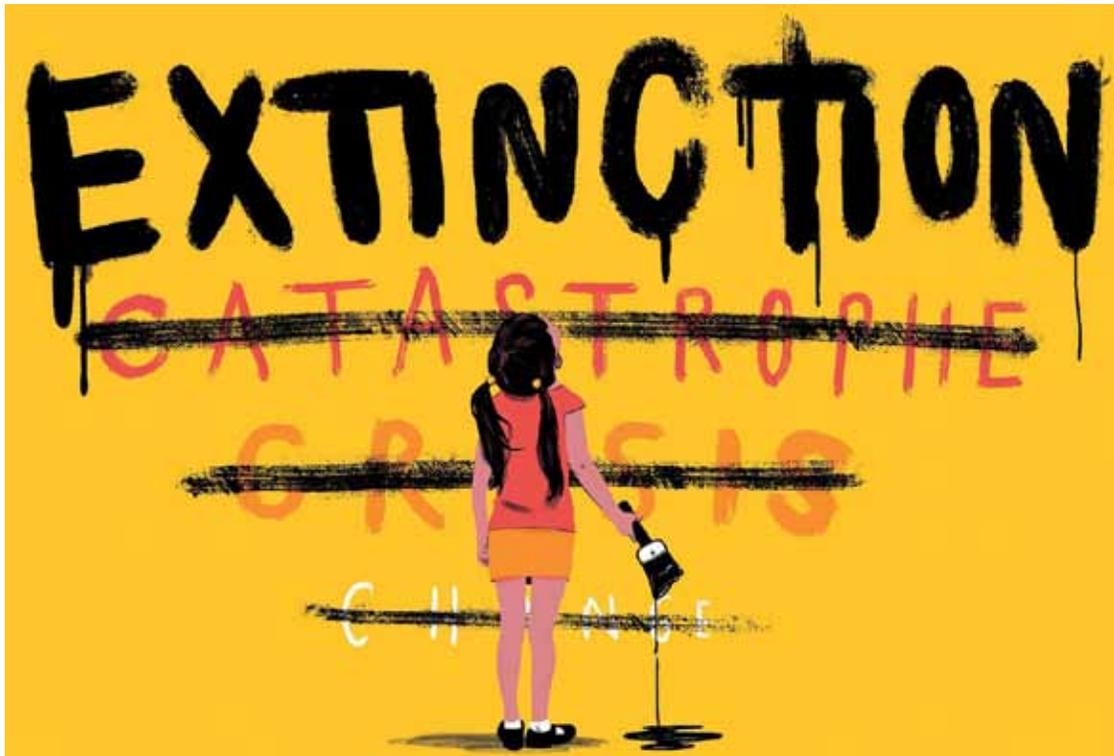


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Expression of Concern



BARRY FALLS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

- **Post Reprint:** “Our indifference toward kids is unconscionable”
- **Post Reprint:** “Words Fail: How do we talk about what’s happening to our planet?”
- **Student Activity:** Find the Right Keener Word
- **Post Reprint:** “A graphic photo gives the press pause”
- **Post Reprint:** “‘This will be catastrophic’: Maine families face elder boom, worker shortage in preview of nation’s future”
- **Student Activity:** A Shortage of Young Workers
- **Post Appreciation Reprint:** “The Tenacity of Hope”

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When you think of three months in your life, you may be quite surprised by the number of new and unexpected activities that get mixed in with the mundane and routine. Imagine having events and issues in your community, your state, country and the world to record in your diary. Reprints and activities in this guide cover June-August 2019.

Petula Dvorak looks at recent events, discerns a theme and shares with her readers. Together the examples serve as a reminder of what took place in one week and ask adults to consider their responsibilities. What would your students have to say about them?

In addition to looking at the words we use (“Words Fail”) and the photographs we print (“A graphic photo gives the press pause”), we take time to appreciate a great American author. Toni Morrison passed away in early August at the age of 88. Ron Charles captures her works and influence in “The Tenacity of Hope.”

Business and economics news reported in “ ‘This will be catastrophic’: Maine families face elder boom, worker shortage in preview of nation’s future” may give students an interesting perspective on career choices, family responsibilities, immigration and demographic impact.

Reporters cover areas of concern to inform; readers respond and make choices

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Our indifference toward kids is unconscionable



By **Petula Dvorak**
Columnist

Originally
Published
August 8, 2019

America is failing its children.

Future generations will look back at how we treat our kids and be appalled at the way we kept them in cages, refused to protect them from sexual predators and drilled them on how to behave when a gunman hunts them down.

The collective news from just this week is a searing indictment of adult indifference.

➔ In Mississippi, hundreds of children were left wandering, hungry and in tears after ICE arrested their parents in a sweeping raid that took 680 people suspected of illegal immigration into custody but made zero plans for their children.

➔ At a news conference in Kansas City, Mo., the woman believed by many to be the greatest U.S. gymnast in history, Simone Biles, teared up as she remembered the sexual abuse she suffered while the organization that was supposed to keep her safe — USA Gymnastics — refused to believe her and the other girls who told them their team

doctor Larry Nassar was a sexual abuser.

➔ In Pennsylvania, lawyers announced a new lawsuit against the Boy Scouts of America that claims to have uncovered at least 300 more cases of sexual abuse, cases where adults covered up for other adults, shushing and tiptoeing around while children were victimized in heinous and depraved ways on campouts and retreats.

➔ In D.C., a girl testified that she was sexually abused by a local Catholic priest, calling it “gross” and “disgusting” and said “it hurt.”

➔ More than 80 kids who had been trafficked for sex were finally recovered by the FBI in a sweeping,

nationwide operation.

➔ Jury selection was underway in Los Angeles in the trial of a Disney music executive accused of sexually abusing two young girls.

