

The Week That Was: 2012-03-24 (March 24, 2012)

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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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March 31: Ken Haapala will be speaking at the Capital Science 2012 Conference sponsored by the Washington Academy of Sciences at 10 am. The topic is “Wind and Solar Power – the Past or the Future.” Unfortunately, registration and a fee are required. The Conference will be held at Virginia Tech, GWU, (branches) and Marymount Universities in Arlington, VA
<http://www.washacadsci.org/capsci12/body.htm>

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Quote of the Week:

"I am always happy to be in the minority. Concerning the climate models, I know enough of the details to be sure that they are unreliable. They are full of fudge factors that are fitted to the existing climate, so the models more or less agree with the observed data. But there is no reason to believe that the same fudge factors would give the right behavior in a world with different chemistry, for example in a world with increased CO2 in the atmosphere." Freeman Dyson [H/t Elliot Cramer.]

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Number of the Week: 23 Agencies, 130 sub-agencies, nearly 700 programs

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THIS WEEK:

By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)

Climate Catastrophe: We are witnessing a number of trends as the globe refuses to obey global warming models. One, since there is no global warming trend, the term trend has been dropped in favor of the term level. The level of warming over the past decade has been greater than it has been since the start of the industrial revolution (about 1850) – essentially meaningless because the earth has been recovering of the Little Ice Age. Since carbon dioxide emissions (CO2) continue to increase, critical reading of this statement calls into question the accuracy of the claims that humans are causing unprecedented and dangerous global warming.

Another definite trend in the general literature is broadening the terminology to make it more alarming. Global warming has morphed into climate change, which is not scientifically significant because climate change is normal and natural. Now, it has morphed again into climate catastrophe or catastrophic climate change. With the use of this scientifically unsupported dire claim, comes an intensification of the political solution.

First, the political solution was voluntary cap-and-trade by Western nations. When this did not work, the political solution was cap-and-trade and taxes on carbon dioxide emissions by some nations, including those in the European Union and Australia. But that is not working. Now the solution is becoming compulsory, authoritarian, international governance, no doubt, envisioned to be run by philosopher-kings in the Plato tradition. Unfortunately, history demonstrates such philosopher kings tend to become tyrants. The thinking can be summarized as: “If tyranny is necessary to save humanity, so be it – as long as I am one of the philosopher-kings or at least be a member of the court.”

Not to be outdone by the article for global governance by 32 social scientists in *Science* magazine referenced in last week’s TWTW, *Scientific American* issued a similar article this week. One is forced to wonder if those who are issuing demands for global governance recognize that in the US, at least, the power of the central government is limited by the Constitution and the individual rights and liberties it protects, outlined, in part, by the Bill of Rights. Please see articles under “Expanding the Orthodoxy.”

Medieval Warm Period and Little Ice Age: One of the claims of the Fourth Assessment Report (AR-4) of the UN International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is that the Medieval Warm Period (MWP) and (LIA) were regional events confined largely to Western Europe. The first two reports contained these events. The third report dropped these events in favor of Mr. Mann's discredited "hockey-stick." Without explanation, AR-4 dropped the hockey-stick in favor of the above claims.

A new study shows that both the MWP and the LIA appeared in the Antarctic Peninsula. It is important to note that the study applies to the Peninsula alone, which is subject to changes in ocean currents. The study does not apply to the continent. The current study adds to a large body of work showing that the MWP and the LIA were global, not local, natural phenomena. Of course, this work undermines the claim by the IPCC that carbon dioxide is the principal driver of climate change. Please the reports of the Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change (NIPCC)

<http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/reports.html> and the links under "Changing Climate."

Infant Industries: In the early days of the US independence from Great Britain, US manufacturers argued that since they were small, they needed tariffs on goods from foreign countries to protect them from the efficient, large manufacturers in Great Britain and elsewhere. Essentially, the claim is that small, immature industries, infant industries, need special nurturing from government. It is been used world-wide for centuries and often results in inefficiency in the protected industries with higher consumer prices to the general public.

