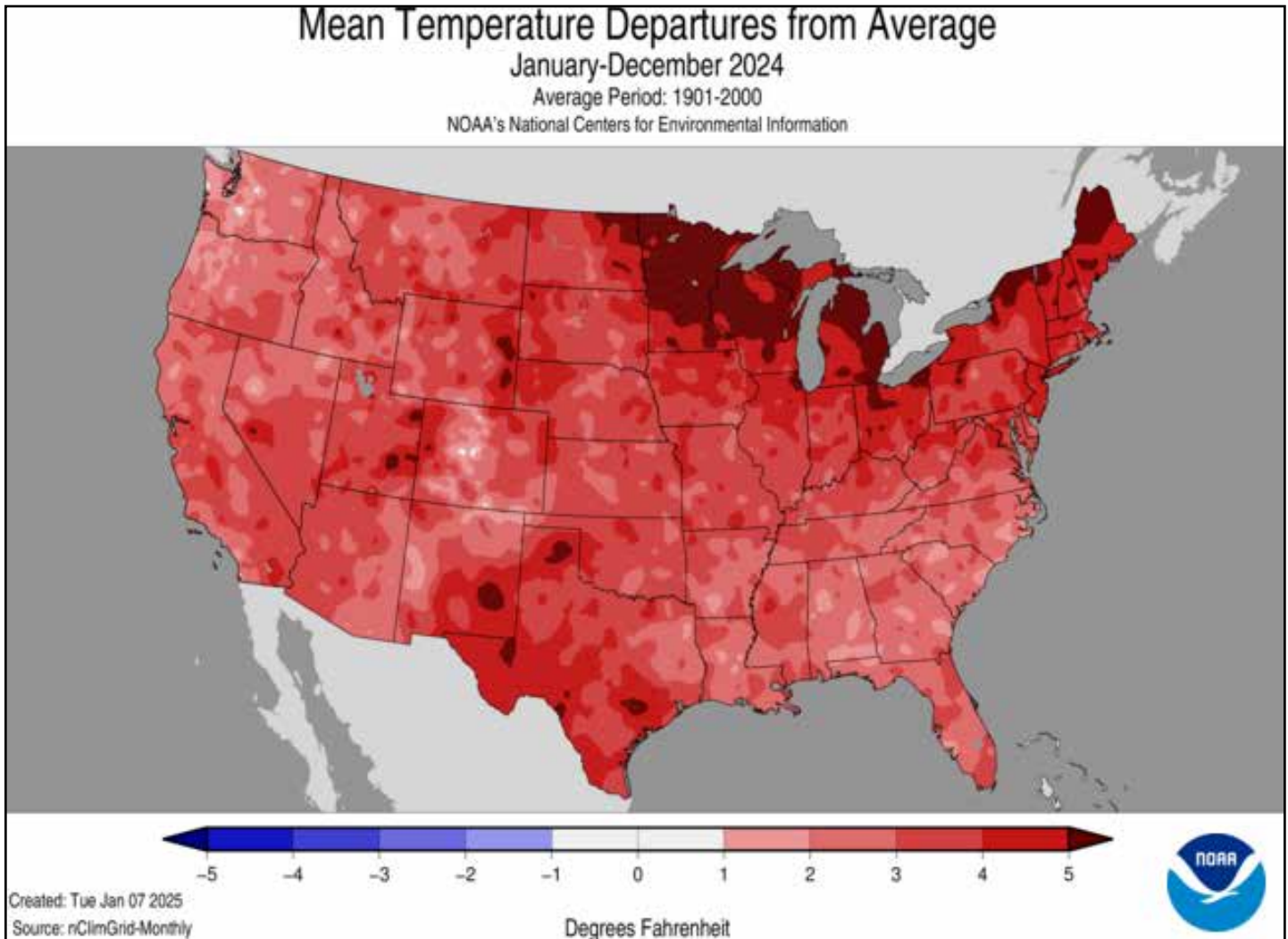
Our Year-End campaign is our most important fundraiser of the year. As a people-powered nonprofit news outlet, we cover issues the corporate media never will, but we can only continue with our readers' support. By donating today, please help us fight the dangers of a second Trump presidency.

Sophie Shepherd is a climate organizer with Planet Over Profit, a youth-led climate justice group based in New York City.

Source: <https://www.common-dreams.org/opinion/climate-movement-fight-fascism>

Peace. There comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other.

~ Wangari Maathai ~



For the year, temperatures were much-above average across nearly the entire contiguous U.S., with record warm temperatures across parts of the Southwest, Deep South and from the Upper Midwest to the central Appalachians and into the Northeast. Seventeen states (Texas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine) ranked warmest on record while all but two remaining states across the Lower 48 ranked as one of the warmest five years on record. noaa.gov/

U.S. Faced 27-Billion-Dollar Disasters in 2024, the Hottest Year on Record

“The villains of this escalating tragedy are also clear, with wealthy nations, the duplicitous fossil fuel industry, and spineless policymakers topping the list,” said one climate scientist.

By Jessica Corbett
Common Dreams: January 10, 2025
Image: NOAA

As catastrophic fires ravaged Southern California on Friday, U.S. government scientists confirmed that – as anticipated – 2024 was the hottest year on record and the country endured 27 weather and climate disasters with losses exceeding \$1 billion *each*.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) found that after 15 straight months of new records from June 2023 through August 2024, global temperatures last year were 2.3°F

(1.28°C) above the agency’s 20th-century baseline from 1951-1980 and about 2.65°F (1.47°C) higher than the mid-19th century average from 1850-1900.