➔ A Florida school district voted to require their students to undergo active shooter drills every month.

➔ Three words: kids in cages. At least 900 of them have been separated from their parents in the year since a judge ordered an end to the separations, according to an ACLU lawsuit. The last time we detained huge swaths of an American population — the deplorable Japanese internment camps of World War II — the government kept children with their



BRYAN WOOLSTON/REUTERS

Children gather for a memorial service honoring the victims of Dayton’s mass shooting, in Springfield, Ohio.

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parents.

➔ And one name: Jeffrey Epstein. Not only is he accused of trafficking girls to his “Pedophile Island” to cavort with the rich and famous, America keeps calling his victims “young women” — rather than “children.”

And all this doesn’t include the daily grind of shootings (2,240 children 17 and under killed or injured by gunfire in America this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive), gross child abuse and neglect cases, the tabloid parade of weird custody battles and adult abdication of responsibility.

I’m talking about the way American systems — schools, religions, sports organizations, corporate America, government — routinely fail to protect our most valuable asset.

“It’s like, ‘Did you guys really not like us that much that you couldn’t just do your job?’” asked Biles, one of the world’s tough, determined, strong and poised athletes.

“We had one job [winning Olympic gold],” Biles said. “You

had one job; you literally had one job, and you couldn’t protect us!”

Maybe you want to point to the 300 million children worldwide who live on less than \$1.90 a day, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the Brookings Institution, and argue that our kids here have it pretty good.

You may look around and see kids with iPhone Xs and Gucci backpacks. Maybe your fancy-pants dinner was ruined by screaming kids in \$800 strollers, and it may seem like American kids are indulged and spoiled.

But the United States has some of the highest child-poverty rates among developed countries. About 15 million of our kids live below the poverty rate, and about 40 percent of them will experience at least a year in poverty before they turn 18.

But that’s not what I’m talking about, either. A childhood of poverty doesn’t mean a childhood of misery. Plenty of well-adjusted, happy adults grew up in loving homes that struggled to make ends meet.

This is about the government and church officials who’d rather cover their butts than protect a child from abuse. It’s the dogmatic supporters of partisan slogans who put cruelty over humanity.

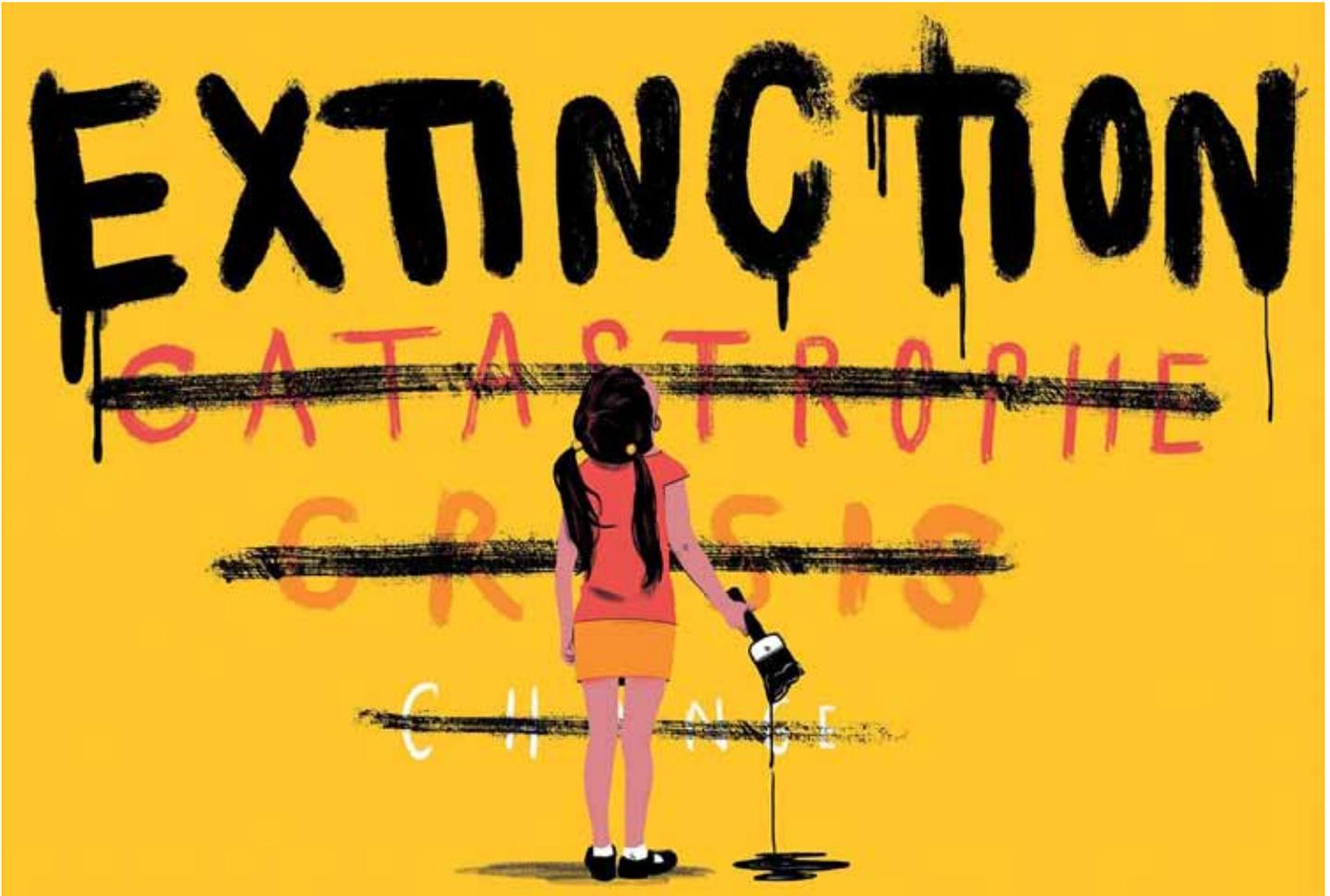
It’s the people who’d rather put the onus of children’s safety from gun violence on them, rather than taking actions to create a safer world.

