

## APATHFORWARD

## MAKING ONE'S CASE WITH A CLIMATE-CHANGE SKEPTIC

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Australia is burning: Since November 2019, bushfires have claimed the lives of 27 people and an estimated 1 billion animals. The fire covers 16 million acres, an area that would span from Tijuana to Bakersfield and Santa Barbara to Joshua Tree in our region. It's emitting vast and dangerous amounts of carbon: about 400 million tons so far, according to NPR. Australia's total emissions last year (from man-made sources) were roughly 540 million tons.

The main cause of the fires is dry lightning from thunderstorms that don't produce rain. The country is coming out of its hottest and driest year on record. It is one of many horrific examples of the devastating impacts of global climate change.

Writing in *The New York Times* "Climate Fwd," newsletter, Christopher Flavelle says 2019 was a big year for climate reporting, and the news wasn't good. He lists a few of the lead stories: wildfires consuming vast parts of the Amazon and Arctic (and now Australia); a decision by the U.S. to pull out of the Paris climate agreement, even as greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise; and United Nations climate talks that



MATTHEW ABBOTT NYT

Jill Rose cools off her alpacas as a wildfire burns nearby in Tomerong, New South Wales, Australia, on Jan. 4.

produced "one of the worst outcomes in 25 years, with the biggest polluters blocking even the suggestion of more ambitious targets." Looking to the decade ahead, Spencer Bokai-Lindell of the *Times* says the forecast is "cloudy with an apprehension of doom."

Yet, he continues, millions of

people still don't accept the premise that the climate change problem even exists; half to two-thirds don't see humans as the cause, according to the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center. Others who acknowledge the problem don't believe it will affect them personally. Some of these nonbelievers

may be relatives or friends of yours.

So how do you convince someone that climate change is real? Bokai-Lindell suggests several sensible approaches:

1. Lead with values, not facts: If you want to convince someone about climate change, don't lead with data. Dr. Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist at Texas Tech University and an evangelical Christian, says that the best way to neutralize climate change conversations is by emphasizing shared values like family, community or religion. Connect the dots on a personal level: Say, "I'm a mother (or father), too, and here's why I care about the climate."

2. Emphasize the potential benefits: Even climate change deniers express a willingness to take action if they believe that mitigation will produce economic and scientific gains, regardless of their political ideology, age or gender.

3. The messenger matters: People are more likely to listen to a message when it comes from someone they trust, which varies, of course, from person to person. A study published in *Nature* in May found that when it comes to parents, children may be especially effective persuaders. Swedish teen Greta Thunberg, *Time* magazine's

Person of the Year 2019, has found an international audience for her message about the urgency of climate change.

Of equal importance to the content is the tenor of your conversation. Thinking that you're right and the other person is wrong is a recipe for an unproductive and frustrating exchange. Probe but in a positive way. Ask a simple question like, "What leads you to believe the way you do?" If you're not quite sure that climate change is human caused, these same principles of civil discourse apply when talking to your activist cousin.

All of this may cause you to wonder: Is it even worthwhile to make the effort to discuss climate change? Hayhoe puts it this way: The climate has been studied for 150 years and the science is known. The most important thing we can do now is talk about it. "Hope begins with a conversation today," she says. Let the conversations begin.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), a San Diego-based organization that is working to create innovative solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. NCRC is nationally recognized for its conflict management and communication strategies. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit [www.ncrconline.com](http://www.ncrconline.com).

## NO TEB OO KS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

SAN DIEGO: KAREN BILLING

## Residents press for road completion

## CARMEL VALLEY

While sitting in traffic in Pacific Highlands Ranch, a driver might have seen the signs. Along Carmel Valley Road and throughout neighborhood streets, the signs urge people to visit PHRTrafficNightmare.com, a new website started by neighbors who are pushing the city to complete Village Center Loop Road.

"This dead-end, 700 feet before the loop completion, isolates thousands of students trying to get to and from Canyon Crest Academy and Pacific Trails Middle schools, as well as a comparable number of daily visitors to our shopping and recreation centers," the website states. "It also robs commuters; traveling to and from SR-56, Cathedral Catholic High School, and points west; of four critical travel lanes—resulting in a traffic and pedestrian nightmare."

The website encourages people to email or call Mayor Kevin Faulconer and to spread the word on social media: "It's time for the city to step up, finish Village Center Loop Road and just 'Get It Done.'"

