I am a coffee snob.

Each morning, I compile all of the accoutrements for my coffee: pour over, cloth filter, locally roasted beans. I fill my kettle half-way and turn on the electric pot. (Half-way saves time and energy!)

I select a specific mug each morning from a wide-spanning and eclectic collection. Once the kettle is heated, I assemble the mug, pour over, cloth fiber, and coffee - pouring in a slow, circular motion to speed up the brewing process. The first pour from my kettle gets me half a mug-full, so I’ll pour once more - carefully repeating the intentional spiral pour.

I’ll settle into this first cup of coffee the way it seems autumn settles into the chameleon needles of our western larch - warmed and welcomed into a crisp, deep golden hue.

This wakening into the morning happens slowly (most mornings) and I savor each sip, feeling my body settle into the day.

Often I find myself unable to let this moment pass, and I’ll wander back into my kitchen surreptitiously, feeling like a kid sneaking a second cookie, and turn on the kettle, placing my pour over back onto my mug.

When the water is warm, I’ll slowly pour over the still-wet grounds, and watch it filter a bit slower than the first time. Often too lazy, or at this point too behind schedule, I don’t take the time to re-do the original ritual. I use the same filter, the same grounds, and take an unsatisfying sip of slightly burned, muted coffee.

I’ll smirk, and remember:

There is enormous beauty in moving slow.

There is also enormous beauty in letting less, be more.

To our Changing Times community, we are excited and humbled to announce that we will be moving to a bi-annual magazine. Every six months, we will produce the perfect first cup of morning pour over. And with the extra time in between, we will take the time to put the grounds in the compost, grab a new filter, and use fresh coffee grounds - we will savor the ritual and freely release the current, busier pace.

The two issues a year will honor the changing seasons, the beauty in transition, and come out in the Fall and the Spring.

We welcome this new routine, new pace, and would encourage you all to savor one cup, instead of pushing for two.

We’re so glad you’re all here - welcome to the Fall 2022 Issue of The Changing Times.

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SHANE SATER

Life, Death, and Silk Moths

I first met the silk moth in October: a mysterious cocoon hanging from the goldenrod along a Helena stream. Wordlessly, he survived freezes, snowstorms, and hungry mice. In the spring I brought him into a terrarium, awaiting his emergence.

Now it’s June 25th, and he’s just emerged. The day is bittersweet: it’s my dad’s birthday. He passed away with Covid last fall.

But the silk moth brings me firmly into the present. First I notice his broad, feathery antennae. His wings are complex shadings of charcoal and brown, the clear eyespots ringed in yellow and blue.

I reach towards him. He grips my finger with surprisingly stout, furry chocolate legs. I transfer him to a soft-sided butterfly cage and give him a stick to hang from. He waits there through the afternoon, motionless and upside-down.

The sun sets. The prolonged summer twilight fades. He doesn’t have much time now: adult silk moths are short-lived. Carrying fats they’ve stored since their caterpillar days, they don’t feed at all. They have just one priority now: find a mate and bring forth the next generation.

His feathery antennae are no accident. They’re finely tuned instruments, far more sensitive than any human nose: this male must find a mate by smell. He’ll fly miles through the night sky, searching the air currents for a female’s perfume.

After they mate, she’ll lay her eggs: a few on each willow, maple, or birch she chooses. With this long-distance signaling, Polyphemus moths (Antheraea polyphemus) can stay rare and still survive, connected by messages on the summer night breeze.

I’m ready to release him. But the night itself is not dark. A crescent of yellow lights rings the edge of Hauser Lake. And up on the hill, it looks as if a spaceship is about to take off: an otherworldly beacon of blue and white pierces the night, while music echoes over the water. What if he’s attracted to the lights? Nine months in a cocoon, surviving all of the hazards, only to die futilely, circling the lights of a fatal party? I couldn’t bear that. I can’t release him here.

Instead, I tuck the cage into my car and drive him to the Helena Regulating Reservoir. Here, we’re away from the bright lights. It’s a cool, still night, the constellation Cassiopeia looking down from overhead. The air is damp. Water gushes over the spillway into the reservoir with a soothing roar. The shadows of the cottonwoods surround us. Farther away, the mountainous horizon is a dark silhouette. The only lights are the stars and a few distant pinpricks from the ranch houses.

In the car he had stayed still, hanging upside down from his branch. But now as I carry the soft cage, he seems eager, fluttering his wings against the top.

I walk towards the shadows of the trees. We move away from the roaring of the water, just in case his flight is feeble at first. I unzip the cage.