“Once again, the temperature record has been shattered – 2024 was the hottest year since recordkeeping began in 1880,” said NASA Administrator Bill Nelson in a statement. “Between record-breaking temperatures and wildfires currently threatening our

Continued on next page

Continuation from previous page

centers and workforce in California, it has never been more important to understand our changing planet.”

Other experts, at NASA and beyond, also responded to the findings by emphasizing that the climate emergency was created by humanity extracting and burning fossil fuels – and continuing to do so, despite scientists’ warnings and initiatives including the 2015 Paris agreement, which was intended to limit global temperature rise this century to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels.

“To put that in perspective, temperatures during the warm periods on Earth three million years ago – when sea levels were dozens of feet higher than today – were only around 3°C warmer than preindustrial levels,” explained Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies. “We are halfway to Pliocene-level warmth in just 150 years.”

“Not every year is going to break records, but the long-term trend is clear,” said Schmidt, acknowledging natural fluctuations such as El Niño and La Niña. “We’re already seeing the impact in extreme rainfall, heatwaves, and increased flood risk, which are going to keep getting worse as long as emissions continue.”

NASA noted that independent analyses from Berkeley Earth, Europe’s Copernicus Climate Change Service, the United Kingdom’s Met Office, and the United States’ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) also concluded that, “Global surface temperatures for 2024 were the highest since modern record-keeping began,” though some of the figures differ slightly due to their various methodologies and models.

For example, NOAA, which also released its 2024 conclusions on Friday, found that the global surface temperature was 2.32°F (1.29°C) above the 20th-century average and exceeded the 1850-1900 average by 2.63°F (1.46°C). The agency also found that the annual average for the contiguous

United States was 55.5°F – 3.5°F above average and the warmest in the 130-year record.

NOAA also put out findings on extreme weather events that are becoming more common and devastating due to fossil fuel-driven global heating. The agency identified 27 disasters across the country – a drought, a flooding event, a wildfire, two winter storms, five tropical cyclones, and 17 severe storms – with losses topping \$1 billion *each*. They collectively cost \$182.7 billion and killed at least 568 people.

Over a third of those deaths – 219 – were tied to Hurricane Helene, last year’s costliest event at \$78.7 billion. The Category 4 storm made landfall in Florida’s Big Bend region and left a trail of destruction up to North Carolina and Tennessee. NOAA said that it “was the deadliest Atlantic hurricane since Maria (2017) and the deadliest to strike the U.S. mainland since Katrina (2005).”

The United States has faced 403 billion-dollar weather and climate disasters over the past 45 years, and 2024 had the second-highest count, after 28 events in 2023. The annual average for 1980-2024 is just nine, compared with 23 for the past five years.

“Last year’s record-breaking heat and billion-dollar disasters are an alarming harbinger of what’s to come if the nation fails to invest in a climate-resilient economy and do its part to sharply cut global heat-trapping emissions,” said Rachel Cleetus, policy director and lead economist at the Union of Concerned Scientists’ (UCS) Climate and Energy Program, in a statement. “It’s time for decision-makers at all levels of government and across the economy to acknowledge the staggering financial costs and human toll of burning fossil fuels and commit to building a stronger, safer economy powered by clean energy.”

Cleetus also called out the fossil fuel companies that “seem intent on burning down the planet to protect their

profits” and the “policymakers in their thrall.” Her UCS colleague Astrid Caldas, a senior climate scientist for community resilience, similarly stressed the urgent need to act while blasting Big Oil and its allies in politics.

“As a scientist exhausted from sounding the alarm hottest year after hottest year, I’m no longer just concerned about the climate crisis and its impacts on vulnerable communities but incensed at world leaders for their grossly inadequate climate action to date,” Caldas declared. “NOAA and NASA confirmed that the last 11 years have been the 11 hottest on record. Will it take another 11 years for policymakers to heed the irrefutable science and address the devastation being experienced in the United States and around the world largely due to fossil-fuel driven global warming?”

As Californians faced what experts fear will be the costliest fire disaster in U.S. history, Caldas said that “deadly and costly climate impacts, including accelerating sea-level rise and record-breaking heatwaves, droughts, storms, and wildfires, are mounting, and yet politicians stand by while heat-trapping emissions continue to rise globally. The science is indisputable: Transformative and comprehensive global climate action, including a speedy and just transition away from fossil fuels and increased investments in climate resilience, is paramount to protect people now and foster prosperity for generations to come.”

“The villains of this escalating tragedy are also clear, with wealthy nations, the duplicitous fossil fuel industry, and spineless policymakers topping the list of those bearing primary responsibility for past and current global warming emissions and climate inaction,” she added. “The biggest injustice is that the most vulnerable communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis have much to lose despite contributing the least to this problem.”

Source: <https://www.commondreams.com>



As Apocalyptic Fires Torch LA, Climate Campaigners Say ‘Big Oil Did This’

“The fires in Los Angeles aren’t just a tragedy, they’re a crime.”

By Jake Johnson
Common Dreams: January 9, 2025

As massive wildfires continued ripping through Los Angeles on Thursday, leaving utter devastation in their wake, climate campaigners said blame for the infernos ultimately lies with the mega-profitable oil and gas giants that have spent decades knowingly fueling the crisis that made the emergency in southern California possible.

