# ROTARY DISTRICT 5440 PEACEBUILDER NEWSLETTER MAY 2020 NUMBER 33 SUSTAINABILITY AND PEACEBUILDING

Del Benson, William Timpson, Robert Meroney & Lloyd Thomas Fort Collins Rotary Club Lindsey Pointer, 2017 Rotary Global Grant Scholarship Recipient

In these newsletters of the Rotary District Peacebuilders, we want to invite readers for contributions and ideas, suggestions and possibilities for our efforts to promote the foundational skills for promoting peace, i.e., nonviolent conflict resolution, improved communication and cooperation, successful negotiation and mediation as well as the critical and creative thinking that can help communities move through obstacles and difficulties.

# ENERGY USES AND CONNECTIONS WITH PEACEBUILDING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**Del Benson, Ph.D.** is a Professor and wildlife specialist for Extension at Colorado State University. His work is with wildlife and recreation enterprises on private land, conservation education, hunter attitudes and behavior, public input to resource management decision making and campus environmental management.

Distribution and use of energy have led to human conflicts for basic food and commodities (<u>https://www.businessinsider.com/nine-wars-that-were-fought-over-commodities-2012-8</u>). Climate change alters energy stored as food and other impacts such as: increased carbon dioxide; greater ocean depth and temperatures; loss of coral and the cover it provides fishes; loss of ice and food cycle alterations for polar bears; earlier and longer growing seasons that might help agriculture in Canada, but turn southwestern US into more of a Great American Desert; etc. (<u>https://www.globalchange.gov/sites/globalchange/files/BioD\_SAP\_4.3\_Letter.pdf</u>).

People can either negotiate or fight over limited resources and climate changes alter coping mechanisms between humans and how we use natural, agricultural, and urban environments. At the most basic level, nature provides food, fiber, and energy that humans seek, share, and fight over. Humans can only live for three days without water. Starvation from lack of food lasts longer but is not desired by anyone. According to the Food Aid Foundation, 1 in 7 persons are hungry. Climate changes can add to that dilemma, increase conflicts, and threaten peace.

The earliest hunter/gatherers exploited resources when and where they were found and often consumed mass quantities when available. Predictability of the next meal was uncertain. Primitives used methods to protect food including drying, mixing in animal fats, crude storage by hoisting meat in trees above predators, placing food underground with more consistent temperature regulation, and storing in primitive pots to protect food from pests.

In temperate regions, ice could be used to preserve foods, but each piece had to be found and transported. Animals might steal food supplies when they could and so would neighbors who were hungry.

Fifty to 90% of wood is used today for fuel to cook food and to heat homes. The world's forests were considerably more plentiful before human expansion (<u>https://www.eh-resources.org/the-</u>

<u>role-of-wood-in-world-history/</u>) and use of forests is a sustainability concern. Fuel is worth fighting for and in modern times wood also builds ships, homes, packaging, and paper products.

Much of the world is industrialized, overpopulated, uses high quantities of resources per capita, and now exploits resources for frivolity and leisure adding to conflicts and reducing peace. The current energy fight seems to be for oil and gas which help to transport humans to desired locations and to keep homes cool with global warming and warm during harder winters.

Sharing resources equally is a peaceful suggestion, but what level of living can sustain resources? (<u>https://theglobalobservatory.org/2019/09/climate-change-peacebuilding-and-sustaining-peace/</u>). Humans can talk, share, sustain, and make peace, but will we use our energies wisely?

# A CENTER FOR PEACE AND NATURE

*William Timpson, Ph.D.* is a professor at Colorado State University in its School of Education and a member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club.

The Corrymeela Community Center was founded in 1965 to aid individuals and groups who had suffered through violence and conflicts, stresses and losses in the deeply divided society of Northern Ireland, the legacy of an imperial conquest by British forces in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. During the "Troubles" of the late twentieth century and after "Bloody Sunday" in 1972 when British troops fired on Catholics in Londonderry who were demonstrating for an end to second-class citizenship, historic prejudices, barriers and limitations. The Center at Corrymeela, then, became a safe, neutral space for all sides of this conflict to meet and discuss ways forward.



The University of Ngozi would like to create something similar but expand the mission to include our collective needs to not only make peace with our own selves and others but with the natural world that supports all life. In truth, the very definition of sustainability calls for this kind of integrative perspective, a focus on the interconnected health of society, the environment and the economy. A deep connection with the natural world motivates the leaders at the University of Ngozi who want to promote new forms of cooperation through positive interdependence. The research is very clear about needing this for cooperative learning to succeed. In general, students must have a stake in each other's success for the group experience to succeed. In order to complete a project, for example, everyone must contribute something of value, some part of the answer or final product.