He launches without saying goodbye. A flutter of soft, furry wings brushes me and then he’s gone. I spot him once more, silhouetted against the sky, a quiet shadow in the night. Perhaps it was actually a bat, or my imagination.

As I drive home again, a part of me stays up there with him, imagining. Chocolate wings beating through the night. Fuzzy body filled with fat for the marathon ahead. Feathery antennae tuned for a smell that only a Polyphemus moth can catch.

I hope he makes it where he’s going.
ROBIN L. PAONE

CARBON CASH-BACK

Clean electric shift
Big polluters pay me cash
Soon our planet heals

PHOTO | MEG SMITH

POETRY

CAROL “KATE” WILBURN

Full Circle

Original watercolor, colored pencil, and ink. The intersecting life circles of Monarch butterflies, their eggs and caterpillars with Showy milkweed (Asclepias speciosa)

ART
BOOK REVIEW - FICTION

SYDNEY BOLLINGER

BECKY CHAMBERS’ SOLARPUNK FUTURE

Imagining the future world is a tricky thing, especially when doing so through a hopeful lens. The easy way out in this thought experiment is to assume everything will magically get better and go back to the way it was, but we know that can’t be true. We already feel — and see — the impacts of the climate crisis locally and globally. Whatever the future may hold, we will be navigating these effects.

In the Monk & Robot books, author Becky Chambers (A Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet) creates a future where, while things did not go back to normal, humanity has found resilience and a new way of life. The books are part of the “solarpunk” genre, science and speculative fiction that explores what life might look like if we are able to solve some of the major issues of our time, with a special focus on sustainable development and communities.

“YOU KEEP ASKING WHY YOUR WORK IS NOT ENOUGH, AND I DON’T KNOW HOW TO ANSWER THAT, BECAUSE IT IS ENOUGH TO EXIST IN THE WORLD AND MARVEL AT IT. YOU DON’T NEED TO JUSTIFY THAT, OR EARN IT. YOU ARE ALLOWED TO JUST LIVE.”

– BECKY CHAMBERS

Dex and Mosscap’s journey is less about the destination and more about the experience of understanding how we — as humans — impact our environment, our capacity for resilience, and our propensity for innovation toward an equitable, sustainable (not capitalist) future. The second novella, A Prayer for the Crown-Shy, tells of Dex and Mosscap on their tour around to different human communities, where Mosscap learns about human civilization and engages in new experiences.

The brilliance of Chambers’ writing is in her ability to take these stories of meanderings and tie them together with rich worldbuilding and a reasonable view of the future. These books are optimistic, yes, but they also do not deny that humanity will have to adapt — and drastically so. The real power comes in the form of communities agreeing to help and provide for each other — and understanding that what happened in the past can be a springboard for a better future.

In March, I worked with a group of people to develop Lunar Echos, a tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG) based on the world of Panga from A Psalm for the Wild Built. Created for the 2022 IndieCade Climate Jam, the game gives players the opportunity to roleplay characters in the world before the events of the book.

In Lunar Echos, the play is more intentional and provides a platform for players to make intentional considerations and decisions on rebuilding a world after climate disaster – all while looking through an optimistic “solarpunk” lens.

Games like this require us to think creatively about the problems we face and how we can solve them by focusing on sustainable, community-driven solutions and radical empathy for our human and more-than-human friends.

Engaging in roleplay (or gameplay) is activist work, even if it may not seem like it. We all need the chance to step outside of ourselves and exist in a world other than our own to gain perspective, empathy, and creativity.

You can download Lunar Echos for free on Itch.io: https://davidblandy.itch.io/lunar-echos

So what can a hopeful future look like?
YOUTH WRITING CONTEST
CREATIVE CLIMATE FUTURES

Calling all Montana youth (ages 18 and under): Submit your creative writing by March 20, 2023 for a chance to be published in The Changing Times magazine! Selected submissions will receive a cash prize of $50. (Limit one submission per person.)

BACKGROUND

The Changing Times is a seasonal publication of Families for a Livable Climate featuring original art and writing from Montanans responding to the climate crisis. Since its beginning, The Changing Times has worked to highlight youth voices in climate activism and to share climate perspectives relevant to families.

In our upcoming issue, we are fully centering youth perspectives in our first ever YOUTH WRITING CONTEST. Through this contest we hope to empower more Montana children and teenagers to tell their stories, and inspire action to protect our shared future.

PROMPT

SHARE WITH US YOUR CREATIVE CLIMATE FUTURE.