“Los Angeles is burning. Entire neighborhoods have been wiped off the map. We are devastatingly unprepared for the climate that fossil fuel greed is creating,” the youth-led Sunrise Movement wrote on social media as several mostly uncontained fires wreaked havoc, supercharged

by roaring winds and abnormally dry conditions.

“Oil and gas CEOs know they’re responsible for these disasters,” the group added. “But still, they choose to fight investments in renewable energy, spread propaganda, and bribe politicians into supporting \$757 BILLION in fossil fuel subsidies.”

With appalling speed, the Los Angeles fires have so far scorched tens of thousands of acres, destroyed thousands of homes, and killed at least five people – a death toll that’s expected to rise.

“It’s like Armageddon,” said one resident, a sentiment echoed by a *CNN* reporter in Los Angeles.

“Everyone keeps saying ‘apocalyptic,’” said *CNN*’s Leigh Waldman. “But that doesn’t begin to cover it.”

The Palisades fire, the largest of five blazes currently ravaging Los Angeles County, has already been deemed the most destructive in LA history.

Early estimates indicate the total

economic damage of the Los Angeles fires could exceed \$50 billion.

With a Thursday social media post featuring footage of the raging fires and damage in Los Angeles, Warren Gunnels, staff director for Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), wrote: “They say the Green New Deal is expensive. Compared to what?”

Ben Jealous, executive director of the Sierra Club, said in a statement Wednesday that, “These fires have taken lives and destroyed homes, livelihoods, and landscapes.”

“We are holding those affected by this disaster close in our hearts and appreciate the first responders who are bravely working to contain the fires. It is essential that federal and state authorities continue to provide these communities with all the resources and support they need to recover and heal,” said Jealous. “Barely a week into the new year, and fire season is

Continued on next page

Writing With Fire: *Khabar Lahariya* – India’s Only Digital Rural News Network Run by Women

What makes *Khabar Lahariya* unique is not just our journalists – women from Dalit, tribal, Muslim, and backward castes – but also our groundbreaking rural journalism.

This is what Rural Journalism Looks Like

Khabar Lahariya is known for its ‘real’ journalism from rural India. It is a testament to the fact that in a democracy, a powerful and independent fourth estate is essential as any other service, in every single village or town. Our rural journalism follows the everyday stories of everyday people in areas that are completely out of the spotlight of media attention. We have been called a powerful local watchdog, an instrument for enforcing robust grassroots governance and accountability.

We expose the acts of omission and commission by the local bureaucracy/political class. Our news – in video, text, and audio formats – brings to light the growing distance between the promises made by the government in terms of rural development and empowerment, and the actual delivery on the ground. We also document an India in the 21st Century that you don’t otherwise see. It’s smart, changing, churning, speaking out: you don’t want to miss it.

Our rural journalism is feminist. We report on issues of violence against women with an astute understanding of gender and caste structures within which this violence is situated. News reports in *Khabar Lahariya* question structures of power and inequity in the personal sphere of the family, as well as in the public realm.

We are now the country’s only women-run brand of



ethical and independent rural news. *Khabar Lahariya* reaches five million people a month through multiple digital platforms. We have a network of 30 women reporters and stringers in 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

It’s your news, in your voice.

Source: <https://khabarlahariya.org/about-us/> (McAfee said this was potentially dangerous but it was fine.)

Note from Iona: The movie about these women is excellent, inspiring, touching. I love it! Watch the trailer at <https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcafee&p=writing+with+fire+documentary&type=E210US752G0>

Continuation from previous page

here. This is not normal.”

“Time and again, we are witnessing fossil fuel-driven climate change heighten extreme weather, making wildfires increasingly common and increasingly destructive,” he continued. “We cannot be passive. We cannot elevate misinformation about what is needed to confront the worsening crisis. Leaders must take the action necessary to fund and support the home-hardening efforts that make our communities resilient.”

The Los Angeles fires come as states and localities across the United States are suing oil and gas companies for climate damages as extreme weather becomes increasingly frequent and

destructive on a warming planet.

According to the Center for Climate Integrity, more than one in four Americans currently live in a community taking legal action against Big Oil, “underscoring the rapidly growing wave of calls to hold the oil and gas industry accountable for its decades-long climate deception and the harms it has caused.”

Aaron Regunberg, an attorney who is helping build a legal case against the fossil fuel industry, wrote Wednesday that the Los Angeles crisis “didn’t just happen.”

“A recent study found that nearly all of the observed increase in wildfire-burned area in California over the past

half-century is attributable to anthropogenic climate change,” Regunberg, senior policy counsel with Public Citizen’s Climate Program, wrote on social media. “This devastation is the direct result of Big Oil’s conduct.”

Jamie Henn, director of Fossil Free Media, offered a similar assessment, writing that, “The fires in Los Angeles aren’t just a tragedy, they’re a crime.”

“This is exactly the sort of disaster that Exxon’s own scientists predicted more than 50 years ago, but they spent billions to keep us hooked on fossil fuels,” Henn added. “It’s time to make polluters pay.”

Source: <https://www.common-dreams.org/news/climate-los-angeles-fires>

U.S. Supreme Court Rejects Big Oil Attacks on Hawaii Climate Lawsuit

By Jessica Corbett, excerpt
Common Dreams: January 13, 2025
 Photo: Honolulu, courtesy Center
 for Climate Integrity

Climate campaigners and scientists on Monday welcomed the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to reject attempts by fossil fuel giants to quash the Hawaii capital's lawsuit aiming to hold the major polluters accountable for the devastating impacts of their products.