The infant industry argument is being used to justify subsidies for solar and wind, as well as other forms of alternative energy production. The argument is that since solar or wind is a new industry, it needs special nurturing from government. Electrical generation from wind has existed since the 1880s and at one time was popular in isolated farms and ranches in the west until the farmers and ranchers received reliable power from the grid, thanks to rural electrification programs. In a two part series, Robert Bradley, Jr. discusses the history of solar energy with quotations of solar energy dating back to the 1700s and photovoltaic back to the 1950s. Please see links under "Subsidies and Mandates Forever."

Changing Temperatures: The temperature record of the Hadley Center - Climatic Research Unit (Had-CRUT) is undergoing changes. For the land surface temperatures, it appears that the historic temperatures are being adjusted downward, reflecting a cooler history than the contemporary evidence shows. Also there will be greater coverage of the Arctic regions at the expense of the temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere. The change creates higher temperatures for 2010, making it the "hottest year on record."

Given that satellite measurements show that most of the warming since 1979 has occurred in the northern part of the Northern Hemisphere, those skeptical about bureaucracies and the science they produce may find these changes typically bureaucratic, rather than scientific.

But these changes may produce a backlash. If the new studies from Norway and Russia reported in last week's TWTW, are correct; than a large part of the 20th century Arctic warming was created by an active sun. If the sun continues to be dormant, then the recorded Arctic warming will become an Arctic cooling. The result will be a pronounced cooling in the revised, new global temperature measurements, giving the producers of Had-CRUT difficulty in future explanations. Please see links under "Measurement Issues."

WMO Annual Report: The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is one of the two parent organizations of the IPCC. The other is the United Nation's Environmental Programme (UNEP). On Friday, WMO released its annual report on the state of the climate. It speaks of levels of surface temperature since 1850, rather than the 21st century trend. Of course, global coverage in 1850 was far from adequate. In spite of recent manipulations of the data record, there has been no temperature trend in over a decade.

The report speaks of declining sea ice in the Arctic, but failed to mention the decline reached a low point in 2007, and since then sea ice has been increasing.

The report contains a litany of weather events such as floods in parts of the world and droughts in other parts, as if climate is uniform for every region through time. It also contains errors on tropical cyclones (hurricanes) claiming that the decade had the highest level of tropical cyclone activity in the Atlantic Basin, which is not supported by research by William Grey and others. The report emphasizes Katrina, the most costly to hit the US, claiming it was a category 5, which it was when it was in the Gulf of Mexico. When it made land fall it was a category 3 storm.

Most noticeably, the report emphasized measurements of sea ice by satellites, but failed to discuss measurements of temperatures by satellites. These are the most comprehensive, rigorous measurements ever taken, are independently verified by balloon data, and are independently compiled by two groups, one of which publishes its data monthly. It appears that for some reports, the WMO is stuck in the technology of the 1850s.

Amplification: Science of Personal Destruction: One of the disturbing trends in scientific discussions and literature in recent years is the willingness by some to resort to arguments of personal destruction (*ad hominem*) to refute the logical, scientific arguments questioning the premise of the writer. An example is calling a skeptic a “shill” for industry. A retort would be calling an alarmist a “shill” for global governance – authoritarianism. Unless the claim can be substantiated it does not belong in scientific discourse.

The two principal founders of SEPP, Fred Singer and Fredrick Seitz, have been the subject of a particularly effective *ad hominem* attack in *Merchants of Doubt* by Oreskes and Conway. The evidence to substantiate outrageous claims made in the book does not exist in the text but is implied to exist in the extensive footnotes, yet it does not.

In preparing TWTW, articles containing significant, unsubstantiated personal attacks are avoided. However, occasionally, TWTW may reference articles that contain distasteful adjectives of a personal nature. These articles may be included for their general interest, not for their personal commentary. Please do not assume that TWTW embraces the comments of the author of an article referenced in TWTW.

Number of the Week: 23 Agencies, 130 sub-agencies, nearly 700 programs. According to a February 2012 report to Congress by the General Accountability Office, that is the number of government organizations involved in renewable energy initiatives in Fiscal Year 2010. Yet, the 23 Agencies, 130 sub-agencies, and 700 programs have failed to produce as significant an impact on US energy as the private efforts of combining deep underground hydraulic fracturing of dense shale with directional, horizontal drilling to extract oil and natural gas.