Promoting peace follows a similar trajectory. Initial "peacekeeping" efforts often require a focus on separating combatants. Once the violence is contained, cooperative "peacemaking" efforts help to define the policies and practices needed to prevent conflicts from reigniting. Eventually, much more will be required for a deeper and broader "peacebuilding" effort where collective attention helps to improve communication and cooperation, critical and creative thinking, i.e., those historic, cultural and economic factors that have sparked conflict and violence in the past.

## Inspire and learn through international service

In *Learning Life's Lessons* (Peace Knowledge Press, 2019) I write about the Cold War when in March of 1961 many feared the inevitability of a nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. It was then that President John F. Kennedy initiated the Peace Corps through an executive order, beginning a tradition of international service that inspired thousands of Americans to volunteer and learn more about people in the far reaches of the planet, especially those in poor and developing areas. Since its first days some 200,000 volunteers have now served in 139 countries.

Today the call of the Peace Corps continues to expand, now resonating more with older and more specialized volunteers. The appeal of this program over so many years provides another model for increasing global understanding in our increasingly interdependent world. Could a Center for Peace and Nature help inspire the return of the Peace corps to Burundi now that the threat of the violence that propelled their exit in 1993 has subsided and calm has returned?

In our book, *147 Practical Tips for Peace and Reconciliation* (2009, Atwood Publishing), we note how peace scholar and professor, Jing Lin (2006, p. 315) has advocated for a global ethic of universal love, forgiveness, and reconciliation. She provides a constructive, optimistic critique of the very purposes of education in the United States and around the world when the daily reports of violence and conflict indicate such a clear need for increased understanding and appreciation among countries and populations.

In her co-edited book, *Transforming Education for Peace*, Lin (2006) argues for a paradigm shift where the teaching of love comprises the central purpose of education. Lin maintains, "I envision our future schools will shift from a mechanical, functionalistic perspective that primarily emphasizes tests and efficiency, to a constructive, transformative paradigm where students' intellectual, moral, emotional, spiritual, and ecological abilities are developed in order to promote understanding of the world and help nurture love and respect for all human beings and nature. In all, constructing a loving world should be the central purpose of education in the twenty-first century."

Pairing that ethic with service in the Peace Corps, for example, provides a context for reaching Lin's vision in a realistic manner and connects peacebuilding efforts with the threats to sustainability and the earth's limitations.

Ask everyone to envision the ideal program, school, community, nation, or world where love, peace and sustainability serve as the foundation for education. Can Peace Corps serve that role? Can a Center for Peace and nature also serve that role? Describe the curriculum, how teaching is conducted, how people are assessed on their capacities for providing needed services as well as a commitment to love, peacebuilding and sustainability, and how the policy context and rule of law shape the containers in which cultural actors engage in everyday actions.

## SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IS AN "OXYMORON"

**Robert N. Meroney, Ph.D**. is a Rotarian and an Emeritus Professor of Fluid Mechanics and Wind Engineering with a long career at Colorado State University.

An oxymoron is a rhetorical statement that is a self-contradiction to reveal a paradox. Its use goes back to Italian grammarian Maurus Servius Honoraatus (c AD400). Examples include things like "keenly stupid", "pointedly foolish", "military intelligence", "civil war", or perhaps even "business ethics".

Albert Allen Bartlett (1923-2013) was a distinguished emeritus professor of physics at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He identified the popular economic concept of *"sustainable growth"* as an oxymoron, since even modest annual percentage population, energy, or resource use increases will inevitably equate to huge exponential growth over sustained periods of time.<sup>1</sup>

Bartlett is one among many prophetic voices that have warned of the stupidity of continued unchecked growth in population, resource use, pollution, and destruction of the environment. Thomas Robert Malthus warned of population growth leading to possible starvation in 1798. George Orwell proposed a society where excessive growth leads to an ant-hill like world of communism or totalitarianism in his book "*Nineteen Eighty-Four*" (1949). Then there is "*The Population Bomb*" by Aldous Huxley (1960), "*The Tragedy of the Commons*" by Garrett Hardin (1968), "*The Limits to Growth*" sponsored by the Club of Rome (1972), "*Beyond the Limits: confronting global collapse, envisioning a sustainable future*" by Meadows and Randers (1992), and even "*Limits to Growth: The 30-year Update*" (2004). Almost every one of these predictions have been revisited and found the growth rates to be essentially correct in that what was or will occur.