"This is a significant day for the people of Honolulu and the rule of law," Ben Sullivan, executive director and chief resilience officer at the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency, said in a statement.

"This landmark decision upholds our right to enforce Hawaii laws in Hawaii courts, ensuring the protection of Hawaii taxpayers and communities from the immense costs and consequences of the climate crisis caused by the defendants misconduct," he added.

Honolulu first sued companies including **BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Shell, and Sunoco** in March 2020. The companies have fought to shut down the case – like dozens of other climate liability lawsuits that states and municipalities have filed against Big Oil at the state level.

Shell and Sunoco led a pair of appeals to the Supreme Court, arguing that Honolulu's suit was "a blueprint for chaos" because it could inform other legal actions against fossil fuel companies and such cases "could threaten the energy industry." Similar to three previous decisions, the justices declined to intervene.

Center for Climate Integrity president Richard Wiles connected Monday's victory to the other cases, saying in a statement that, "Big Oil companies keep fighting a losing battle to avoid standing trial for their climate lies."

"With this latest denial, the fossil fuel industry's worst nightmare – having to face the overwhelming evidence of their decades of calculated climate deception – is closer than ever to becoming a reality," Wiles continued. "Communities everywhere are paying dearly for the massive damages caused by Big Oil's decadeslong climate deception. The people of Honolulu and communities across the country deserve their day in court to hold these companies accountable."

Delta Merner, lead scientist for the Union of Concerned Scientists' Science Hub for Climate Litigation, similarly celebrated the decision, which she called "a resounding affirmation of Honolulu's right to seek justice under state law for the mounting climate impacts caused by fossil fuel companies' deceptive practices."

"For more than 50 years, fossil fuel companies have conducted sophisticated disinformation campaigns to obscure their own research showing that burning fossil fuels would drive climate change," Merner highlighted. "This case lays bare how these actions have contributed to rising seas, intensified storms, and coastal erosion that are devastating Honolulu's people, infrastructure, and natural resources."

"Scientific evidence is unequivocal: The human-caused emissions from fossil fuels are the primary driver of climate change," she stressed. "Honolulu's case stands as an example of how communities are using both science and the law to challenge corporate misconduct and demand accountability for climate damages."

Merner added that, "The people of Honolulu are demonstrating remarkable leadership in standing up to powerful fossil fuel companies whose disinformation campaigns have directly contributed to the climate harms they now face. Their efforts serve as a powerful example for communities around the world. This decision is one step in a larger effort to seek accountability and justice."

The Supreme Court's latest blow to the oil and gas industry came just a week before the second inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump, who courted Big Oil executives on the campaign trail and pledged to "drill, baby, drill" if he won the November election...

Merner said at the time that her briefs "represent an important step in the pursuit of climate accountability."

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/hawaii-climate-lawsuit>



Global Nature Beat #52: Taking The Pulse



Submitted by **Bill Boteler,**
Maryland USA,
with this comment:

There are a lot of international agreements on the table and it's a little overwhelming. But I deeply hope that the world is beginning to recognize the legitimacy of international institutions vs. the right-wing nationalism expressed by people like Trump who try to bully other countries. The latter world view is outdated and leads to disaster.

By *Mike Shanahan, PhD, UK*
Substack: January 9, 2025
www.thenaturebeat.substack.com/

The last quarter of 2024 was filled by an exhausting frenzy of intergovernmental negotiations – on biodiversity, on climate change, on desertification, and on plastics. One by one, they failed to meet their respective challenges. All seems relatively quiet now, but that will soon change.

Here is a quick look ahead at just some of the coming year's main events for nature and climate.

Biodiversity: In February, the suspended COP16 biodiversity conference will resume in Rome. Among other things, negotiators need to agree a strategy for 'mobilizing' US\$200 billion a year by 2030 for conservation. See the meeting documents at <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/COP-16-R2>.

Climate Change: Also next month, countries are supposed to submit their

updated climate change plans – called nationally determined contributions – under the Paris Agreement. Many will miss the deadline – see the World Resources Institute's tracker at https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ndc-tracker?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email.

Later in the year, the International Court of Justice will issue its advisory opinion on the obligations of states with respect to climate change. And in November, Brazil will host the COP30 climate change conference in the city of Belém in the Amazon rainforest.

Other COPs in 2025: There will also be Conferences of Parties (COP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, and the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions – which concern hazardous waste and chemical pollutants.

Plastics: Negotiations towards a plastics treaty will resume. Will this be the process in which ambitious countries finally reject the blocking tactics of polluters? There are reasons for hope according to Magnus Løvold, which you can read at <https://medium.com/points-of-order/m-for-majority-388595c87ca3>.

Deep-sea Mining: Member states of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) are due to agree to a new Mining Code to regulate deep-sea mining. On January 1, Leticia Carvalho officially assumed the role of ISA Secretary-General – see the ISA's press release for a summary of her inaugural remarks at <https://www.isa.org.jm/news/leticia-carvalho-assumes-role-as-secretary-general-of-the-international-seabed-authority/>.

EU Deforestation Regulation: In December, the European Union's anti-deforestation regulation will enter into force, having been delayed by one year. It requires companies selling commodi-

ties such as cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soy, and timber to ensure that their production is "deforestation-free."

In The Spotlight

- Nomsa Maseko and Rob Wilson wrote about the social and ecological consequences of illegal trade in succulent plants from South Africa.

