



AP Photo/Jean Marc Herve Abelard

**Relatives walk to a hilltop, where they will place a cross, in remembrance of those family members who died in the 2010 earthquake, prior to a memorial service in Titanyen, north of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 12. Haitians paused to remember the tens of thousands of people who died in the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that struck outside Haiti's capital on Jan. 12, 2010. The quake left 1.5 million people living in tent camps. Officials say more than 300,000 died, but no one knows for certain how many people lost their lives.**

## Scrooges of the World, Begone!

By **NICHOLAS KRISTOF**  
*New York Times News Service*

**P**ORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI — Merry Christmas! Yet in this season of hope and holiday cheer, Haiti might not seem the obvious place to celebrate.

Almost five years after the catastrophic earthquake here, this country symbolizes poverty and hopelessness to many Americans. That despair and disdain are misguided. Haitian politics are still a mess, and poverty is deep-rooted, but the economy is rising, more children are going to school, and health is improving.

That, in turn, is emblematic of a broader truth that we journalists don't acknowledge often enough: In many ways, the world is becoming a better place. There! I said it.

Bad news is news, and good news isn't. We cover planes that crash, not those that take off. But a relentless focus on bad news unfortunately leads people to conclude that places from Haiti to Congo are hopeless, driving away tourists, investors and donors. So, at least once a year, it's worth stepping back and acknowledging progress.

That's particularly true because 2015 will be a crucial year for efforts to combat global poverty. There will be new financing in January for the global vaccine initiative that is saving lives on a huge scale, the African Union plans to focus on women's empowerment, and the U.N. General Assembly in September is expected to agree on new "sustainable development goals" that will provide metrics for progress for many years to come.

So bear this in mind: Fewer children worldwide are starving or dying of disease now than at any time in recorded history, and more children are in school.

Here in Haiti, too many people are still homeless from the earthquake. But, in the last few years, the economy has been growing more quickly than the U.S. economy.

A U.S.-backed effort to support garment manufacturing in Haiti has fizzled. But agriculture, which may be the best hope for Haiti's economic future, is improving in some important sectors.

I visited a program that trains flower farmers to use greenhouses and is supported by the United States as part of the Feed the Future initiative. One farmer, Michel Dorlean, told me that, with greenhouses, he has tripled production of chrysanthemums.

"You come back, and this hillside will be covered with greenhouses," he predicted.

He added that the flowers I buy for my wife in New York will eventually be exported from Haiti.

Health care likewise shows basic improvements. More than 4 out of 5 Haitian children get some childhood immunizations. Deworm-



Nicholas Kristof

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ing is now widespread. "In the old days, these kids would be dead," Dr. Margareth Mallet told me as she showed me around a ward treating severely malnourished children at a clinic here in the capital, Port-au-Prince. Now they're revived with a peanut-based paste or other supplements.

There has also been a push to encourage Haitian moms to breast-feed, because that's regarded by nutrition experts as one of the most cost-effective ways to save lives in poor countries (globally, an estimated 800,000 children die annually because of problems with breast-feeding).

In 1970, almost a quarter of Haitian children died before their fifth birthday. At last count, the figure is 7 percent. Just compared with 15 years ago, one fewer child dies each hour.

As families grow confident that their children will survive, they also have fewer of them. In 2005, the average woman in Haiti could be expected to have five children. Now the figure is about three births per woman.

None of this is to gloss over the remaining challenges: At least 2 billion people are malnourished worldwide, according to the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington.

Isn't this season supposed to be about something more profound than shopping and Christmas trees?

So I'd suggest that the successes against poverty should stimulate us to do more — and some steps are remarkably simple. Consider iodization of salt.

When a pregnant woman doesn't get enough iodine, her baby's brain doesn't develop properly. Iodize the salt and, years later, children will do better in school and will have higher IQs.

Another nutritional triumph: that orange sweet potato on your plate. It's the Mother Teresa of foods, a treasure of vitamin A in particular. It could prevent blindness or death for millions of children suffering from vitamin A deficiency, so aid groups like Helen Keller International are helping farmers grow it in poor countries. Good for Michelle Obama for growing sweet potatoes in the White House garden this year to encourage their use worldwide. The orange sweet potato is gaining ground, and hunger and sickness are retreating.

So tuck into your meal. Join the holiday cheer. The world still has its problems, but as an incentive to do more, let's acknowledge some reasons for joy.

### A positive note

Oregonians can start the new year on a positive note. For 2014, Oregon has been rated the least corrupt state in our country, where corruption in our government starts with the Supreme Court and infiltrates every other government body all the way through. But Oregon — the least corrupt state in this U.S.

