

# GOOD WORK NEWS

The Working Centre, 58 Queen St. S. Kitchener, ON N2G 1V6

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## A Community Responds

Our community has responded to help meet the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic

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## The Healing of Spring

By Stephanie Mancini

As we welcome the Spring, we also mark a year of COVID. We welcome the healing and renewal of warmer weather, the quickening of the earth. We have been reflecting, responding, enduring, and the challenges are not over.

We have been understanding our work as walking forwards on two feet.

The foot we have leaned into strongly during COVID is the work of responding to poverty, homelessness, and a poison drug supply. We have created Covid safe environments; faced Covid fear for people working in the sector; walked with Covid denial for many who face the stark realities of drug-induced death rather than Covid induced symptoms; faced the challenges of finding people a place to live when the numbers of homeless far outflank available housing units; supported a variety of new housing options – Water Street House, University Ave housing, motels; we have served delicious meals for 600 people a day; supported the job search of many seeking work; and problem solved the financial boondoggles of a changing income support landscape. Challenging, meaningful, beautiful work.

This work is ongoing and intense.

We hope to enhance this work with support for new housing options, and support access to a safer supply strategy responding to the powerful drugs that are holding so many hostage.

And we continue to strengthen the second foot of our work – enhancing our responses to Climate Change, and to reimagine creative community examples that help to support the concepts of limits, of making and doing, of nourishing the soil and living sustainably. We have work to re-open our community spaces, our community tools projects, and to build on learning and doing as a community.

We keep one foot in helping to heal and respond to the dislocation of our times; and the second foot will lead us forwards to new ways of being. If we have learned anything from this COVID crisis, it is that we can make changes quickly and with agility but it is much easier to have models to build on, and people committed to acting together. The Winter we have been through reminds us that the dislocation we are enduring is unbearable. The Spring reminds us that our planet has limits and is a gift that sustains us. Stay tuned to Good Work News and to our soon-to-be-ready new website as we walk together on two feet.

## Changing Our Relationship to the Living World

By Joe Mancini

*“Owing to past neglect, in the face of the plainest warnings, we have entered upon a period of danger. The era of procrastination, of half measures, of soothing and baffling expedients of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences... We cannot avoid this period, we are in it now...”*

– Winston Churchill, 1936

The decade of the 2020's will be momentous for turning away from the endless growth economy by learning to walk more gently on the Earth. If we don't, these coming decades will be characterized by attempts to hopelessly navigate around the climate and ecological barriers that are directly in our path.

Walking gently is a new priority. If we don't start revising society's relationship to the living world, the next generations will inherit a world that will not be recognizable – and eventually not habitable.

Already, the Guardian reports that “the climate crisis is pushing the planet's tropical regions towards the limits of human livability, with rising heat and humidity threatening to plunge much of the world's population into potentially lethal conditions... Should governments fail to curb global heating to 1.5C above the pre-industrial era, areas in the tropical band that stretches either side of the equator are at extreme risk.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not just climate change; consider the over-extraction of raw materials which has consistently doubled from a world-wide tonnage of 14 billion tons/year in 1950, to 35 billion tons/year in 1980. By 2000 it was 50 billion tons/year and is now over 92 billion tons/year.<sup>2</sup>

This means that the industries of extraction and production like mining, forestry, trawler fishing, steel and concrete production, and chemical and plastic production produce 92 billion tons of raw materials per year. Every spurt of economic growth compounds and adds billions of tons of extracted material. On this trajectory, the next doubling could come as early as 2045, when the Earth will be forced to give up 184 billion tons of material. But the Earth is a fixed resource. We are at the point where doubling demand will stress the Earth's living systems beyond recognition.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that every new point of economic growth adds more material extraction even as the interconnected life systems of the Earth are being overwhelmed by machines that extract with ever greater efficiency. Where will this model of economic growth lead us? Deforestation has resulted in the loss of 50% of Earth's tropical forest in the last 50 years. Species extinction is 1000 times faster than 200 years ago with the resulting 68% loss of plants and animals in the last 50 years.

If we listen, we can hear the Earth reacting to the over-extraction of its living and natural systems with stronger and more explicit language.

For example, it was just in December 2019 when 46 million acres of Australian outback was consumed by wildfires. This summer the US experienced wildfires and hurricanes like never before and all resulted in severe economic dislocation. This February's Texas snowstorm left millions without power and water and effectively froze the state physically and economically for a week.

It makes no difference whether these events are climate related or the result of a growth-at-all-cost mentality. Either way both the natural world and all living things,

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## Thirty Seventh Year

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# Good Work News

Good Work News was first produced in September 1984. It is published four times a year by The Working Centre and St. John's Kitchen as a forum of opinions and ideas on work and unemployment. Four issues of Good Work News constitutes our annual report. There is a circulation of 12,000 copies. Subscription: a donation towards our work.

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## Mayors' Dinner Reimagined for 2021

The Mayors' Dinner has a wonderful 32-year history of recognizing and celebrating individuals and stories of community commitment. For almost 10 years, the event has been at capacity of nearly 1000 guests. We are grateful for the support the event and our work has engendered.

For the second year in a row, the COVID-19 pandemic has played havoc with our plans for the Mayor's Dinner. The strength of the dinner has always been our ability to come together in community, for community. In consultation with the Mayors of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge, due to the inability to gather in person, we have decided to also not host a virtual Mayor's Dinner this year.

Having said that, COVID-19 has made for a challenging time for our community's most vulnerable members. Throughout this past year, and especially this past winter, the complexity of our work and the urgent need for affordable and supportive housing has only grown.

For 2021, in lieu of the dinner, the Mayors have offered to assist us in inviting past Mayors' Dinner attendees and others who are able, to offer a donation to the Working Centre's Capital Housing Campaign. In our next issue of Good Work News, we will share our new housing ideas with you, and invite your support.

In the meantime, stay tuned for our invitation in mid-May.



## Worth A Second Look

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# Growing Homelessness

## A Guide to the Numbers

In November 2019, in the middle of a snow storm The Working Centre opened a warming centre at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church where over 220 different individuals stayed over-night during those two weeks. Through November and December, we continued the warming centre at a vacant Tim Hortons.