Imagine it is the year 2070. Using story (think characters, metaphor, fantasy, sci-fi, realism, imagery, etc!) and your imagination, tell us about what your community looks like and how people are responding.

In your piece, please address at least one of the following questions:

• How have climate impacts in Montana affected you, your loved ones, your community, your traditions, or your favorite Montana places, plants, or animals?
• What are some changes your community has made to help Montana become healthy and livable for all?
• How are you helping to reweave the world? What unique skills or gifts are you offering to create a livable community?

GUIDELINES

FORMAT: Your story may be in written narrative (prose) form or poetry.

LENGTH: Submissions will be grouped into age categories. Poetry submissions can be up to two pages for all ages. Length guidelines for prose submissions are:

• Ages 10 or below: Up to 250 words.
• Ages 11 - 14: Up to 500 words.
• Ages 15 - 18: Up to 1000 words.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Submit your piece at bit.ly/tct-youthwriting. Files can be uploaded as a Google Doc, Word doc, or PDF. Limit one submission per person.

SUBMISSIONS DUE BY MARCH 20, 2023.

We will select one first and second prize winner per age category for both Prose and Poetry. Contest winners will be featured in the spring/summer issue of The Changing Times, to be released May/June 2023. First prize winners of each category will receive a cash prize of $50.

QUESTIONS?

Contact us at magazine@livableclimate.org with any questions.
BOOK REVIEW – NONFICTION

SARAH CAPDEVILLE

An Immense World

by Ed Yong

There’s a factoid in Ed Yong’s *An Immense World* that I can’t stop thinking about: When some bats echolocate, their calls are the equivalent volume of a chainsaw.

We just can’t hear frequencies that high. When I step outside at night, my sensory perception is quiet. But to bats and other animals, it is a cacophony of sound, dozens of chainsaws screaming amongst the stars.

Yong’s book is an exploration into animal senses that asks and is limited by the same question: What is it like to experience the world through perceptions different from our own? Yong uses the guiding concept of Umwelt—defined as “the part of [an animal’s] surroundings that an animal can sense and experience”—to steer this question through smell, taste, light, color, pain, heat, touch, sound, and electric and magnetic fields. But in exploring these senses and the animals that utilize them, from the pheromones through which ants communicate to how some dolphins can tell objects with a 0.6 mm width difference apart through sonar, Yong repeatedly reminds us that we can never truly experience the world the way these animals do. He takes us across the globe, profiling dozens of scientists and their vast research on animal senses, and brings us as close as possible to understanding what it might be like to navigate the world as a bat or dolphin or ant. But we can’t truly know, because we are limited by our own robust Umwelten.

Any book on environmental science these days cannot avoid the elephant in the room: climate change and our planet’s broader environmental crises. But in the same way that Yong’s stellar reporting on the pandemic (which I highly recommend reading—even still) in *The Atlantic* tackles the “grueling and tragic world” of COVID-19 without losing its grip on science and lived experience, *An Immense World* knits a tapestry of animal Umwelten into a compelling and grounded call for the protection and survival of the beyond-human world. The depth and synthesis of research in this book is enough to get pleasantly lost in. But Yong goes even further, quietly challenging the idea that there is only one way to perceive and be in our shared world. There are, in fact, a myriad of ways, and *An Immense World* is a well-guided, engaging, and humorous exploration into these lush sensory lives of our animal relatives.

MEGAN THORNTON

LEAF PILE DREAMS

Have you jumped in a pile of fall leaves lately? Or surprised a friend with a leaf ambush? Have you rested under a blanket of gorgeous, fragrant leaves? Have you become like the bear arranging his leaf den? Have you, finally, come into a time of stillness in the kingdom of leaves, like the tiny butterfly or moth pupae, incubating dreams until spring’s unfolding?

Have you taken five minutes of silence embraced by the leaves? To recall that you are a human animal, so like the leaf, mortal and bound for death, but part of something bigger and greater beyond death, moving through regenerative cycles of birth, growth, death and decay? Or is leaf play just a long ago memory from childhood?

Our compartmentalizing culture encourages us to bag up, blow aside, and send away those messy rotting leaves, but what if they land, and stay in place, to do their good work as habitat, and in our consciousness? I remind myself, be a child again, go befriend the leaf pile. Smell her smells and rest in her arms. She has so much to teach us.

