

OMNI'S NEWSLETTER, SPECIAL NUMBER 3 ON CLIMATE CHANGE,
JULY 25, 2007, FOR A CULTURE FOR PEACE, JUSTICE, SPECIES, AND
THE LAND

Compiled by Dick Bennett

WORST CASE

DONALD KAUL, PESSIMIST WITHOUT HOPE: PREPARE FOR THE WORST
In "There Is No Substitute for Oil," NAT (7-19-07), Kaul
declares the world doomed, because the humans that have caused
and continue to cause warming (and that includes most of us)
will not change our habits, but are wallowing in "feel-good
concerts" and other evasions, self-deceptions, deceptions,
delusions, and lies. If he is correct, we must begin now to
prepare for massive evacuations of coastal cities and lowlands
and the care for millions of refugees.

Most of the following essays and comments in this Newsletter,
scientists like Hobson and Monbiot, tell similar hard truths
about the catastrophe approaching, but they believe humans
will choose in time the austerities and sacrifices that will
be necessary, but we must start, and drastically, now.

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Warming and Wars

How to contact our Congressional Delegation.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS, AWARENESS STARTING

SCANDINAVIA

Bruce Johansen, "Scandinavia Gets Serious on Global Warming." *The
Progressive*, (July 2007). Within a few decades, fossil fuels may be gone

from Sweden and Denmark.

CALIFORNIA

BRANCACCIO'S NOW PBS Friday 7-12: California's struggles for significant CO2 reduction. A legislator, Fran Pavley, given particular praise. **California** the U.S. leader in warming control.

NEW COLLEGE PROGRAM

Greg Bluestein. (AP) "College Starts First Ecology School." *TMN* (7-16-07). Named after Eugene Odum, "the legendary University of Georgia ecologist," the new school hopes to "become a national blueprint." Odum, called the "father of modern ecology," wrote *Fundamentals of Ecology* with his brother Howard in 1953.

ARKANSAS STARTING TO START:

ATTRACTS A WINDMILL COMPANY

"Governor: Big Plans in Works." *TMN* (7-18=07)1D. "Windmill Plant Could Employ Up to 500."

WAL-MART REDUCING CO2

Marcus Kabel. (AP). "Wal-Mart Focuses on Fuel Cuts." *TMN* (7-18=07) 1D. Wal-Mart is trying to reduce waste, use more renewable energy, and stock more green products. Their truck fleet, the company claims, is "about 15 percent more fuel efficient" than 2 years ago, and "the annual savings in carbon dioxide...would be equal to taking 67,744 cars off the road." (These claims have not been verified by an Independent study.)

FAYETTEVILLE/MAYOR COODY HOLD NATIONAL CONFERENCE: AGENDA



DAN COODY'S OP ED IN *NAT* (Saturday, July 14, 2007), WITH Michelle Wyman, "The Fiscal Sanity of Saving Planet Earth." "...the city further established a prominent role on the climate and sustainability front this week."

Robert Smith, "City Leaders Promote Ways to Cut Warming: Officials Nationwide Come to Fayetteville." *ADG* (7-12).

ORIGINAL PRESS RELEASE (condensed by Dick)

Arkansas Welcomes Local Government Leaders for National Climate Change Workshop Workshop July 10-13 Focuses on Economic Benefits, Practical Solutions

Fayetteville, Ark. - Local government staff and elected officials from around the region and across the country will gather in Fayetteville, Arkansas, July 10-13 to showcase and exchange ideas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make their cities more sustainable. The workshop, *Saving Energy and Saving Money: The Economic Benefits of Local Climate

Action,* builds on the leadership that cities, towns and counties of all shapes and sizes have shown for more than a decade.

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability and the City of Fayetteville are co-hosting the event. Key-note speakers include Andy Ruben, Vice President of Corporate Sustainability at Wal-Mart, and Ed Mazria of Architecture 2030.

For more information, including the agenda, please visit:
www.icleiusaworkshop.org.

Local government leadership has been the cornerstone of this country's response to global climate change, a tradition that the Fayetteville workshop is continuing,* said Michelle Wyman, Executive Director of ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability USA, a membership association of more than 250 local governments across the country advancing climate protection and sustainable development. *We're honoring innovative solutions and local climate protection achievements, and arming new leaders with tools and expertise.

We are excited to host the ICLEI conference here in Fayetteville, Arkansas, said Fayetteville Mayor Dan Coody. *Fayetteville is a leader in the sustainability movement and we hope to inspire other smaller, mid American cities to do what they can to reduce our carbon output while saving money through energy conservation. If Fayetteville, Arkansas, can do it, other cities should be able to as well.*

Last week Mayor Coody and the City of Fayetteville were awarded First Place in the Small City Category of the Mayors Climate Protection Awards, sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Wal-Mart, for the City's Alternative Transportation and Trail Master Plan.
(http://usmayors.org/75thAnnualMeeting/climateprotectionawards_062307.pdf)

...Also, food provided will be locally grown and/or organic, floral displays will use native plants, and ICLEI will purchase carbon offsets for air travel.