Since January 2020 The Working Centre has been supporting 40 motel rooms for emergency shelter.

When the pandemic hit, we estimated that there were well over 150 people still camping. It was a very cold March 2020. From April on, the properties around St. John's Kitchen were used as a camping ground for at least 80 different people until October 2020.

In April 2020: Ron Doyle invited Nadine Greene to support 50 homeless people to camp inside at Lot 42. A Better Tent City (ABTC) has rooted itself at Lot 42 with support from St. Mary's Catholic Church, the Social Development Centre and Jeff Wilmer.

By October 2020: The Region of Waterloo had made possible substantially more shelter beds. The House of Friendship moved to a hotel in Waterloo with 120 beds, The Working Centre opened up the University Avenue Residence (UA)

for 80 people, The Working Centre continues to support 40 motel rooms for those with health related issues and the YW's St. Mark's shelter opened with 45-50 beds.

Other shelters in the Kitchener downtown included the YW's 50 beds for women, oneRoof's 15 beds, plus youth overflow, and the 8 beds at Water Street House.

All these shelter-type beds now add up to 400 beds, almost tripling what was available in November 2019.

But there are more people to count. At motels and social housing there is often double and triple occupancy - people who don't have any options, who move into their friend's rooms. There are others who are camping. During the pandemic, St. John's Kitchen has served 140 - 180 people a day and about 60% are unsheltered.

Based on these numbers it is reasonable to state that in Kitchener-Waterloo there are 500 people who could at any time be unsheltered.

Growing homelessness is rooted in the long-term displacement of decent paying working class jobs, the pervasive availability of drugs, and the minuscule availability of affordable housing units. Unless all three of these factors are addressed, homelessness will worsen.

## WHAT IS IT?

by Stephanie Mancini

*What is it to sit beside someone in the emergency department*

*As they face the fear and anxiety of an overdose that doesn't quite kill them?*

*What is it to stand in presence to that moment*

*Where a body succumbs to the drug that takes away a life?*

*What is it to stand with family members as they mourn the loss*

*The unbearable moment where we stand together in the face of unrelenting death.*

*And what is to do this over and over again*

*To chock up the body count to 40 people this winter?*

*Lost mostly to the stark theft of life caused by drugs.*

*Theft, a whole new thing, the violation of trust between friends -*

*This becomes the norm as people desperately seek*

*A desire beyond human capacity as the drugs surpass human will.*

*The moment when we turn away and a life is lost*

*And even when we don't turn away and it happens anyway.*

*All sense of control, of safety, is lost*

*As we face each reality.*

*With deep sadness, with determination to be present.*

*This is a lament of loss*

*Of humanity*

*Of dignity*

*Of life.*

# A Community Responds During COVID-19



**We want to thank all the volunteers, donors, and community partners who have supported our efforts to produce and distribute over 600 meals each day during the pandemic. Thank you to all those sharing the spirit of community through these challenging times especially the 2500 people and groups who donated over Christmas season. Here is a summary of the work we have accomplished.**

### St. John's Kitchen Garage Distribution

This fall we renovated the garage in the Worth A Second Look parking lot to serve a daily take away meal. The garage has been used throughout the winter to serve up to 200 takeaway meals each day.

### Improved Meal Preparation at Maurita's Kitchen

In order to produce 600 meals per day we renovated Maurita's Kitchen (which has been the main kitchen for the Queen Street Commons) into a commissary kitchen with increased meal prep volume. The main new equipment included a double commercial steam oven and an 80 gallon floor kettle. We needed all 80 gallons to produce the gravy used for the Christmas dinners. We also added a walk-in freezer and cooler and expanded our dry good storage. We are grateful to Waterloo Regional Food Bank for providing all the food that has been turned into daily meals.

### Housing 80 people at UA

UA is a former university residence with 80 bedrooms. On each floor there are shared washrooms and a large bright common room for gatherings and where the meals are served. We deliver enough meals each day for breakfast, lunch, supper and snacks for 80 residents. This project, funded by the Region of Waterloo has helped 80 formerly homeless people who were either camping or in motels to have a secure room. It has been a long winter, dealing with many cases of COVID, but much learning has taken place, people have adapted to the housing, and new workers have learned on the job supportive housing skills. This project has demonstrated a new model for addressing homelessness.

### St. John's Kitchen

Each day between 140 - 180 meals are served inside at St. John's Kitchen. We primarily serve the unsheltered, those without a home. Our space capacity is 30-40 people at once - this flows during the day with people taking turns. There is often a line up at the door. SJK provides showers (used all day long), washrooms, laundry, along with the daily meal, coffee, and snacks. There is a nurse on site every day, COVID testing and health checks are frequent. As with all spaces, COVID has been a constant presence since December. The work has been amazing as we keep St. John's kitchen open as one of the few locations for those without housing.



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Thank You to 100 Women Who Care for their donation of \$18,200 to help support The Working Centre's community response during the COVID-19 pandemic



Thank You to Waterloo Region Crossing for hosting a virtual event that raised \$15,000 to support our community response

# Changing Our Relationship

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including humans, are dangerously vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic is another economic disaster which managed to singlehandedly close down the world economy. Its roots are linked to the rapid pace of the globalized movement of people, goods and services. Everyone now understands the fragility of our economy and our way of living. Yet, we can expect more climactic events. Continued overdevelopment suggests this past year is merely a dress rehearsal.

On March 1st, the UN secretary-general António Guterres pleaded that, "All planned coal projects around the world must be cancelled to end the "deadly addiction" to the most polluting fossil fuel."<sup>4</sup> This must be our new mantra – how to find every way possible to put an end to the deadly addiction of fossil fuels.

Guterres knows that greenhouse gasses are rising and they are the leading edge of potential economic misery. The pattern is the same for raw material extraction. Every spurt of economic growth is matched by a rise in carbon in the atmosphere. In 1950, annual carbon emissions were estimated at 5 billion tons/year. By 2000 they had reached 25 billion tons per year. 17 years later, after the issue had been identified and solutions sought, annual emissions grew even more to 37 billion tons.<sup>5</sup>

Climate scientists fear what will happen as we increasingly totter closer to the edge, which "could fundamentally disrupt the planet and produce abrupt change in the climate. A mass methane release could put us on an irreversible path to full land-ice melt, causing sea levels to rise by up to 30 meters."<sup>6</sup> This is why there is an immediate need to reduce the growing potential of a tipping point that will worsen the impact of global warming.