**FIRST:** Give thanks for what is now, without holding on. This year it seemed the turning of leaves and the fall came late, in line with what we know is a warming climate. So when the cold and the winds finally did come, many of us sighed deep relief and gave thanks; this year at least, nature’s seasonal death ritual, familiar and loved, is here. And yet, even if autumn as we know it becomes another ghost, we may still rest into what is true, the changing of light in accordance with the earth’s tilt and rotation, the love that moves us to action, and – death, ever steady death, intermingling with life, life changing form and moving into the next wondrous, surprising iteration.

**SECOND:** The journey of the leaf is our journey too: Even with all that is wrong and heartbreaking in the world, much remains as it ever has been in our human journey. It is HARD; it is letting go of the parent and flying into the wild storms of the unknown, it is settling into something new and strange. The invitation is to trust (a bit madly) in the journey, just as a little sapling may cycle back to mulch over a few hundred years, we may place ourselves in that human cycle: child to adult to elder to ancestor. Can we find some case and guidance here? What does each stage signify? What is our responsibility at each stage? Can we trust that the portal of death is something like birth?

**THIRD:** Tune into what the season invites. Our bodies are of nature and, despite our cultural conditioning, they yearn to align with nature and the seasons. We yearn to slow down, rest more, and reflect in fall. We desire what is warm, cozy, nourishing: hot tea and soup, roasted vegetables, layers of blankets, fires, friendship. We may also feel drawn to work on integrating our own histories, reflecting on that which is past. Holidays and festivals before commercialization. The lives of our ancestors and the ancestral stories of the land we now call home. We can acknowledge that this season is melancholic. Fallen leaves are glorious, but not in the way of a summer sunflower or freshly picked cherry tomato. The beautiful colors signify they are dying, beginning the disintegration into soil that must happen for that sunflower to be possible. We too can give some space and gentleness to our own melancholic feelings, trusting eventually we will come into a different season.

These are three little musings, but I think there are as many lessons of the leaves as there are leaves. To you dear reader, dreaming in that leaf pile, what do leaves evoke in your body and spirit?
"The plastics industry’s greenhouse gas emissions are on track to surpass those of coal-fired power in the U.S. by 2030."

The physical and chemical components of plastics contaminate our water, air, soil and the bodies of all life on earth. Plastics are “Part of” us. We’ve found plastics in beer, salt, earthworms, apples, lettuces... and in human breastmilk, blood, placentas and deep in the lungs of living humans.

Plastics pollute and are a major contributor to climate change at every stage including how plastics are made, used and disposed. The so-called life-cycle of plastics creates a long-lasting legacy of damage to the health of earth’s biological systems. Each stage of plastics disproportionately harms people of color and people in economically depressed areas around the world. If the plastics industry was a country it would rank as the 5th largest climate polluter.

It is important to stop the toxic overproduction of single use plastics and stop the greenwashing and false solutions. We can’t recycle our way out of this mess. Incineration and methods such as waste-to-fuel and chemical recycling are not the answer. We need to support a regenerative circular economy and actions to stop the harm and injustice at every stage of plastic pollution.

For ways to take action contact Families for a Livable Climate and check out the resources at Beyond Plastics.

Mask by Youpa Stein made with Alder bark and plastic from a blue water bottle.
I.
In Missoula, smoke travels hundreds of miles from Idaho — remnants of a controlled burn lasting hours, but the smoke lasts days, its sticky scent woven into clothing and covering my skin.

So, I sit in sanctuary: my apartment with filtered air, protected unlike my friends, who have to prop windows open in the summer to feel a cool, dry breeze.

Now, they suffocate,
because the smoke rolls in like waves to the shore, pulled by the atmosphere’s current.

Wear a mask, my mother said
when I told her my inhaler was empty and the pharmacy sits a half mile down the road in smoke’s stagnant, heavy coat.

But I didn’t have a mask — only the cloth of my t-shirt over my nose, my rescue inhaler in my right hand, and my eyes full and burning from contact without protection.

Now I suffocate,
asymptomatic and wheezing,
swollen bronchioles looking for space to hold air,
between inflammation and thick mucus —
like I was shown on the poster at my doctor’s office when I was a child.

Exhale with force into the spirometer, the doctor said,
It will measure your air, knowing the outcome would be that my body refuses basic function —
operation only found with daily maintenance —
inhalers and pills and breathing machines,
steamy rooms and masks and filtered air.

II.
In Missoula, I taught children about wildfires, unrelenting and devastating, lifegiving and restorative.

If only smoke could be restorative for me.

Ponderosa pines rise tall in Montana’s mountain landscape.
Spot them from afar, their stature imposing against the brightest summer skies, their bark scarred from wildfires long past.