It comes back to a proverb with a debated provenance, but a sound principle: “A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.”

We’ve stopped planting those trees, and we will pay a terrible price for it.

Petula is a columnist for The Post's local team who writes about homeless shelters, gun control, high heels, high school choirs, the politics of parenting, jails, abortion clinics, mayors, modern families, strip clubs and gas prices, among other things. Before coming to The Post, she covered social issues, crime and courts.

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BARRY FALLS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Words Fail

How do we talk about what's happening to our planet?

BY DAN ZAK

• Originally Published on August 27, 2019

In the middle of a winter's night in 2017, Frank Luntz's cellphone alerted him to a nearby wildfire. The longtime analyst of public opinion opened his bedroom curtains

and saw, less than a mile away, flames chewing the dark sky over Los Angeles. Luntz — who specializes in how the public reacts to words — saw scary evidence of a threat that he once tried to neutralize with language. In 2001, he'd written a memo of environmental talking points for Republican politicians and instructed them to scrub their vocabulary of “global warming,” because it had

“catastrophic connotations,” and rely on another term: “climate change,” which suggested “a more controllable and less emotional challenge.”

Last month, with a revised script, Luntz appeared before the Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis.

“I'm here before you to say that I was wrong in 2001,” Luntz said. Nearby was a colorful chart of

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vocabulary, developed since his polling in 2009 showed bipartisan support for climate legislation. He went on: “I’ve changed. And I will help you with messaging, if you wish to have it.”

Don’t talk about threats, he told the senators. Talk about consequences.

Don’t talk about new jobs created by green energy. Talk about new careers.

And sustainability?

“Stop,” Luntz said. “Sustainability is about the status quo.”

Even the committee’s name had a troublesome word in it: “crisis.” It’s flabby from overuse, Luntz thought. If everything is a crisis, then nothing is.

From a word standpoint, that’s true. And sometimes it feels true in the real world. The phone in your hand has become a police scanner of unfolding crises. The Kashmir crisis, the Hong Kong crisis, the border crisis, the trade crisis, the measles crisis. The crisis of mass shootings, of the national debt, of Puerto Rico, Brexit, the Amazon. And, yes, the climate crisis, formerly climate change — somehow the least tangible but most alarming of the crises, which makes it trickier to talk about.

Those who are talking about it have ratcheted up their rhetoric. In May, the Swedish activist Greta Thunberg ditched “climate change” for “climate breakdown” or “climate emergency.” The Guardian now uses “climate catastrophe” in its articles. A resistance movement born in Europe last year named itself Extinction

Rebellion, partly to normalize the notion of aggressive action in a life-or-death situation.

Luntz wants defter language. “The strongest advocates for a particular issue are often the worst communicators,” he says later by phone, because “they forget that the people they need to convince are not themselves or their friends.”

The climate problem is not just scientific. It’s linguistic. If we can agree how to talk and write about an issue that affects us all, maybe we can understand and fix it together.

But words can be clumsy tools. They can be too dull to puncture ignorance, or so sharp that people flinch and turn away. Is “change” appropriately neutral, or unjustly neutered? Is an “emergency” still an “emergency” after months or years? Does “catastrophe” motivate people, or make them hide under the bed? How long before words such as “breakdown” and “extinction” lose their bite?

And if we keep returning to the dictionary for new words to replace them, will there eventually be any left?

The second volume of the fourth National Climate Assessment is 1,515 pages long. The word “likely” appears 867 times, sometimes after “very” or “extremely.” Last spring, as they distilled data into text, the scientists who wrote the report spent long hours debating the usage of “likely.”

Without significant action to curb climate change, they wrote in the final

chapter, “it is very likely that some physical and ecological impacts will be irreversible for thousands of years, while others will be permanent.”

When translated to conversational English, “very likely” becomes “this is something really bad and totally crazy and wild,” says one author of the report, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

“Why don’t we use plain language and say, ‘Yes, this is crazy and, yes, you should be freaking out’? Because that’s not fair. That’s not the role of the National Climate Assessment,” the author says. “But then we sort of fail as a community in actually getting people to understand the severity of it.”

The science community is supposed to interpret for the rest of us, but its dialect does not always pack rhetorical oomph. “I didn’t realize that pointing to a climate graph I think is the Rosetta stone — people don’t see it the way I see it,” says Brenda Ekwurzel, director of climate science for the Union of Concerned Scientists. “We as humans don’t experience an exponential curve viscerally, in our gut.”

In the industrial age, environmentalist writers have tried to access the brain via the gut. “Thank God men cannot fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth,” Henry David Thoreau wrote in the 19th century. In the 1960s, Rachel Carson envisioned an ecosystem silenced by chemicals: “Everywhere was a shadow of death.” In the 1980s, as global warming was

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first debated widely, Bill McKibben pondered “the end of nature” itself.

But “there’s a point at which words like ‘climate change’ become part of your mental furniture,” McKibben says in an interview. “Like ‘urban violence’ — things that are horrible problems but you just repeat the thing so often that people’s minds kind of skip over them.”

Terms lose their power as they get used over many years, says Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, and “come to accrete their own set of connotations.”

