

## OUR SWEET, OLD WORLD

Thanks for the information-rich cover story “Extinction Sucks” July 16. As our planet continues to move inexorably toward its sixth mass extinction, we *Homo sapiens* who acknowledge our collective responsibility for the unfolding tragedy look for ways to express our great guilt and boundless sorrow.

“Be here now,” the brief mantra Ram Dass urged us to embrace in the ’60s, suggests a behavioral pattern for today. We cannot live in the future nor dwell on the past, yet to be truly present we must find a way to grieve, to express the often overwhelming emotions we feel now.

In the July 20 issue of *Truthout*, journalist Dahr Jamail has written an important piece titled “Mourning the Changes that Surround Us: Readers Speak Out on Climate.” In the section titled “Environmental Melancholia,” Jamail refers to Regan Rosburg’s master’s thesis in progress.

Rosburg suggests allowing ourselves to feel the loss of each “mini-death” we personally experience, such as when we notice that the birds or bees that have always come have now vanished from our garden. Maybe it’s a way to mourn our larger existential loss and to help us experience our grief for this sweet, old world in a personal way.

Lois Wadsworth  
Eugene

## A FESTIVE SUNDAY

Kudos to organizers, sponsors and volunteers of the Eugene Sunday Streets event July 26. It was a really festive, entertaining and educational event. I walked the route — which started close to my home — where I met neighbors for the first time, bumped into some old friends and enjoyed the various demos and entertainers at Monroe Park and along Broadway. I loved the house parties of onlookers and pop-up garage sales!

I stopped short of Kesey Square to have some tea and sit outside at Noisette for a while to people watch. There were so many smiling faces — very young, very old and everyone in between. Many sweet families! I think it was the perfect way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Thanks to everyone involved.

Michele Postal  
Eugene

## PERSISTANT POISONS

Have you been enjoying watching the furry bumble bees visiting your garden flowers? Despite their love fest with your oregano and echinacea, native and wild bee populations are in serious decline.

Researchers are finding that bumbles and other native bees are in jeopardy from environmental stresses including habitat loss and pesticides. An estimated 100,000 native bumble bees died from seven acute neonicotinoid pesticide exposures in Eugene and parts of Portland between 2013 and 2015.

Unlike honey bees living cooperatively in hives with many worker bees, most native bees are solitary. If the mother

bumble bee is poisoned and does not return to her nest, all her offspring and future generations perish. The survival of each native bee is essential to ecosystem biodiversity.

Last month, Beyond Toxics received a call from a Portland resident who saw bumble bees dying on a sidewalk. We reported it to the Oregon Department of Agriculture, who investigated by sampling plants and dead bees for neonicotinoid pesticides. Their laboratory analysis indeed showed the presence of neonicotinoid pesticide residue in plants as well as the dead bees. Then the investigators discovered the plants had been sprayed a year ago.

That means a neonicotinoid pesticide applied to a plant in 2014 is still potent enough to kill bumble bees in 2015!

We want to encourage individual action and better policy to reverse the decline of native bee populations. Please stop using pesticides. To help save Oregon’s bees we’re putting on a series of events during our “Summer of Bee Love,” including the third annual Beauty of the Bee photo and video contest. Vote for your favorite on our Facebook page and contact us at [info@BeyondToxics.org](mailto:info@BeyondToxics.org) to request information.

Lisa Arkin,  
Executive Director  
Beyond Toxics

## IS 350 IN DENIAL?

I’m a reporter in Toronto, Ontario. One thing struck me about your article July 16 on the radical predictions of Guy McPherson: The reaction from members of 350 seemed to deny the possibility of McPherson’s predictions of near-term human extinction, “no room for doom and gloom,” a thread of hope/window still open and the “disservice” McPherson does by not mentioning carbon sequestration out of the atmosphere, etc.

But why should 350 members reject his predictions? If they were to accept his predictions, would it motivate them to be a little less reformist and more radical in taking action to avert the same crisis they are working to fix?

By making predictions that the climate crisis is more serious than commonly thought based on the positive feedback loops that could lead to abrupt change, it seems McPherson’s is the conservative approach rather than assuming a margin of error based on many unknown and unprecedented models for anthropomorphic climate change.

Zach Ruiter  
Toronto, Ontario

## BUSINESS AS USUAL

After the Civic Stadium fire the Eugene City Council voted 8-0 to ban playing with fireworks in south Eugene, a rare example of cooperation across political divides.

Actual progress on the biggest problems we all face would require transcending partisanship. Alleged efforts for climate “action” pretend that Republicans are the problem and Democrats are the solution. It’s easy to ridicule Republicans denying that digging up a hundred million years’ worth of stored energy is altering the biosphere. It’s more complex (and less

popular) to challenge the pandering and the greenwashing of Democrats.