Their message is a play on the mayor's "Get It Done" app where people can request street repairs and neighborhood services.

Village Center Loop Road has long been considered a "critical" circulation element—when connected, it would link back to Carmel Valley Road.

The remaining 700-foot segment of road falls within the 21 acres of private property owned by the Lin family and the owners currently have no plans to develop the property.

The money to build the road is and has been available in community funds. Pardee Homes has agreed to build the road with facilities benefit assessment money if an agreement can be reached with the Lin family. The city would need to acquire the right

of way to build the road ahead of the family's development of the property, however, negotiations have reached an impasse.

Since she took office in 2016, Councilwoman Barbara Bry has been working to resolve the issue, meeting with representatives from the Lin Family Trust until she was informed that only the mayor has the authority to negotiate contracts on behalf of the city.

Last year, the Carmel Valley Community Planning Board wrote an open letter to the mayor asking for help.

"Our community has rallied around this project. The impact of the current dead-end at Village Center Loop Road is felt by our residents every day. The ensuing traffic creates dangerous situations for the students of the surrounding schools and impacts traffic flow in the surrounding neighborhoods," said Danielle McCallion, the Pacific Highlands Ranch representative on the planning board. "The Carmel Valley Planning Board is in full support of the completing the loop, as are our residents. I sincerely hope the city hears our grassroots message to get the loop completed."

The PHR Traffic Nightmare site is entirely resident-funded. Understanding that developers are trying to sell homes in the area, resident Bruce Cameron said the signs will only be up for weekday rush hours.

"This is meant to be a quick-moving storm," Cameron said, hopeful that the signs will result in a flurry of emails to the city before he removes the signs for good, not wanting to overstay his welcome in the community.

The Mayor's Office did not respond to a request for comment.

Karen Billing writes for the U-T Community Press.

THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

## U-T meeting for readers is next week

Readers will have a chance to talk to Union-Tribune editors and reporters next week and give them their thoughts on covering their community.

The event is the second in a series of U-T Neighborhood Town Hall meetings. The first was held in September at the Jackie Robinson Family YMCA in southeastern San Diego.

The next one will be Jan. 28 at the Border View Family YMCA in Otay Mesa West. The Y is at 3601 Arey Drive. Check-in is at 6 p.m., with the meeting starting at 6:30.

## Screening of U-T series on Hunter

A screening of the U-T's documentary series chronicling the scandal that forced Rep. Duncan Hunter to resign will be shown Wednesday at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido, 340 N. Escondido Blvd. The series is titled "The 50th: A scandal. A dynasty. An election." Cost is \$6. Doors open at 6 p.m., with the showing and Q&A from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. For tickets, go to <http://artcenter.org/events/>

## It wasn't 'appropriate'

A few readers emailed about a sentence in a short crime item published in print Jan. 6.

The story reported on an armed robbery at a Taco Bell in Linda Vista. The information came from a San Diego Police Department news release.

The sentence that puzzled readers was: "Taco Bell employees called police after an 'appropriate thirty minute delay.'" It was attributed to a police sergeant who issued the news release. Reader stripped over "appropriate."

I too was perplexed. So I asked veteran public safety reporter Pauline Repard if she had ever heard anything like that. Repard hadn't and wondered if a mistake might have been made. She looked at the Police Department archives of news releases and found the one about the Taco Bell robbery.

It was a mistake indeed. The news release read "appropriate" not "appropriate."

The reporter misread the word.

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NORTH COUNTY: J. HARRY JONES

## Tire store to be razed for a bigger one

## ESCONDIDO

A popular and highly visible Discount Tire store in downtown Escondido will be torn down and replaced with a larger tire store and more parking.

The project, at South Escondido Boulevard and Second Avenue, includes the demolition of a nearby former bridal business, now vacant. The plans involve four separate parcels totaling just under an acre.

Because the store is currently a non-conforming use in the city's historic downtown

hearing on the project. "What I've noticed is that people will take their cars in and then walk to Grand Avenue to go eat or do something while they wait for their vehicle to be ready. That's what I do, too."

She said while the business does not conform to current zoning, it is nevertheless a very popular store that generates ancillary business for its neighbors.

"I really like that they are going to build something new that will change the way that particular corner works," she said.

A neighbor-backed effort to speed up road completion