



I was deeply moved by Sarah van Gelder's (YES! Magazine) account of Northwest Canoe Tribes joining the Standing Rock Sioux in solidarity over their opposition to the Dakota Access pipeline. This was the first time since the Battle of Little Bighorn that all seven bands of the Sioux Nation have come together. And, dozens of other tribes have come as well swelling the ranks of those who care deeply about the land and water.

Showing up is no small thing. History has shown that when people make the effort to join hearts and hands in common cause it makes a difference.

We've experienced some of that here in Indiana at various rallies at the Statehouse. Several organizations usually co-sponsor; others join in cross-promotion. The people who show up are inter-generational and culturally diverse. This is the dream of the Earth Charter.

Ten years ago Earth Charter Indiana set out to discover and document examples of Earth Charter principles being implemented right here in Indiana. Sustainable Indiana 2016 was commissioned to celebrate these "Green Lights" as a Bicentennial legacy. Now over 200 models of sustainability have been cataloged and the "Celebrations" are underway.

The next Green Lights Celebration will be Thursday, September 15th, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Shelton Auditorium of Christian Theological Seminary, 1000 West 42nd Street, in Indianapolis. Following in quick succession are Muncie, September 17th, 4-6 p.m. at the Minnetrista Cultural Center; Bloomington, September 20th, 7-9 p.m. in the Wittenberger Auditorium (Memorial Union Building) at IU; Terre Haute, September 29th, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Vigo County Main Library. Four more will be held in October. Details can be found on [www.sustainableindiana2016.org](http://www.sustainableindiana2016.org) website.

Want to make a positive difference in these troubled times. SHOW UP! Support these solution-minded Hoosiers who are lighting candles of hope. Thank them, make connections, and forge bonds of common interest. This is the Earth Charter way.

For our children's children,  
John Gibson

Monday Memo

Share this: **Much Ado about a MRF**



In honor of Divestment Day; what you can do here in Indiana, now!

MRF. My mouth twists into a frown as I utter the acronym (try it: "murf"), which stands for Materials Recovery Facility. Given recent developments to the Indianapolis waste management scene, it seems that there is reason to frown beyond MRF morphology.

On June 18, Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard announced Covanta's plan to construct a \$45 million Advanced Recycling Center that will recover recyclables from mixed municipal solid waste. Ballard maintained that the new facility "will take Indy from a 10% recycling rate to 100% without any new taxes, fees or tax increases." The full press release is available [here](#), and more detailed information from Covanta is available [here](#).

One hundred percent recycling participation is mighty impressive, no? The rhetoric certainly **I have heard the statement that there is power in words.** One should choose carefully what and how one uses words to avoid hurting our family, friends, and strangers. I have been ruminating on this idea the last couple of weeks as the current election cycle continues to degrade into name calling and half-truths. Yes, I am referring to both Presidential candidates with this statement. My spirit grieves over the lack of actual discussion of policy versus how nasty can one be about the other candidate. You might say that the nastiness will end with the November 8th election. Let me suggest that unless we as followers of the Earth Charter make a stand for civility in how we treat each other, we have only seen the beginning of the nastiness. The Earth Charter in Principle 15 says: "Treat all living beings with respect and consideration". I am sure that the writers of the Earth Charter understood the power of words to harm and denigrate others.

The rise of the "Alt - right" in recent months alarms me. It is really only the old hate filled language of the White Supremacist or Neo-Nazi's. The power of the use of the new branding does not make it sound as bigoted or hurtful to immigrants, blacks or Jews. The hate oriented speech has not changed in words or tone according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. The Southern Poverty Law Center tracts the rise and decline of hate groups in the United States. However, I would hasten to add that while the left of the political spectrum does not tend to use hate filled language, one can quickly realize that one is not greeted with open arms if one does not agree with them on issues. Try to speak a different opinion with an academic in their area of expertise. My experience has been that a conversation with someone from the far right or left often is unpleasant due to their inability to recognize the validity of someone else's ideas or approaches.

