

Dear Virginia,

## A Pale Blue Dot



### That's us!

**On February 14, 1990** the spacecraft Voyager 1 took this photo of Earth from 4 billion miles away. The following is an excerpt from Carl Sagan's book, *Pale Blue Dot*. Sagan was an astronomer, planetary scientist and science communicator. [Watch Sagan's short video.](#)

*Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there--on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.*

*The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds.*



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

~ ~ ~

*Justice is what love  
looks like in public.*

Jim Hightower

~ ~ ~

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### 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

### Pale Blue Dot (continued from above)

*Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged*



position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.

*The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.*

*It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known. (Thanks to Robert Hubbell for sharing this excerpt.)*



## Two inspiring people and their causes

**Jane Goodall** is an esteemed anthropologist, primatologist and zoologist. At 90 she continues to advocate for a thriving, healthy life for people, animals and the planet. She is one of my heroes. **Jose Andres** is a chef and restaurateur. He is the founder of the World Central Kitchen, a non-profit organization which serves the needs of

those suffering in conflict zones and from natural disasters around the world. Both were recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, January 4, 2025.

**Pictured above** are the two addressing the audience at the [Clinton Global Initiative](#) in September where world activists and change makers meet and commit to take action to address our most pressing problems. What was particularly interesting is how Jane Goodall's work influenced Jose Andres and the World Central Kitchen. Andres says, **"What her love for protecting animals and chimpanzees tells me as a cook, is that I need to make sure that in the process of feeding humanity, we are not taking away the forests."** The event is partially described in this edition of [Fix the News](#). Other stories are included. I encourage you to subscribe to *Fix the News* which reports on multiple good news stories of people and planet around the world.



## 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. (I recommend "Surviving the Next Four Years" for strategies such as: avoid doom and despair; be a voice of hope, not fear; unplug from network news; commit small acts of resistance." [Read here.](#))

### 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



### **New Mexico rivers protected**

New Mexico's Water Quality Control Commission voted to protect 250 miles of stream and river segments with the state's highest water quality safeguards. This historic decision recognizes stretches of the Rio Grande, Rio Chama, Cimarron, Pecos, and Jemez rivers as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW), ensuring that these lifelines remain uncontaminated by pollution. [Read here.](#)



### **Well Done**

Read positive stories about people, non-profits and governments working to plug old oil wells. There are 3.7 million oil and gas wells in this country that belch more than 8.2 million metric tons of CO2 every year. [Here's the story](#) of one oil man who started the Well Done Foundation to cap as many wells as he could. The EPA has awarded \$12.6 million to Colorado to help with plugging old wells. [Read here.](#)



### **Positive about plastic**

I've gathered a number of news stories about efforts to reduce plastic usage. though not enough stories to make producers responsible.

#### **Plastic Pollution Reduction Act in**

**Colorado:** Early in 2023, Colorado began enforcing a 10-penny charge on all single-use plastic and paper bags at major retailers. Reports show Colorado used 1.5-1.8 billion fewer plastic or paper shopping bags since then and also generated \$5 million in revenue. [Read more.](#)

**California** Governor Newsom has signed a law prohibiting all plastic shopping bags at grocery store checkouts, making the state the first to impose such broad regulations. The new law, which goes into force in 2026, eliminates the choice of plastic bags completely. Customers who do not bring their own reusable bags will only be able to choose paper bags. [Read more.](#)

**Amazon** has announced that it will stop using puffy plastic shipping pillows. The retailer says the move will avoid the use of almost 15 billion air pillows a year in North America. They'll be replaced in North America with paper packing, eliminating some 15 billion pillows a year. Plastic film is a major pollutant. [Read here.](#)

## Wisdom for Our Time



### **Referring to the threat to our democracy in the next four years,**

**Rebecca Solnit says,** "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. 'Fight on' might sound like a lot now, but maybe you can at least not quit, even if you need to take time off, which is not the same thing as checking out."

## **SMILE! You're on**



I grew up laughing hysterically at the scenes from Candid Camera. Here's "[Candid Camera Classic Quickies](#)" to bring a little, or alot, of laughter into your day.

*May your month of February be filled  
with love and good cheer.  
Virginia / Gibi*



Fan the flames of your renewal with "[144 Ways the World Got Better in 2024,](#)" by *Reasons to be Cheerful*

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Jessica Craven offers [helpful guidance](#) for keeping balance while we endure the chaos in Washington.

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