The workshop is sponsored by Wal-Mart. Additional sponsors include CH2M Hill, P&G, Cities of the Future, and the Fayetteville Advertising and Promotion Commission.

POST-CONFERENCE INFO: (from Susan Thomas)

ICLEI has posted the daily blog from the conference. You can access those entries at www.iclei.org/usa

ARKANSAS GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION

In the fall of 2006, OMNI created a committee called the Carbon Caps Task Force, chaired by Kelly Mulhollan and supported by several able scientists, such as Art Hobson. Its aim was to bring a bill before the Arkansas Legislature for constraints on CO2 based on the best scientific knowledge. The model was California. Soon CCTF joined with Citizens First Congress, an arm of the Arkansas Public Planning Program (APPP, and experienced with the practical work of creating legislation), to draft the bill and see it through the legislative process. But because CFC/CCTF could not find sufficient sponsors, a much less ambitious bill was finally written, creating a Commission to study warming, and that passed. At this time, the commission is very slowly being appointed. The governor does not yet understand the urgency. We should all be on

the phone to him and those commissioners similarly disengaged, about the scientific consensus, about Al Gore's book, film, and Pledge, and about other scholars like Monbiot. Read Glick's essay, the section denouncing "a climate movement that is afraid to get out in the streets and up the ante, afraid to rock the boat, unwilling to speak truth to power." (See end for further comment.)

AL GORE'S LIVE EARTH PLEDGE

Dear friends,

On Saturday, over a billion people around the world watched the Live Earth concerts against climate change. **Will it make any difference? That's down to us.**

Over a billion saw the Live Earth concerts, but will anything really change? It's down to us --

[Sign the Pledge today!](#)

Saving the world will take more than seven concerts -- it'll depend on millions of us, **coming together across borders to take action and**

pressing our governments and corporations to do the same. The Climate Pledge below is much more than a petition -- it's a personal commitment to seven simple things each of us can do, and a challenge to leaders to act before it's too late.

Just take 30 seconds now, go to this link and sign the Pledge -- then tell seven friends:

http://www.avaaz.org/en/global_climate_movement/i.php

When you sign the pledge look at the bottom of the page for a map of thousands of Avaaz parties and events from last Saturday. In 125 countries around the world, from Hong Kong to the USA and Portugal to Peru, Avaaz members were responsible for almost half of all the Live Earth events held on the day. This was a big step forward for our new community that helped make Live Earth a significant day of awareness raising, and everyone who hosted and attended deserves a huge congratulations!

When it comes to our planet, we can be a lot more than spectators. **The Climate Pledge is the whole point of Live Earth.** So add your name now at this link, and send it to seven friends --

http://www.avaaz.org/en/global_climate_movement/i.php

This week we could reach a million or more, then get started with the rest of the world. **Let's turn the moment into an unstoppable global movement.** The climate crisis demands nothing less.

With hope,

Paul, Graziela, Ricken, Ben, Hannah, Iain, Galit, and the entire Avaaz team

Here's the text of the pledge. It's more than a petition--it's a statement of personal and political purpose. Just imagine what's possible

if millions of people sign it and take action:

I PLEDGE:

1. To demand that my country **join an international treaty within the next 2 years that cuts global warming pollution** by 90% in developed countries and **by more than half worldwide** in time for the next generation to inherit a healthy earth;
2. To **take personal action** to help solve the climate crisis by reducing my own CO2 pollution as much as I can and offsetting the rest to become "carbon neutral;" 3. To fight for a moratorium on the construction of any new generating facility that burns coal without the capacity to safely trap and store the CO2;
4. To work for a **dramatic increase in the energy efficiency** of my home, workplace, school, place of worship, and means of transportation;
5. To fight for laws and policies that **expand the use of renewable energy sources and reduce dependence on oil and coal**;
6. To **plant new trees** and to join with others in **preserving and protecting forests**; and,
7. To buy from businesses and support leaders who share my commitment to solving the climate crisis and **building a sustainable, just, and prosperous world for the 21st century.**

ACT NOW: http://www.avaaz.org/en/global_climate_movement/i.php

Avaaz.org is staffed by a global team of campaigners operating on 3 continents. We have administrative offices in London, New York, and Rio de Janeiro. Please direct mail to our NY office at 260 Fifth Avenue, 9th floor, New York, NY 10001 U.S.A.

A FAITH RESPONSE TO WARMING (from Rabbi Waskow's Shalom Center) (Beginning and ending excised--Dick.