My growing concern is that the use of hate filled words and the unwillingness to consider words spoken by those with a difference of opinion will make it impossible to be able to discuss solutions. We need solutions to the real and growing economic, environmental, and social justice issues. I must admit that understanding the power of words has made me hesitant to speak my mind or explain my ideas. I, like most in our hope that we behave in ways that hold decision makers accountable to these principles.

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[The New Color of Green](#)  
September 22, 2014  
In "Monday Memo"

society, do not want to be rebuked with hurtful speech or be ignored by those who disagree with an idea I believe with passion and conviction. Let us remember the spirit of Principle 15 when we hear ourselves or others treat people as less than human because we disagree. I will look forward to the end of the election if we can return to a more civil society. Consumers, comforted by impressions that "it all gets recycled," to mindlessly toss more. We sift past happiness-inducing statistics about green job creation and ask where will the "remaining residues" go, and for the next generation whose verbal freedom depends on us;

John Drake

is the proposed MRF flexible enough to be integrated with clean energy production? We

communicate with the Board of Public Works members in advance of the July 9 meeting. Share this: will vote on the Covanta proposal.

We act. And we turn that MRF frown upside down.



Cheers,

If you're like me and have spent far too much time with your eyes glued to the Olympics this week, you likely share the feeling of pride and awe at the incredible strength and ability of the athletes competing in Rio from 205 nations. Of the many incredible moments so far in Rio, the most striking moment came during the Opening Ceremony with the performance piece "Simple Idea that Helps A Lot" that beautifully highlighted the threat that climate change poses to people and the planet.

In a country that is already plagued by deforestation in the Amazon, lack of sanitation in the poorest areas, and the Zika virus, the Olympic Games are the latest world treasure to be threatened by climate change.

A new study published the same week as the Olympics shows that by 2084, the extreme heat and humidity due to climate change will make it nearly impossible and dangerous for most cities to host the Summer Olympics. Using widely-accepted climate models, researchers from the U.S. and Australia conclude that only eight cities in the Northern Hemisphere outside of Western Europe and no cities in the Southern Hemisphere could safely host the Summer Olympics' outdoor events.

While it's certainly shocking to think about the effect of warming temperatures on the world's best athletes and their ability to compete, it's even more poignant to consider the hazards to the more than half of the planet's workforce that works outdoors, primarily in construction and agriculture.

The study's authors rightly posit, "If the world's most elite athletes need to be protected from climate change, what about the rest of us?"

In the same way that the Olympics unites the whole world to showcase feats of human strength and endurance, every nation must also keep working together to heal our planet or we risk having neither.

For our children's children,  
Lauren Kastner

Share this:



Today, August 8, 2016 is Earth Overshoot Day (when the human species is plundering and polluting the Earth faster than it can regenerate). Last year, according to The Global Footprint Network, Overshoot Day was August 13, the year before that it was August 19 and in 2012 it was August 22. Beyond "Overshoot Day" mankind is creating an ecological debt and passing it on to future generations.

We Americans are especially gluttonous. With only 6 percent of the world's population we consume 40 percent of the planet's ecological budget. If the rest of humanity lived like Americans it would take 4.8 planets to sustain our collective appetite.

This is not new. We've known trend this for years. Yet, economists and politicians continue to call for and promise more and more economic growth. Alluring advertisements convince us that we need yet more stuff to be hip.

Thankfully, the current generation of Millennials seem to be trending toward a simpler, less hectic lifestyle. Tiny houses, healthier food, bikes, sharing, bartering, rent vs. mortgage, etc. are appealing alternatives to conventional debt-traps and illusionary bliss. Maybe, just maybe, the next generation of our species will actually take principle 5(e) of the Earth Charter seriously: "Manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems."