Do doubt, the leaders of the 23 agencies, 130 sub-agencies, and 700 programs will continue to defend these programs even when faced with the hard data that their programs are economic failures. Please see link under “Subsidies and Mandates Forever.”

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see this week’s TWTW at: www.sepp.org. The articles are at the end of the pdf.

1. Supremes 9, EPA 0

The Justices rebuke the bureaucracy's water torture.

Editorial, WSJ, Mar 22, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204257504577152830079320346.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

2. Cheap Gasoline and Human Rights

By Sam Kazman, Letter, WSJ, Mar 19, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304459804577285420604906582.html?mod=ITP_opinion_1

3. Gas Set to Test Capacity Limits

By Dan Strumpf, WSJ, Mar 22, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303812904577295873283143892.html>

[SEPP Comment: The unexpected natural gas problem – where to store it?]

4. Climate Wars Continue With More Heat Than Light

By Michael Mann, Letter, WSJ, Mar 21, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304724404577291600175012584.html?mod=ITP_opinion_1

[SEPP Comment: Some may disagree with Mr. Mann’s interpretation of scientific facts.]

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Climategate Continued

Vignettes before MM2003

By Steve McIntyre, Climate Audit, Mar 19, 2012

<http://climateaudit.org/2012/03/19/vignettes-before-mm2003/>

It’s interesting to see that Mann, who at that time knew nothing about me, was nonetheless quick to portray me as a “shill” and had recommended strategies for rejecting emails.

[SEPP Comment: Apparently, to Mr Mann anyone with the audacity to question his work is a shill for industry.]

Suppressing Scientific Inquiry

Suzuki vs. the Senate — who’s silencing whom?

‘Silence and -demonize’ could be the Suzuki foundation’s motto

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Mar 23, 2012 [H/t Tom Harris]

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/03/22/peter-foster-suzuki-vs-the-senate-whos-silencing-whom/>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

A Newfound Cog in the Ocean Conveyor

Scientists confirm existence of a previously unknown current

By Lonny Pippsett, Oceanus, Mar 23, 2012

<http://www.whoi.edu/oceanus/viewArticle.do?id=132749§ionid=1021>

The newly confirmed ocean current is called the North Icelandic Jet. It feeds cold, dense water into the Deep Western Boundary Current, helping to drive the lower limb of the Ocean Conveyor, **the global ocean circulation system that regulates Earth's climate.** [Boldface added.]

[SEPP Comment: Changes in the ocean conveyor are not found in the IPCC reports as natural features that change or regulate the Earth’s climate.]

Sensationalist And Distorted Climate Stories Increase As Climate Science Failures Exposed

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Mar 20, 2012

<http://drtimball.com/2012/sensationalist-and-distorted-climate-stories-increase-as-climate-science-failures-exposed/>

New Paper: Many Tree-Ring Analyses Highly Biased, Unreliable

By Staff Writer, GWPF, Mar 20, 2012

<http://thewgpf.org/science-news/5263-new-paper-many-tree-ring-analyses-highly-biased-unreliable.html>

Defending the Orthodoxy

WMO Annual Statement confirms 2011 as 11 warmest on record

Climate change accelerated in 2001-2010, according to preliminary analysis

By Staff Writers, Press Release No 943, WMO, Mar 23, 2012 [H/t Bishop Hill]

http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/press_releases/pr_943_en.html

Why spring is blooming marvelous (and climate change makes it earlier)

By Staff Writers, Norwich, UK (SPX), Mar 23, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Why_spring_is_blooming_marvelous_and_climate_change_makes_it_earlier_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The assumption is that spring did not bloom early in the Medieval Ages. Also that CO2 fertilization has nothing to do with it.]

Climate law survives red tape cull

Britain's laws on climate change that push up energy bills for millions of households have been spared, despite George Osborne's plea for a reduction in expensive green regulations.