- Sarah Brown reported on claims that jaguars are saving human lives in Brazil's Pantanal wetlands by controlling prey in which deadly parasites live.

- Bayu Asya Isminanda and Finlan Adhitya Aldan investigated the illegal trade in endangered pig-nosed turtles from Papua, Indonesia.

- Geri Emiri, Ingrid Gercama, Nathalie Bertrams, and Vjosa Čerkini investigated a trend among crime bosses in Balkan countries to keep trafficked tigers and lions as pets – available in 13 European languages.

Tips And Resources

- On the IPBES podcast, Rob Spauld spoke with Patrick Greenfield from *The Guardian* and Sahana Ghosh from *Nature India* about the challenges and opportunities when covering biodiversity news.

- Altin Raxhimi has written a new guide to science journalism in Albanian.

- The Global Investigative Journalism Network has a webinar on January 27 about how to access free satellite images.

What Caught My Eye

- Kirsten Freja Young and Brendan Godley make the case for a new North Pole marine reserve.

- The International Emissions Trading Association released an analysis of the biodiversity credits market.

- The latest State of the Apes report focuses on the impact of disease and other health considerations on apes and ape habitats.

- The U.S. government is providing

Continued on next page

Continuation from previous page

US\$125 million in grants for wildlife crossings in 16 states.

- Ben Payton wrote about prospects for Africa's emerging biodiversity credits projects.

- Vibha Varshney says the Global Environment Facility – the financial mechanism for the UN conventions on biodiversity, climate change, and desertification – needs an overhaul and new funders.

- The near-extinct Siberian Crane is recovering thanks to habitat protection, reports Shreya Dasgupta.

- Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli shocked the country's conservationists by calling for "fewer tigers, less forest," reports Abhaya Raj Joshi...

- Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto said it is okay for oil palm plantations to replace rainforests because "oil palms are trees, right? They have leaves, right?"

- On December 30, Indonesia's Minister of Forestry announced plans to use 20 million hectares (49.4 million acres) of forest for food and energy projects – see reaction from Greenpeace at <https://www.greenpeace.org/southeastasia/press/66739/plan-makes-mockery-of-climate-biodiversity-commitments>.

From The Journals

- Researchers identified 32 legally traded reptile and fish species that pose high invasion risk to the United States – read the full paper at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S000632072400449X>.

- How rocket launches threaten global biodiversity conservation – read the full paper at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-024-01963-x>.

- Navigating the hype and risks around use of artificial intelligence for conservation – read the full paper at <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/conl.13076>.

- A proposed new conservation tool: 'Ecological Peace Corridors' – read the full paper at <https://www>.

[sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320724005123](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320724005123).

- Large-scale ecological restoration contributed to increases in bird diversity in China's Yangtze River Basin – read the press release at <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/1069645> or the full paper at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2772985024000620>.

- Microplastics and other tiny particles of human origin are abundant in seafood – read the press release at <https://www.pdx.edu/news/microplastics-widespread-seafood-oregonians-eat-psu-study-finds> or the full paper at <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/toxicology/articles/10.3389/ftox.2024.1469995/full>.

- Environmental DNA can boost biodiversity monitoring in forest carbon markets – read the full paper at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-024-01970-y>.

- Regional patterns of wild animal hunting in African tropical forests – read the press release at <https://newsroom.wcs.org/News-Releases/article-Type/ArticleView/articleId/24072.aspx>

- One quarter of freshwater animals are threatened with extinction – read the full paper at <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-024-08375-z>.

Jobs And Opportunities

- The Earth Journalism Network is hosting a three-day virtual media workshop (in two time zones) during the week of 3 March 2025 for journalists in coastal countries to learn about the 30x30 marine conservation target – deadline 16 January.

- *The Indianapolis Star* is hiring an environment and natural resources reporter.

- *Mongabay's* Y. Eva Tan Conservation Reporting Fellowship Program is open for applicants from biodiverse tropical countries – deadline 19 January.

- *Nature* is hiring a senior news reporter – deadline 20 January.

- The Knight Science Journalism Program at MIT is seeking a new director.

- The Earth Journalism Network is offering organizational grants of up to US\$20,000 to boost environmental journalism in the Asia-Pacific region – deadline 30 January.

- The Association of British Science Writers is accepting entries for its 2025 Awards – deadline 31 January.

- The One World Media Awards are open for entries – deadline 6 February.

On The Horizon

20-24 January 2025: The World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting takes place in Davos, Switzerland.

20-24 January 2025: The 64th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands takes place in Gland, Switzerland.

3-8 February 2025: The 78th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee will take place in Geneva, Switzerland.

25-27 February 2025: The resumed 16th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity takes place in Rome, Italy.

Bonus content: The full calendar for Global Nature Beat's supporters includes nature-related intergovernmental negotiations, scientific conferences, report launches, and other events up until 2026.

Whose Eye Was It?

The eye belongs to a Siamese crocodile. Photo: Tambako the Jaguar / Flickr

Thanks for reading. Global Nature Beat is free. I

Email: thenaturebeat@substack.com.

My newsletter: The Nature Beat

My books: Ladders to Heaven / Gods, Wasps & Stranglers

My blog: Under the Banyan

If You Find This Useful...please consider supporting my work.

Source: <https://thenaturebeat.substack.com/p/nature-beat-52>

Standing Against Injustice: A Call for Unity and Compassion

By Stephen N. Zielinski Sr.