(Here's an important call to us in NWA to begin bringing the churches together to stop warming. What other churches also have a "green covenant" and how scientific, truthful, and comprehensive is it?)

"CREATING STRONG JEWISH RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS"

The Green Menorah Covenant Coalition will therefore focus on averting or minimizing global climate crisis by minimizing the use of all carbon-emitting fuels. Energy independence must be configured to serve that goal, not the other way around.

In each of the seven areas, "work" will consist of developing three areas:

- (a) deeper, richer access to relevant Jewish sources, prayers, practices, rituals, ceremonies, Jewish law, etc ;
- (b) better-informed and broader access to scientific information on the evolving climate crisis;
- (c) and information on emerging possibilities for effective personal

change and public-policy change.

These are the seven points of agreed action:

1. Making carbon pay:

At the personal level, agreeing as households, to set 1% of our annual coal, oil & gasoline costs as tzedakah ("charitable" contributions) for sustainable-energy activism.

In public policy, advocating for laws providing that carbon emissions into the atmosphere must cost the emitter, whether through a carbon tax or carbon caps, or a combination, and providing for a rising ramp of such costs.

2. Shifting purchases, subsidies, loans, and investments from high-carbon to low-carbon energy sources:

For individuals and households, this means changing our purchasing habits, joining wind-energy plans, etc.

For public policy, it means ending subsidies to such carbon-producing sources of energy as coal, oil, and corn-based ethanol; creating and constantly increasing subsidies for research and production of non-carbon-emitting sources of energy such as wind, solar, switch-grass.

3. Energy conservation in buildings.

In our own homes, congregational buildings, etc., choosing new technologies as we build anew or refurbishing present buildings.

In public policy, enacting strong building-code regulations for new buildings and retrofitting old ones.

4. Energy conservation in transportation:

As households and congregations, turning more and more to low-energy, high-conservation forms of transport. (Ride-sharing for services and work, living in walking or biking distance to congregations and jobs, etcv.)

In public policy, choosing to reduce and end subsidies to high-emission forms of transportation (conventional autos, highways, and airplanes), imposing costs on them, insisting on strong conservation measures to reduce emissions from autos and airplanes, and raising subsidies to lower-energy-consuming forms of transportation (bikes, rail, walking) and to hold meetings by teleconferencing, etc., that use less energy.

5. Geographic changes:

In our personal and congregational lives, choosing urban-style high-density living (whether in actual cities or in suburbs, or for those Jewish pioneers who choose consciously green farming, in village-type communities). In policy decisions, strongly encouraging subsidies and investment in urban recreation, workplaces, etc. vs. investment in sprawl and low-density housing, long distances between home and workplace, etc.

6. Focusing the wisdom-creation centers of our culture -- education, arts, science, and religion -- on climate crisis.

In Jewish life, infusing celebration of festivals, life-cycle markers (especially intergenerational markers like bar/bat mitzvah & confirmation), prayer, and Torah-study with concern for the earth and climate.

In public policy, subsidizing scientific climate-crisis analysis; climate-centered educational projects throughout school years from pre-K through grad school; support for art, literature, music, dance, film, games, etc. that address climate crisis.

7. Shabbat and restful time:

In our individual and congregational practice, strongly encouraging - even more than before -- setting aside restful time and making minimal use of carbon-emitting energy for the time of Shabbat itself, as a wise

and sacred Jewish practice.

In public policy, favoring much longer paid vacation and holiday time for home-centered and neighborhood-centered celebration (as against long-distance high-energy-consuming vacation time).

Remember - if you want to take part in creating the Green Menorah Covenant Coalition, or to work on this basic approach in another religious, ethical, or spiritual community, write us at Office@shalomctr.org

ART HOBSON'S COLUMN NAT (7-21-07), "Planet Earth Today: Imminent Peril." For a decade Prof. has warned about the increasing danger of CO2, and now a scientific consensus backs him up. In this classic essay, Art describes the danger (a tipping point is rapidly approaching when reversing the threat will be beyond human power), explains what must be done via national allocations (rationing, austerities, sacrifices), and urges an immediate significant local action: stopping the SWEPCO coal plant near Texarkana (or if built storing its carbon). He gives this web site for action: <http://www.sustainablearkansas.info> to send a message to the Ark. Public Service Commission.

TED GLICK ON THE WARMING EMERGENCY, WHAT MUST BE DONE, CORPORATE OPPOSITION, GOP AND DEM, AND PUBLIC COMPLICITY

A "must read" on global warming issue. Either we understand this stuff or our grandkids may decide they are the last generation the earth will tolerate. Fran

"Speaking Truth to Power" By Ted Glick, [truthout](http://truthout.com) | Guest Contributor, Tuesday 17 July 2007

The Kyoto Protocol is an agreement that was negotiated in 1997 and went into effect on Feb. 16, 2005. Under it, industrial countries which have signed on - which is all of them except for the US and Australia - pledge to reduce their earth-heating carbon emissions by between roughly five and seven percent below 1990 amounts by 2012. Some countries are going to make or exceed those pledges, and others are not.