That gives me hope, and in the last election, Oregon voters turned out in very high numbers. Isn't that great? The Democrats in Oregon (I am not a Democrat — but to give credit where credit is due) are said to be responsible for a voter law where voters can check to see if their ballot was counted. If it was not, the voters have time to rectify it.

Democracy starts where everybody has a voice in their government, right? Despite more than \$20 million spent to defeat Measure 92 (labeling Genetically Modified Organisms). It almost passed, and probably would have if all votes were counted. I am really in awe of the Oregon voter. Oh, by the way *Fortune* magazine calculated that corruption in the U.S. costs each family \$1,308 every year.

I am so glad to live in Oregon. Reading through our local newspapers shows many of our elected officials and local citizens are putting their time and energy into solving real problems that we have to face in the coming years. My energy for the new year is going to educate myself about public banking, the better to fight big bank bail-ins, my dear. Think public banking.

I would like to mention corruption has a hard time gaining a foothold when everybody turns out to vote. The more voters cast their ballot, the less corruption has a chance.

DIXIE GAINER  
Nehalem

### Calling Robin Hood

Where is Robin Hood when you need him, to rob from the rich and give to the poor?

N. GLARUM  
Warrenton

### We are not Scrooged

It is a Christmas story told: We are not Scrooged after all. The past 10 years have been full of meetings, letters and protests. A Christmas present, at last, for all the good people of Clatsop County — a future with no liquefied natural gas (LNG).

LAREE JOHNSON  
Astoria

### America's New Year bonus

All this concern, all this blathering ink fretting that the poor oil-drillers may not be able to drill profitably below \$50 a barrel. No. Say it isn't so. Has Chicken Little become a business reporter?

With oil falling to \$55 a barrel, we will soon see gas for less than \$2.20 a gallon. Maybe lower.

Unless you are self employed, your fuel is bought with after-tax dollars. Let's calculate your savings. You drive 60 miles a day. Your car gets 22 miles to the gallon. You were paying \$3.40 a gallon last year and you will be paying \$2.20. That's \$1.20 a gallon times 2.7 gallons, which equals \$3.24 a day times 365 days, which equals \$1,181.60. That's only 21,900 miles a year.

GEORGE HAGUE  
Astoria

In Oregon, we pay federal and state income tax on that, so we had to earn about \$1,900 on average to have that \$1,181 to spend. And that hits entry-level taxpayers equal to everyone else. Better than a targeted tax credit.

Now, if high-energy-dependent companies would quickly pass on their savings as well (parcel deliveries, airlines, transportation, plastics, fertilizers, electricity), imagine our collective relief.

We're all getting a bonus this year. I love this country.

WAYNE MAYO  
Scappoose

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The Finnish Brotherhood & Sisterhood Auxiliary, of Suomi Hall Lodge #2, Astoria, OR, would like to thank the Community for the extraordinary support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lutefisk Holiday Event, held on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Special Thanks to:

- Astoria Coffee Company
- Bridgewater Bistro
- Cathie at Erickson's Floral
- Clatsop Distributing
- Josephson's Smokehouse
- Finn Ware
- M & N Workwear
- Oja Tree Farm
- Stephanie's Cabin
- Blue Scorcher Bakery
- One Six Five West Bond
- Home Baking Company

- Ronni Harris
- Columbia Produce
- Dana Gunderson
- Cannery Pier Hotel
- Andy Carlson
- Columbia River Maritime Museum
- Leila Collier
- Sven Sundstrom
- Jorgen Madsen
- Steve Phillips
- Wilho Saari
- 2014 Miss Finland: Kaylee Nyberg

And to the Members of the UFKB&S Lodge #2

Kiitos! (Thank-You!)

Onnellista Uutto Vuotta! (Happy New Year!)

## TOWN HALL

### RIVERFRONT VISION PLAN - BRIDGE VISTA AREA



Tuesday, January 6, 2015  
6pm to 8pm

Holiday Inn Express, Riverview Room #2  
204 West Marine Drive

Please join us to discuss preliminary strategies for updating the City's development code to implement the Riverfront Vision Plan for properties in the Bridge Vista area.

Recommendations will include possible changes in allowed land uses; revised provisions related to building heights, sizes and setbacks; design standards and guidelines for future new developments and major renovations; and possible changes to requirements associated with landscaping and off-street parking areas associated with future development.

City Staff and Consultants will make a brief presentation at 6:15pm, followed by Q&A and comments. Light refreshments will be provided.