Let's Work Together

New Jersey, Zielinski 4 Green 2025

Note from Iona: *I have been a registered Green Party member for 40 years, ever since I read their 10 Key Values, values which neither Democrats nor Republican seem to have these days. I vote Green.*

As I reflect on the chance to speak to the Muslim community, I can't help but wonder how to convey the urgency and depth of what I feel in my heart. If I were given the platform, here's what I would say:

Why are we here? Why, in the 21st century, are we still allowing human beings – children, women, men – to suffer in ways that strip them of their dignity, rights, and lives? Why are we standing by as people are starved, oppressed, and killed, denied even the most basic humanitarian rights?

Every single person matters.

No questions asked. No qualifiers. I am exhausted and heartbroken by what's happening, both here in the United States and across the world. What we are witnessing isn't just negligence or mismanagement; it is complicity in genocide. That's what it is, and it's time we name it.

Too often, those who are supposed

to represent us are controlled by money – money funneled into their campaigns, their policies, and ultimately, their silence. The influence of corporate and foreign interests, particularly those aligned with Israel's actions, has shown us a dark truth: human lives are being treated as expendable in the face of political and financial gain.

And I will not stand for it anymore.

Why are we so blind to the suffering? Why are we so complacent in the face of injustice?

It doesn't matter what faith you follow or what background you come from – life is sacred. To turn a blind eye to this atrocity, to allow such suffering to persist, is inconceivable. If standing against this makes me the only gubernatorial candidate willing to call out this injustice, then so be it.

This crisis didn't start yesterday. It's been generations in the making. But how many more lives must be lost before we act? How many more children, sons, daughters, grandchildren will we allow to perish before we feel the weight of this tragedy as if it were our own?

Imagine, for a moment, that the child suffering is your child, your grandchild. Imagine the fear, the anguish, the helplessness. That's the reality for too many families right now. If that image doesn't move you to action,

then I ask you to search deeper within your heart.

Now is the time to end this. Not tomorrow, not next year – now. Too many lives have been lost already.

We must stop treating lives as commodities, as bargaining chips. We must remember that every human being has worth, that life is real and sacred. Every child, no matter their race, religion, or ethnicity, is part of our shared humanity.

We all bleed red.

It's time to step up, to open our hearts and minds, and say, "No more." No more suffering. No more silence. No more turning away.

So, I ask you: Why am I the only candidate for governor speaking out about these issues? Why am I the only one saying that enough is enough?

This isn't just a political stance – it's a moral imperative. Together, we can stop the bleeding, heal the wounds, and create a world where every life is valued.

Let us stand united, not just for ourselves, but for the future we owe to our children and grandchildren.

Let's act with courage, compassion, and unwavering resolve. Because if not us, then who? And if not now, then when?

*Stephen Zielinski For Governor
Zielinski4Green2025.com
info@Zielinski4Green2025*



Research Exposes Trump Inaugural Committee as ‘Cesspool of Special Interest Financing’

“The record-shattering abuses of the 2025 Trump-Vance Presidential Inaugural Committee, Inc. should signal the immediate need for legislation to prevent this influence peddling,” said one ethics expert.

By Jake Johnson

Common Dreams: January 15, 2025

With Inauguration Day less than a week away, a watchdog group on Tuesday published research shining light on the unprecedented level of financial support President-elect Donald Trump’s inaugural fund has received from corporations and executives seeking to court favor with the incoming administration.

The new research from Public Citizen includes a tracker that lists known corporate donations or pledged contributions to Trump’s inaugural committee, which is tax-exempt and not subject to contribution limits.

Amazon, Apple, Chevron, Citigroup, Bank of America, Goldman Sachs, Google, Meta, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, the pharmaceutical lobby, Pfizer, Microsoft, and Coinbase are among those that have pumped money into Trump’s inaugural fund, which has raked in a record-shattering \$150 million since Election Day – and could bring in over \$200 million by January 20.

“These million-dollar donors come from a small class of very wealthy industries in Big Tech, cryptocurrency, government contractors, and others with lucrative contracts or business pending before the federal government,” Public Citizen found. “Some of the biggest donors had long been critics of Trump, especially following

the January 6 Insurrection by Trump supporters, and who are now fearful of retributions by a vengeful president.”

Some of the companies that have donated to the inaugural fund are also facing federal investigations, amplifying suspicions that the contributions were made with the goal of receiving favorable treatment from the next administration.

“The record-breaking cesspool of special interest financing for the Trump-Vance Inaugural Committee raises serious concerns about the ability of corporations and wealthy special interests to purchase influence over public policy or lucrative government contracts,” Craig Holman, a government ethics expert at Public Citizen, said in a statement Tuesday. “The record-shattering abuses of the 2025 Trump-Vance Presidential Inaugural Committee, Inc. should signal the immediate need for legislation to prevent this influence peddling.”

Trump’s inaugural fund has easily surpassed the then-record-setting \$107 million he raised for his inauguration in 2017, *The New York Times* reported earlier this month. On Monday, the *Times* reported that, “Harold G. Hamm, the billionaire oil and gas executive who helped bankroll Donald J. Trump’s campaign and stands to profit from his energy policies, is hosting an exclusive fossil fuel industry celebration on Inauguration Day.”

“Among the invited guests to Mr. Hamm’s celebration is Doug Burgum, Mr. Trump’s pick to run the Interior Department,” according to the newspaper.