Given the urgency of the climate crisis, the 5.2 percent average reduction of emissions is nowhere near enough. There is also a problem because formerly colonized, now industrializing, countries like China and India are not part of this first phase of carbon reductions. That is justifiable. The industrialized West is responsible for the vast majority of the carbon that's in the atmosphere now, and the industrialized West needs to lead the turn away from its past and present dirty, polluting, energy production processes. But it is not a good thing at all that China and India are following in the West's footsteps by building far too many polluting coal plants.

We need a much, much stronger international agreement to accelerate the critically needed transition away from coal, oil and natural gas toward a world economy that is energy-efficient and based upon clean, renewable energy sources - the wind, the sun, the earth, the tides and currents and, for a transitional period, certain fairly-produced, energy-efficient biofuels.

It was a good thing that Al Gore included as point No. 1 of his Live Earth Pledge a "demand that my country join an international treaty within the next two years that cuts global warming pollution by 90

percent in developed countries and by more than half worldwide in time for the next generation to inherit a healthy earth." The short, two-year time frame is good, as is the objective of 90 percent cuts. It's also good that, rather than projecting a 43-year time frame, to 2050, he articulates a time frame that is appropriate: "in time for the next generation to inherit a healthy earth."

Unfortunately, powerful energy companies in the USA, supported by the AFL-CIO and other unions thinking extremely short-term and shortsightedly, have just joined with Democratic and Republican senators to unveil a so-called Low Carbon Economy Act, which will have the "radical" goal of reducing US carbon emissions to last year's level by 2020.

That's not a mistake. According to the July 11 New York Times, this bill gives the energy companies 13 years to get emissions to the level they were at LAST YEAR! By 2030, they would be at 1990 levels.

Outrageous; truly outrageous.

If the US were to ratify and then implement the Kyoto Protocol, on the other hand, a truly revolutionary set of changes would have to take place if the USA were to meet its objectives. Because current carbon emissions are about 16 percent higher than they were in 1990, we would need to reduce emissions by about 23 percent by 2012 to meet the US's Kyoto-negotiated objective of 7 percent reductions.

Some local municipalities get it on the climate crisis and have been working to meet these objectives. More than 500 city, town and county governments, representing over 50 million people, have signed on to the Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement.

As explained on the web site of Greg Nickels, the Seattle mayor who initiated this effort over two years ago: "Under the Agreement, participating cities commit to take the following three actions:

- Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities, through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns.
- Urge their state governments, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission-reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol - seven percent reduction from 1990 levels by 2012.
- Urge the US Congress to pass the bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system."

As is true for the nations that have signed the Kyoto Protocol, some of the cities and towns are on track to meet these reduction objectives, and others will probably not.

Meantime, while important action to reduce emissions is taking place on local levels, it remains to be seen what is going to happen with the sham "Low Carbon Economy Act."

It is possible that some of the national environmental groups, particularly those who take corporate contributions to meet their budgets, will grudgingly go along with this, seeing it as better than nothing.

Most groups, I would expect, will respond in a way similar to that of Dan Becker of the Sierra Club, quoted in the July 11 New York Times story as saying, "It's too weak. It would be better to wait until more members of Congress understand that the heat is on them to act, and that may have to wait until the next Congress and the next president."

But there is another way to respond to this latest capitulation to the oil, coal, automobile and other corporate interests by Democrats,

Republicans and groups that really should know better. That is to publicly, creatively and massively express our outrage and anger, our determination to stand up for our threatened ecosystem, its people, animals, plants and all life forms, by stepping up our movement for climate justice and a [take note, labor leaders] jobs-creating, clean-energy revolution.

Becker may be right that it won't be until 2009 that we can get what is needed out of Congress and the White House, but if we accept that - if we don't bring maximum pressure to bear in support of what the science is telling us is needed now - our children and grandchildren might end up cursing us for our fear and "political realism." A climate movement that is afraid to get out in the streets and up the ante, afraid to rock the boat, unwilling to speak truth to power, is a climate movement that could be defanged, unable to bring much pressure to bear in 2009 - if we have to wait that long - for the kind of climate legislation needed, for the kind of widespread cultural and social change at the grassroots needed to push forward and accelerate the clean energy revolution.

In the words of a martyred World War II German resistance fighter, the Rev. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present."

Ted Glick is coordinator of the US Climate Emergency Council, which is coordinating a Climate Emergency Fast that begins on September 4, the day Congress comes back from its summer vacation. He is also active with No War, No Warming, which is mobilizing for a major nonviolent civil disobedience action on Capitol Hill and around the country on October 23. He can be reached at indpol@igc.org .