Even the World Economic Forum in Davos has issued a dark, foreboding warning. "We need to act now on our climate. Act like these tipping points are imminent. And stop thinking of climate change as a slow-moving, long-term threat that enables us to kick the problem down the road and let future generations deal with it. We must take immediate action to reduce global warming and fulfil our commitments to the Paris Agreement, and build resilience with these tipping points in mind."<sup>7</sup>

A recent study in *Nature*, Fossil CO<sub>2</sub> in Post Covid-19 Era found that in order to sustain a decline in global greenhouse gas emissions, we will need to have a COVID-like shutdown every two years. The seven percent decline in emissions achieved because of COVID needs to be repeated every two years for a decade or more, to have a chance of getting ahead of Climate Change.<sup>8</sup>

This is the direction we are heading in.

It is now very clear that a small minority on our planet has benefitted from the false comforts of the growth economy. Underneath this model of development is a degrading founda-

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tion of natural living systems that have been put under tremendous stress.

The countries of the global North are responsible for the largest legacy of carbon greenhouse gases and for the over extraction and consumption of raw materials. Even though the rich North represents only 19% of the global population, they have generated 92% of overshoot emissions. This means most countries of the South live within a worldwide carbon budget, while Canada, United States, the European Union, the rest of Europe, Russian, Japan and Australia are responsible for using up not only their own allocation but that of the rest of the planet too. This is another reason why the Global North needs to immediately implement policies to reduce energy and consumption use. When it comes right down to it, the reality is that the big houses, big cars, big travel, big consumer purchases of the North are all one big on-going splurge and for the sake of the living systems of the planet we need a plan of reduction.

## Transitioning to Regeneration of Community and Soil

The upside down world of COVID has given us an example of what it means to substantially cut back our economy while focusing on important human supports. As more of the economy opens up, it is imperative to rethink the economy. We need to transition to regeneration of community and soil in an effort to heal our overdeveloped world.

The Working Centre has staked its ground for almost 40 years, creating examples and projects that critique

the overdevelopment of institutions and the resulting effects on community. Ivan Illich's books were important guideposts for this thinking. Pen State University Press has just published David Cayley's long awaited intellectual journey of Ivan Illich. In the introduction, Cayley notes that Illich's critique of endless growth forewarned "the consequences of an increasingly "uninhabitable" social and natural environment in which personal initiative would shrink, polarization would grow, (and) all bridges to a normative past would be broken."<sup>9</sup> Cayley notes how the institutional and media environment is saturated and it is hard to keep one's footing in a flood. "But what cannot be changed can be withstood."<sup>10</sup> This is where we find ourselves at the edge of change, looking for new ways of living, not in the abstract, but in actions that generate healing and community.

## Deintensifying Economics

One step is to help a cultural shift to grow at the neighbourhood level. It is about lessening our economic activity. These are the steps to regeneration. It is the collective ability to produce things for ourselves. Activities of home production supported by family and friends is the key to deintensifying economics. There is so much work to create the infrastructure for urban gardening in thousands of backyards, planting more forests, learning the importance of composting, and expanding community gardens with full amenities. It also means decommunitifying public goods. This is a central idea of The Working Centre's Community Tools where public tools and spaces are made available to serve the common good. These are projects that model reciprocity, give energy to the commons, and teach us the possibilities of spaces dedicated to the public good.

## Reducing Wastefulness

Reducing wastefulness is another response to enable ecological rebirth. This requires a new consciousness about the use of precious resources. A starting point is to identify the 20-30% of excess waste in all parts of our economy. A lesson from COVID is that we were over-commuting. Clearly it is possible to reduce commuting by more than 30%. What

about other parts of our economy? How much of consumerist spending is wrapped up in not-exactly important goods? It is not hard to analyze one's consumer spending and to find how much is wasteful. Humans societies are not dependent on ever-growing consumer spending. We are dependent on finding ways of walking gently on the Earth.

## Reducing Work Hours

Juliet Schor has been advocating since the 1990's for reducing work hours which would effectively change patterns of consumption. Another lesson from the COVID shutdown is that decarbonization is possible when working hours are reduced. This leaves more time for being at home where the art of living can be practiced through cooking, growing gardens, becoming more attentive to nature, and having more time to strengthen relationships. The gift of time provides the opportunity to shield yourself and your family from the imperative of the market. The goal of achieving reduced working hours is to break the connection between work and spending. Satisfaction can replace the need for more money when there is time to foster community amenities and engage in voluntary work to meet local needs. These are social connections that money can't buy. The time is now for citizens to engage government policy to advocate for the integration of a soft social income policy that includes job guarantees and continued development of elements of a Basic Income. More on this to come.

## Ending Planned Obsolescence

The above ideas question the need to grow our GDP and instead focus on increasing wellbeing. Then there are policy ideas that would quickly change the energy and material waste embedded in our growth-at-all-cost economy. The first policy is to end planned obsolescence. Consider the tremendous waste just from electronics, packaging, glass, steel and plastic containers, furniture, appliances, and cars. With the stroke of the law, companies can be forced to either take back and recycle the waste they produce or create products that last significantly longer and do not create waste. This should be the top of any political agenda.<sup>11</sup>

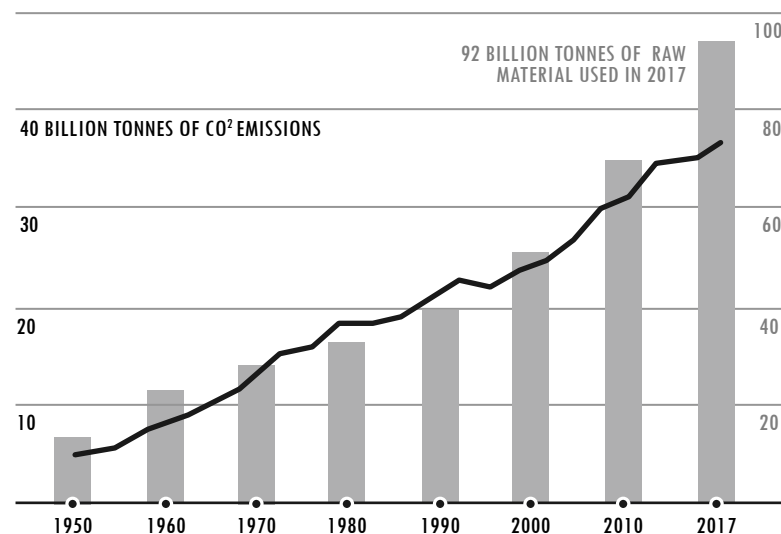
## Reducing Advertising

Another policy is to cut advertising. The marketing of consumer society should no longer have priority. The goal is to use less material, not to persuade the purchase of more. Yes, this turns upside down the growth economy and that is exactly what is needed.<sup>12</sup>