Such as: elitist, liberal, socialist. When thousands of pages of analysis become a two-word slogan, it passes from science to politics. Facts become less important than feelings. For some people, “climate change” is a wedge word synonymous with “hoax” and calls to mind former vice president Al Gore. For others, it summons the specter of ExxonMobil and is a rallying cry for restructuring the global economy.

“The facts do not speak for themselves,” says Richard Buttny, a professor in the department of communication and rhetorical studies at Syracuse University. “People make decisions based on values.”

And therein lies an opportunity, according to Kim Cobb, professor of earth and atmospheric sciences at Georgia Tech. Scientists observe and publish findings for the public, Cobb says, but then often fail to “recognize the emotional toll this takes on the recipient and the challenge to their core values.”

Cobb refrains from using words such as “crisis” and “emergency” on Twitter, where the character limit discourages context and nuance. Instead, she elevates language about solutions, and about the emotions triggered by the science, in the hopes of widening the circle of understanding.

“We’re way behind creating these communities for shared values and shared goals,” Cobb says. “And from that comes shared language.”

We are gradually building that language to talk about where we are, where we’re going and about the emotions that accompany that knowledge.

The Germans have a word for feeling guilty about flying on airplanes: “flugscham,” or “flight shame.”

The biologist Edward O. Wilson has a word for a future epoch following a profound loss of species: “the Eremocene,” or “the Age of Loneliness.”

Karla Brollier, founder of the Climate Justice Initiative, is listening to her fellow indigenous Alaskans as their language evolves to include loss and adaptation, without relying on words such as “climate refugee” that connote victimhood.

Jennifer Atkinson’s students at the University of Washington at Bothell have used “blissonance” to describe the feeling of enjoying a record-hot day in winter — while recognizing that climate change might have something to do with it.

“Solastalgia,” coined by

environmental philosopher Glenn Albrecht, means distress over change in one’s home environment. Atkinson phrases it as a homesickness without ever having left home.

Her students “describe how the sound of frogs has slowly disappeared over time — these changes that destabilize connections to personal memories,” says Atkinson, a senior lecturer at Bothell. “Unlike with personal bereavement, we don’t have a vocabulary for the grief people have for the loss of the natural world.”

Her course is called “Environmental Anxiety and Climate Grief.” One of the goals is to search for ways of communicating outside the bounds of science and its “value-neutral” vocabulary — all those likelys and somewhat likelys.

“We’re moving into an age of great earnestness, because we’re trying to figure out, ‘How do we show up for each other?’ ” says Sarah Myhre, a climate and ocean scientist who has studied social and ecological decision-making. “And the language that’s being used in my spaces is all about heart-centered work.”

Whereas Frank Luntz once tried to strip the climate problem of emotional resonance, Atkinson, Myhre and others are acknowledging and amplifying it. Whereas science has traditionally been guided by dispassionate, male-centric authority, women are rewording climate conversations to honor the collective, connective nature of the problem.

And how we talk about the environment affects how we think about it. In the colonial and industrial

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ages, Myhre says, our language reflected an idea of the natural world as an inventory of useful commodities — separate from, and subservient to, humanity.

Trees became timber.

Animals became livestock.

Oil and coal became fuels.

And thus a cultural problem has given birth to an environmental one, says Daniel Wildcat, a professor at Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas.

“Think of how our worldview changes if we shift from thinking that we live in a world full of resources,” he says, “to a world where we live among relatives.”

In June, the White House slashed its red pen through certain labels in written congressional testimony from a State Department analyst. When the analyst used “possibly catastrophic” to describe the future impacts of climate change, a member of the National Security Council typed a note in the margin: “not a science-based assessment but advocacy for the climate-alarm establishment.”

The analyst listed “tipping point processes” on a page that was entirely crossed out. A note in the margin: “‘Tipping points’ is a propaganda slogan designed to frighten the scientifically illiterate.”

Some activists believe fright is “appropriate, and they’re eager to use keener language than “tipping points” to do it.

“We’ve been told for years: ‘Don’t scare people, people don’t want to know the bad news’ — and all that’s meant is nothing’s changed,” says Charlie Waterhouse, founder of the company behind Extinction Rebellion’s branding. “We know that we have to up the ante, and we have to have a more extreme position because that opens that crack that lets other people follow.”

The word “extinction” is a blunt instrument that whacks at complacency.

The word “rebellion” invites enlistees and subverts established power structures.

But this “constant inflation” in terminology hampers rational discussion, says the Danish author Bjorn Lomborg, whose skeptical writings on the economics of climate action have riled scientists and activists. Words such as “catastrophe” and “extinction” imply that we should either cower and do nothing, or overreact and do everything, says Lomborg, who is president of the Copenhagen Consensus Center.

“The conversation we should have is: How do we make smart policies

that cost less than the damage they reduce?” Lomborg writes in an email. “Climate policy shouldn’t be done with labels but with careful analysis.”

We don’t need labels as much as we used to, back when the effects of climate change were forecast instead of seen and felt.

“In a certain sense, words are no longer as necessary as they once were,” says McKibben, author of *The End of Nature*. “Twenty or 30 years ago we were describing things that hadn’t happened yet, so you couldn’t take a picture of them. Now every single day you can take 1,000 pictures around the world of the trauma of climate change.”

Nearly two decades after Frank Luntz recommended it, “climate change” may still be the closest thing to a shared language that Americans have for describing what’s happening to the planet. But we diverge from there. Scientists speak about consequences. Activists speak about crises and catastrophes. Politicians speak about doubt and propaganda. And if you’re paying attention, you’ll hear nature speaking loudly for itself.

Dan Zak is a reporter for The Washington Post. He writes a wide range of news stories, narratives and profiles from local, national and foreign assignments, from the Academy Awards to Fallujah, Iraq.

