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Environment

The Fiction Of Climate Science

Gary Sutton, 12.04.09, 10:00 AM ET

Many of you are too young to remember, but in 1975 our government pushed "the coming ice age."

Random House dutifully printed "THE WEATHER CONSPIRACY ... coming of the New Ice Age." This may be the only book ever written by 18 authors. All 18 lived just a short sled ride from Washington, D.C. *Newsweek* fell in line and did a cover issue warning us of global cooling on April 28, 1975. And *The New York Times*, Aug. 14, 1976, reported "many signs that Earth may be headed for another ice age."

OK, you say, that's media. But what did our rational scientists say?

In 1974, the National Science Board announced: "During the last 20 to 30 years, world temperature has fallen, irregularly at first but more sharply over the last decade. Judging from the record of the past interglacial ages, the present time of high temperatures should be drawing to an end...leading into the next ice age."

You can't blame these scientists for sucking up to the fed's mantra du jour. Scientists live off grants. Remember how Galileo recanted his preaching about the earth revolving around the sun? He, of course, was about to be barbecued by his leaders. Today's scientists merely lose their cash flow. Threats work.

In 2002 I stood in a room of the Smithsonian. One entire wall charted the cooling of our globe over the last 60 million years. This was no straight line. The curve had two steep dips followed by leveling. There were no significant warming periods. Smithsonian scientists inscribed it across some 20 feet of plaster, with timelines.

Last year, I went back. That fresco is painted over. The same curve hides behind smoked glass, shrunk to three feet but showing the same cooling trend. Hey, why should the Smithsonian put its tax-free status at risk? If the politicians decide to whip up public fear in a different direction, get with it, oh ye subsidized servants. Downplay that embarrassing old chart and maybe nobody will notice.

Sorry, I noticed.

It's the job of elected officials to whip up panic. They then get re-elected. Their supporters fall in line.

Al Gore thought he might ride his global warming crusade back toward the White House. If you saw his movie, which opened showing cattle on his farm, you start to understand how shallow this is. The United Nations says that cattle, farting and belching methane, create more global warming than all the SUVs in the world. Even more laughably, Al and his camera crew flew first class for that film, consuming 50% more jet fuel per seat-mile than coach fliers, while his Tennessee mansion sucks as much carbon as 20 average homes.

His PR folks say he's "carbon neutral" due to some trades. I'm unsure of how that works, but, maybe there's a tribe in the Sudan that cannot have a campfire for the next hundred years to cover Al's energy gluttony. I'm just not sophisticated enough to know how that stuff works. But I do understand he flies a private jet when the camera crew is gone.

The fall of Saigon in the '70s may have distracted the shrill pronouncements about the imminent ice age. *Science's* prediction of "A full-blown, 10,000 year ice age," came from its March 1, 1975 issue. *The Christian Science Monitor* observed that armadillos were retreating south from Nebraska to escape the "global cooling" in its Aug. 27, 1974 issue.

That armadillo caveat seems reminiscent of today's tales of polar bears drowning due to glaciers disappearing.

While scientists march to the drumbeat of grant money, at least trees don't lie. Their growth rings show what's happened no matter which philosophy is in power. Tree rings show a mini ice age in Europe about the time Stradivarius crafted his violins. Chilled Alpine Spruce gave him tighter wood so the instruments sang with a new purity. But England had to give up the wines that the Romans cultivated while our globe cooled, switching from grapes to colder weather grains and learning to take comfort with beer, whisky and ales.

Yet many centuries earlier, during a global warming, Greenland was green. And so it stayed and was settled by Vikings for generations until global cooling came along. Leif Ericsson even made it to Newfoundland. His shallow draft boats, perfect for sailing and rowing up rivers to conquer villages, wouldn't have stood a chance against a baby iceberg.

Those sustained temperature swings, all before the evil economic benefits of oil consumption, suggest there are factors at work besides humans.

Today, as I peck out these words, the weather channel is broadcasting views of a freakish and early snow falling on Dallas. The Iowa state extension service reports that the record corn crop expected this year will have unusually large kernels, thanks to "relatively cool August and September temperatures." And on Jan. 16, 2007, NPR went politically incorrect, briefly, by reporting that "An unusually harsh winter frost, the worst in 20 years, killed much of the California citrus, avocados and flower crops."

To be fair, those reports are short-term swings. But the longer term changes are no more compelling, unless you include the ice ages, and then, perhaps, the panic attempts of the 1970s were right. Is it possible that if we put more CO2 in the air, we'd forestall the next ice age?

I can ask "outrageous" questions like that because I'm not dependent upon government money for my livelihood. From the witch doctors of old to the elected officials today, scaring the bejesus out of the populace maintains their status.

Sadly, the public just learned that our scientific community hid data and censored critics. Maybe the feds should drop this crusade and focus on our health care crisis. They should, of course, ignore the life insurance statistics that show every class of American and both genders are living longer than ever. That's another inconvenient fact.

Gary Sutton is co-founder of Teledesic and has been CEO of several other companies, including Knight Protective Industries and @Backup.

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