By Rowena Mason, Telegraph, UK, Mar 20, 2012

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/environment/climatechange/9156410/Climate-law-survives-red-tape-cull.html>

Scientists who trade in doubt

By Mike Steketee, The Australian, Mar 17, 2012

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/scientists-who-trade-in-doubt/story-e6frg7ax-1226301906429>

[SEPP Comment: See discussion on the science of personal destruction.]

British MP: Majority of my colleagues don't understand climate science

The UK's cross party consensus on climate change cannot be taken for granted according to a member of Parliament's Energy and Climate Change Select Committee.

By Ed King, RTCC, Mar 23, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.rtcc.org/policy/british-mp-majority-of-my-colleagues-dont-understand-climate-science/>

[SEPP Comment: Anyone who disagrees with me doesn't under the science.]

Climate Change Skepticism Stems from Recession

By Staff Writers, Storrs Mansfield CT (SPX), Mar 19, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Climate_Change_Skepticism_Stems_from_Recession_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The failure of the globe to obey global climate models is not an issue?]

Do you believe in climate change?

That's not a question you should be asking – it's a matter of empirical evidence, not belief

- Everything you need to know about climate change

By Vicky Pope, Guardian, Mar 23, 2012

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/mar/23/climate-change-believe-in-it>

[SEPP Comment: Hardly everything we need to know. No discussion of the glaring deficiencies of the climate models. See link immediately below.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Pinning down the debate

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Mar 23, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/3/23/pinning-down-the-debate.html>

[SEPP Comment: The claim of overwhelming evidence that man is influencing climate is not particularly meaningful, nor the issue. The issue is the extent to which carbon dioxide emissions are causing global warming. See link to article immediately above.]

Lower Climate Sensitivity Estimates: New Good News

By Chip Knappenberger, Master Resource, Mar 19, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/03/lower-climate-sensitivity-estimates/#more-19240>

[SEPP Comment: A somewhat technical presentation that the IPCC would be remiss and misleading, if it uses in its upcoming report the probability distributions for its models that it used in AR4.]

1970's Global Cooling – What The Scientists Said

By Paul Homewood, NLPKT, Mar 13, 2012 [H/t ICECAP]

<http://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2012/03/18/1970s-global-cooling-what-the-scientists-said/>

[SEPP Comment: A look at climate change in the early and mid 20th century.]

Accelerating global warming

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Mar 23, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/3/23/accelerating-global-warming.html>

[SEPP Comment: Links to an excellent example how one can create the trend desired on a sine curve by choosing the right end points.]

Global Warming As Cargo Cult Science

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Mar 17, 2012

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2012/03/global-warming-as-cargo-cult-science/>

Tropical Forests Rejoice!

By Patrick Michaels, World Climate Report, Mar 22, 2012

<http://www.worldclimaterreport.com/index.php/2012/03/22/tropical-forests-rejoice/#more-532>

[SEPP Comment: Thanks to increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide, the health of the studied tropical forest is improving.]

Climate Science From the Onion?

By Patrick Michaels, WUWT, Mar 21, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/03/21/climate-science-from-the-onion/>

[SEPP Comment: Some climate science stories appear to be right out of the humor magazine.]

Detecting evidence for CO2 fertilization from tree ring studies: The potential role of sampling biases

By Brienen, et al. Global Biogeochemical Cycles Mar 17, 2012

<http://www.agu.org/pubs/crossref/2012/2011GB004143.shtml>

Questioning European Green

Why we must repeal the Climate Change Act

By Roger Helmer, His Blog, Mar 20, 2012

<http://rogerhelmermep.wordpress.com/2012/03/20/why-we-must-repeal-the-climate-change-act/>
[SEPP Comment: A waste to the UK economy.]

The De-industrialisation of Europe

By Roger Helmer, His Blog, Mar 22, 2012 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://rogerhelmermep.wordpress.com/2012/03/22/the-de-industrialisation-of-europe-2/>

DECC and “Tackling Climate Change”

By Clive Best, His Blog, Mar 20, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://clivebest.com/blog/?p=3459>

Mixed messages on climate and energy policy

By Martin Livermore, Scientific Alliance, Mar 21, 2012

<http://www.scientific-alliance.org/scientific-alliance-newsletter/mixed-messages-climate-and-energy-policy>

[SEPP Comment: One idea of geo-engineering to stop Arctic warming. Also, discusses the inconsistency between British policy goals and practicality.]