Find the Right Keener Words

Dan Zak in “Words Fail” discusses the dilemma of vocabulary — the denotation and connotation that words define, communicate and evoke. He uses one topic — “what’s happening to our planet” — to illustrate his theme. Read “Words Fail.”

Respond to the following questions on your own paper.

1. What is the point he is making about the use of “climate change,” “climate crisis,” and “climate catastrophe”?
2. Zak refers to Greta Thunberg as an activist.
 - Who is she and why did she make news in August 2019?
 - What do you think of her choice of using “breakdown” and “emergency”?
3. What balance can exist between the data of scientists and interpretations of analysts and the more emotional vocabulary that cries for a human response? What term do you think communicates the current condition of climate?
4. Robert C. Cantu and Mark Hyman in “Brain injuries, other dangers of tackle football” address a topic that has cultural, physical and emotional responses. Read the second paragraph that is a suggested warning to be placed on youth football helmets. What words elicit an emotional response:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c. How would the message change if verbs such as “may be,” “are likely to,” and “could” were used?
 - d. Do the writers provide sufficient scientific evidence to support the stronger verbs they have used in the suggested warning?
5. Continue reading through the guest commentary by Cantu and Hyman for examples of word choice that present the observable _____ (pick a term to fill in the blank: results, impact of, damage from) subconcussive hits.
 - a.
 - b.
6. Zak quotes Anthony Leiserowitz: “Terms lose their power as they get used over many years and come to accrete their own set of connotations.” He gives “elitist,” “socialist,” and “liberal” as examples.
 - As an election approaches give an example of how one of these terms is being used, what connotation it carries and what is the impact on those who are labeled with the term.
 - Do you see these descriptions used: “liberal” and “conservative” or “left-leaning” and “right-leaning”? Do these terms help to distinguish points of view or confuse positions?
 - What other terms are used to distinguish political views?

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A graphic photo gives the press pause

BY PAUL FARHI

• Originally Published June 27, 2019

Mainstream news organizations are reluctant to show images of the dead. Whether it's the victims of accidents, mass shootings, natural disasters, terrorism or military conflict, photos and videos of lifeless bodies rarely are published. Rarer still are those involving children.

On Tuesday, there was a striking exception.

Media outlets around the world published a now-iconic photo of the bodies of Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez and his 23-month-old daughter, Valeria, washed up in the shallows of the Rio Grande near Matamoros, Mexico. The Salvadoran man and his daughter drowned Sunday in an attempt to migrate to the United States.

The searing image seemed to capture the heartbreak, desperation and danger of immigrants fleeing their countries. In the photo, Valeria's tiny arm is flung across her father's neck in a haunting embrace, her body tucked inside his T-shirt. Both are face down in the muddy, brown river water.

The photo was taken by Julia Le Duc, a journalist with the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, which published it Monday morning. It gained international attention on

Tuesday after it was distributed by the Associated Press, which provides news and photos to thousands of newspapers, broadcast stations and online publications.

The image quickly began appearing — to a shocked reaction — online and on some TV networks and stations. On CNN on Wednesday, anchor Brianna Keilar broke briefly into tears as she narrated the story behind the photo.

Many compared it to the 2015 news photo of Alan Kurdi, a 3-year-old Syrian boy whose body washed up on a beach in Turkey after he and his family attempted to migrate to Europe, or the photo of a dazed and bleeding Syrian child, Omran Daqneesh, who was pulled from the rubble in Aleppo in 2016 after an airstrike by the Syrian regime. Both captured the world's attention, with the former sparking talks that led to more funds for the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

The decision to distribute the photo of the father and daughter came after discussions among AP editors in New York and Mexico City, said John Daniszewski, the news service's vice president for standards. "Normally, we don't show scenes of death," he said in an interview. "But in this case, we felt it was a respectful and poignant photo that conveyed an important moment and a lot of factual information about what's going on along the border."

Given the graphic nature of the photo, AP's editors decided to package it with a staff-written news story explaining who the victims were and how they died, including an eyewitness account by Ramírez's wife, who spoke to Mexican police. They also moved a related blog post by Daniszewski that carried the headline, "Why we published a border deaths photo."

"The AP does not transmit highly graphic or disturbing photographs for their own sake," he wrote. "We also avoid images that are gratuitously violent. But we have through our history made the decision at times to show disturbing images that are important and that can convey the human cost of war, civil unrest or other tragic events in a way that words alone cannot."

Other news outlets issued warnings, such as the one on MSNBC.com: "The photo you are about to see is very graphic and some might find it disturbing. In a stark reminder of the perils at the border, the Associated Press today published images of a man and his 23 month old daughter from El Salvador who drowned in the Rio Grande river on Sunday."

While the photo gained wide and nearly instant circulation via digital sources, most U.S. daily newspapers did not publish it on their front pages, including *The Washington Post*.

A major exception was the *New York Times*, which featured it as the

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JULIA LE DUC/AP

The bodies of Salvadoran migrant Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez and his nearly 2-year-old daughter, Valeria, lie on the bank of the Rio Grande near Matamoros, Mexico, on Monday.

“display” photo, the leading image on its front page. The photo ran across four columns with a two-line caption that included a referral to a news story inside the paper.

Like the AP, the Times’s editors spent some time Tuesday afternoon discussing the pros and cons of publishing the photo, said Beth Flynn, the newspaper’s deputy photo editor. With deadline approaching, one editor called editors at the AP to get more information about the photo and the photographer. A group of top editors, including Executive Editor Dean Baquet, then discussed

what to do.

“Most of us, the majority, felt very strongly that we should run it” on the front page, Flynn said. The accompanying news story “tried to tell about who these people were so that they weren’t just anonymous people coming to our country,” she said.