See the crevices? I asked the children. See how the bark protects them from the fires?

See their pinecones? I ask — because their pine cones require fire to unfurl and foster new growth in a new landscape of char and ash and death.

Ponderosa pines need fire, like we need water and food and shelter, I said, watching wonder on the children’s faces —
children who have lived their whole life in Montana, who expect the shock of wildfires, their smoke and devastation, who understand the cycle of fire, how it births something new, who fear fire season, because it’s only getting worse.

III.
In Missoula, rumbling unease undercuts summer’s joy, because we listen to broadcasts about California and Washington and Oregon,
so I think about wildfires and I think about myself, my own smoke-succumbed soul,
how the disease refuses to relent its stronghold, not satiated unless I take more medicine because

asthma’s restrictions are part of my natural cycle, and
my reliance on inhalers in my backpack is only increasing as I age,
even though, the doctor told me when I was young,
Most children grow out of it, and it’s likely you will, too.

But, twenty-five years since my diagnosis and I’m afraid I won’t be able to walk a mile in our ever-decaying air.
DO IT YOURSELF

SARAH LUNDBQUIST

COMPOSTING 101

With layers of freshly-fallen leaves blanketing the ground, fall is the perfect time to set up a compost pile. Compost is a nutrient-dense soil amendment formed when different types of organic materials break down in the presence of oxygen. During the composting process, bacteria, fungi, and other decomposers turn kitchen scraps and yard trimmings into a material that can be added to lawns, gardens, and potted plants to improve soil health, promote plant growth, and sustainably manage waste.

HOW TO COMPOST IN YOUR BACKYARD

STEP 1: FIND A LOCATION

Locate an area in your yard (roughly 1-2 cubic yards) that is well-drained and relatively level, a few yards away from your house and garden (don’t worry about whether it is in the shade or sun - it doesn’t matter!). You want to place the pile close enough that it is convenient and accessible, but not so close that it could invite critters and pests inside.

STEP 2: CHOOSE A CONTAINER

Compost bins come in an array of styles - plastic bins, wooden and wire cages, tumblers, etc. You can also DIY a compost bin out of a trash can, chicken wire, hardware cloth, pallets, or other materials (try to avoid pressure treated and painted woods to prevent chemical leaching). Or, you can compost in an open pile or trench, no bin necessary. Do some research and find a container that will work for you, keeping in mind ease of turning the pile, harvesting the compost, and any pest considerations. Composting is typically most successful when the pile has direct access to soil and all its beneficial decomposers (i.e. an open-bottom or hardware cloth-lined container, rather than an enclosed bin or a pile placed on concrete).

STEP 3: SOURCE YOUR INGREDIENTS

Home composting systems are made up of two types of ingredients: “greens” (nitrogen-rich materials like kitchen scraps and fresh grass clippings), and “browns” (carbon-rich materials like dried leaves, straw, and paper towels). You don’t need to be too precise when measuring your ingredients, but you’ll want about 3 times as many browns as greens by volume (or about a 1:1 ratio by weight). A lot of compost problems are caused by a lack of browns so when in doubt, add more browns!

Acceptable compost ingredients:

Greens

Fruit & veggie scraps/peels/pits, grains (cooked or uncooked), egg shells, coffee grounds & tea leaves, fresh grass & garden clippings, and livestock manure.

Browns

Dried leaves, dead/dried grass & garden clippings, straw & hay, sticks & twigs, untreated woodchips & sawdust, paper towels & napkins, shredded newspaper, egg cartons, and unbleached cardboard.

Do NOT use

Meat & bones, large amounts of dairy, oil & grease, pet waste (including cat litter), weed seeds, diseased plants, heavy pesticide-treated materials, treated/painted wood, glossy paper, synthetic/plastic items (including “biodegradable” plastics, which are not designed to break down in a small, backyard pile).

STEP 4: LAYER

Start your pile with a layer of coarse browns (like criss-crossed sticks and twigs) for aeration. Then, add to the pile layer by layer over time, alternating layers of greens and browns. After adding a layer of greens, always top off with a layer of browns immediately - food scraps should never be visible from outside the pile (this will help deter pests and keep smells to a minimum).

STEP 5: MANAGE & MONITOR

Keep an eye on the pile, its temperature, and its moisture. It should feel warm to the touch when you stick your hand inside the pile, and should be about as moist as a wrung-out sponge. If it feels too wet, add more browns. There is typically no need to water the pile - food scraps will provide all the moisture the pile needs.