Is carbon cutting a waste of time? Figures show Britain's 'footprint' has increased by 20 per cent despite green taxes

By Jason Groves, Mail, UK, Mar 19, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2117428/Britains-carbon-footprint-increased-20-cent-despite-green-taxes.html>

Questioning Green Elsewhere

Earth Hour: A Dissent

By Ross McKittrick, His Blog, Mar 23, 2012

<http://www.rossmckittrick.com/uploads/4/8/0/8/4808045/earthhour.pdf>

[SEPP Comment: McKittrick's view of the movement to stop electricity use.]

Ontario FIT is a miracle—high electricity prices create jobs!

Liberal government maintains — and may expand—program that will help double province's electricity prices

By Terence Corcoran, Financial Post, Mar 22, 2012

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/03/22/terence-corcoran-fit-fix-more-like-a-refuel/>

[SEPP Comment: We are in competition with other governments to capture a money losing industry. Let's spend more money!]

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Effective World Government Will Be Needed to Stave Off Climate Catastrophe

By Gary Stix, Scientific American, Mar 17, 2012 [H/t Catherine French]

<http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/2012/03/17/effective-world-government-will-still-be-needed-to-stave-off-climate-catastrophe/>

[SEPP Comment: Complete with satellite photo with the caption “The Receding Himalayan glaciers”, yet the glaciers are not receding.]

Fairy Tales on the Road to Rio

By Donna Laframboise, Mar 19, 2012

<http://nofrackingconsensus.com/2012/03/19/fairy-tales-on-the-road-to-rio/>

[SEPP Comment: International political science masking as physical science.]

“Fundamental steps needed now in global redesign of Earth system governance”

By Staff Writer, SPPI, Mar 23, 2012

<http://sppiblog.org/news/fundamental-steps-needed-now-in-global-redesign-of-earth-system-governance>

[SEPP Comment: Commentary on a story of the call by 32 social scientists for global governance to protect humanity from climate change.]

The Gleick Affair

Climate debate must be unfettered by obfuscation

By William Kininmonth and Des Moore, Letters, The Australian, Mar 19, 2012

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/opinion/climate-debate-must-be-unfettered-by-obfuscation/story-fn558imw-1226303256434>

Seeking a Common Ground

Pseudoscience (?)

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Mar 20, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/03/20/pseudoscience/#more-7791>

[SEPP Comment: A discussion on the issue is climate science a pseudoscience as some skeptics assert it is.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate, or be Vague?

NRC’s artless untruths on climate change and food security

By Rud Istvan, Climate Etc, Mar 22, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/03/22/nrcs-artless-untruths-on-climate-change-and-food-security/#more-7834>

[SEPP Comment: Examples of how the National Resource Council is misleading the public about the impact of warming on food production.]

Climate double talk

By Peter Smith, Quadrant, Mar 23, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/03/climate-double-talk>

We are entitled to expect more from the CSIRO [Australia’s national science agency]. It is duty bound to provide objective advice. If I can do this quick analysis of the data surely it can; unless its agenda overrides providing the Australian public with reliable information. We should expect more too from the Climate Commissioner. And the whole truth from politicians would be refreshing.

Climate to cost \$2 trillion year in damage to oceans: study

By Staff Writers, Paris (AFP) March 21, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Climate_to_cost_2_trillion_year_in_damage_to_oceans_study_999.html

"This is not a scaremongering forecast," says the report.

“Attention scientists and journalists: I want my word back. Forever, and Ever, and Ever”

By Harold Ambler, ICECAP, Mar 23, 2012

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/political-climate/attention_scientists_and_journalists_i_want_my_word_back_forever_and_ever_a/

[SEPP Comment: A humorous demand that the term “ever” be removed from pronouncements on climate change.]