The president-elect has openly boasted that prominent figures in corporate America – from Amazon founder Jeff Bezos to Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg – have lined up to show support for his second administration, which is set to be packed with billion-

aires and others with close business ties. Trump is reportedly keeping close track of major companies that have yet to donate to his inaugural fund.

Public Citizen noted Tuesday that, “While the self-serving motivations of inaugural donors has a long and troubling precedent, the scope of donations and, in many cases, the fear of retribution driving the donations to the Trump-Vance Inaugural Committee represents a worrying shift.”

“Buying access to the president and the president’s inner circle is the name of the game,” the group says in its new research brief. “For corporations and wealthy special interests attempting to influence public policy or secure lucrative government contracts, writing big checks to Trump’s inaugural committee – or any presidential inaugural committee – provides a bonanza of access to leading government officials and influence over public policy. This is a level of influence peddling only available to those who can afford to pay the price and is denied to those who are not wealthy.”

To “ensure that undue influence-peddling through Inaugural donations is mitigated,” Public Citizen called on lawmakers to pass legislation banning corporate and lobbyist donations to inaugural funds, implementing contribution limits, and strengthening disclosure requirements, among other reforms.

“The possibility for corruption exists any time an officeholder accepts large donations from those who have business pending before the official,” Public Citizen said. “Congress should end the double standard for presidential inauguration fundraising. The celebration of an election victory should be viewed as part and parcel of the process of selecting our president.”

Source: <https://www.common-dreams.org/news/trump-inaugural-fund>

OUR FRIENDS IN ACTION



Females having fun together at one of the residential training retreats in New Zealand sponsored by Radically Alive Women. Photo by Julia Neumann (center, white T-shirt)

Antidote: Women's Conscious Anger

By Julia Neumann, New Zealand

The antidote to what we are facing politically and ecologically is not hope. The antidote is conscious anger. Conscious anger is a resource that every human comes equipped with. It is a gift of nature, not a curse. Yet we need a paradigm shift to move from anger *against* to using our anger to create and take action *for* what we want instead.

Women's conscious anger has a special role to play. It is the force of nature that we need to take the rest of

humankind along. It has the potential to change the face of culture on our planet. This is so, mainly for two reasons:

1) Women are designed by nature to birth life-affirming systems. Playing along in life-negating systems, even if only by giving up on life or humanity (a passive form of playing along), goes against their very nature and comes at a high cost: a vicious circle fuelled by self-doubt, self-hatred even, from an inner knowing of the lack of integrity.

2) Women are especially conditioned in mainstream culture to not

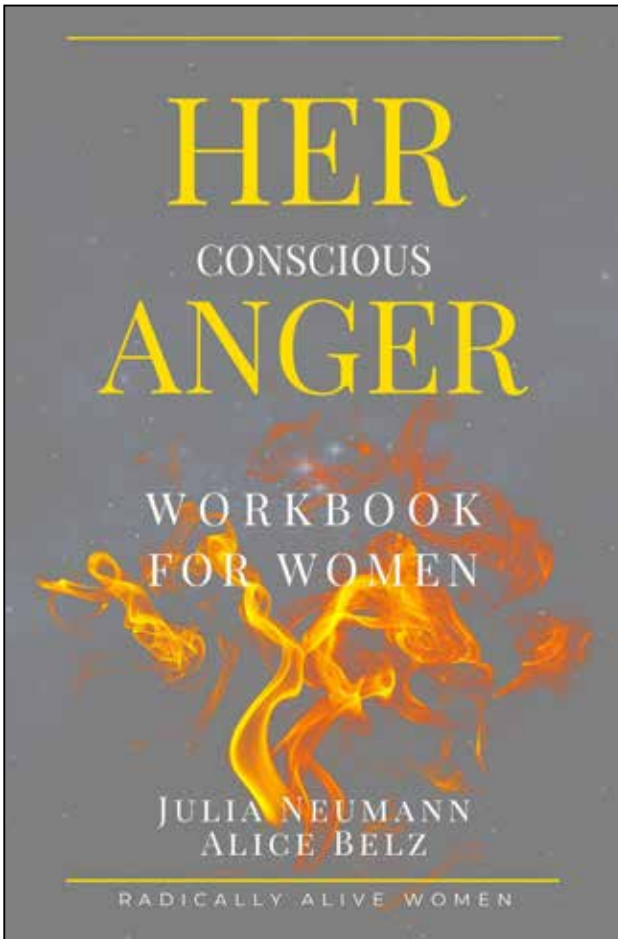
be angry, but instead to be nice, to not make a fuss, to be quiet, etc. This limited perspective cuts them off from one of their main resources that would instead enable them to:

- a) Be confident,
- b) Know what they want,
- c) Say No,
- d) Honour their innate clarity,
- e) Set boundaries,
- f) Take action, and more.

Gaining access to anger as a conscious resource, rather than an unconscious destructive energy, is a game changer.

Continued on next page

Continuation from previous page



The suppression of anger is what causes the negative expressions of anger that we probably all have come across. The pledge here is not for women to become shouting, bossy maniacs. While at times, high intensities of anger may be necessary, the antidote here is the radicality that anger offers as a conscious resource, even in low intensities of up to 10% anger.

When we truly learn to embrace

our anger as a force for evolution, and to honour it while it is at low intensities, instead of negating it until it becomes too big for us to handle, then we gain access to clarity and an immense wisdom on what the next steps are. Anger becomes a neutral energy and information that serves that which we truly care about. Women regain their capacity to slay bullshit and to be fierce Love.

