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## From the EDITOR

### Let's talk about climate change.

Six young writers have started the conversation with their essays in this special issue. They are three students from the High School in the Community in New Haven, and three from the UConn Avery Point campus in Groton, where Connecticut Sea Grant is based. All are recipients of Connecticut Sea Grant's Voices of Diverse Youth Scholarship, an initiative to introduce the perspectives of a new generation to the *Wrack Lines* audience. They have important stories to tell about how they see climate change impacting their lives now and in the future. I'm incredibly proud to have their essays in the magazine.

Now I invite you to join the conversation, with your own perspective reshaped not only by these essays, but also by the work of Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, a marine biologist and author of the newly published *What if We Get It Right? Visions of Climate Futures*. On her fourth stop of a 20-city book tour this fall, she came to Avery Point to discuss the challenges of climate change and her book alongside Sally McGee, director for climate and strategic initiatives at the Connecticut Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. Speaking to an audience of about 100 people, they offered thought-provoking and inspiring insights from their work and experiences.

When I first heard about Johnson's book, I was eager not only to read it myself, but also to use it to create a sense of community around the difficult topic of climate change. We can all become overwhelmed and paralyzed when we think about the challenges we face. Disengaging can look like the more appealing option. But that's not the way forward.

"There is a lot of anxiety," Johnson said during her talk. "But it is not a viable option to just give up. We have to look for solutions and respect our place in this web of life. There is going to be a lot of humility required for the next phase of our species, because we're all just a bunch of flailing goofballs. But my goal is just to be useful, to be a welcomer of others to this work, because we need all their skills."

Her book takes a unique perspective on climate change. In it, she spends just 4½ pages summarizing the current and future impacts of climate change, and the next 400+ pages attempting to answer the question she asks in the title. It's one that implies that success is possible—not perfection, not paradise, but a sustainable future for people and wildlife. How would we get there? Drawing from interviews with various experts, poems, artwork and her own writings, she presents possible answers to that question.

And, as she said during her talk, many answers, many actions are needed, at all scales—personal, local, national and global.

"We need a million, billion small important things," she said, "because climate change is everything. You can fix the place you work. You can do something in your town. There is room for so much creativity in this."

So here is one of those small important things you can do. Join me and my Connecticut Sea Grant colleagues in this new community by reading *What If We Get It Right* then come to one of the book discussions early in the new year. The first will be at 10 a.m. Jan. 11 at the Groton Public Library, 52 Newtown Road, the second will be at 10 a.m. virtually on Jan. 14, and the third will be at noon at the North Branch of the Bridgeport Public Library, 3455 Madison Ave. To register, visit: <https://seagrant.uconn.edu/?p=12342>.



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Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, author of *What If We Get It Right? Visions of Climate Futures*

Cover: Recipients of the Voices of Diverse Youth Scholarship, clockwise from top, are: Farwa Mohsin, Dominic Moore, Elena Smith, Eden Torres, Seth Kinter and Isaiah Sosa. Photos: Judy Benson

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### *Choosing to help the environment*

UConn students pick up litter on Pine Island offshore from the Avery Point campus during the "Messing About in Boats" event on Sept. 13. Photo: Judy Benson