Bartlett worried: *"The greatest shortcoming of the human race is our inability to understand the exponential function."* And humanities great challenge is:

"Can you think of any problem in any area of human endeavor on any scale, from microscopic to global, whose long-term solution is in any demonstrable way aided, assisted, or advanced by further increases in population, locally, nationally, or globally?"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A.A. Bartlett et. Al. (2004), <u>The Essential Exponential For the Future of Our Planet</u>, University of Nebraska, 294 pages. <u>https://www.albartlett.org/books/essential\_exponential.html</u>

<u>Sustainability and World Resources</u> Bartlett opposed the "cornucopian" school of thought that believe that continued progress and use of material items can be met by continued advances in technology, and that there is enough matter and energy on the earth to provide for whatever population the world reaches. Consider that there is hardly a political regime today that does not promise and desire to achieve GDP growth rates for their countries of 3 to 8% and complain bitterly if not achieved (e.g. currently USA, 2.3%; China 7%).<sup>2</sup> Bartlett pointed out that with exponential growth one can calculate the actual lifetime of resources for different growth rates. For example, for a resource (say coal, oil, lithium, arable land, potable water, etc.) that should conservatively last 1000 years at 0% growth rate (or current rate of consumption), one will consume it all at:

- 2% growth rate resource in 152 years,
- 4% growth rate resource in 93 years, or
- 6% growth rate resource in 69 years.

Because of its size and living standard, the United States has 30 to 50 times the impact on world resources as does a person in an underdeveloped country. As pointed out by President Carter in 1977: "And in each of these decades (the 1950s and 1960s), more oil was consumed in all of man's previous history combined." Or a rate of 7%/year.

**Sustainability and War** Sustained growth is not possible among nations without competition. Since some resources will be limited political entities and nations will insist on their rightful "share" or even unlimited access to what they need to maintain or grow their quality of life. There seems to be limited political interest in "altruistic" global trade and recently we have frequently heard slogans like "America First." Again, Bartlett wrote:

Modern warfare is extremely dependent on fossil fuels and minerals; hence, war can't be a part of a sustainable society. The world in 2012 seems to have a deep commitment to perpetual war. In today's wasteful and destructive environment of unceasing hostility we can have little or no hope of achieving global sustainability. In seeking to abolish war we must remember that overpopulation is a major factor that drives people to make war.

**Sustainability and Population**\_ After examining the impacts of limitations of various resources, Bartlett returned to his main conclusion that control of population is the primary solution to avoid human social or military Armageddon. He noted we must overcome both cultural and religious constraints that defy population control. In his 2012 book that considers the global forecast until 2051, Jorgen Randers, University of Cambridge, concludes:

If I could persuade you of one thing, it should be this: the world is small and fragile, and humanity is huge, dangerous, and powerful. This is a total reversal of the biblical perspective on humanity, and the way in which man has thought during most of his presence on Earth. But this is the perspective we need to take if we're to be sure that sustainability emerges or, at least, that the world as we know it survives for a couple of hundred more years. "Over the next 40 years, in addition to all the resource, pollution and inequity problems that we have already, humanity will run into more problems of depletion, pollution, adaptation and repair of climate damage, because we will be trying to fit an excessive amount of activity on to a small globe." <sup>3</sup>

**Final Words About Growth from Albert Allan Bartlett:** Bartlett argues there is no such thing as "smart growth" instead he suggests:

Dumb growth destroys the environment. Smart growth destroys the environment. The difference is that smart growth destroys the environment with good taste.

So, it's like buying a ticket on the TITANIC. If you're smart you go first class If you're dumb you go steerage. Either way the result is the same.<sup>4</sup>

# Predicting the Future Literature Robert N. Meroney

Joseph Johnson (Thomas Robert Malthus) (1798), An Essay on the Principle of Population, St. Paul's Church-yard, London, <u>http://www.econlib.org/library/Malthus/malPop.html</u> Sixth Edition published in 1826 <u>http://www.econlib.org/library/Malthus/malPlong.html</u> *Essay describes how unchecked population growth is exponential while the growth of the food supply was expected to be arithmetical. Malthus believed there were two types of "checks" that could then reduce the population, returning it to a more sustainable level. He believed there were "preventive checks" such as moral restraints (abstinence, delayed marriage until finances become balanced), and restricting marriage against persons suffering poverty and/or defects. Malthus believed in "positive checks", which lead to 'premature' death: disease, starvation, war, resulting in what is called a Malthusian catastrophe. The catastrophe would return population to a lower, more "sustainable", level.* 

