

**CLIMATE CHANGE
MUSINGS AND STUDIES FROM
LAKE SUPERIOR'S NORTH
SHORE**

BY KATYA GORDON

CONTENTS

- 1. WHY THIS BOOK?**
- 2. LIFE IN TWO HARBORS**
- 3. STRAIGHT-UP SCIENCE**
- 4. THE BEST SOLUTION**
- 5. IS OUR GOVERNMENT BROKEN?**
- 6. THOSE DARNED FOSSIL FUELS**
- 7. FOOD FUNDAMENTALS**
- 8. REASONS TO BE HOPEFUL**
- 9. JUST FOR THE HOLIDAYS**
- 10. THINKING GLOBALLY**
- 11. TRAVELING TALES**
- 12. THE FINAL WORD**

Preface:

Why This Book?

When considering this book, three questions surely pop up for you, my judicious reader: “What information do you have and where do you get it? Who are you to be my informant? Why should I care?”

Like the soccer player who streaks ahead with the ball before giving anyone a chance to steal it, I’m going to pre-empt those questions in hopes that you will turn the page.

There is a lot of information on the internet on everything, including climate change. Too much, in fact, for the average busy person to assimilate. Online research can be shoddy—but unquestionably, good research and reliable media sources are available. In this book I am streamlining, for you, the process of finding reliable information and making sense of it. I have approached many local experts and asked them specific questions relating to the North Shore of Lake Superior; the answers they give me are woven into each chapter.

As for the second question: I come not as an authority but as a neighbor. I am a contented resident in a small town, famous only as an interruption to the National Scenic Highway 61, which winds up the picturesque North Shore of Lake Superior. This town matters to me, and since 2012 I have shared a small part in its conversation by writing a “Climate Column” in the local newspaper, *The Lake County Chronicle*. We may be small but we are affected by climate change, just like anyone else. Our eyes must gaze beyond the scenes that capture our immediate attention – the high school football game, the eyesore potholes, the man arrested for hiding 56 cats in his living room.

Our democracy depends on an educated and informed public. History has repeatedly shown that once we citizens understand our realities, eventually we will take the long view and do the right thing. History also shows that an uninformed or complacent public can make very poor decisions, or simply follow the path of least resistance, which is also a decision. You, my reader, may not be from Two Harbors, Minnesota, but you too are affected by climate change, and you too are urged in this book to contemplate life beyond the immediate horizon and reflect on the bigger picture.

And finally, why should you care about what I have to say? That's a reasonable question to ask in a place like Two Harbors, where "global warming" conjures up images of enjoying swimmable temperatures in our beautiful Lake Superior, or seeing tomatoes ripen before the first frost. Indeed, why aren't we pleased that global warming may ease some of our tussles with the land?

The truth is, you don't have to be concerned about climate change to benefit from this book. Many of our deeper societal problems have connected solutions. Learning to solve climate change mirrors the process of learning to appreciate and understand one another. Once we accomplish the latter, the former will become a path that needs only to be cleared. Whether it's climate change, poverty, moral degradation, the loss of the family or religious tolerance, breakdowns in our schools or our medical systems, our health crisis, our crumbling bridges, or just the most selfish act you've witnessed in the past week—the answers lead us down the same difficult but ultimately restorative path. I hope that these selections will offer hints that illuminate ways we move towards restoration. If nothing else, I hope it dates our global struggle to respond to climate change. This book was written between 2012 and 2018—a period that I believe will go down in history as a turning point in our collective ability to acknowledge and respond to the crisis of climate chaos. If much of what I write seems outdated in just a few years -- that can only be good news.

Many people know me and my family as "the sailors"—a slightly wacko family that for some unfathomable reason keeps leaving the safety of solid brown earth, spacious bedrooms, and a four-burner stove to explore life on the water in many places vastly inferior to our own beautiful shoreline and town. Crazy as it is, notwithstanding, we return from every trip with insights that stand out sharply against the gentle curves of everyday living. It's no stretch at all to compare the human population to a sailing vessel, heading for rocky waters. While the current voyage of humanity appears imperfect but generally sweet, we know what we're in for. The forecast has been heard. We have a course set, we know the wave height, we feel the wind on our faces, and we have a map that shows where we are headed. In order to head in a different direction, we need to change course. How that course can be changed is the message of this book.

LIFE IN TWO HARBORS

CLIFF JUMPING

OH, THOSE GRAVEL ROADS

RUN THE BEARGREASE

ONE CITY'S VISION

WALK OR BIKE TO SCHOOL

POVERTY AND SMALL TOWN LIFE

THE VOICE OF YOUTH

WINTERTIME HABITS

MINNESOTANS—CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

THE GARBAGE SCOOP

INFRASTRUCTURE TROUBLES

THE SHIPPING NEWS