Few readers criticized the Times’s decision, judging from comments posted online. One reader even thanked Flynn and assistant editor Carolyn Ryan in an email, writing, “I can’t imagine the heart-wrenching, soul-searching process you must go

through each and every day. You are telling the stories that need to be told. . . . It is important and brave.”

For The Post, the decision not to publish the photo in its print edition was largely a logistical one, according to Emilio Garcia-Ruiz, managing editor for digital. “We were unable to get a Washington Post-level story written in time to meet print deadlines [Tuesday night] so we didn’t consider it” for display on the front page, he said. The Post, however, published the photo and AP story online on Tuesday and wrote several follow-up stories on Wednesday.

Le Duc, a crime reporter, told the Guardian, “I’ve seen a lot of bodies — and a lot of drownings. . . . You get numb to it, but when you see something like this, it resensitizes you.

“Will it change anything?” she asked. “It should. These families have nothing, and they are risking everything for a better life. If scenes like this don’t make us think again — if they don’t move our decision-makers — then our society is in a bad way.”

Paul Farhi is The Washington Post’s media reporter. He started at The Post in 1988 and has been a financial reporter, a political reporter and a Style reporter.

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Business

‘This will be catastrophic’: Maine families face elder boom, worker shortage in preview of nation’s future

BY JEFF STEIN

• Originally Published August 15, 2019

DOVER-FOXCROFT, Maine — Janet Flaherty got an alarming call last October from the agency tasked with coordinating in-home care for her 82-year-old mother. It could no longer send her mom’s home caretaker. It knew of no other aides who could care for her mother, either.

Flaherty’s mother, Caroline, has for two years qualified for in-home care paid for by the state’s Medicaid program. But the agency could not find someone to hire amid a severe shortage of workers that has crippled facilities for seniors across the state.

With private help now bid up to \$50 an hour, Janet and her two sisters have been forced to do what millions of families in a rapidly aging America have done: take up second, unpaid jobs caring full time for their mother.

“We do not know what to do. We do not know where to go. We are in such dire need of help,” said Flaherty, an insurance saleswoman.

‘Just not enough people’

Across Maine, families like the Flahertys are being hammered by two slow-moving demographic forces — the growth of the retirement population and a simultaneous decline in young workers — that have been exacerbated by a national worker shortage pushing up the cost of labor. The unemployment rate in Maine is 3.2 percent, below the national average of 3.7 percent.

The disconnect between Maine’s aging population and its need for young workers to care for that population is expected to be mirrored in states throughout the country over the coming decade, demographic experts say. And that’s especially true in states with populations with fewer immigrants, who are disproportionately represented in many occupations serving the elderly, statistics show.

“We have added an entire generation since we first put the safety net in place but with no plan whatsoever for how to support them,” said Ai-jen Poo, co-director of Caring Across Generations,



MARLENA SLOSS/THE WASHINGTON POST

Albert Rose, owner of Allen’s Seafood, talks on the phone while fishermen unload their catch last month in Harpswell, Maine. With a median age of 57, Harpswell is the oldest town in the oldest state, by population.

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which advocates for long-term care. “As the oldest state, Maine is the tip of the spear — but it foreshadows what is to come for the entire country.”

Experts say the nation will have to refashion its workforce, overhaul its old-age programs and learn how to care for tens of millions of elderly people without ruining their families’ financial lives.

Last year, Maine crossed a crucial aging milestone: A fifth of its population is older than 65, which meets the definition of “super-aged,” according to the World Bank.

By 2026, Maine will be joined by more than 15 other states, according to Fitch Ratings, including Vermont and New Hampshire, Maine’s neighbors in the Northeast; Montana; Delaware; West Virginia; Wisconsin; and Pennsylvania. More than a dozen more will meet that criterion by 2030.

Across the country, the number of seniors will grow by more than 40 million, approximately doubling between 2015 and 2050, while the population older than 85 will come close to tripling. ...

'Far too few younger people'

Albert Rose sits on the wharf of his seafood business and fumes that he cannot find help with his daily work of moving and unloading 50 crates of lobster, each often more than 100 pounds. In Harpswell, median age 57, he lives in the oldest town of America’s oldest state.

Rose, 40, has suffered from two torn rotator cuffs and a herniated disk but continues to perform the

heavy labor himself in part because he has for the past five years been unable to find young workers, absent sporadic help from college students during their summer vacations.

“Ten years ago, every spring you had young people wanting work on the wharf or want to work on a lobster boat,” Rose said. “I haven’t seen a single person this spring or summer looking for boatwork.”

Maine’s aging population, and its dearth of young workers, falls particularly hard on poorer businesses and parts of the state that do not have enough resources to compete amid the shortfall.

Piscataquis County, a region in the north battered by the closure of its lumber mills, will see the number of people ages 75 to 84 increase by 81 percent from 2015 to 2025, according to the Muskie School of

Public Service at the University of Southern Maine.

The biggest impact likely is in health care for the elderly.

There are 34 physicians in the county, about 70 percent less than the state average per person, and fewer available nursing home beds per person, according to a Maine Health Access Foundation report. Half the physicians in the county are older than 50, as are half the nurses.

Stepping into the breach is Pine Tree Hospice, one of the few dozen volunteer hospices in the United States. The hospice’s volunteers do not provide medical services, but they go to the homes of patients in end-of-life care, cooking, cleaning or playing a game of cribbage. About one-quarter of the volunteers are themselves in their 70s. They like reciting the hospice’s motto: “We



Lagasse, 55, checks her father's band.

MARLENA SLOSS/THE WASHINGTON POST

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MARLENA SLOSS/THE WASHINGTON POST

Gail Johnson, owner of Ship to Shore Store in Harpswell, Maine, rings up a customer. Johnson reopened the store in 2009 after spending decades as a shore captain. She now balances running the store and caring for her husband, Charlie, who has moderate dementia.

can't add years to your life, but we can add life to your years."