Glacier-fed river systems threatened by climate change

By Staff Writers, Copenhagen, Denmark (SPX), Mar 21, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Glacier_fed_river_systems_threatened_by_climate_change_999.html

[SEPP Comment: As if they were ever stable.]

Lung doctors expect respiratory diseases will worsen with global climate change

By Staff Writers, Davis CA (SPX), Mar 21, 2012

http://www.interndaily.com/reports/Lung_doctors_expect_respiratory_diseases_will_worsen_with_global_climate_change_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Everything bad will intensify, nothing good will become better.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Global sea level likely to rise as much as 70 feet for future generations

By Staff Writers, New Brunswick NJ (SPX), Mar 23, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Global_sea_level_likely_to_rise_as_much_as_70_feet_for_future_generations_999.html

"The natural state of the earth with present carbon dioxide levels is one with sea levels about 20 meters higher than at present," he said.

[SEPP Comment: No reason to check the assumed sea level rise with satellite measured rise. The projected sensitivity of the earth to carbon dioxide is not being observed.]

Models v. Observations

Plants may absorb more carbon dioxide than previously thought

The capacity of terrestrial ecosystems to absorb carbon dioxide emissions from human activity may be greater than previously thought, according to a new study

By Simon Levey, Imperial College, London, Mar 22, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/newsandeventspggrp/imperialcollege/newssummary/news_22-3-2012-17-45-48

[SEPP Comment: An experiment that counters the assumptions in the climate models. According to geologists, the earth's atmosphere once had more carbon dioxide than oxygen. Then green plants eat most of carbon dioxide, releasing oxygen. Why is it strange that green plants consume carbon dioxide?]

Measurement Issues

Global temperature historic record updated

By Staff Writers, London (UPI), Mar 19, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Global_temperature_historic_record_updated_999.html

HADCRUT4: Statistics, Science and Spin

By David Whitehouse, The Observatory, Mar 20, 2012

<http://thegwgf.org/the-observatory/5262-hadcrut4-statistics-science-and-spin.html>

A first look at CRUTEM4

By Clive Best, His Blog, Mar 21, 2012

<http://clivebest.com/blog/?p=3493>

[SEPP Comment: Many US stations dropped, many stations in Arctic regions added.]

CRU's new HadCRUT4, hiding the decline yet again

By Anthony Watts with additions by Joe D'Aleo, ICECAP, Mar 21, 2012

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/crus_new_hadcrut4_hiding_the_decline_yet_again/

Those who cool the past are condemned to repeat it.

Changing Weather

The reality of a wet, cold summer has failed to dampen activists' enthusiasm for alarmism

By: Miranda Devine, Sunday Telegraph, AU, March 18, 2012[H/t WUWT]

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/the-reality-of-a-wet-cold-summer-has-failed-to-dampen-activists-enthusiasm-for-alarmism/story-e6frezz0-1226302557028>

[SEPP Comment: Alarmists predictions of drought led to human action contributing to the flooding of Brisbane.]

'Calmer' 2012 hurricane season forecast

By Staff Writers, Fort Collins, Colo. (UPI), Mar 21, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Calmer_2012_hurricane_season_forecast_999.html

March Warmth Trumps Many Previous High Temperature Records

By Christine McEnrue, Weatherbell Analytics, Mar 21, 2012

<http://www.weatherbell.com/weather-news/march-warmth-trumps-many-previous-record-high-temperatures/>

Unseasonably warm temperatures have dominated the eastern half of the nation for much of the month of March. New temperature records are being set with each passing day, some of which have been around since the early 1900s. Temperature records have been broken in more than 1,050 locations since March 13th. On March 19th alone, 367 high temperature records were broken across the US and 68 high temperature records were tied.

Changing Climate

Study Links Past Changes in Monsoon to Major Shifts in Indian Civilizations

By Staff Writers, Woods Hole MA (SPX), Mar 21, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Study_Links_Past_Changes_in_Monsoon_to_Major_Shifts_in_Indian_Civilizations_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Reinforcing HH Lamb's classic *Climate History and the Modern World*]

Scientists use rare mineral to correlate past climate events in Europe, Antarctica

By Staff Writers, Syracuse NY (SPX) Mar 23, 2012

[SEPP Comment: The statement: "We showed that the Northern European climate events influenced climate conditions in Antarctica," Lu says, implies causation. A more correct statement would be that they occurred at similar times.]

