

# Climate Corner

A new outlook for the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette

by Ashley Ropp

Nith Valley EcoBoosters

## Wait! Don't turn the page!

I know that coming across the word 'Climate' can be quick to put people off. Whether you're scrolling on social media, flipping through the newspaper, or just having a conversation, hearing words like 'green', 'sustainability', and 'climate change', are signs to stop listening. And who can blame you? Nobody wants to hear more disastrous news when there's already more than enough. Nobody wants to be guilted or lectured for the endless ways they don't live 'sustainably'; how much red meat they eat, the fact that they don't drive an electric car, their plastic to-go cups, or their water usage. The list goes on and on.

But, regardless of the controversial nature of the subject, regardless of the frustration we've all grown to feel within these conversations, regardless of your personal investment in the issue, **climate change is here, and we need to talk about it.** And I don't just mean talking about far out goals that will continuously be pushed back — lowering whatever percentage of emissions by whatever year. I mean we need to talk about lowering emissions *now!*

What if words like 'climate' or 'environment' *weren't* the signs of a not only divisive, but **intensely grating** conversation coming to life? In a world of increasing political tension, community division, and all-consuming uncertainty, I believe it's crucial these words make their way into our daily vocabulary so that we can have **genuinely constructive, productive, and truthful conversations.** I believe we need a new outlook to our climate conversations.

Speaking of what I believe, I should probably explain who the 'I' is. My name is Ashley Ropp, and I am a lifelong resident of Tavistock, a lover of art, and someone who has whatever the opposite of a green thumb is. Most importantly, I am committed to learning about the best ways to help those around me — about how to advocate for environmental and social justice, and, currently, about how to write a column for the local newspaper. I am thrilled to introduce my column, *Climate Corner*.

In *Climate Corner*, I will discuss topics about sustainability, the environment, and climate change. I will do it with this new outlook of which I so cryptically speak. For too long, climate action has been presented as something for specific people — it's for 'activists' not 'regular people'; it's for people with excess money, those who can afford house renovations and electric vehicles; it's for people in specific spaces — political spaces, that is.

It's time for a change. At the risk of sounding preachy, I think it's time we start realizing that **climate action is for everyone, in our everyday lives.** I want to explore, and learn alongside everyone who is willing to read this column. How can we make climate action effective,

accessible, practical, and non-divisive, so we can all sleep better knowing our future is bright?  
...Bright green, that is!

And most crucially, I want us to make climate action *not boring*. This doesn't have to be an insufferable chore, and this 'bright green' future I speak of, doesn't have to be a miserable life of inconvenience, where paper straws dissolve in our drinks and every field is filled with towering windmills. There is no universal definition of an 'environmentally sustainable community'. Once we realize we can create a more just and *enjoyable* world, the creative task of defining our 'environmentally sustainable community' can begin — in Wilmot, in our individual towns, workplaces, schools, homes, and in every other community which we enjoy.

*Climate Corner* represents Nith Valley EcoBoosters. The NVEB is a not-for-profit, politically non-partisan volunteer group established in 2015. It is committed to achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships through education, action and collaboration. In 9 years of work, they have organized 18 live or online workshops, webinars, and events. For more information on the group, visit [nvecoboosters.com](http://nvecoboosters.com). *Climate Corner* will include NVEB updates and how you can get involved or support us.