

The End Is Near... Again!

The Search For Facts Beyond The Sound Bytes

By Jim Gauntt

Global warming has done one thing that no one can argue with. It has increased the number of articles written on the subject at least tenfold over the past few weeks. The hysteria has become mania. I recently calculated the effect of 10,000 reporters typing feverishly, and I am pretty certain that this one factor has reduced the Arctic's ice pack even more than your SUV.

You too have probably had your fill of media reports that show polar bears stranded on ice floes portending their certain death and our destruction along with them (even though some experts report the polar bear population stable in some areas). But, I'll bet you have not seen some of the more amusing articles I have been collecting over the past month for your review.

How about this from Feb. 4, *The London Times*:

"The oceans may be warming and air temperatures rising, but Iceland is bucking the global climate trend. Thick pack ice, the like of which has not been seen for decades, is stretching into the western fjords as temperatures plummet and a bitter wind blows in from Greenland."

Participants in the Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue, a group advocating environmental issues whose members are walking between Northampton, Mass., and Boston, trudge through a spring snowstorm on March 16, the first day of the walk in Northampton.



The Associated Press

And this from the *Toronto Star*, March 5: *"Frigid conditions made the month the coldest February in 28 years, according to Environment Canada's senior climatologist, Dr. Avid Phillips. Not since 1979 has February dished up such bone-rattling conditions."*

Consider the following reported by Terra.Wire from Stockholm, Feb. 7:

"Sweden said Wednesday it would give its reindeer herders millions of euros (dollars) in emergency aid to help them feed their animals, which are starving because of thick ice that is preventing them from reaching the lichen they eat."

Or this headline from *The Telegraph* in England on Feb. 6: *"Valentine bouquets are bad for the planet."*

The article proceeded to chronicle the latest environmental campaign, which contended that importing flowers from Africa to satisfy the demand for Valentine's Day bouquets contributes to global warming:

"Environmentalists warned that 'flower miles' could have serious implications on climate change in terms of carbon dioxide emissions from aeroplanes."

I wonder how those who earn economic benefit from growing those flowers in the poorest continent on earth feel about that?

Then, the latest in definitive climatology in *Sports Illustrated's* lead this week:

Going, Going, Green—"The next time a ball game gets rained out during the September stretch run, you can curse the momentary worthlessness of those tickets in your pocket. Or you can wonder why it got rained out and ask yourself why practice had to be called off last summer on a day when there wasn't a cloud in the sky, and why that Gulf Coast wharf where you used to reel in mackerel and flounder no longer exists, and why it's been more than one winter since you pulled those titanium skis out of the garage. Global warming is not coming; it is here..."

Or, how about the weirdest one, also from the UK *Metro*, March 6:

"Brothel owners in Bulgaria are blaming

global warming for staff shortages. They claim their best [staffers] are working in ski resorts because a lack of snow has forced tourists to seek other pleasures."

I mean, really. If you work hard enough, I guess you can find some way to blame the worldwide increase in paper cuts on global warming.

Please don't get me wrong. I don't want polar bears to suffer because there isn't enough ice, or reindeer to starve because there is too much of the stuff. But, neither do I believe that the end is near, as so many would have us think.

A nationally syndicated talk show host, Neal Boortz, posted the reasons he is skeptical about global warming on his website a few days ago. Here are a few of his most salient points (edited for brevity):

- *Because the sun is warmer...*
- *The polar ice caps on Mars are melting. How did our CO2 emissions get all the way to Mars?*
- *It was warmer in the 1930s across the globe than it is right now.*
- *It wasn't that long ago that these same scientists were warning us about "global cooling" and an approaching ice age.*
- *Because many of these scientists who sound the global warming scare depend on grant money for their livelihoods... they know the grant money dries up when they stop preaching the global warming sermon.*
- *Radar shows that the ice mass in the West Antarctic is growing at a rate of over 26 gigatons a year...[reversing] a melting trend that had persisted for the previous 6,000 years.*
- *Rising sea levels? Sea levels have been rising since the last ice age ended... 12,000 years ago. Estimates are that since then the sea level has risen by over 300 feet.*
- *Because global warming "activists" and scientists seek to punish those who have different viewpoints. If you are sure of your science you have no need*

to shout down or seek to punish those who disagree. Why do global warming proponents insist that the matter is settled and that no further scientific research is needed?