Aldous Huxley (1932), Brave New World, Chatto & Windus, London, UK, 306 pp. Satirical fiction book based on Malthusian forces, it was not scientific prophecy. <u>http://www.huxley.net/</u> or full book <u>http://www.huxley.net/bnw/index.html</u>

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjeld6XgN\_o AhXRKs0KHc38DWgQFjACegQIBxAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cisl.cam.ac.uk%2Fresources%2Fpublicationpdfs%2Fjorgen-randers-2052-a-global-forecast-for-the-next.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1JTnCvwLfN9dZQXnHR2CkS

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Jorgen Randers (2012), <u>2062: A global forecast for the next forty years</u>, Chelsea Green Publishing, 416 pp. or download a pdf summary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Albert A. Bartlett (2012), The Meaning of Sustainability", Population Media Center, Teachers Clearinghouse for Science and Society Education Newsletter, Volume 31, No. 1, Winter 2012, 17 pp. <u>https://www.populationmedia.org/2012/04/04/the-meaning-of-sustainability-by-professor-emeritus-albert-a-bartlett/</u>

- George Orwell (1949), Nineteen Eighty-Four, Secker and Warburg, London, 267 pp. Introduces Big Brother, is watching you, doublethink, thoughtcrime, Newspeak, 2+2=5, and memory hole, the book was written as his vision of what life would be like under the anthill like world of communism, or any other totalitarian state and the consequence of over population and limited resources.
- M. King Hubbert (1956) (June 1956). "Nuclear Energy and the Fossil Fuels". Shell Oil Company/American Petroleum Institute. Presented before the Spring Meeting of the Southern District, American Petroleum Institute, Plaza Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, March 7– 8-9, Shell Development Company, Publication No. 95, 57 pp. <u>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M. King Hubbert#Citation</u> Video 1976 explaining Peak Oil concept. <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImV1voi41YY</u> Gary Flomenhoft (2011), Hubbert's 3 Prophecies, Gund Institute of Ecological Economics, Rubenstein School of Environment & Natural Resources, University of Vermont, a video introducing Hubbert's ideas followed by an audience discussion about modern money and resource situation and whether a different banking/credit system might be a solution. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xvAgJZ30QA
- Aldous Huxley (1960), Brave New World Revisited, Bantam Books, 116 pp. <u>http://www.huxley.net/bnw-revisited/index.html</u> Non-fiction book where Huxley muses about what has happened...he is rather pessimistic.
- Paul R. Ehrlich (1968) The Population Bomb, Sierra Club/Ballantine Books, 201 pp. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The Population Bomb
- Garrett Hardin (1968), "The Tragedy of the Commons". Science 162 (3859): 1243–1248. 1968. doi:10.1126/science.162.3859.1243. PMID 5699198 <u>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tragedy of the commons#cite note-hardin68-3</u> or for a pdf to download see: <u>http://www.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243.full.pdf</u> "The population problem has no technical solution; it requires a fundamental extension in morality" *Garrett Hardin*
- Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen (or Jorden, Jargen) Randers, William W. Behrens III, (1972), The Limits to Growth, Universe Books, 205 pp. Funded by Volkswagen Foundation and commissioned by the Club of Rome. The discussion of this book is available as a Wikiversity Course at: <u>http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Limits\_To\_Growth</u> A pdf copy of the books is available at: <u>http://www.donellameadows.org/wp\_ content/userfiles/Limits-to-Growth-digital-scan-version.pdf</u>
- Al Bartlett (1978), Forgotten Fundamentals of the Energy Crisis, Journal of Geological Education, Vol. 28, Jan. 1980, pp. 4-35. <u>http://www.albartlett.org/articles/art\_forgotten\_fundamentals\_reprintings.html</u>
- Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows, Jorgen Randers (1992), Beyond the Limits: confronting global collapse, envisioning a sustainable future, Chelsea Green, Vermont, 300 pp. <u>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beyond\_the\_Limits</u>