MONBIOT'S *HEAT*, Dick's ongoing review:

"Introduction," Monbiot, *Heat*
"If in the year 2030, carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere remain as high as they are today, the likely result is two degrees centigrade of warming... major ecosystems begin collapsing [and] climate change is out of our hands." To prevent that, "the rich nations [must] cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 90 per cent by 2030," if they wish to retain "industrial civilization." "This book seeks to devise the least painful means of achieving a 90 percent cut in carbon emissions."

First 3 chapters from Monbiot' *Heat*:

Chap. 1, "A Faustian Pact," the global scientific consensus of accelerating warming caused by humans. If anybody says there's 2 sides to the issue, they have not read this chapter and have no credibility. E.g. an article in *Science* in 2004 surveyed 928 sc. papers on global climate change, and not a single one disagreed with the consensus. With only .6 degrees of warming, glaciers are retreating, permafrost melting, rainforests turning to savannah, sea levels rising. Disasters will accelerate within the range of 1.4-5-8 degrees of warming. Monbiot even speculates on what might happen if temps. rise by more than 6 degrees. And he discusses tentatively the solution, in anticipation of the rest of the book: "A 90 per cent cut should make the worst of warming that took place at the end of the Permian impossible. It is also clear that the sooner we act, the more effective the cut will be."

Chap. 2, "The **Denial** Industry." Here Monbiot answers the question, "why we have been so slow to act" against global warming. He gives 3 general

replies: I. Failure to act by professional and wealthy classes. These people "have the most freedom to lose and the least to gain from an attempt to restrain it." The richest people, "who can buy their way out of trouble, will be harmed last." II. Active campaign of dissuasion by corporations and the mainstream media, longest of the 3 sections. His search for the origins of the campaign to create public doubt about warming is fascinating. It's a story of fake "grassroots" organizations, of sham scientists and bought politicians, of lots of money—from Philip Morris, Exxon, and other corporations--and of mountains of lies. III. The U.S. government, a short section because the fact is well known.

Chapter 3, "A Ration of Freedom" promotes the solution of CO2 footprint rationing. But I'll save this for the next Newsletter.

See: "In **Denial** On Climate Change" by Peter Hart, *Extra!* (May-June 2007) on **how leading pundits have rejected science** on global warming, focusing on John Stossel, George Will, Glenn Beck, and Robert Samuelson.

(Comment by Dick on an **egregious example of media denial in TMN** July 19, 2007.) The newspaper's editorial that day ridiculed and misrepresented Fayetteville's international climate conference and the fact of global warming in general.

Its conference title, the editorial writer said, "International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives" was "quite a mouthful." Well, it was a quite significantly far-reaching mouthful.

But was the conference a "gabfest" or a genuine examination of global warming, the alternatives the editorialist gives us? "We'd guess it was some of both." Guess? The writer had not attended? Some of both equally? Not true. The days were packed with researched reports and focused discussion.

Participants dismissive of the evidence of warming were equally represented along with advocates of the "global-warming scenario," as the writer claims? Again, not true. The meeting did not imitate a newspaper's two sides format, but attempted to present the best science, which is the consensus on human-caused warming. But that's really not the issue. Rather, were the presenters fully informed about the science that produced the consensus, and the impending global catastrophe, and the radical remedies necessary.

The writer heard "some interesting notions on how to deal" with rising sea levels and temperatures, such as opening boat sales and air-conditioning" businesses. What a pitiful effort by an ignorant person to cover up his ignorance. The editor would joke about the possibility of hundreds of millions of refugees from New York City to Bangladesh?

Having totally misrepresented the facts and the remedies for warming presented at the conference, the editor then calls us to be serious: "This is, of course, more serious than that." Which leads him to his huge lie, that "there's room for debate as to the influence of humankind on the planet and the extent to which we can moderate that influence." Let me bring in another climate scientist here (among the thousands I might quoted), Tim Flannery, author of *The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth*: Warming "results from air pollution, and the size of our atmosphere and the volume of pollutants that we are pouring into it are known with great precision. The debate now...concerns the impacts of some of those

pollutants (known as greenhouse gases) on all life on Earth" (p. 3). There are essentially two outcomes of the climate modification that humanity is engaged in: either we will respond too slowly, which will "destroy Earth's life-support systems," or if we are to save our civilization, we will act promptly to drastically reduce emissions. This means "to have commenced significant decarbonizing of our electricity grids by around 2030, and to have substantially decarbonized transport systems by 2050" (p. 291). But perhaps the editor did not lie, but simply had never read a book or even an essay by a reputable climate scientist. Or perhaps the editor was so busy he or she asked a passerby to write for that day.