With practice, consciously angry women become the peaceful warrioresses that source our next, regenerative cultures.

Will you start practicing?

Julia Neumann is one of the co-founders of Radically Alive Women ('RAW,' radically-alivewomen.com) and originator of Radically Alive Women Edgecast (radicallyalivewomen.com/edgecast).

Radically Alive Women is a context for Women to become radically alive and recognize their Earthly-ness, their regenerative life force, and their capacity to take a stand for next cultures to emerge.

Together with Alice Belz, Julia wrote *Her Conscious Anger: Work-*

book for Women, which you can purchase online through radically-alivewomen.com/her-conscious-anger. Alice and Julia offer online workshops for women to reclaim the conscious power of their anger. Together with other radically alive women, Julia also offers residential trainings in New Zealand and globally. You can find all the information you need on radicallyalivewomen.com.

I honour the force of Evolution that you innately are, and I want to find out how it pulsates through you. What wants to be unfolded?

Stay connected:

Website: <http://www.julia-neumann.com/>

Newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/40900bdf907f/julia-neumann>

Email: life@julia-neumann.com

Note from Iona: I met Julia on Zoom when we were taking a writing class with Derrick Jensen and thought her workbook sounded so good that, last year when I was going through a rough time and the book was ready, I ordered it, read it, and gained more self-awareness from it. I am attending Julia's and Alice's four-session adventure called the "Create Your Future Workshop" and loving it. These are the kinds of things I enjoy doing when I'm not working on my newspaper, going to doctors' appointments, or spending precious time with my family.

Tomorrow belongs to those of us who conceive of it as belonging to everyone, who lend the best of ourselves to it, and with joy.

~ Audre Lorde ~

Messages from Our Friends

[cover email sent with ES #3]

Amos, the wonderful orphanage manager in Uganda with whom I have worked closely for a few years, has a caregiver in his orphanage school, who was in an accident and badly injured. After his leg got fixed up, He tried going to the bathroom himself and fell, undoing all that work. Now his leg is infected and Amos is broke from trying to keep up with Denis's medical bills. Denis is about to lose his leg and I have no idea who will pay for that surgery.

My heart is in tatters because I'm not doing fundraising anymore; all I can do is share this sad situation with you. If you can help, please email Amos at amosmugarura@icloud.com. Please don't email me; Amos must give the doctor an answer by tomorrow. Normally I don't wish I was rich but tonight I do.

[replies]

Thanks so much for sharing

Sorry for Amos's caregiver. I am so impressed and inspired by the content of the paper. When is the next publication? I would love to have my article, too. Well-done.

Frances Tugumisirize, Uganda

Dear Mrs Conner,

I must recommend your good heart and the way you are using your talents in writing, to help many people.

Of course, this story is so touching and anyone with conscience, will definitely be touched by this story.

Haven't thanked you earlier, I will also like to appreciate Mr. Amos and his work with the orphanage. He should understand that he is one in a kind.

Like I have said before, I am convinced that I will be of help someday in the future to people

like Denis and will support orphanages, like that of Mr. Amos.

I can only pray and wish them well for now, I believe that this publication will get to some other people, that will certainly show concerns and extend their supports.

I think I will begin to share your publications to lots of friends...I believe that many people need to read your work and understand the efforts you are making to humanity.

I mean I have not read the 151 pages about how and why Wycliffe was killed, the nature of violence is remorseful. You are so detailed in your narrative. I applaud your skills, most of all, I applaud your kindness to humanity.

I admire your work. As a matter of fact, I am taking notes on your works. Thanks a lot and know that you are making impact in people's lives.

Duke Ajuma, Nigeria

Iona, thanks, impressive production!!! So sad about the African guy with wounded leg. So many of us like you and me just have no surplus funds to spare to give donations to help.

The one on Coral thriving I brought to attention of Dr. Marty Rowland just now. Thanks for including my O Say Ca You See! Regarding person question about Antarctica there are maps showing how it is divided into claims by five or six countries. Regarding how to environmentally protect it: this calls to the need for a Global Resource Agency. Regarding deep ocean mineral mining, Law of the Seas said that 50% of the value of those resources should fund the Global Resource Agency and UN peace keeping efforts.

Good that you covered land rights wins. Remember that the current

lack of affordable housing in the U.S. and elsewhere is because of the land problem, essentially a land rights issue calling for the end of land hoarding and speculation via shift of taxes from labor and production to the commons rent. So important to connect the indigenous land rights struggles to the housing affordability problem.

About 500 feet from my house now is a sign with 35 acres of land for sale by non-other than Warren Buffet's company Berkshire Hathaway. What is he doing in my rural county, a population of about 140,000 people only? He is "mining" extracting, stealing the commons rent and adding it to his huge fortune while our homeless population grows. This is the land problem under our nose!

Thanks again, great edition, sooooo much to it and beautifully presented!

Alanna Hartzok, Pennsylvania USA

Message from Amos to Iona from Denis:

I was immediately after reaching at the hospital that Denis' requested me to first extend his regards.

(Note from Iona: Here is a man who might lose his leg and is in a lot of pain but his kindness has not been injured.)

Dear Iona,

Many warm thanks for your email. My apologies for being so late, but I have only just seen your email, with the wonderful newsletter attached. You are really talented.

I wish you a peaceful New Year.

Best,
David Crookall, Ocean-Climate

Literacy

<https://oceansclimate.wixsite.com/>