## Community Tools

In 2003, Jeremy Rifkin wrote a book called *The Age of Access* advocating for reduction in the actual ownership of goods and services. Instead the goal should be public or private affordable access to things that people need. This substantially reduces the material load – after all, everyone does not need to own their own bus! The Recycle Cycles Community Bike Shop and Computer

### RISE OF ANNUAL GLOBAL CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS & RAW MATERIAL USE



Source: Our World In Data, Global CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Recycling are examples of making affordable tools and services available to the public. These are the kinds of projects that need to be supported.

The electric vehicle world is all abuzz over the potential for autonomous robotaxis. The reality is that personal cars are only used about 4% of the time. Robotaxis will be 100% more efficient and will be able to move people at a cost of about 15 cents per kilometer while decreasing the surplus car population by as much as fifty percent. This is a bold direction that creates access, is more affordable and reduces the waste and cost of personal vehicle ownership.

### Recreating Our Food Economy

Why is over 50% of all food that is produced wasted? There are many answers but at one level it is an economic system that prizes waste over efficiency, dumping thousands of tons of food, even while poverty leaves many hungry. And then our economy organizes work so that those who can afford to purchase food, do not have the time necessary to prepare it. Food spoiling in refrigerators represents 30% of food waste. This is a poverty of time. Our economy needs to place the highest priority on rationalizing and reducing a food system that is wasteful at the core.

One area of food production that has gigantic potential to reduce our carbon footprint is the adoption of plant-based diets. This world-wide phenomenon has been described in the food industry as an “inexorable” trend. The wide spread substituting of plant-based meat alternatives, 2 or 3 times a week, will dramatically change the carbon footprint of the agriculture industry.

### Solar, Wind and Batteries: Decentralized Electrification

Divesting, reducing subsidies and scaling down fossil fuel production is essential. In its place, all effort and resources are needed to install renewable green energy, especially the combination of solar, wind and batteries. Fossil fuel production should be incrementally sunset as new green renewable energy production is deployed. However, this is not presently happening. New green energy is being added to the total energy, which is not decreasing the carbon or material load.

If you look around, you can see the beginnings of a bottom up disruption of centralized energy distribution. The old spoke and hub model will wither away as every home, condo, factory, and office installs solar panels that will soon be on windows and building facades, combined with new heating and cooling systems which will allow all buildings to potentially generate more electricity than they use. Production of electricity will be closer to the point of consumption. Electric car batteries are already being used as mobile energy storage. New AI energy software like Tesla's Autobidder moves electricity from the homeowner to batteries to where it is needed. This distributed energy will earn household's income and reduce their energy bills.

Alectra Utilities, which serves a million homes between Guelph,

Barrie and Vaughan is developing a distributed energy structure. One project models a microgrid. Another offers residential customers integrated solar panels with batteries for storage and energy software that protects their home against power outages and allows customers to participate in secure, real-time energy exchanges.

In Kerala, India, a solar rooftop program will install solar panels on 75,000 homes with the goal of covering a quarter of Kerala's electricity needs from the sun by 2022. The goal of the project is to help families become more self-reliant, reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and to use government subsidies to ensure lower income families can participate.<sup>13</sup>

### Building an Economy that is Regenerative, Reciprocal and Distributive

Post COVID is an opportunity not to jump back into consumerist culture. Meaningful change means learning how an economy can be regenerative, how reciprocity can create fairer and quality exchanges and how models of distributism can support a stronger grassroots economy. If we want, it can happen faster than we think. Cultures can sometimes change intensely in a short period of time. Consider what we call 60's culture, when in a short few years between 1963 and 1969, there were dramatic changes of clothes, hair, sound, language and feelings.<sup>14</sup> All the seeds have been sown for building a culture focused on healing the Earth. The reality is that we need to start tomorrow!

From The Working Centre's perspective, we want to focus on all these areas described above. We want to deintensify economics, reduce wastefulness, investigate reduced working hours, change planned obsolescence, challenge advertising, help make goods and services publicly available, recreate our food economy, promote the transition to soft, renewable energy. There is so much work to do. This is barely a starting list. There is much work to be done for our culture to catch up to the cries of the Earth..

<sup>1</sup> [www.theguardian.com/science/2021/mar/08/global-heating-tropical-regions-human-livability](http://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/mar/08/global-heating-tropical-regions-human-livability)

<sup>2</sup> Jason Hickel, *Less is More, How Degrowth Will Save the World*, (London: Penguin, 2020), 99.

<sup>3</sup> Hickel, *Less is More*, 87.

<sup>4</sup> [www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/02/cancel-all-planned-coal-projects-globally-to-end-deadly-addiction-says-un-chief](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/mar/02/cancel-all-planned-coal-projects-globally-to-end-deadly-addiction-says-un-chief)

<sup>5</sup> Hickel, *Less is More*, 103.

<sup>6</sup> [arctic-news.blogspot.com/2021/](http://arctic-news.blogspot.com/2021/)

<sup>7</sup> [www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/climate-change-sudden-cataclysmic-need-act-fast/](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/01/climate-change-sudden-cataclysmic-need-act-fast/)

<sup>8</sup> [www.nature.com/articles/s41558-021-01001-0](http://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-021-01001-0) This is the direction we are heading in.

<sup>9</sup> David Cayley, *Ivan Illich, An Intellectual Journey* (Pennsylvania, Pen State University Press, 2021), 21.