Alas, there are more misleading statements to come in this short editorial collection of misinformation. His next garbling comes in his claim that "we don't have the one-and-only answer here," "we don't know 'the truth' about global warming," and "we haven't heard from anyone else who has convinced us that they have all the answers either." Watch the slippery confusion of "the truth" (fact of warming and of human cause about which there is global consensus) with having all the answers (scientists the first to agree).

Is the editor through with his topsy-turvy "how we see it"? Next he contradicts himself and superficially affirms warming and human influence: "It's too late to avoid harming the environment, but we should do less harm, he declares. We should reduce our impact on the environment by recycling or improved energy efficiency. Clearly here he reveals how little he understands the degree of harm done already and coming and the austere remedies required.

But the conclusion is the worst of all in its utter trivializing of the danger: "Even if it turns out, a century or two down the road, that global warming was overstated as a manmade phenomenon and nothing significant comes of our own small contributions to the effort to combat the planet's rising temperatures, we should object if we can still say that less harm has been done. Someone might even thank us for it." Rather: all informed scientists agree that global warming and its consequences are rushing upon us, that it is caused by our species, and that only extreme changes in our behaviors can significantly reduce the catastrophe. To our own small reductions of our carbon footprint we must band together to stop the use of carbon in our culture, or that culture will be destroyed. And all people who employ their privilege and authority as newspaper editorial writers can be sure nobody will ever thank them for it.

What the writer might have questioned—how adequately the conference participants faced up to the scientific warnings—, he fails to do because he had not read the science and could therefore only piddle.

Water World: Slipping Toward Climate Catastrophe

By George Monbiot, Monbiot.com

July 13, 2007

<http://www.alternet.org/story/56125/>

Editor's Note: George Monbiot is a British journalist and author whose expertise is on climate change and other environmental issues. Monbiot's article reveals that government ineptitude in

the face of increasingly frightening scientific data on climate.

Reading a scientific paper on the train this weekend, I found, to my amazement, that my hands were shaking. This has never happened to me before, but nor have I ever read anything like it. Published by a team led by James Hansen at NASA, it suggests that the grim reports issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change could be absurdly optimistic.

The IPCC predicts that sea levels could rise by as much as 59 centimeters this century. Hansen's [paper argues](#) that the slow melting of ice sheets the panel expects doesn't fit the data. The geological record suggests that ice at the poles does not melt in a gradual and linear fashion, but flips suddenly from one state to another. When temperatures increased to 2-3 degrees Celsius above today's level 3.5 million years ago, sea levels rose not by 59 cm but by 25 meters. The ice responded immediately to changes in temperature.

We now have a pretty good idea of why ice sheets collapse. The buttresses that prevent them from sliding into the sea break up; meltwater trickles down to their base, causing them suddenly to slip; and pools of water form on the surface, making the ice darker so that it absorbs more heat. These processes are already taking place in Greenland and West Antarctica.

Rather than taking thousands of years to melt, as the IPCC predicts, Hansen and his team find it "implausible" that the expected warming before 2100 "would permit a West Antarctic ice sheet of present size to survive even for a century." As well as drowning most of the world's centers of population, a sudden disintegration could lead to much higher rises in global temperature, because less ice means less heat reflected back into space. The new paper suggests that the temperature could therefore be twice as sensitive to rising greenhouse gases than the IPCC assumes. "Civilization developed," Hansen writes, "during a period of unusual climate stability, the Holocene, now almost 12,000 years in duration. That period is about to end."

I looked up from the paper, almost expecting to see crowds stampeding through the streets. I saw people chatting outside a riverside pub. The other passengers on the train snoozed over their newspapers or played on their mobile phones. Unaware of the causes of our good fortune, blissfully detached from their likely termination, we drift into catastrophe.

Or we are led there. A good source tells me that the British government is well aware that its target for cutting carbon emissions -- 60 percent by 2050 -- is too little, too late, but that it will go no further for one reason: it fears losing the support of the **Confederation of British Industry (CBI)**. Why this body is allowed to keep holding a gun to our heads has never been explained, but Prime Minister Gordon Brown has just appointed Digby Jones, the former director-general of the CBI, as a minister in the UK government department responsible for energy policy. I don't remember voting for him. There could be no clearer signal that the public interest is being drowned by **corporate power**.

The government's energy program, partly as a result, is characterised by a complete absence of vision. You can see this most clearly when you examine its plans for renewables. The EU has set a target for 20 percent of all energy in the member states to come from renewable sources by 2020. This in itself is pathetic. But the British government refuses to adopt it: instead it proposes that 20 percent of the UK's electricity (just part of Britain's total energy use) should come from renewable power by that date. Even this is not a target, just an "aspiration," and it is on course to miss it. Worse still, the British government has no idea what happens after that. I recently asked whether it has commissioned any research to discover how much more electricity we could generate from renewable sources. It has not.