For our children's children,  
John Gibson

Share this:



**For those who were around during the 1960s and 70s**, our nation felt the most divided then that most of us had ever experienced. The history is well-known: Civil rights action with jailings, beatings and murders; Black, Native American and Latino power movements; nationwide anger over the Viet Nam War; radical life styles that included drugs and freeing of sexual rules. We experienced movements that liberated and unified even while infuriating many of us. Young Americans stood up, acted out and shouted, while Nixon's "Silent Majority" was sure we were going over the brink. In 1968 alone we absorbed the Tet Offensive, King and Kennedy assassinations, riots at the Democratic National Convention, and the George Wallace campaign.

We could hardly imagine then that we would ever be more divided, and many Americans still remember the time as doing unmitigated harm. But there's another interpretation of that same period, that alongside the scars and alienation, good and lasting developments took root – not in spite of the turmoil but because of it. The times caused us to rethink equity and citizen engagement so that we saw legislation for voting reform, certain War on Poverty interventions and a host of initiatives to help redistribute power through access to opportunity, citizen advocacy, community economic development, early childhood nutrition and education, and community-based health care. Important gains that came with heavy cost.

Of course the present angry division, albeit exacerbated by election year rhetoric, brings this subject to mind. In fact, today can be seen as not separate from the 60s but as a deepening entrenchment over new layers of the same issues. We're still struggling over race relations and law enforcement (My web search reminded me that the Black Panthers formed in Oakland initially to protect African Americans from police brutality), trust of government, respect for diversity across ethnic groups and accepting each other's sexual orientation. Only the argument over climate seems new.

If it's true that we actually saw progress come out of the painful divisions of the 60s, then we can hope that the result of today's public debates will be that we learn more about what it means to honor people's differences. As we experience obfuscation in government and corporate America, surely we become prepared to recognize and expect transparency. The Earth Charter brings both opportunity and resource to this time by giving us language to contribute to the outcomes and perspective to help lead us to a progressive consensus.

-Jerry

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Share this:



**You might be wondering which James Brown I am referring to with this name.** Is it the singer or the Hall of Fame football player?

Recently, I had the opportunity to go to the Indiana Black Expo Corporate Luncheon. One of the honorees that afternoon was James Brown, the football player, actor, and activist. The company I work for is minority owned and purchases a table at this luncheon each year. When I responded to the email indicating that I wanted to take one of the available seats, I had no idea who would be given awards. Besides James Brown, the honorees included Dionne Warrick, Colts Coach Chuck Pagano, actor and filmmaker Lorenze Tate, and LeRoy Robinson. The acceptance speech that I remember the most came from James Brown.

After football and acting, James Brown decided to give back to his community. He founded Vital Issues which taught life management skills and personal growth techniques to inner-city gang members and prison inmates. He could have rested on his success as a Hall of Famer and actor, but he understood that as a role model he needed to give back. Remember that he played football in the era before the big dollar contracts became common. He had to earn the money he needed to be an activist. His life as an activist illustrates how to actualize Principle 10 of the Earth Charter: *"Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all level promotes human development in an equitable and sustainable manner."* While we may not have the fame that comes from a football and acting career, we can choose to make a difference in the lives of those who need and want a hand up.

You might be thinking that it is great that James Brown used his fame to benefit of his community. Most of us are not inclined to start our own program. However, there is a cause or group in Indianapolis to help you fulfill your need to make a difference in the economic development of all our citizens. One such group is Results. [Results](#) is a grassroots advocacy group with a chapter in Indianapolis. Its mission is to put an end to poverty through educating volunteers to advocate for public policy and educate the public to put an end to the scourge of poverty. I give you but one example of how to act out Principle 10 of the Earth Charter. Even if you do not have time to work with this group, be encouraged that others are working to help our under-resourced friends.