Paper: Antarctica did experience both MWP and LIA

By Lubos Motl, Reference Frame, Mar 23, 2012

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2012/03/paper-antarctica-did-experience-both.html#more>

Medieval warming WAS global – new science contradicts IPCC

By Lewis Page, A Register, Mar 23, 2012

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2012/03/23/warm_period_little_ice_age_global/

“The end for small glaciers” or anthropogenic circular reasoning?

By David Middleton, WUWT, Mar 19, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/03/19/the-end-for-small-glaciers-or-anthropogenic-circular-reasoning/>

Changing Seas

Millions of Americans at risk of flooding as sea levels rise

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), Mar 20, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Millions_of_Americans_at_risk_of_flooding_as_sea_levels_rise_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Why bother with observations when models give scarier scenarios.]

New study lowers estimate of ancient sea-level rise

By Staff Writers, New York NY (SPX), Mar 23, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/New_study_lowers_estimate_of_ancient_sea_level_rise_999.html

Average global sea level has risen eight inches since the 1880s. It is currently rising an inch per decade, driven by thermal expansion of seawater and melting of glaciers and ice sheets, including the still mostly intact ice sheets of Greenland and West Antarctica.

[SEPP Comment: Past sea level rise unrelated to CO2 emissions.]

New dataset provides 40 year record of CO2 accumulation in the surface ocean

By Staff Writers, Norwich UK (SPX), Mar 23, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/New_dataset_provides_40_year_record_of_CO2_accumulation_in_the_surface_ocean_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The premise behind blanket statements such as CO2 absorption by oceans benefit humanity by reducing CO2 concentrations is questionable.]

Changing Sea Ice

Could Arctic Sea Ice Decline be Caused by the Arctic Oscillation?

By Roy Spencer, His Blog, Mar 22, 2012

<http://www.drroyspencer.com/2012/03/could-arctic-sea-ice-decline-be-caused-by-the-arctic-oscillation/>

[SEPP Comment: As TWTW has reported, studies show that the flow of fresh water in the Arctic Ocean has changed.]

Sea Ice News Volume3, #2

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Mar 18, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/03/18/sea-ice-news-volume-3-2/>

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Corn insecticide linked to great die-off of beneficial honeybees

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX), Mar 23, 2012

http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Corn_insecticide_linked_to_great_die_off_of_beneficial_honeybees_99.html

[SEPP Comment: May be an important beginning to understanding the great die-offs.]

Litigation Issues

EU mulls 'green lawsuits' against China

By Staff Writers, Euractiv, Mar 21, 2012

<http://www.euractiv.com/climate-environment/eu-mulls-green-lawsuits-china-news-511615>

[SEPP Comment: Chinese subsidies of wind and solar are unfair, but EU's subsidies are not?]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Federal Agencies Implement Hundreds of Initiatives [for Renewable Energy]

By Staff Writers GAO-12-260, Feb 27, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-260>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Ending EPA's land grab

Supreme Court delivers lesson in humility to arrogant agency

Editorial, Washington Times, Mar 21, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/mar/21/editorial-ending-epas-land-grab/>

Court backs Idaho couple in battle with EPA

By Valerie Richardson, Washington Times, Mar 21, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/mar/21/court-backs-idaho-couple-battle-epa/>

Murray facts & fictions

By Max Rheese, Quadrant, AU, Mar 21, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/03/murray-facts-fictions>

How did we get to this, where a false premise based on junk science, is accepted as the starting point for major water reform?

EPA's Heavy Hand Seen In Gas Crisis

Editorial, IBD, Mar 22, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/article/605348/201203221853/epa-partly-to-blame-for-gas-crisis.htm>

Energy Issues – Non-US

Why North America is the new Middle East: Citibank

By Yadullah Hussain, Financial Post, Mar 23, 2012

http://business.financialpost.com/2012/03/23/why-north-america-is-the-new-middle-east-citibank/?_lsa=fed80879

[SEPP Comment: Projections from a narrow data base are deadly. But, the potential exists.]