It's a critical question, whose answer -- if its results were applied globally -- could determine whether or not the planetary "albedo flip" that Hansen predicts takes place. There has been remarkably little investigation of this issue. Until recently I guessed that the maximum contribution from renewables would be something like 50%: beyond that point the difficulties of

storing electricity and balancing the grid could become overwhelming. But three papers now suggest that we could go much further.

Last year, the German government published a study of the effects of linking the electricity networks of all the countries in Europe and connecting them to North Africa and Iceland with high voltage direct current cables. This would open up a much greater variety of renewable power sources. Every country in the network would then be able to rely on stable and predictable supplies from elsewhere: hydroelectricity in Scandinavia and the Alps, geothermal energy in Iceland and vast solar thermal farms in the Sahara. By spreading the demand across a much wider network, it suggests that 80 percent of Europe's electricity could be produced from renewable power without any greater risk of blackouts or flickers.

At about the same time, Mark Barrett at University College London published a preliminary study looking mainly at ways of altering the pattern of demand for electricity to match the variable supply from wind and waves and tidal power. At about twice the current price, he found that we might be able to produce as much as 95 percent of our electricity from renewable sources without causing interruptions in the power supply.

Now a [new study by the Center for Alternative Technology](#) takes this even further. It is remarkable in two respects: it suggests that by 2027 the United Kingdom could produce 100 percent of our electricity without the use of fossil fuels or nuclear power, and that it could do so while almost tripling its supply: British heating systems (using electricity to drive heat pumps) and transport systems could be mostly powered by it. It relies on a great expansion of electricity storage: building new hydroelectric reservoirs into which water can be pumped when electricity is abundant, constructing giant vanadium flow batteries and linking electric cars up to the grid when they are parked, using their batteries to meet fluctuations in demand. It contains some optimistic technical assumptions, but also a very pessimistic one: that the UK relies entirely on its own energy supplies. If the German proposal were to be combined with these ideas, it's possible to see how one might reliably move towards a world without fossil fuels.

If Hansen is correct, to avert the meltdown that brings the Holocene to an end we require a response on this scale: a sort of political "albedo flip." The British government must immediately commission studies to discover how much of our energy could be produced without fossil fuels, set that as its target then turn the economy round to meet it. But a power shift like this cannot take place without a power shift of another kind: the UK needs a government which fears planetary meltdown more than it fears the CBI. (from Tom B)

FOOTNOTE ON ARKANSAS GOVERNOR'S WARMING COMMISSION

Change comes not from Washington so much as from the people. Think of it: Civil Rights laws from Selma and Birmingham; the 19th Amendment from the Women's Suffrage movement; the end of the Vietnam War by the numerous peace organizations; and on and on. The history of the U.S. has witnessed a recurrence of popular movements for change, and using every means possible. OMNI'S CCTF and Environmental Committee in coalition with all other ecology organizations must push not only the Governor's Commission but the members of the legislature, both political parties, and the public, but actually in reverse order, to build pressure on the Commission to act meaningfully and rapidly. The Commission will not be able to do much without numerous public demands for **reducing CO2** significantly and soon—2% a year beginning very soon—, or warming will be beyond human resistance.

FOOTNOTES ON OFFSETS AND CREDITS

OFFSETS

Dick: read Monbiot's *Heat*, pp. 210-211, for comparison of **offsets** to medieval "indulgences" and as "systematic false accounting." And see Ben Grabow's satire of offsets in "How to Offset Environmental Sins," *TMN* 7-16-07, 8A. I expect Gore to drop offsets when he revises his Pledge.

DEBATE OVER CARBON CREDITS

See *The Weathermakers*, whose author promotes carbon trading.

"The Idols of Environmentalism: Do environmentalists conspire against their own interests?" First in a two-part series by Curtis White, *Orion* magazine (March / April 2007) (selection reprinted in *Harper's* (August 07).

Environmental Destruction proceeds apace in spite of all the warnings, the good science, the 501(c)3 organizations with their memberships in the millions, the poll results, and the martyrs perched high in the branches of sequoias or shot dead in the Amazon. This is so not because of a power, a strength out there that we must resist. It is because we are weak and fearful. Only a weak and fearful society could invest so much desperate energy in protecting activities that are the equivalent of suicide.

For instance, trading **carbon emission credits** and creating markets in greenhouse gases as a means of controlling global warming is not a way of saying we're so confident in the strength of the free market system that we can even trust it to fix the problems it creates. No, it's a way of saying that we are so frightened by the prospect of stepping outside of the market system on which we depend for our national wealth, our jobs, and our sense of normalcy that we will let the logic of that system try to correct its own excesses even when we know we're just kidding ourselves. This delusional strategy is embedded in the Kyoto agreement, which is little more than a complex scheme to create a giant international market in pollution. Even Kyoto, of which we speak longingly - "Oh, if only we would join it!" - is not an answer to our problem but a capitulation to it, so concerned is it to protect what it calls "economic growth and development". Kyoto is just a form of whistling past the graveyard. And it is not just international corporations who do this whistling; we all have our own little stake in the world capitalism has made and so we all do the whistling.. (from a two-part article in *Orion*)

FOSSIL FUELS, WARMING, AND WARS

Dick: Despite Gore's wonderfully comprehensive campaign against warming, from the world peace point of view significant issues are omitted that reinforce Gore's campaign against warming.