<sup>10</sup> Cayley, *Ivan Illich*, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Hickel, *Less is More*, 207.

<sup>12</sup> Hickel, *Less is More*, 211.

<sup>13</sup> [www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/india-kerala-benefit-new-solar-power-scheme/](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/03/india-kerala-benefit-new-solar-power-scheme/)

<sup>14</sup> Kurt Andersen, *Evil Geniuses, The Unmaking of America*, (New York, Random House, 2020) 23.



## Ron Doyle: 1951 – 2021

We were deeply saddened when Ron Doyle died on March 15, 2021. For 10 years we have walked together on projects from the Hacienda Market Garden to the bunkies to A Better Tent City. We gained so much from the journey. In the next issue we will reflect on that. As a small tribute we offer this reflection from Ron:

Early on Sunday morning February 27th, Joe Mancini received this email from Ron. Titled *Future*, it was part of a conversation we had been having on how good paying jobs have been taken away, the resulting disconnection from meaningful work, and the compounding of social issues. This poem reminded us of the song *The Future* by Ron's favourite artist Leonard Cohen.

### Future

by Ron Doyle

*The wound is deep, how can it ever be fixed.*

*All the factories are closed, you're left with part time low paying jobs with no security.*

*Grandpa or great grandpa was the last one with a job, good car, home and family.*

*Now dad and mom are divorced, have a beat up car, rent, poor diets, Netflix, drugs look like a good escape.*

*Where are the role models to teach and see the future beyond being left with electronic connections with a lot of bad stuff.*

*Very poor discipline, no religion, no respect for others or their property.*

*Dysfunctional families and the black hole is spiraling down deeper and faster.*

*UA, HoF and ABTC are all needed and more of it will be required. It's a growth industry, sad.*

*How can it ever be fixed?*

*How do you plant the seeds of desire, build a better life?*

*Or is America broken and it's over?*

*What is the new America?*

*I'm in a real different mood.*

Ron

### The Future

by Leonard Cohen

*Things are going to slide, slide in all directions*

*Won't be nothing (won't be nothing)*

*Nothing you can measure anymore*

*The blizzard, the blizzard of the world*

*Has crossed the threshold*

*And it's overturned*

*The order of the soul*



## The Mystery of Soil

If we care for the soil, it will care for us

By Isaiah Ritzmann

Soils deserve our attention. This has been one of the most important lessons at the Working Centre's Market Garden over the past decade. Every year at the Garden as our community plants, weeds, waters, and harvests we have seen how caring for the soil leads to stronger, heartier, more fruitful plants. We've learned and explored different methods for caring for the soil. Soil is capturing our imagination. As the power of soil to store carbon is seen as an important way to reduce our emissions. As plants breathe in carbon dioxide through photosynthesis they send down carbon to their roots where it is fed upon by the bacteria and fungi living in the soil. Globally the capacity of soil to sequester carbon is enormous.

### Microbiology

We begin with the most important dimension of soil health - the tremendous, largely invisible biological community which inhabits it. Productive soils contain a plethora of living organisms. Some of these are visible to the naked eye: mites, beetles, and earthworms. But most are microscopic, the bacteria and fungi that make the soil their home. And there are a lot of them. In one handful of soil there will be billions of individual microorganisms and perhaps tens of thousands of species. As mind-boggling as it may sound, in one acre there might be anywhere between several hundred to thousands of pounds of these creatures. Many of these are highly beneficial, helping to decay organic matter into nutrients that plants need or humus into enrich soil structure. Many of these organisms congregate in close proximity to plant roots. Through photosynthesis plants will create sugars and proteins they release through their roots in order to feed these critters. In turn these newly expanded populations will work on decomposing organic matter in the soil, producing nutrients (such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium) in plant available form. Some of these creatures are also able to "farm" (so to speak) the soil's particles - made up of pulverized, tiny rocks - for other needed minerals and nutrients that they pass on to plants. Furthermore, as the microorganisms live, die, and feast they also create gummy substances which help

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*Soil deserves our attention. This first article of a three-part series will explore critical dimensions of soil health: microbiology, soil structure, organic matter, and fertility. The second article will look at threats to soil health such as erosion and proper nurturing. How can we work with our soil so that it can heal our climate, our waters, and ourselves? The last article in the series will explore ways of healing the soil in our backyards, and in our wider agricultural practices.*

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soil particles stick together in "aggregates". These in turn build soil structure, the next great dimension of the soil.

### Soil Structure

Soil structure, it is important to note, is different from soil texture. Soil texture is about the size of soil particles, whether it's sandy (largest soil particles), silty (medium-sized), or clay (smallest). Soil structure is about how these particles are assembled - do they stick together in "aggregate" clumps or are they dispersed, and in what patterns? Soil structure matters for how healthy the soil is. First and foremost, good soil structure provides a habitat for the soil microbiology. If you harm the structure of the soil, you inadvertently harm the biological population. Good soil structure means there is a lot of porosity in the soil, which means water, air, and plant roots can travel more easily through the soil. This, in turn, can help filter water, provide air for microorganisms, and allow plant roots to find more nutrients and water during a drought. Good soil structure can also guard against erosion, as larger aggregates stay in place more easily. Poor soil structure can do the opposite. Without pores between aggregates the soil can choke-out aerobic (oxygen-breathing) bacteria and be replaced with less helpful anaerobic bacteria. This also decreases the ability of water to filter through the soil. Water then more easily flows over the ground, taking with it the good topsoil and the fertility.

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## Climate Crisis and the Good Life: A Review of Seth Klein's *A Good War*

by Kiegan Irish

In June of 2019 Canada officially declared the climate crisis an emergency. But are we acting as if this were really an emergency situation? Author Seth Klein contends the Canadian government is not stepping up to the urgency of the moment. He argues for a wartime level of mobilization to respond to the climate crisis, modelled after Canada's response to the Second World War.

This notion stands in contrast to the prevailing ideology he aptly names the "new climate denialism": the incrementalism and voluntarist policymaking on the part of governments who claim to understand the warnings of climate scientists. Seth Klein states the current Liberal government claims to be a global leader but their actions glaringly contradict their rhetoric. The purchase of the TMX pipeline project or the insufficient carbon tax underline this contradiction.