When Jane Stitham began as the executive director of the hospice about a decade ago, she urged as many elderly people as possible to call for free end-of-life care. But over the past two years, Stitham said, the hospice has shifted its focus to recruiting new volunteers, as its waiting list has grown dramatically.

Every month, Stitham has to turn away one to two people whom the hospice cannot reach.

"There are far too few younger people in the mix of volunteers," said Meg Callaway, who ran a program in the county focused on helping older people.

Cliff Singer, who runs an Alzheimer's clinic in an isolated northern region of the state, said his waiting list has more than doubled to 70 people, meaning it takes 10 months for patients to see him. Singer is trying to hire nine nurses, which would allow him to cut his waiting list dramatically, but he only has three, in part because of fierce competition and clinicians.

"It feels awful not to be able to help more people," Singer said. "But we really can't."

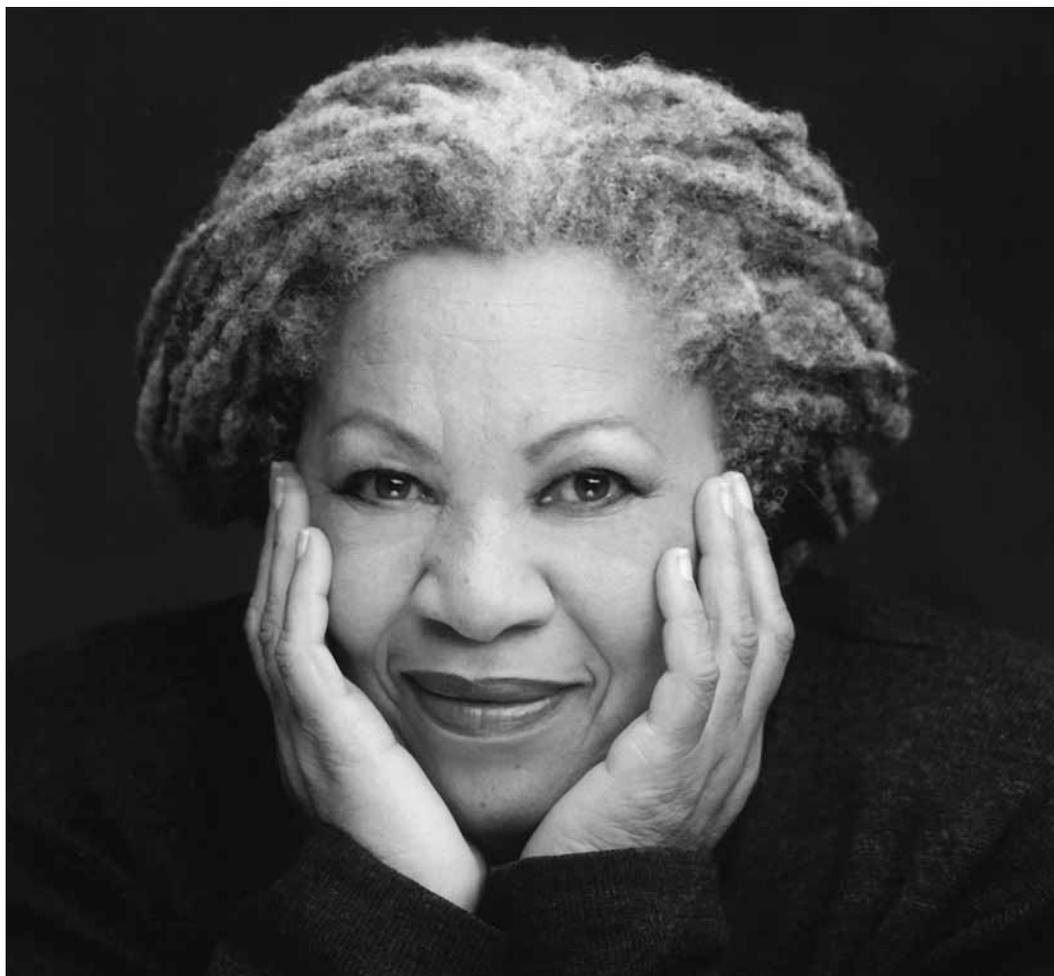
A Shortage of Young Workers

In The Post's Business section article, "'This will be catastrophic': Maine families face elder boom, worker shortage in preview of nation's future," reporter Jeff Stein presents the problems that two industries — health care and fishing — are facing in Maine. Through figures and personal stories readers learn about current conditions.

1. How does having an aging population influence the job market?
2. Maine has an aging population and a reduced work force of younger people. How does this demographic fact change the economic picture?
3. Workers have sought a minimum wage of \$15 an hour. The federal minimum wage is \$7.25, in D.C. it is \$14, and in some California municipalities it is over \$15 and as high as \$16.30. In Maine private health care providers are asking up to \$50 an hour.
 - Of what economic concept is this an example?
 - What is the impact on families that need a home caregiver for family members?
4. When a municipality, state or country has 20% of its population over 65 years old, it is called "super-aged." In Japan the population over the age of 65 reached 25.1% in 2013. Read to learn what it is doing to address its senior citizens' health care.
 - What might American states facing a super-aged population learn from Japan's endeavors?
 - What other ideas would you suggest to the people in small towns in Maine?
5. Do you have a career goal? Have you thought about the education that is required by this profession and where you will receive this training?
6. Would you consider a career in health care? Especially after reading of the high demand for people in this field?
7. No matter your career, would you consider moving to Maine or one of the "15 other states, according to Fitch Ratings, including Vermont and New Hampshire, Maine's neighbors in the Northeast; Montana; Delaware; West Virginia; Wisconsin; and Pennsylvania" that will be super-aged and need younger workers?
8. Many immigrant workers work for restaurants, landscape companies, poultry and meat industry and other labor-intensive jobs. What impact do federal policies on immigrants have on the business owners and the workers and their families?
9. Stein states: "The disconnect between Maine's aging population and its need for young workers to care for that population is expected to be mirrored in states throughout the country over the coming decade, demographic experts say. And that's especially true in states with populations with fewer immigrants, who are disproportionately represented in many occupations serving the elderly, statistics show."
 - In your community what percent of hospital, nursing home and in-home care workers are foreign-born?
 - Would your local hospital be able to fill its physician, RN and aide positions without immigrant workers?
 - Are there candy striper or volunteer opportunities in your local medical facilities?
10. The headline to this Business section article indicates this is a "preview of nation's future." Do you think this is now or will be true of your community?