Ted Taylor’s cover story profile July 16 of Guy McPherson’s recent speech on potential near-term extinction discussed McPherson’s perspective that we’re all doomed — versus the slow and steady approach of mainstream environmentalism that hopes to save us before it’s too late.

Even if climate change were magically fixed, there are other components to mass extinction. We have all lived under the threat of nuclear annihilation since Aug. 6, 1945. Habitat destruction includes deforestation, urbanization, industrial agriculture. Clearcuts cause desertification. Toxic and nuclear wastes threaten the gene pool. Militarism. Overpopulation. Overconsumption. Overfishing.

Peaked energy and climate chaos are two aspects of ecological overshoot. See [peakchoice.org/peak-climate.html](http://peakchoice.org/peak-climate.html).

We need the consciousness shift recognizing the limits to growth on a round, finite planet. The oil wells are half empty, so business as usual is no longer physically possible. The oil wells are half full, so we have some resources for the transition, if we all choose wisely.

Mark Robinowitz  
Eugene

## SPLINTERED APPROACH

On July 6, the Legislature passed HB 2828, which was signed by Gov. Kate Brown July 22. This bill is one of the most important bills to pass the Legislature in this session. It will fund a study to determine the most effective and economical way to deliver health care services to *all* of Oregon’s residents. The implementation of the results of the study has the potential to be transformative. It could end the economic and emotional terror associated with needing health care that is unaffordable.

Health care-related bankruptcies in Oregon could become a thing of the past, and implementation in Oregon could lead to change nationally.

Oregon has implemented many innovative health care programs, but the splintered, non-comprehensive approach seems to continually leave the end product — universal, comprehensive health care services for all residents — out of reach.

This passage of this bill is a *major step* toward making this long sought-after care a reality in Oregon.

Marc Shapiro  
Eugene

## WE CAN MAKE CHANGES

Extinction does suck! Thanks for your informative but alarming article July 16 on Guy McPherson’s talk giving us so little hope to change a climate disaster. Will he wake up those in power or does it take everyone making a change in how we live each day?

I only wish the pope would visit Oregon and spread his message for carbon fees with no time-consuming carbon trading! I’ve read many summaries of the pope’s amazing talk, and only *The New York Times* mentioned how he discounted carbon trading and urged a direct carbon fee. What happened to the rest of the media and all

those groups with their response leaving out the pope’s direction for meeting the climate crisis? I’ll be listening to his message when he comes to our country in September.

I urge everyone to read UO associate professor Kari Norgaard’s book *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions and Everyday Life*. She spoke July 26 at the Unitarian Church. I do believe we can make the changes needed!

Ruth Duemler  
Eugene

## PSYCHIATRY AND TORTURE

While it is great that groups representing psychologists are speaking out against collusion with torture, this can potentially expose a whole iceberg of human rights violations.

For about four decades I have worked as an activist for a peaceful revolution in the mental health industry. This U.S. government scandal reveals that we have collectively been far too soft on psychologists while focusing instead on psychiatrists. For instance, my friend and author Bob Whitaker has just co-written a book about corruption in psychiatry. Yes, Whitaker and his blog “Mad In America” are today’s leaders in this reform field. But psychologists need to speak out about way more, including rampant abuse throughout mental health care and even the way trauma caused by oppression holds us back from addressing crises in our world such as global warming.

David W. Oaks  
Eugene

## NATURAL DEFENSE

I just read the article about pigeons July 23. Something about it didn’t seem right. It looked like the writer was struggling to create controversy with the comments about selective breeding to force the “roller pigeons” to do something that is unnatural and dangerous to them.

It’s been many years, but as a teenager, I kept pigeons and had friends who kept pigeons.

In my coop, among the dozen or so that I had, my favorite was one which the person I bought it from called a “highflying roller.” I didn’t really know the complete significance of that name at first. Some of my friends had “parlor rollers,” which would spin around on the floor like little feathery pinwheels in reaction to loud noises or other threats. I always figured it was a defensive adaptation, and completely natural. It certainly didn’t appear to hurt the birds to do it. They’d just rearrange their feathers, and hop back on their perches afterwards. It would certainly confuse a fox or raccoon trying to make a meal out of the pigeon.

I never saw my highflying roller do anything like that. What I did see was that he’d fly way up in the air and just fly lazily around in circles. Sometimes for an hour or more.

Then one day he showed me the other aspect of his name: He was attacked by a red-tailed hawk that lived in a broken-top fir tree on the back side of our property overlooking outer Fox Hollow Road. That hawk was probably never the same after