Klein is careful to point out his opposition to wars and violence. Rather, the Canadian response to the emergence of European fascism in the 1930s and 40s provides a useful model for the scale of mobilization and transformation that is necessary to confront the contemporary climate crisis. We need to reconstruct Canadian society and its economy into something more sustainable and more just. In order to get the Canadian public on board, Klein argues, it is necessary to put forward a vision of the good life that will appeal to all.

Klein firmly ties together economic justice with greening the economy. In order to quickly transform our material footprint and build an ecologically sustainable economy necessary to avert the worst climate outcomes, we will need mass public buy-in. In order to achieve this, the government needs to offer a vision of the good life that will draw people in and motivate them to participate.

For Klein, improved living standards as a goal of the mobilization is a major lesson from Canada's WWII experience. Grassroots campaigning aimed to pressure officials to improve quality of life in the wake of the war. They offered expanded education, housing, full employment and involved the public in developing a shared social vision. Economic inequality decreased significantly in the post-war years. With the goal of social transformation in mind, the people were capable of transforming the economy, re-tooling factories, increasing production by orders of magnitude, organizing logistical systems etc. Klein goes into detail drawing out the analogies between what was accomplished then and what needs to happen now. This hard work of transformation depends upon a shared vision and a willingness to engage in collective action.

Polling data demonstrates that the Canadian public is ready for bold climate action. But our vision is impoverished by a compromised leadership class that has colluded with oil and gas industrialists to maintain the flow of fossil fuels and the inflated profits they bring. Even those in leadership motivated by environmental concerns are bound to be influenced by the culture of deferral to oil industry narratives. Klein demonstrates that a dramatic break from this status quo is necessary to achieve the vision of sustainability that millions of people already seek.

Klein's core vision of reconstructing the economy with the promise of a good life and a commitment to justice resonates deeply with Working Centre values. We aspire to model a social world in which it is not so very difficult to be good. Any plan for the future requires the element of desirability. People need to understand why this transformation is worth fighting for, that after the work is done they will have homes to go back to, that they will have safety for their families, that they will have meaning in their lives and relationships with their neighbours that are deeper and richer than before. If we are to transform the economy to be more sustainable, we cannot reinscribe the same hierarchies and injustices into the new. If that is the only vision on offer then it will be impossible to overcome the apathy of the public and the inertia of industry.

Klein's book outlines an existential threat to our society and to the continuation of our very lives. It is difficult to overstate the seriousness and urgency of the moment. If we want to continue to exist, then we need to take these warnings with the soberness they deserve and seize the life-ring Klein throws us. While the possibilities of failure are very real, the strength of Klein's book lies in its fine-grained analysis of how change could be accomplished. It outlines a detailed policy plan hinging on emergency mobilization, state economic intervention, building widespread public support through education, and the development of new crown corporations. Klein demonstrates that new crown corporations are needed to make sure we have enough heat pumps, to get solar panels on roofs, to install large scale renewable energy projects, to produce electric vehicles and charging stations, to start retrofitting homes to be energy efficient. We need new government energy to establish goals and to either produce or help produce the necessary equipment to get Canada off fossil fuels.

Klein dedicates a chapter of his book to Indigenous climate leadership. In this chapter, he argues for the integration of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous

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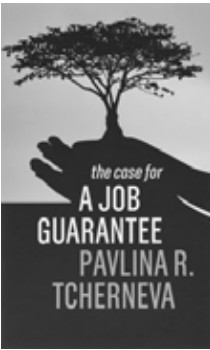
## A Good War

Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency

Seth Klein

Canada is not on track to meet our climate targets. To do so, we'll need radical systemic change to how we live and work and fast. Policy analyst and author Seth Klein demonstrates how wartime thinking and community efforts can be repurposed today for Canada's own Green New Deal. He shares how we can create jobs and reduce inequality while tackling our climate obligations for a climate neutral or climate zero future. From enlisting broad public support for new economic models, to job creation through investment in green infrastructure, Klein shows us a bold, practical policy plan for Canada's sustainable future. Moreover, *A Good War* offers a remarkably hopeful message for how we can meet the defining challenge of our lives.

464 pages | \$24.95 softcover

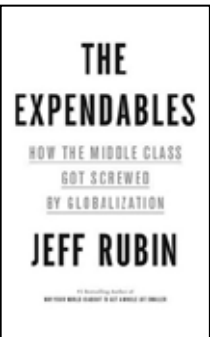


## The Case For A Job Guarantee

Pavlina Tcherneva

One of the most enduring ideas in economics is that unemployment is both unavoidable and necessary for the smooth functioning of the economy. This assumption has provided cover for the devastating social and economic costs of job insecurity. It is also false. In this book, leading expert Pavlina R. Tcherneva challenges us to imagine a world where the phantom of unemployment is banished and anyone who seeks decent, living-wage work can find it - guaranteed. This is the aim of the Job Guarantee proposal: to provide a voluntary employment opportunity in public service to anyone who needs it. Tcherneva enumerates the many advantages of the Job Guarantee over the status quo and proposes a blueprint for its implementation within the wider context of the need for a Green New Deal.

140 pages | \$15.95 hardcover



## The Expendables

How the Middle Class Got Screwed by Globalization

Jeff Rubin

Former CIBC World Markets Chief Economist Jeff Rubin argues that all this was foreseeable back when Canada, the United States and Mexico first started talking free trade. Labour argued then that manufacturing jobs would move to Mexico. Free-trade advocates disagreed. Today, Canadian and American factories sit idle. More steel is used to make bottlecaps than cars. Meanwhile, Mexico has become one of the world's biggest automotive exporters. And it's not just NAFTA. Cheap oil, low interest rates, global deregulation and tax policies that benefit the rich all have the same effect: the erosion of the middle class.

368 pages | \$32.95 hardcover



## On Fire

The Burning Case For A Green New Deal

Naomi Klein

Naomi Klein pairs a decade of her powerful writing on our acute environmental decline with new material on the staggeringly high stakes of what we choose to do next; and inspiringly offers here a politically viable, just, sustainable path forward. Delving into topics ranging from the clash between ecological time and our culture of "perpetual now," to the soaring history of humans' ability to change rapidly in the face of grave threat, to rising white supremacy and fortified borders as a form of "climate barbarism," this is a rousing call to action for a planet on the brink. Above all, Klein underscores how we can still rise to the existential challenge of the crisis if we are

willing to transform our systems that are producing it, making clear how the battle for a greener world is indistinguishable from the fight for our lives.