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APPRECIATION



THE WASHINGTON POST

THE TENACITY OF HOPE

Toni Morrison exposed America's ugliest truths
in some of its most beautiful prose

BY RON CHARLES / AUGUST 7, 2019

“124 was spiteful.” ¶ With that enigmatic opening line of *Beloved*, Toni Morrison, who died Monday at the age of 88, placed her indelible stamp on American literature. ¶ That a black woman should write the greatest novel of the 20th century is a glorious rebuke to our long history that denigrated women and African

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Americans. From the furnace of her genius emerged a book that melded America's past into a work of enduring art — gothic, magical, magisterial. And the passage of more than three decades has done nothing to diminish the power of that masterpiece. It remains, like the world's most famous monuments, both familiar and astonishing, as capable of inspiring awe as it did when it first appeared in 1987. ¶ Most authors are silenced by death. But a few — Shakespeare, Austen, Twain — grow more amplified by each new generation. We had the blessing of reading Morrison as she was writing. Others will have the blessing of rediscovering her. ¶ The granddaughter of a slave, Morrison wrote the novel that definitively dismantled a century of Southern romanticism. Arguments about states' rights or fantasies of antebellum gentility were scythed by her storytelling. With *“Beloved,”* she dared to expose not just the injustice of slavery, but the full spectrum of its obscenity. She uncovered the ghastly metal devices wrapped around black necks and crammed into black mouths. She explored the sickening abuses of “science” to justify racial hierarchies. She blasted the myth of the benevolent plantation.



THE WASHINGTON POST

President Barack Obama presents Toni Morrison with the Presidential Medal of Freedom at the White House on May 29, 2012.

And most dramatically, she called forth the spirit of trauma that still haunts this nation, what she once called “the tenacity of racism.” Recalling the true story of Margaret Garner, an African American woman who killed her own daughter rather than allow her to be dragged back into slavery, Morrison presented America’s “peculiar institution”

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in terms so visceral and intimate that no reader could endure it unshaken. It was the greatest love wrapped in the greatest horror.

The scope of Morrison's accomplishments is impossible to exaggerate. She published her first classic, *The Bluest Eye*, at the age of 39, at a time when books by black authors — no matter what their subjects or genres — were usually ghettoized in bookstores and rounded up in newspaper book sections like so many curiosities. The initial response to *The Bluest Eye* was, in her own words, "slight, even hostile," but fame came, and she went on to write 10 more novels — including *Sula*, *Song of Solomon* and *Paradise* — stories that placed black women at the center, in the full complexity of their lives. In 2008, she returned to the earliest days of American slavery to write *A Mercy*, a short, feverish novel that reminded us of her stylistic sorcery. And just four years ago, at the age of 84, she published her last novel, *God Help the Child*, which brought her back to the tragic themes of *The Bluest Eye*.

As a professor at Princeton and elsewhere, she encouraged generations of students and future writers to reimagine American literature and remake it. Before that, as an editor at Random House — the first female African American editor in the company's history — she broke down old racial barriers



KATHY WILLENS/AP

Author Toni Morrison in 1994. The Nobel laureate died August 5 at age 88.

and welcomed new authors into the canon. And she remained an insightful cultural and literary critic who published a new collection of her essays and speeches just a few months ago in *The Source of Self-Regard*.

Some of those pieces are decades old, but none of them feel dated. As this summer has demonstrated so horrifically, the rhetoric of racial hatred maintains its currency in America, even from the highest realms. The words of Morrison's Nobel acceptance speech from 1993 still ring with relevance:

"Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence; does more than represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge," she said. "It is the language that drinks blood, laps vulnerabilities, tucks its fascist boots under crinolines of respectability and patriotism as it moves relentlessly toward the bottom line and the bottomed-out mind."

The ferocity of that wisdom didn't dampen the joy of her spirit.

In 2015 when she accepted a lifetime achievement award from the National Book Critics Circle in New York, she radiated delight — not in herself but in the remarkable possibilities of this nation.

It's that twining of brutal insight and determined hope that generates such energy in *Beloved*. The novel is packed full with devastating moments, but one quiet one sticks in my mind. It takes place in 1874.

A black man named Stamp Paid is tying up his boat on the bank of a river when he catches sight of what he thinks must be a cardinal's feather. "He tugged," Morrison writes, "and what came loose in his hand was a red ribbon knotted around a curl of wet woolly hair, clinging still to its bit of scalp." After all the lynchings, the school burnings, the property thefts, it's this tiny scrap of atrocity that finally exhausts Stamp Paid. "What are these people?" he asks. "You tell me, Jesus. What are they?"

America is still struggling to answer that question.

"We die," Morrison said in her Nobel acceptance speech. "That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives."

We're still plumbing the dimensions of hers.

Ron Charles writes about books for The Washington Post and hosts TotallyHipVideoBookReview.com.