- Al Bartlett (2004), The Essential Exponential! (For the Future of Our Planet), Center for Science, Mathematics and Computer Education, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, ISBN 0-9758973-0-6, 291 pp. <u>http://www.albartlett.org/books/essential\_exponential.html</u> Compilation of Dr. Albert Bartlett's essays/presentations regarding the most critical issue which is threatening the Earth: "Unsustainable Population Growth", "Expanding Consumption", and "Declining Global Resources".
- Donella Meadows, Jorgen Randers, Dennis Meadows (2004), Limits to Growth: The 30-year Update, Chelsea Green Publishing Co., Vermont, 338 pp. A site discussing this book and other resources can be found at: <u>https://limitstogrowthnet.wordpress.com/</u> also the publisher provides: <u>http://www.chelseagreen.com/bookstore/item/limitspaper</u>
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- Ugo Bardi. (2011), The Limits to Growth Revisited. Springer Briefs in Energy: Energy Analysis , ISBN 9781441994158 (print) <u>http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4419-9416-5</u> 12 chapters
- Heinberg, Richard (2011), The end of growth: adapting to our new economic reality (3rd printing. ed.). Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers. ISBN 0865716951.
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- Al Bartlett (2013 deceased), Arithmetic, Population and Energy: Sustainability 101—a talk by Al Bartlett, a one hour lecture given more than 1,742 times to audiences exceeding 80 in the US and world-wide. First given in 1969, and subsequently presented an average of once every 8.5 days for 36 years! One can watch this in an entire one-hour streaming video <u>http://old.globalpublicmedia.com/lectures/461</u> or in ten minute segments <u>http://www.albartlett.org/presentations/arithmetic population energy video1.html</u> Website to extensive list of articles and videos compiled by and about Al Bartlett. A definitive resource about the exponential factor present in growth and its effects on population, energy, and oil production (peak oil),

http://www.albartlett.org/about al bartlett/about al bartlett.html

#### **RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Lindsey Pointer, Ph.D., a graduate of the Restorative Justice Program at Victoria University of Wellington, is a past recipient of the Rotary Global Grant Scholarship. She works as a restorative justice facilitator, trainer and researcher. Her recently released book is titled: "The Little Book of Restorative Teaching Tools." Lindsey writes: "I recently read an <u>excellent</u> booklet released by the European Forum for Restorative Justice on the intersection between restorative justice and environmental justice. For my contribution this month, I would like to share an excerpt from that publication."

## Restorative environmental justice: An introduction By John Braithwaite, Miranda Forsyth and Deborah Cleland

We live in the Anthropocene, the era of history when humankind dominates nature, when human kindness to nature withers, especially as machine bureaucracies of production lines, commodified institutions and blitzkriegs of war machines displace organic organizations that flourished relationally through interconnections among and between human worlds and the worlds of the land and the sea. Climate change, species loss, growing and urbanizing populations, diffuse sources of pollution and predatory capitalism are all placing increased pressures on our natural and built environment, often leaving the most marginalized communities to bear the worst of the burden of environmental pollution.

#### **Repairing harm**

Restorative environmental justice is philosophically much more than a set of techniques for doing justice for the environment in a more relational and emotionally intelligent fashion, though it is that as well. It is about repairing the harm of the Anthropocene. It is about healing earth systems and healing the relationship of humans with nature and with each other. Because the relationship of human domination developed during the Anthropocene, restorative environmental justice should also be about humbling humans' domination of nature. It is about tempering human power over earth systems and domination of the powerful over the less powerful. It seeks to advance the imperative to harness collective human power to forge a new vision of humankind as bearing a harmonious, restorative relationship with nature and with each other. It is about a humanly articulated future that is healing and relational.

This must involve a transformative mobilization of the restorative power and the restorative imagination of humankind. It involves the insight that, by being active citizens of the planet, by participating in the project of healing our natural world, we heal ourselves as humans who only have meaning and identity as part of that natural world.

Restorative environmental justice means, for example, a massive human-led reforestation of the planet and investment of human resources in seeding those renewed forests with species that have become endangered thanks to human domination. It means following the Chinese example of building 'sponge cities' that capture and clean every bit of run-off from the city's paths, roads, buildings and gutters and returning some of that city water to river systems that need more water to survive. It means more circular systems of using water in agriculture that take less water from those same endangered river systems. It means more circular re-use of waste so it does not find its way into rivers. It means restorative human steering the circle of warming that links the sun to the earth — steering some of the sun's heat to human projects of cooling the earth system.