288 pages | \$32.00 hardcover

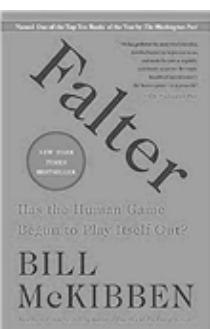


## Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey

David Cayley

In the years since Ivan Illich's death, David Cayley has been reflecting on the meaning of his friend and teacher's life and work. Now, in *Ivan Illich: An Intellectual Journey*, he presents Illich's body of thought, locating it in its own time and retrieving its relevance for ours. Ranging over every phase of Illich's career and meditating on each of his books, Cayley finds Illich to be as relevant today as ever and more likely to be understood, now that the many convergent crises he foresaw are in full public view and the church that rejected him is paralyzed in its "folkloric" shell.

560 pages | \$63.95 hardcover



## Falter

Has the Human Game begun to Play Itself Out?

Bill McKibben

Climate change shrinks the space where our civilization can exist, new technologies like artificial intelligence and robotics threaten to bleach away the variety of human experience. *Falter* tells the story of these converging trends and of the ideological fervor that keeps us from bringing them under control. And then, drawing on McKibben's experience in building 350.org, the first truly global citizens movement to combat climate change, it offers some possible ways out of the trap. We're at a bleak moment in human history -- and we'll either confront that bleakness or watch the civilization our forebears built slip away. *Falter* is a powerful and sobering call to save our planet and our humanity.

304 pages | \$36.50 hardcover



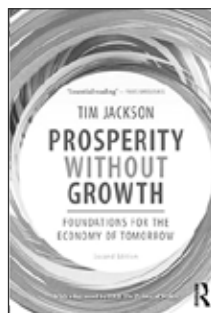
## The Green New Deal

Why the Fossil Fuel Civilization will Collapse by 2028, and the Bold Economic Plan to Save Life on Earth

Jeremy Rifkin

A new vision for America's future is quickly gaining momentum. The Green New Deal has caught fire in activist circles and become a central focus in the national conversation, setting the agenda for a new political movement that will likely transform the entire US and world economy. Although the details remain to be hashed out, it has inspired the millennial generation, now the largest voting bloc in the country, to lead America on the issue of climate change. In *The Green New Deal*, New York Times best-selling author and renowned economic and social theorist Jeremy Rifkin delivers the political narrative, technical framework, and economic plan for the debate now taking center stage across America. The concurrence of a stranded fossil fuel assets bubble and a green political vision opens up the possibility of a massive global paradigm shift into a post-carbon ecological era, hopefully in time to prevent a temperature rise that will tip us over the edge into runaway climate change.

304 pages | \$37.99 hardcover



## Prosperity without Growth

Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow

Tim Jackson

What can prosperity possibly mean in a world of environmental and social limits? *Prosperity without Growth* was a landmark in the sustainability debate, challenging conventional economic goals: the continued pursuit of exponential economic growth. Its findings provoked controversy, inspired debate and led to a new wave of research building on its arguments and conclusions. In this updated and revised edition, Jackson demonstrates that building a 'post-growth' economy is a precise, definable and meaningful task. He sets out the dimensions of that task: the nature of enterprise; the quality of our working lives; investment and money supply. Can the

economy of tomorrow protect employment, facilitate social investment, reduce inequality and deliver both ecological and financial stability?

350 pages | \$35.95 softcover



## Less is More

How Degrowth Will Save the World

Jason Hickel

The world has finally awoken to the reality of climate breakdown and ecological collapse. Now we must face up to its primary cause. Capitalism demands perpetual expansion, which is devastating the living world. There is only one solution that will lead to meaningful and immediate change: DEGROWTH. If we want to have a shot at halting the crisis, we need to restore the balance. We need to change how we see nature and our place in it, shifting from a philosophy of domination and extraction to one that's rooted in reciprocity and regeneration. We need to evolve beyond the dogmas of capitalism to a new system that is fit for the twenty-first century. But what does such a society look like? What about jobs? What about health? What about progress? This book tackles these questions and traces a clear pathway to a post-capitalist economy. An economy that's more just, more caring, and more fun. An economy that enables human flourishing while reversing ecological breakdown. An economy that will not only lift us out of our current crisis, but restore our sense of connection to a world that's brimming with life. By taking less, we can become more.

320 pages | \$29.99 softcover



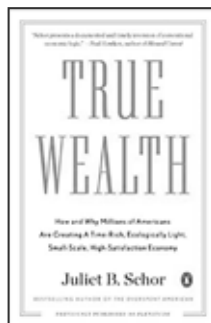
## Doughnut Economics

Seven Ways to Think like a 21st Century Economist

Kate Raworth

Kate Raworth sets out seven key ways to reframe our understanding of what economics is and does. How we can break our addiction to growth; redesign money, finance, and business to be in service to people; and create economies that are regenerative and distributive by design. Raworth handpicks the best emergent ideas—from ecological, behavioral, feminist, and institutional economics to complexity thinking and Earth-systems science—to address this question: How can we turn economies that need to grow, whether or not they make us thrive, into economies that make us thrive, whether or not they grow?

384 pages | \$24.95 softcover



## True Wealth

A Time-Rich, Ecologically Light, Small Scale Economy

Juliet B. Schor

In *True Wealth*, economist Juliet B. Schor rejects the sacrifice message, with the insight that social innovations and new technology can simultaneously enhance our lives and protect the planet. Schor shares examples of urban farmers, DIY renovators, and others working outside the conventional market to illuminate the path away from the work-and-spend cycle and toward a new world rich in time, creativity, information, and community.

272 pages | \$24.00 softcover



## Climate - A New Story

Charles Eisenstein

Flipping the script on climate change, Eisenstein makes a case for a wholesale reimagining of the framing, tactics, and goals we employ in our journey to heal from ecological destruction. With research and insight, Eisenstein details how the quantification of the natural world leads to a lack of integration and our "fight" mentality. With an entire chapter unpacking the climate change denier's point of view, he advocates for expanding our exclusive focus on carbon emissions to see the broader picture beyond our short-sighted and incomplete approach.

