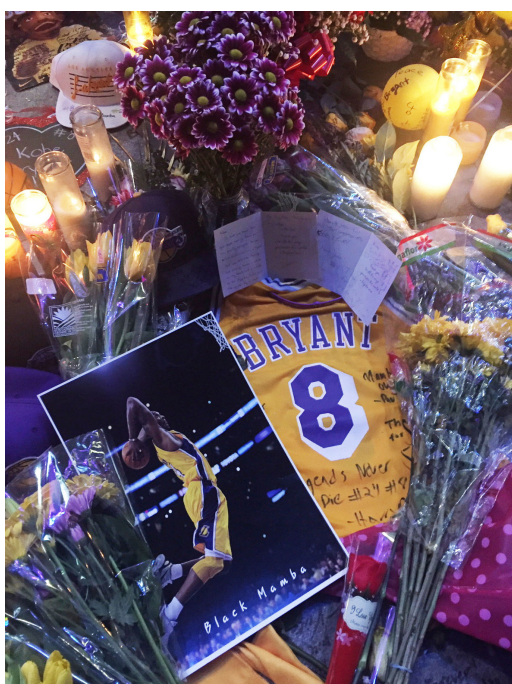# The Road Report & More

Health, Science, & Climate Action
Dr. Shahir Masri

Living Life to the Fullest

As you know, I often start these newsletters on a personal note. With that said, I would feel remiss if I did not pay tribute to the late Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gigi, and the others whose lives were tragically lost in last week's helicopter crash. Having grown up in southern California in a Lakers family, Kobe was a big part of my youth and a man whose inspirational footprint cannot be overstated. The picture to the left was taken by me last Tuesday during my visit to the Staples Center just two days after his passing. The cards and flowers just above his jersey were left by my friends and I. While it's hard to find a silver lining amidst such tragedy, I think Kobe's death serves as an important reminder to live in the moment, cherish our loved ones, and enjoy life's journey. After all, today is all that we're promised.

New Article: Emerging Policy Consensus on Climate Action

I'm proud to have teamed up with Citizens' Climate Lobby's Bob Taylor last month in order to

write an article detailing the emerging policy consensus that has been growing in Washington. The article was ultimately picked up by The Hill, giving it wide visibility. An important message from the article is that we have a variety of policy options now on the table of Congress to reduce carbon emissions. However, we as individuals are still needed to ensure such policy gets adopted. Click here to read the article, and please share it on social media to help raise awareness about climate change and the important steps we must take to achieve climate action!

Coronavirus Status Update

By now, the word "coronavirus" is no stranger. So, what's the situation? As of this week, the new virus has been found in 23 countries, being declared an official public health emergency. While there have been about 20,000 cases reported in China, there have been only 11 in the U.S. As for the death toll, there have been nearly 400 deaths globally, with only one death occurring outside of China. By comparison, there were 349 who died in China during the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2002 and 2003. Though the new virus is an important public health concern, you need not panic. The mortality rate of SARS was about 10%, compared with 2% for the new coronavirus. While scientists believe that the coronavirus can survive for some time on surfaces such as door knobs and counter tops, such transmission is thought to be unlikely. Rather, droplets coughed or sneezed into the air is the main route of exposure. Does that mean you should wear a face mask? Not so fast. Surgical masks can prevent an infected person from spreading the virus, but they are relatively ineffective at protecting those who are not yet infected. The best safety tip is to simply do what your parents always told you. That is, wash your hands before you eat or touch your face. And if you have a fever with cold or flu symptoms and are worried about the virus, seek medical attention and self-isolate until tests

come back. To learn more, click here where you can watch a full 30-min interview with an epidemiologist at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Eco-Tip of the Month!

We all talk about solar powered this and solar powered that, mostly referring to fancy technology that allows us to convert sunlight into electricity. But let us not forget about solar energy in the form of heat and how we can use that direct energy in our daily lives. One prime example is hang-drying our clothes. For the majority of my life, I followed the standard American paradigm of sticking my wet clothes into the "dryer" after being washed. After all, hang-drying seemed like an outdated activity carried out only by those without the machine. Even as I became more environmentally conscious, I still failed to see this glaring energy paradox in my life. It wasn't until around 2014 when I had a roommate from the Netherlands that I saw the light, the "sunlight." As many Europeans do, he hung his clothes to dry. There I was, spending energy and money to carry out a chore that he was able to carry out for free by the sun. I quickly changed my behavior and haven't looked back since. Hang-drying clothes lets one harness free energy from the sun without drawing electricity from the grid and causing pollution. Since much electricity still originates from fossil fuels that release greenhouse gases, it's important to conserve electricity. If you live in a cold environment or small apartment, you can still hang-dry indoors. Simply pick up a portable hanging wrack at your local supermarket. I have one, and it's great! In fact, I mostly dry my clothes on a wrack indoors to avoid sun damage.

Kids Changing the World!

Meet Alex Lin from Rhode Island. When he was 11 years old, he discovered a newspaper article that described the awful issue of environmental contamination from electronic waste (e-waste). Instead of sitting back and
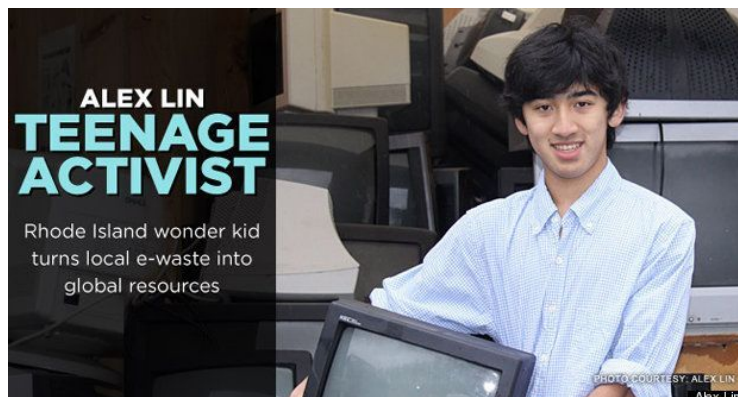
accepting the news, he got to work organizing a small team of friends to start an e-waste recycling drive in his neighborhood. After much success diverting e-waste from the landfill to the recycling plant, he stepped up the program even further to begin refurbishing e-waste to be reused. After all, reusing is even better than recycling! His amazing campaign would go on to rescue over 180 tons of e-waste from the landfill from 2005 to 2011, sending over 350 refurbished computers to Sri Lanka, Mexico, and the Philippines in the process. What's more, Alex's team would go on to successfully lobby the local government to pass a bill that mandates the recycling of e-waste throughout the entire state of Rhode Island. I'm sharing this story to help inspire you to create positive change in your community. If you think you're too small to make a difference, think again! Click here to learn more and watch a short interview with Alex about his work.

Cheers,
Dr. Shahir Masri

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