For the future of our city and its children,  
John Drake

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Share this:



***“Many human conflicts appear extraordinarily difficult to resolve even when outsiders can see the contours of a rational resolution. Ideological opponents risk the health of their economies and their planet because they are unable to make political compromises. Ethnic and religious groups across the world engage in mass acts of violence, rejecting solutions of mutual benefit that involve sharing power, land, or religious sites. Why are so many conflicts so intractable when people on both sides could gain from a compromise?”(Waytz, Young, & Ginges, 2014)***

Principle 16 of the Earth Charter urges us to promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace. But surely you, sensitive to the domestic and international happenings that defy this principle, join me in echoing Waytz et al.’s question, How do we overcome seemingly intractable conflict?

I look to psychological science for a partial answer. In a series of studies involving American Republicans and Democrats, Israelis, and Palestinians as participants, Waytz et al. (2014) tested the concept of **motive attribution asymmetry**. To make sense of this of concept, we must first recognize humans’ tendency to automatically sort the social world into ingroup and outgroup members. Ingroups are social groups to which we belong (i.e., “us”); outgroups are those to which we do not belong (i.e., “them”).

We think very differently about ingroups and outgroups, and one important aspect of this thinking is how we explain behavior. Here, the behavior of interest is involvement in conflict. We constantly speculate why ingroup and outgroup members behave as they do – what are their motives for behaving aggressively rather than peacefully? Motive attribution asymmetry suggests that there is a pattern to our explanations for aggressive behavior such that we believe ingroup members’ aggression is motivated by love for the ingroup, whereas outgroup members’ aggression is motivated by hate for the outgroup. In other words, we fight out of love, but they fight out of hate. It must be noted that this attribution pattern reflects a cognitive bias; a large body of social science literature suggests that conflict is more firmly grounded in ingroup love than outgroup hate ([see 7-13](#)).

The practical implication here is that we strive to recognize **love as a shared motive**, a potent commonality uniting ingroup and outgroup members. We stop asking “why do they hate us so much?” and remind ourselves that the outgroup, vile though it may seem, is as capable of love as we are.

Thanks for reading,  
Ali

Share this:



**It has been emotional and sobering week** as we are once again confronted with the reality of systemic racism and out of control gun violence in America.

I am angry and sad about the deadly police encounters with Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge and Philando Castile in St. Paul and the deadly attack on five police officers in Dallas who were protecting protestors. But as a white person, I will never know the extent of the pain that my black friends and colleagues are experiencing and have known their whole lives. I can take steps to challenge the deep racism that runs through our institutions and offer some modest advice to other white folks who are committed to helping.

First, offer gentle support to black friends and coworkers. Listen with the goal to understand, not to respond with your opinion. Your offer will most likely be appreciated, but that doesn’t mean the door is open for you to ask probing questions or burden them with your own emotional load.

We must unconditionally, tenaciously, and frequently speak the words “Black Lives Matter” and challenge those who say “all lives matter” to escape personal accountability for institutionalized racism. Despite good intentions, many white folks are questioning the simple statement, “Black Lives Matter,” and are distorting the term into “all lives matter.”

Let’s explore this through a great analogy that a friend shared online.

Can you imagine if you broke your arm and upon rushing to the hospital seeking medical attention, the doctor tells you, “I won’t fix your arm because all bones matter”? Naturally, you would be horrified. Yes, of course you know that all of the bones in your body matter. But right now one particular bone is broken and it deserves immediate and compassionate attention.

The Earth Charter tells us that every form of life has value and that all human beings are inherently and universally dignified. In other words, all lives do matter. However, the Earth Charter also tells us to “recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.”

We must treat the crisis of racism in the same way and we must work tirelessly to create deep change.

To do this, we must participate in community actions organized by the Black Lives Matter movement and grassroots community leaders in Indiana. White allies are needed to act in coalition with the Black Lives Matter movement, but remember that the movement is not for you or

about you, and black folks are more than capable of organizing themselves.

And finally, attitudes about race will not change overnight. We must regularly engage other white folks in tough conversations about race and challenge stereotypes as protests and more information unfold in the coming weeks.

All of this will be uncomfortable, but necessary.