Turning the pile will help speed up the process and provide aeration, but it is not completely necessary. To turn the pile, you can stir it with a pitchfork or aerator tool, or you can shovel the pile to an empty space next to it. If you have a bin, it is usually easier to pull the bin off the pile if possible, set it down beside it, and shovel the pile into the now-empty bin. Do not turn the pile any more than once every couple weeks - over-turning the pile will disturb decomposer colonies and sterilize the pile. If you choose to turn the pile, it is advisable to turn it once every month or two.

STEP 6: HARVEST

After 9-12 months, your compost will likely be ready to use! You can tell the compost is ready when you can’t recognize the ingredients (it will look like dark, crumbly soil and have an earthy scent). If you don’t turn your pile often, the bottom of the pile (the oldest materials) will be ready first. Shovel out the finished compost and return anything that doesn’t look finished to the bin. You can now use the finished compost in your garden, lawn, or houseplants!

For more information and resources about composting, visit www.zerobyfiftymissoula.com/compost.
PUTTING CLIMATE CHANGE FRONT AND CENTER

Elisabeth Kwak-Hefferan is the former deputy editor of Outside Business Journal (OBJ). For the Winter 2022 issue of OBJ, Elisabeth used her influence as an editor to put the climate crisis on the cover. We asked her about her work on this issue and her interest in and involvement with climate action.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN CLIMATE CONCERNED?

I’ve cared and worried about climate change since I learned about it from my second-grade teacher, but the crisis became viscerally frightening during the awful smoke season of 2021. I’d experienced wildfire smoke before, but this was my first bad season as a mom. That made climate change feel very real, and it left me deeply concerned about the world we’re leaving to our kids.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS ON THE COVER OF THE OUTSIDE BUSINESS JOURNAL?

We began planning the issue in the fall of 2021, and the smoke season plus the summer ’21 IPCC report meant climate change was in the front of my mind. I pushed for us to do a big report on the crisis for our audience, which is members of the outdoor industry. I felt very strongly that climate change is a subject of huge importance for our readers (and everyone else in the world!). And I also believe in the "agenda-setting" power of the media: Publications help people decide what’s worth paying attention to. Choosing what subjects to cover, and in what way, is a huge responsibility of journalists, and I try to take that very seriously.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE?

It was challenging to balance reporting on the seriousness of the problem without making readers lose hope entirely. We tried to provide very actionable advice for companies to take to achieve net-zero emissions — because we need everyone tackling this problem in every way possible.

WHAT POSITIVE OUTCOMES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED BECAUSE OF THIS WORK?

We got some good feedback from readers on the stories in the issue, and the fact that we put a spotlight on climate change in the first place. My dearest hope is that the magazine inspires many companies in the outdoor industry to take big action starting now. And my reporting for the stories in the issue showed me just how many people in the world really care about the climate and are working hard in many ways to turn this crisis around.

IS THERE A LARGER VISION OR INSPIRATIONAL SOLUTION FOR OUR FUTURE THAT YOU’D LIKE THIS WORK TO BE A PART OF?

My vision for the future is that everyone, in every job, figures out how to do what they do in a sustainable way.

TELL US ABOUT ANY RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR INSPIRATION THAT YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE.

My 4-year-old son has asked to make part of his next birthday party an "electric car protest," where he and his friends will make posters and banners and yell "We want more electric cars!" That’s a huge inspiration to me!

DO YOU HAVE WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT OR WISDOM FOR PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS WHO WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH CLIMATE ACTION BUT DON’T KNOW WHERE TO START?

Climate change is such a huge and overwhelming problem that it’s easy to feel like you can’t do anything about it. But you don’t have to solve all the problems and save the entire world — you can’t. What you can do is work for a better future within the reach of your arm. If everyone does that, we can make a real difference. Also, get involved with Families for a Livable Climate, or Climate Smart Missoula, or any other group that speaks to you. Getting together with other people who also care helps keep me optimistic when I’m tempted to give in to despair. And it’s only by working together and supporting each other that we’ll get this done.
MEET CAITLYN LEWIS, FLC’S NEW EVENTS AND EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Caitlyn Lewis (she/her) has always been drawn to action-oriented work and her love for the natural world has led her to environmental education and climate action. She found her way to Montana for graduate school in Communications Studies at UM and has been determined to be a part of the Missoula community ever since. Caitlyn founded Soil Cycle, a nonprofit dedicated to reducing food waste and educating about the potential that composting has to heal our planet. She has used her knowledge of living ecosystems to create a thriving flower farm, Blue Mountain Flowers, with her husband Rick. When she isn’t getting her hands dirty, she is hiking around Montana, biking across Idaho, or creating art with friends.

