

Dear Virginia,

## Fan the Flames of Renewal



### What flames shall we fan?

**The new year calls us** to review our personal lives, our relationship to others, to the world and to the planet. It asks us to make resolutions for change if necessary or desired. As we approach the installation of the new administration in this country now is the time to renew our commitment, dedication, resolve and determination . . . .

To advocate and fight for the principles of our democracy.

To practice democracy by staying informed and taking action.

To resist the fascist agenda of the new administration.

To embrace and practice the human values of loving kindness, generosity, inclusion, compassion, dignity, decency, integrity, truth.

To nurture and celebrate beauty, nature, art, community, our quality of life.

To take care of ourselves.

*Be joyful though you've considered all the facts* —Wendell Berry

*Life is a hard battle anyway. If we laugh and sing a little as we fight the good fight of freedom, it makes it all go easier. I will not allow my life's light be determined by the darkness around me.* —Sojourner Truth



**Stories, insights and action for a world that works for all of us**

~ ~ ~

*Justice is what love looks like in public.*

Jim Hightower

~ ~ ~

### Favorite Resources

[Fix the News](#)

(Future Crunch)

[Reasons to be Cheerful](#)

[Chop Wood, Carry](#)

[Water](#)

[350.org](#)

[Climate Reality](#)

[Project](#)

[Local Futures](#)

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[Desert Rose Press](#)

[VirginiaMudd.com](#)

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## This Month's Features

### Meet MAGA: A primer on fascism

**Beginning in 1943**, the War Department published a series of pamphlets for U.S. Army personnel in the European theater of World War II. Titled *Army Talks*, the series was designed to help [the personnel]



become better-informed men and women and therefore better soldiers. On March 24, 1945, the topic for the week was FASCISM! Excerpts from the pamphlet follow.

"It is vitally important to learn to spot native fascists, even though they adopt names and slogans with popular appeal, drape themselves with the American flag, and attempt to carry out their program in the name of the democracy they are trying to destroy.

"The only way to stop the rise of fascism in the United States is by making our democracy work and by actively cooperating to preserve world peace and security. In the midst of the insecurity of the modern world, the hatred at the root of fascism fulfills a triple mission. By dividing people, it weakens democracy. By getting men to hate rather than to think, it prevents them from seeking the real cause and a democratic solution to the problem. By falsely promising prosperity, it lures people to embrace its security."

The pamphlet ends by warning, "Fascism thrives on indifference and ignorance. Freedom requires being alert and on guard against the infringement not only of our own freedom but the freedom of every American. If we permit discrimination, prejudice, or hate to rob *anyone* of his democratic rights, our own freedom and all democracy is threatened."

[This article by historian Heather Cox Richardson](#) goes into the tactics, strategies and techniques for the development of the fascist state. It is concise and clear about the threats we are facing in today's America. I highly recommend it!



## Action Sites for Democracy and Our Planet

Given the continued threats to our democracy and our Earth, this resource guide lists our favorite sources of information, opportunities for action and hope.

### Protecting Our Democracy is Every Day

[Chop Wood, Carry Water](#): Provides daily actions for our democracy. Always encouraging.

[Steady, by Dan Rather](#): Excellent commentary on current affairs.

[Today's Edition Newsletter by Robert Hubbell](#):: Reflections on and summary of today's news.

[Letters from an American, by Heather Cox Richardson](#): Commentary on current news.

[The Status Kuo, by Jay Kuo](#): Commentary and analysis of today's news.

### Climate Action: Every Action Counts!

[100 Things You Can Do to Help in the Climate Crisis](#)

[15 Actions to Make a Difference](#)

## All Kinds of Good News



### Ballot Initiatives Win for Climate



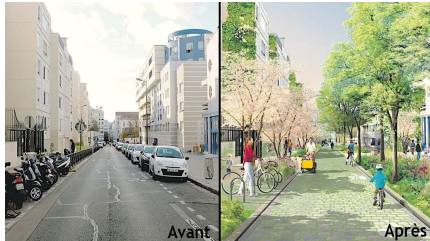
### Greening Cement

Concrete is the most ubiquitous building



## and Conservation

Twelve climate and conservation-related ballot initiatives were approved in the recent election, covering environmental education, wildfire prevention, water conservation, park maintenance, offshore energy generation and more. They include a \$10 billion bond in California for climate resilience, \$6 billion in New York for clean water, and \$2 billion for conservation in Minnesota. [Here's the article.](#)



### Replacing Parking Spots with Trees

A newly released plan would see 60,000 parking spots throughout Paris turn into grounds for tree planting by 2030. The goal of the project is to better prepare for extreme heat events by providing shaded green spaces. The plan still requires approval from the Council of Paris to move forward. [Read more.](#)

material on the planet, but making it generates massive amounts of CO2 emissions. There are multiple initiatives underway around the world now to try and solve this - from slashing, or even replacing the use of limestone, to capturing the carbon generated when it's burned, and even using crushed waste concrete to draw down emissions [Read more here.](#)



### Reverse Vending Machines

In February 2023 Ireland introduced a bottle deposit return program. Since then 630 million cans and bottles have been dumped into return vending machines. The plan allows consumers to return cans and bottles for a refund of €0.15 (\$0.16) for cans and €0.25 (\$0.27) for plastic bottles. A PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottle can be recycled seven times, while cans can be recycled indefinitely. [Read more here.](#)

## Wisdom for Our Time



**Hope** does not mean saying this is not bad, and it does not mean saying that we can defeat it. It just means saying we will keep showing up. That we will not give up. That we will assess our powers and weaknesses and recognize that the future we face looks grim, but we do not know how it will unfold, and neither do those we oppose. How it will unfold depends in no small part on what we do. People too often think hope is smiles and sunshine, when it's fury in the face of danger and oppression, and pressing on in the storm. —Rebecca Solnit

## Wanna Dance?



### Favorite Dance Moves of 2024

Last year about this time I posted the popular dance moves of



Read inspiring quotes and comments from *Fix The News* that will fan the flames of your renewal.

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Happy and Healthy

Youtuber Ed People, who travels around the world asking people to show him their favorite dance moves. He's still traveling and dancing. Here he is with more of his fun and happy dancing to begin the year 2025! [Let's dance!](#)

*I hope you have an active and upbeat month!*

*Virginia / Gibi*

New Year to all!

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