Sources to back up these skepticisms are available from a wide variety of scientists. Indulge me to offer just these two. First from Dr. David Bromwich of the Ohio State University, March 2007. The headline reads:

"Antarctic temperatures disagree with climate model predictions."

COLUMBUS, Ohio - A new report on climate over the world's southernmost continent shows that temperatures during the late 20th century did not climb as had been predicted by many global climate models...

"It's hard to see a global warming signal from the mainland of Antarctica right now," he said... "We're looking for a small signal that represents the impact of human activity and it is hard to find it at the moment."

And then this from *The National Post* discussing research from one of the world's foremost astrophysicists, Dr. Nir Shaviv, who once bought into the global warming craze but is now a skeptic:

"In another study, directly relevant to today's climate controversy, Dr. Shaviv...found that an upper limit can be placed on the relative role of CO2 as a climate driver, meaning that a large fraction of the global warming witnessed over the past century could not be due to CO2—instead it is attributable to the increased solar activity."

If you want more evidence, try a Google search for the flash video of "The Great Global Warming Swindle," or type in the Web link below. The video is 75 minutes long but is worth the time; it seems that atmospheric increases in CO2 follows warming periods on earth, not causes them, but that's another article: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=9005566792811497638>.

Back to the list. The last item made me think about a book I read 35 ago. "1984" is George Orwell's cautionary tale against the slide of civilization into a totalitarian state where "real" history has been erased, and reality is based solely on imposed "truth." The plot is fantastic and dark, and it delves into concepts that are frightening yet today. One such concept is that of "doublethink." Even now, whenever I see a misuse of information, I remember that term. In

"1984," doublethink is defined as:

"The power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them...To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed to deny the existence of objective reality...[thus] the lie [is] always one leap ahead of the truth."

In Orwell's book, the state imposed "truth" using doublethink. But today's doublethink "truth" seems to be composed of not just what political and environmental zealots spew, but also by what the mainline media covers and feeds us daily.

Anyone who has watched The Weather Channel move into "personality-based" reporting, with so-called experts like Dr. Heidi Cullen, understands what I am talking about. It was Dr. Cullen who suggested that any meteorologist who did not agree with the concept of man-made global warming should be stripped of their American Meteorological Society credentials. Quite open minded of you, Heidi.

But this is not a rant against the media or the political figures who forget any fact that becomes inconvenient. It is a call for all of us to be vigilant in what we distill from what we read or hear daily. This may seem like preaching to the choir, but there is a recent example in our own wood preserving industry that illustrates how we must all be on constant guard about our own thinking.

A few years ago, CCA manufacturers voluntarily removed residential uses from the US-EPA registration label for that product. Within a year of that action I remember having a conversation with

one wood preserving industry associate who referred to "when CCA was banned by the EPA." It was never banned; it was voluntarily withdrawn. Yet, because the media had been reporting it as "banned" for so long, history was rewritten in at least that person's mind.

This is the point. We must seek out the real truth, not simply absorb a manufactured truth that only beckons for immediate attention. We must question the sensational and endeavor to find the facts beyond the sound bytes.

The tie and railroad industries are at a peak now with demand at historic levels for their respective products and services. For the cynical, one could say that it's just about that time in the business cycle of our industries for some new battlefield to emerge. Maybe re-regulation of the railroads or more attacks on wood preserving or forestry?

I'm hopeful that any prediction of a new dragon to slay won't come about. But whatever happens, clarity of thought is required. Working within our association to tackle the problems and promote the facts is essential.

So "manmade global warming" is only a reminder that we need to do our homework whenever we hear the next world-is-going-to-end tale from Washington, The Weather Channel or around the water cooler at the office.

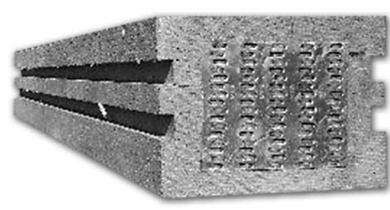
In those situations, getting at the real "truth" will probably take some effort. Helping others find the truth will take even more. The 19th century humorist Josh Billings may have said it best when it comes to the latter:

"The trouble with most folks isn't so much their ignorance as knowing so many things that ain't so." §



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