THE LETTER CONTAINED OVER 1,000 SIGNATURES FROM INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND BUSINESSES IN SUPPORT.

Our letter is one small step in the effort to transition Montana toward renewables. As NorthWestern Energy’s leadership begins its Electricity Supply Planning process and prepares to send lobbyists to Helena in January, we must build momentum for statewide pressure on the company to move away from fossil fuels and toward clean, renewable energy.

To get involved with building this momentum:

- Follow us on social media (@livableclimate) and subscribe to our newsletter (www.livableclimate.org) to stay in the loop for action alerts and training opportunities.
- Commit to writing a letter to the editor about this issue (it’s only 200 words!) — join our LTE campaign by sending an email to director@livableclimate.org with your name, community, and which week you plan to submit your letter. We will send you some talking points as well.
- Save the date to join in the Climate Advocacy Day at the Montana State Legislature in Helena on Friday, January 20, 2023.
- Stay tuned for public comment opportunities at the Montana Public Service Commission in January and February.

Read more about our NWE letter delivery and watch remarks from rally speakers at bit.ly/nwe-rally.

FLC UPDATE

Speaking Up For a Brighter Future

Last month, Families for a Livable Climate rallied with supporters, parents, caregivers, and community members to deliver a letter to NorthWestern Energy’s leadership asking the company to move to clean, affordable, and renewable energy. (You can read the full letter at livableclimate.org/nwe).
When I was first starting out in the environmental action realm, I got very into personal actions. Making changes in my habits and consumption patterns felt like the most tangible way to address the climate crisis, and was where I felt a sense of power and influence. Since then, my understanding of climate change, its causes, its symptoms, and its solutions has broadened. I still believe change in the personal sphere is important - for me, these actions help build my sense of self-efficacy and motivate me to continue engaging. But placing disproportionate burden on individuals when the problem is systemic is a clever way for the fossil fuel industry to let themselves off the hook - and to keep the public preoccupied on smaller things, like which brand of lightbulb is the most efficient, or how many times per week we should (or shouldn’t) shower.

Instead of waffling endlessly over small decisions in a system full of imperfect options, I want a system that is designed to work for us and for the earth. I want the right choice to be the easy, accessible, and obvious choice. What I want is a system where workers are valued, water is kept clean, ecosystems are healthy, air is breathable, and our climate is stable, all inherently. I want a system that enriches rather than pollutes. I want a future that is livable for all.

But what role do we, as individuals, play in creating systems-wide change? According to renowned climate scientist, author, and expert climate communicator Katharine Hayhoe, we can start by talking about climate change and normalizing its solutions. At a recent Families for a Livable Climate event featuring Katharine Hayhoe, she addressed a number of important changemaking skills, including connecting with people over authentically shared values, mobilizing people who are already concerned, pushing forward solutions that address multiple issues at once, and practicing hope. We discussed how to have effective climate conversations, and how to use our voices to advocate for change.

Watch the event recording at bit.ly/hayahoe-event.

This upcoming year, we are building on and launching a number of events and programs to turn up the volume on climate conversations across the state. Join us at an upcoming Climate Conversations Workshop, submit to The Changing Times, or share your story through our Montana Climate Stories project. Follow our work and join us at livableclimate.org.

– Sarah Lundquist
Communications Director

Families for a Livable Climate is seeking submissions for their Montana Climate Stories project, a space for Montanans to share personal stories about how climate change is impacting them. More about the project at MTClimatetStories.org.

Submit your Montana Climate Story in an original essay, narrative, poem, photo essay, photography, or artwork.

Selected storytellers will receive $100 for their submission, will be featured on our website, and may be included in a traveling exhibit of stories in 2023.
WHO WE ARE

“The Changing Times” is a seasonal (quarterly) publication of Families For A Livable Climate that invites community-wide response to these turbulent and revolutionary times, seeking submissions from people of all ages and backgrounds. In this space, we share stories, express love for the world around us, and offer ways for everyone to get involved in answering the call to change – in ourselves, our families, our communities, and our country. We know this work happens by challenging our systems and leaders; conversing on racial justice, resiliency, grief work, activism, youth empowerment, education, intergenerational support, local living, and traditional knowledge; and connecting with one another through our relationship with nature and the creative arts. While the magazine is based in Missoula, MT we consider “conversations with the peripheries,” throughout Montana and beyond to be valid, so anyone is welcome to subscribe and/or submit.