All in,  
Laura Kastner

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Share this:



### *Gun Country by Michael Murphy*

What a week we've just had. Britons narrowly vote to leave the European Union, and Democrats wedge what might finally turn into a crack in the wall between gun control and the people.

Mind the Gap. That admonition is as much part of daily life in London as Big Ben's chimes. Getting on and off the Underground, watch your step; don't trip. We won't know for some time whether the UK has tripped or over which of endlessly inter-connected moving parts. We can appreciate that Brexit is about accountable government, powerful multi-national corporations and political leaders who have lost their bearings. But this campaign, like others across the West, has also been about global isolation, resentment of newcomers, racial prejudice and nostalgia for times remembered by some when England was England. Some of us want to reclaim a time from our memory when America was America – even though the America that some remember never existed.

Meanwhile in the US, Democrats mounted a filibuster in the Senate and staged a sit-in on the House floor – both attempts to force their chambers to take up moderate legislation to keep guns away from people who should not have them. Speaker Paul Ryan called the sit-in a partisan stunt, and with a straight face Majority Leader Mitch McConnell blamed the filibuster for delaying the action that Democrats were demanding. The Democrats' four Senate bills failed and the House recessed until after July 4 without taking action. But by the end of the week hope had emerged for at least modest bi-partisan compromises, and Democrats left for home districts promising that we have turned the corner.

The common denominator of these two stories is the people's confidence in their representatives – the Brexit movement accusing leadership of being out of touch with ordinary people and frustration with Congress resulting from years of stonewalling on measures that most Americans want, even while gun carnage rages on.

Let's acknowledge that honest and thoughtful people disagree whether legislation supported by most Americans will actually do much to reduce access to guns. I'm more hopeful. Even so, law serves another purpose that is not about measurable results. Law expresses our common will and highest expectations of ourselves. Law states our aspiration for universal suffrage. Law promises unfettered access to education and opportunity. Law seeks to guarantee blind justice. We can unite behind law to declare that our communities will be free of assault weapons. It's within us through law to wrest our collective conscience from the stranglehold of uncompromising agendas – which would give quite a different meaning to taking back America.

In search of balance,  
Jerry King

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Share this:



**Last weekend I felt an intense swing of emotions.** On Saturday June 11th, I took part in the Pride Parade in Indianapolis with a group from my church. We walked and celebrated the joy and freedom to be true to oneself. Sunday June 12th was a very troubling and sad day. Emotions that sweep over me on Sunday were ones of sadness and fear. I felt both sadness over the madness in Orlando and fear knowing that the person from Indiana, who planned to attack the Pride Festival in Los Angeles, could have struck in Indianapolis. I have never felt fear in walking in the Pride Parade, but I did on the 12th. Fear will not stop me from walking in future Pride Parades, but I will be aware of the potential risk. These emotions of joy and fear reminded me of the need to follow Principal # 16 in the Earth Charters which reads: "Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace." How does one accomplish such a seemingly unreachable goal after last weekend?

Let me suggest that things are not as bleak as are often portrayed in the media. I tend to be an optimist since I have seen positive change accomplished by non-profit organizations and small groups of dedicated citizens. For example, I am a member of the Southern Poverty Law

Center which works to end violence based on hatred. This organization has successfully filed and won lawsuits against some of the larger Klu Klux Klan organizations. They have used the money received from the sale of assets of the Klan against other hate based groups. Social media, such as Twitter, can be used for positive activism such as responding to hate groups. Churches, for those of you who are so inclined, are a source of opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. It may be hosting a Farmers' Market in a food desert or feeding people via a soup kitchen. Reach out beyond your doubts and fears. If you will do so, life will not seem bleak and violent. I take great hope in the fact that more people are now aware of hate based violence than before Orlando. Let the Earth Charter inform your actions to be part of the positive response to hate based behavior. Love will ultimately overcome hate.

For our neighbors, friends and family;  
John Drake

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