320 pages | \$25.95 softcover

## The Mystery of Soil

continued from page 6

### Organic Matter

The third critical dimension to healthy soil is organic matter. At its base organic matter is decomposing plant and animal bodies and excrement in the soil, death which the microbiology turns into nutrients that is then turned into new life by plants. There is a proportional relationship between soil organic matter and microbiology; the more organic material, the more microbes. The organic matter thus serves first of all as a source of nutrients, first for the microbiology and then for the plants. Second of all it serves the whole soil community through its water-holding capacity. It acts like a sponge, being able to absorb about 90% of its own weight in water. In this way plants have access to water during droughts. Furthermore, organic matter helps the soil to clump together, enhancing the structure and preventing erosion. The percentage of organic matter in soils can range from 2-6%. Some studies show that raising organic matter between 1-3% can reduce soil erosion by 20-30%. This is how the microbiology, the structure, and the organic matter rely on and reinforce each other. Some farm practices result in much lower soil organic matter than others.

### Soil Fertility

The final dimension of a healthy soil is the importance of soil fertility. A fertile soil - facilitated by the organic matter, the biology, and the structure of the soil - makes it possible to grow plants. Without this plants wouldn't have the nutrients needed to grow, let alone produce the food we harvest. Yet when the soil is fertile, it doesn't stay that way. As plants grow, they feed on the nutrients and deplete them in the soil. There are two ways of adding nutrients to the soil either by synthetic fertilizers or natural farming methods.

Presently the dominant form is synthetic fertilizers and this has resulted in dependency of much of our food supply on fertilizers

produced with nonrenewable natural gas. These fertilizers feed about one third of the world's population and account for half of the nitrogen in the human body. Unfortunately, much of this fertilizer doesn't reach the plants but accumulates in the soil or is washed away into nearby streams or rivers.

### Natural Methods of Soil Fertility

Instead of synthetic fertilizers, farmers and gardeners have developed a myriad of ways to return nutrients to the soil: ranging from the spreading of compost and animal manure, to the planting of cover crops (crops planted between harvests). Some leguminous cover crops can actually fix so much nitrogen (by taking it out of the air, and putting it into the soil) that they can supply all the needs of the next planted crop. Most of all when soils have rich microbiology, strong soil structure, and sufficient organic matter, then nutrients will remain in the soil (rather than being washed away) and be available for plants. Then the cycle starts over again, fertility is maintained through composting, manure, cover cropping, and other methods. All these methods help the soil to feed the plants and secure the soil from being washed away.

There is much more to soil than biology, structure, organic matter, and fertility. But these four critical dimensions are the best starting point in our work to honour and care for the soil. They help us understand how our soils have been degraded, here and around the world. They help us understand how healing our soils helps to heal our climate, our waters, and ourselves. Finally, we can see, from the smallest scale of our backyard gardens to the larger scale of our food systems, how caring for the soils can restore them to full health. For untold millennia the work of soil has been intricate, complex, critical, and - in good measure - mysterious. If we do the good work of caring for that which cares for us, it will continue to take care of us - indefinitely.

## Climate Crisis and the Good Life

continued from page 6

Peoples into Canadian law, and a true partnership with Indigenous nations to integrate holistically into decision-making at the federal level, while preserving their autonomy and their independent plans for their lands. Klein argues that Indigenous people are already buying everyone time through their opposition to ecologically damaging development projects. Canadian settler society needs to get itself organized and come alongside Indigenous nations in the goal of protecting the lands and waters of this continent. Whether Canada can break from its colonialist past, remains an open question.

Klein offers a necessary corrective to the politics around the climate

crisis that prevail in Canada today. Incremental changes and voluntary market based policies have been woefully inadequate to the severity of the moment. They are not solutions, rather they are an insidious form of climate denial. We need courageous collective action and a genuine attempt to attain to a good and sustainable form of life. Klein not only helps us imagine what this might look like, he provides a detailed roadmap showing how we get there. We invite you to read this book and work to take the actions it outlines. In every sphere of our lives change is happening. It is up to us to determine whether we can come together and act or whether change will happen to us while we remain powerless and divided.



The Working Centre Market Garden is a volunteer driven community enterprise engaged in ecological food production, hands-on cooperative work, and knowledge sharing. The garden is a space for cultivating relationships among gardeners through the work of growing food and building a more sustainable community-based food system.



## CSA Shares Available Now!

**Community Supported Agriculture** is a model of food production that connects farmers directly with the people who eat the food they grow. Members purchase a share in the harvest and are treated to fresh, locally-grown vegetables in season each week.

Order your share now to receive your items weekly from mid-June until the end of October. Purchasing a share directly supports the work of our projects and community!

### Fresh Vegetables

Each week from mid-June through October, you will receive a variety of fresh seasonal produce. CSA members are offered some choice of vegetables each week depending on their preferences and what is available from the garden.

### Pea Shoots and Microgreens

The mighty microgreen is simply a just-sprouted baby vegetable. Broccoli, Purple Kohlrabi, Radish, Arugula, Kale, Cress! And our fan favourite - Pea Shoots. They are great for your salad, a topping in your sandwich, a garnish on your soup, or blended into your daily smoothie. Each mouthful is packed with nutrients and flavour!

### Flower Bouquets

Bring the freshness and beauty of the garden home with locally grown, pesticide free flowers from our Market Garden. Available weekly or every other week from mid-July to the end of September.

### Fair Trade Coffee

Enjoy delicious fair trade organic coffee that is freshly roasted at Queen Street Commons Cafe!

Purchase CSA Shares at our new website!

**[garden.theworkingcentre.org](http://garden.theworkingcentre.org)**

[garden@theworkingcentre.org](mailto:garden@theworkingcentre.org) | 519.575.1118

### Weekly Pickup Locations

**The Green Door** 37 Market Lane in Kitchener  
Wednesdays 4pm - 6pm

**The Working Centre Market Garden** 1254 Union St. in Kitchener  
Thursdays 3pm - 6pm

**Delivery by Eco Courier** Fridays between 12pm - 2pm