## Transformation

Restorative environmental justice requires a human-led transformation of the shape of our economy, so we grow our well-being and continuously grow non-exploitative employment — not by increasing the consumption of goods, but by increasing the consumption of services. Increased consumption of health, education, care and disability services is structurally critical to shape-shifting. More teachers, nurses, child care, aged care and environmental care workers do not carbonize the atmosphere in the way more cars, coal, houses and plastic straws do.

By restoring nature through economic shape-shifting that favors growth in services over- growth in goods, we can better restore ourselves with enriched human services. The type of linking of guarantees of universal human welfare with environmental goals by leaders such as those developing the Green New Deal demonstrates a commitment to the entanglement of human and planet well-being that is at the center of restorative environmental justice. You can read the rest of the European Forum for Restorative Justice's booklet on Restorative Environmental Justice here.

## POSITIVE RESPONSES TO THE PANDEMIC

**Lloyd Thomas, Ph.D.** is a longstanding member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club, a licensed psychologist and a life coach with a long history of writing regular columns.

For the past several weeks the world has been experiencing a pandemic of the coronavirus, COVID-19. The psychological, social, economic and political impact on people everywhere has been devastating. Nevertheless, I am reminded of the psychological principle: *You have no influence or control over what happens to you. You can only influence and control how you respond to what happens to you.* Certainly, we had no influence or control over COVID-19's affects on the human race. However, here are some of the positive aspects of, and responses to its pandemic.

Historian and Professor of History at Boston College, Heather Cox Richardson, wrote on April 12<sup>th</sup>, "As the novel coronavirus has burned its way across America, it has highlighted the searing inequality that has lurked just below the surface of the economic boom of the past generation. It has revealed that self-serving politicians are indifferent to the lives of their constituents, that racial disparities in healthcare and poverty have created a deadly caste system, and that political partisanship has become so toxic that some people would literally rather die than listen to leadership from a member of another party.

"At the same time, the pandemic has also revealed the extraordinary character of ordinary people, who have sacrificed their jobs, their personal freedoms, and even their lives to save both their neighbors and strangers they will never know. It has shown that our essential workers are not CEOs, but rather the farm workers and fishermen and janitors and teachers and postal carriers and trades people who keep society functioning. It has proved that reordering our priorities and adjusting our lives can renew the ailing planet."

If Professor Cox's description is accurate, then we can begin to identify and focus on some of the positive aspects the pandemic has created.

- It has identified and highlighted the politicians who are only self-serving and indifferent to the inequality of the lifestyles of their constituents. That has influenced the choices we can make in November.
- It revealed inequality in economic status, healthcare availability, educational opportunity and social mobility that has plagued our society for centuries. Conscious knowledge of those inequalities gives us the chance to address them once and for everyone...as a government of, by and *for the people*.
- It has revealed the heroic dedication of the people working in our healthcare system. Now we are able to recognize and respect them for how they serve (and love) others.
- It has brought out the creative adaptability of the human race. With great gratitude, we are seeing and experiencing the caring skills of human beings in how they relate to one another.
- "Social isolation" has slowed down the frenetic activity of the human species. That has allowed the human-caused quantity of pollution to diminish around the world...in our air, oceans, drinking water and forests. I'm sure the fish and wildlife of the world enjoy the diminution. It makes it easier for them to survive.
- "Staying at home" closes factories, organizations and large gatherings. It gives us more time to be with immediate family members, to let go of time pressures, to remember and engage in forgotten, rejuvenating activities.
- It gives us time to think about the fragility of our lives, our interdependence with others *and* our environment, and how we might begin to heal ourselves, our relationships...and indeed, our planet.

Finally, Heather Cox Richardson wrote, "When this deadly crisis passes, we will be faced with the task of building a new era. What it will look like is ours to choose." How will we choose to respond?

# PRIORITIES OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

See the RI website: <u>https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/our-priorities</u> If you would you like to respond to one of the pieces in this newsletter, check out our blog <u>www.rotarypeacebuilder.com</u> and join the conversation! If you would like to contribute to a future newsletter, visit <u>www.rotarypeacebuilder.com/submit/</u>. You can find some of our past issues at the Rotary District 5440 website: <u>https://www.rotary5440.org/sitepage/peace-building-newsletters</u>. Future issues may explore the following: JUNE-- National elections and their influence on war and peace; JULY—(Thomas) Human diversity and leadership skills for peacebuilding; AUGUST—(Thomas) Characteristics of successful families and peacebuilders.