Fossil fuels have led to militarism and to wars and threats of wars. Oil dependency fuels the U.S. quest for military supremacy; it is a driving fact in U.S. foreign and military policy; it has led to the militarization of U.S. foreign policy and to huge increases in U.S. military expenditures at the expense of massive human needs. The whole world suffers as conflict and war over oil consume vast human and financial resources. These conflicts over oil wealth undermine democracy and human rights in both importing and exporting countries. The U.S. is the leading global consumer of oil, and its foreign and domestic policies

are the consequences.

That is, warming and wars are inseparable problems. Educate our Congressional Delegation to act now to confront the twin threats of global climate change and deadly conflicts over oil.

These Newsletters provide us with facts and arguments for our own writings and actions. Write and call your congressional delegation AND TO THEIR STAFF, to your Party leaders, to newspapers, film a CAT Short Take.

CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

--Senator Blanche Lincoln: Web Site (they have contact links): www.lincoln.senate.gov;
<http://www.lincoln.senate.gov/index.cfm>; <http://www.lincoln.senate.gov/webform.html>

Washington Office: 355 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510-0404

Phone: (202) 224-4843 Fax: (202) 228-1371.

Fayetteville office: 251-1380. Lincoln's staff is better informed than Boozman's (see below), but obviously (her vote to join Bush in appropriating \$95 billion more to keep the occupation going) they need a lot of education.

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4 South College Avenue, Suite 205,

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(479) 251-1224; FAX (479) 251-1410

Community Affairs Specialist: John Hicks

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Donna Kay Yeargan State Director

Community Affairs Specialist: Tamika S. Edwards and Kim Mullen

Cyndey Pearce Office Manager\Special Projects Coordinator

Cathy Bozynski State Scheduler and Caseworker (Passports, Post Office, and Railroad Retirement)

State Staff Shelly Baron, Constituent Relations Specialist

Margie Goss Staff Assistant

Mary Anderson Caseworker (Education, EEOC, Health Insurance, Housing, IRS, Labor, OPM, Small Business, and Workers' Compensation)

Betty Ruth Davis Caseworker (FEMA, Medicare, and Social Security)

Cynthia Edwards Caseworker (Corps of Engineers, FCC, Farm Services, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Justice, Natural Resources, Parks, Prisons (State), Rural Development, Veterans, and USDA)

Rod Sweetman Arkansas Military Liaison\Caseworker (Academy Appointments, Immigration, Military, Prisons (Federal), and Veterans)

--Senator Mark Pryor: Web Site (see contact link): www.pryor.senate.gov;

<http://pryor.senate.gov/contact/> Pryor has no office in NWA, so call or write him and his staff in

DC: **Washington Office: 217 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510-0403. Phone: (202) 224-2353 Fax: (202) 228-0908**

Main District Office: 500 Pres. Clinton Ave., Suite 401, Little Rock, AR 72201.

Phone: (501) 324-6336 Fax: (501) 324-5320. From Pryor: "I have received your e-mail and I thank you for your message. If you would like a specific reply to your message, please visit

<http://pryor.senate.gov/contact.>"

--Congressman John Boozman, District 3, 12 counties from Benton to Washington

Lowell office: 479-725-0400. 213 W. Monroe, Suite K, 72745. Boozman's new office in Lowell is located at 213 West Monroe in Lowell between I 540 and Business 71. Go there, talk to Boozman's staff members. They are all polite young people, but now, made blind and deaf by the US Corporate/War complex, they need your peaceful explanation of reality and values. To reach that office take Exit 78 off I - 540 and go east. You will be on Hwy 264 which is also West Monroe. The office is in the Puppy Creek Plaza, past the McDonald's on the right. His suite is in the back of the complex to the left. Or write or call. **Ms. McClure** is Assistant Chief of Staff for the Lowell office, STACEY.McCLURE@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV

Ms. Breazeal focuses on gangs, and Ms. Stacy Davis is constituent staff member.

Ft. Smith office: 479-782-7787; 30 South 6th St. Rm 240, Ft. Smith 72901.

Harrison office: 870-741-6900; 402 N. Walnut, Suite 210, Harrison 72601.

DC address: 1708 Longworth House Office Bldng., Washington, DC 20515; 202-225-4301. Leslie Parker, appointments secretary: 202-225-4301. (Or she was, let me know if it's now someone else.)

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