

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Another Earth Week, not much action

The world was shocked and saddened last week when Notre Dame Cathedral, the 800-year-old symbol of Paris, was ravaged by a horrendous conflagration.

Within two days, the French government received \$960 million in pledges to rebuild Notre Dame, with more pledges coming in daily.

Notre Dame was a terrible tragedy, but it pales in comparison to the catastrophe that's just over the horizon: irreversible climate change.

Back in 1969, Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin called for a national environmental teach-in. The next year, students from the University of Pennsylvania took him up on the idea and launched Earth Week. More than 20,000 people — mostly young people — gathered at the mall across from Independence Hall on April 21, 1970, to call for specific actions to protect Planet Earth.

Those young people are now senior citizens, and while there's been a great deal of progress cleaning up our air and water — President Richard Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency in December 1970 — we are

still turning a blind eye to the greatest environmental crisis in the history of civilization.

Coastal cities like New York underwater. Frequent, violent storms. Droughts. Species extinction.

And it may be too late to prevent it by the time today's kindergartners are entering their prime of life.

In January 2018, Pottstown Borough Council and the Pottstown School District passed a joint sustainability plan.

Have any of the numerous items on the to-do list been implemented? A few, such as bike lanes to create a more bike-friendly Pottstown (which are often ridiculed on Sound Off and elsewhere).

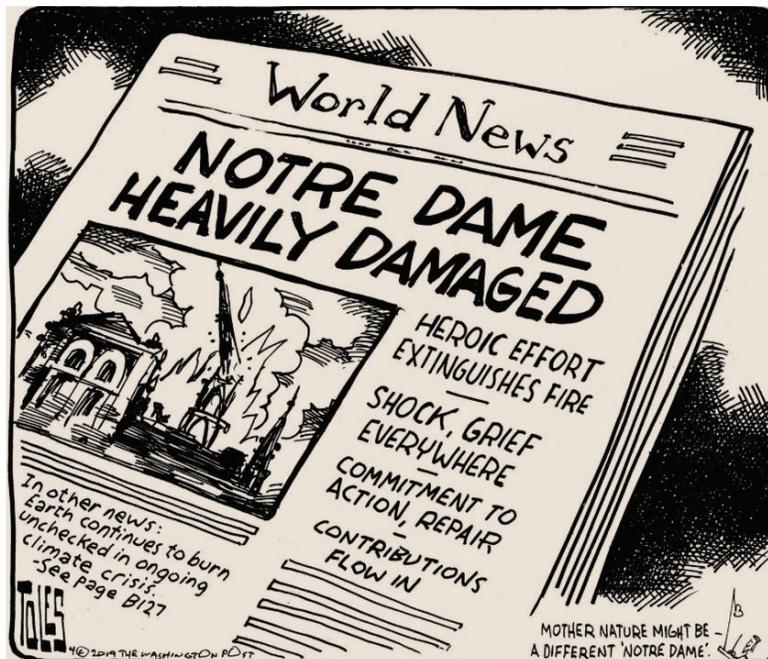
But others, such as increasing Pottstown's tree canopy and improving storm water management by removing excess impervious surfaces, have not.

Replacing the gas-guzzling Pottstown Police SUVs with hybrids? Not even being considered.

Here in Pottstown, as elsewhere, we need a culture change before we can fight climate change.



Commentary by
Thomas Hylton



AS ILLUSTRATED by cartoonist Tom Toles of the Washington Post, people are traumatized by the burning of Notre Dame, but ignore the existential crisis of the world slowly burning from global warming.