Families for A Livable Climate is a project of Social and Environment Entrepreneurs (SEE) a non-profit public charity exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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Sarah Capdeville, 30, is an alum of the University of Montana and Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A nonfiction editor at The Hopper, her writing has been published in Orion, Toca. Normal School, Hynx, Fourth Genre, Camas, and others. Always in search of wild places, she’s rambled high desert, glacial basins, and boreal forests two-hundred miles north of the arctic circle. For five seasons, she was wilderness ranger in the Absaroka-Bearthol Wilderness, Welcome Creek Wilderness, and Rattlesnake Wilderness, her home of homes. Currently, she lives in Missoula, Montana with her partner, greyhound, and chaotic kitten, where she navigates chronic illness and daydreams about the crosscut saw.

Elisabeth Kwak Heffernan is a freelance writer and editor who specializes in the outdoors, environment, science, health, parenting, and culture. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, Backpacker, Sunset, 5200 (Denver’s city magazine), Grist, Organic Life, Outdoor Retailer Daily, and more. She is deputy editor of Outside, Business Journal and Backpacker’s Rocky Mountain Editor and wrote the last two editions of Frommer’s Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park travel guides. Elisabeth holds a Master’s degree in magazine journalism from Northwestern’s Medill School of Journalism, where she earned both the prestigious McCormick Scholar designation and the Harrington Memorial Award.

Sarah Lundquist, 27, is an environmental educator, mother, and zero waste enthusiast originally from the Seattle area. She has a degree in American Sign Language Studies and Psychology from Western Oregon University, where she was a member of the campus sustainability & recycling team. Sarah later completed a stint through a Vermont-based AmeriCorps program at Addison County Solid Waste Management District in Middlebury, Vermont. In 2018, she moved to Missoula to pursue a Master’s degree in Environmental Studies at UM. Her graduate work focused primarily on zero waste policies, and included several interesting internships with Home ReSource, Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, and the City of Missoula. Sarah worked as Zero Waste Education Manager at Home ReSource following her graduate studies, and gave birth to her beautiful daughter, Mirabelle, in 2021.

Robin L. Paone, 62, is a retired software engineer who lives in Whitefish and volunteers with Citizens’ Climate Lobby. She is an avid supporter of all effective climate solutions and supports all who advocate for the environment. Her favorite solution is Carbon Fee and Dividend.

Shane Sater, 27, is a naturalist, writer, and podcaster currently based in Helena, Montana. Find his work at https://whatgoingsonblog.org/. (This piece first appeared there, in longer form, under the title “Into the night on furry wings.”) Passionate about nature, community, languages, and life, Shane holds a B.A in Environmental Science from Carroll College and has previously done field botany and biology work for various organizations.

Meg Smith, 28, is local Montanans with a deep wonder for the more-than-human world. She has a BA in English Literature and Teaching from the University of Montana and an MA in Environmental Humanities from Bath Spa University, Bath, England. When she isn’t finding new trails, she loves to write poetry, cook without recipes, and find new ways to use less.

Youpa Stein, 63, artistically collaborates with the natural world to bring to attention to our responsibilities for the care of the Earth. She manages the Facebook group “Working Toward Plastic Free in Montana” and volunteers with Beyond Plastics and Families for a Livable Climate in support of work to end the health and environmental justice issues related to plastics and the climate crisis. Youpa was born in Montana and lives on the Flathead Reservation of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

Megan Thornton, 38, is mother to 3 little humans (Samuel, Willa, Ben). Megan grew up in Butte, lived in Bozeman for a spell, and is now settled for the long haul in the Russell district of Missoula, where she and her husband Orion navigate the bumpy terrain of parenting alongside beloved family, friends, and neighbors (including the deer, squirrels, trees, and birds of the block!).

Carol “Kate” Wilburn, 67, cherishes the wild Land, is keenly aware of legacy across generations. Her life’s terrain is diverse: engineering, homemaking, single parenting, permaculture design, teaching, activism. She endeavors to stand as an Earth-protector and as a settler-ally to Indigenous neighbors. A naturalist at her core, she celebrates nuanced life and its intense beauty. Her art & poetry offer vivid contrasts in words, strong shapes, light, dark. Passionate over current challenges, she also illustrates & writes children’s stories that imagine new possibilities.
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As always, *The Changing Times* is freely available online and at our Western Montana distributors.