

Hopefulness during the metamorphosis



By Nate Smelle

WELL, YET ANOTHER climate summit bringing together world leaders to confront the scientific facts that have been demanding their attention for decades has ended in disappointment.

Leading up to COP-26 in Glasgow, Scotland there was the expected buzz arising from most of the usual suspects calling for fundamental system-wide change. Also as expected, the most powerful voices insisting on this global transformation of how we do business were those of the youth. Tragically, once again, the most destructive forces preventing this life or death societal metamorphosis from occurring, were the adults in attendance who are supposed to be responsible for leaving behind a home planet for future generations that is worth inheriting.

Before refocusing on the completely avoidable causes of this disappointment, I will take a page out of the Monty Python playbook to look 'on the bright side of life?' before we get back to drawing our terminal breath.

Despite the abounding despondency COP-26 has generated among the environmental community, the summit was not a total waste of time. Representatives of the 197 attending parties were able to establish a new agreement called the Glasgow Climate Pact. Building on the progress made through the Paris Agreement drafted during COP-21, the Glasgow Climate Pact marks the beginning of the end of the coal era by 'limiting?' the use of this filthy and primitive resource. The pact is also receiving praise because it demands wealthier nations increase financial aid for developing countries to take meaningful action on the climate crisis.

Some media outlets are touting the fact that leaders have agreed to meet again next year to improve on their targets aiming to keep global atmospheric temperatures from increasing more than 1.5°C. Don't get me wrong, we need to take every opportunity we can to improve the strength and effectiveness of our climate action strategy. Still, the fact those in charge of the big show feel the need to debate whether they need to improve on their efforts to protect the health of our living home once a year is by no means a sign of progress. As far as I'm concerned, it's the exact opposite. If anything, making the effort to publicly declare what obviously needs to be done is more telling in regards to how far we have to go to convince these individuals that our future on this planet is worth fighting for.

We cannot afford to elect those willing to kick this can down the road any longer. The more time we waste bickering over reasons why not to implement the solutions science has given us to remedy this existential crisis, the more deadly it will become.

In the meantime, as we have done to deal with the clear and present danger of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must also start taking

such drastic measures to address the climate crisis.

Seeing the nonsensical blow-back from the easily misled anti-science herd in response to public health measures meant to protect the ones they claim to love from this toxic virus, we unfortunately are a long way off of imposing climate lockdowns to slow our consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As much as I detest the huge step backwards for humankind this mob represents, there is no denying the strength of their convictions. In acknowledgment of this irrefutable truth, rather than waiting around for them to refocus their attention on climate denial after the pandemic, I suggest a more proactive approach to climate change mitigation. Perhaps the climate crisis deniers among the anti-science mob would like to put their money where their mouths are by purchasing and repopulating areas already ravaged by the climate crisis. I hear land in and around Lytton, B.C., Butte County, California, and the Welsh village of Bangor on Dee is pretty cheap these days. If these locales aren't a good fit, for a short time only there is waterfront property available for a reasonable price on the South Pacific island nation of Tuvalu.

Frustrating as our affliction of consciousness may be, I find hope for the long-term survival of Earth in the fact our planetary metamorphosis is inevitable. Our changing climate has already repeatedly shown us how nature will not wait for humankind to evolve.

Fortunately, for the sake of our loved ones now sharing this turf with us, although rare, there is hope in the short-term as well. As members of the human species, we can all relish in the fact that every can-kicker will eventually shift from kicking the can to kicking the bucket. Until then we must settle for the words of Czech writer Franz Kafka:

?There is an infinite amount of hope in the universe ... but not for us.?