Oil sands facing new scrutiny by U.S. politicians

By Robert Hiltz, Financial Post, Can, Mar 21, 2012

http://business.financialpost.com/2012/03/21/oil-sands-facing-new-scrutiny-by-u-s-politicians/?_lsa=fed80879

[SEPP Comment: A US Congressional hearing on oil sands that was more interested in factual details than political posturing.]

More countries start rare-earth mining

By Staff Writers, Newcastle, England (UPI), Mar 21, 2012

http://www.spacemart.com/reports/More_countries_start_rare-earth_mining_999.html

Energy Issues -- US

Exposing the 2 percent oil reserves myth

By Staff Writers, IER, Mar 13, 2012 [H/t Randy Randol]

<http://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/2012/03/13/exposing-the-2-percent-oil-reserves-myth/>

Yes, We Can Lower Gas Prices Today

By Thomas Pyle, IBD, Mar 22, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/article/605286/201203221818/how-to-cut-gasoline-prices-today.htm>

How the U.S. dropped the ball on energy independence

Editorial, Financial Post, Mar 20, 2012

http://business.financialpost.com/2012/03/20/how-the-u-s-dropped-the-ball-on-energy-independence/?_lsa=fed80879

U.S. Inches Toward Goal of Energy Independence

By Clifford Krauss and Eric Lipton, NYT, Mar 22, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/23/business/energy-environment/inching-toward-energy-independence-in-america.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&adxnnl=1&emc=edit_th_20120323&adxnnlx=1332504046-yIDUdIBwikg2PDIIGGFzRQ

[SEPP Comment: Even the NYT recognizes the impact of 21st century drilling techniques. Energy independence is a straw man argument: energy security is the key issue.]

Cash for Flunkers: A Bold New Energy Strategy

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Mar 20, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/03/20/cash-for-flunkers-a-bold-new-energy-strategy/>

[SEPP Comment: A humorous look at Washington's energy policy.]

Cheaper Gasoline Starts at the EPA

By Bruce Thompson, American Thinker, Mar 20, 2012

http://www.americanthinker.com/2012/03/cheaper_gasoline_starts_at_the_epa.html

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

France's Total eyes new China tie-up: report

By Staff Writers, New York (AFP), March 18, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Frances_Total_eyes_new_China_tie-up_report_999.html

[SEPP Comment: One of several agreements with international companies on oil or gas from shale.]

Study: 'Fracking' may increase air pollution health risks

By Neela Banerjee, LA Times, Mar 20, 2012

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/environment/la-me-gs-fracking-increases-air-pollution-health-risks-to-residents-20120320,0,7159850.story?track=rss>

Gas Drilling Did Not Contaminate Water in Pennsylvania Town, EPA Finds

By Staff Writers, AP, Mar 16, 2012 [H/t Timothy Wise]

<http://www.governing.com/news/local/ap-gas-drilling-did-not-contaminate-water-in-pennsylvania.html>

US Administration's Control of Oil and Gas

Fossil fuel production on federal lands at 9 year low

By Staff Writers, IER, Mar 15, 2012

<http://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/2012/03/15/fossil-fuel-production-on-federal-lands-at-9-year-low/>

Pipeline ruling filled with politics

White House sided with EPA against State Department

By J.C. Watts, Washington Times, Mar 21, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/mar/21/pipeline-ruling-filled-with-politics/>

TransCanada moves forward to build the southern half of Keystone XL pipeline...Obama says "OK"

By Rebecca DiFede, Net Right Daily, Mar 22, 2012

<http://netrightdaily.com/2012/03/transcanada-moves-forward-to-build-the-southern-half-of-keystone-xl-pipeline-obama-says-ok-2/>

Obama's Keystone XL Visit A Potemkin Village Photo-Op

Editorial, IBD, Mar 21, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/article/605139/201203211855/obama-keystone-xl-pipeline-photo-op.htm>

Oil Spills & Consequences

Chevron accused of 'environmental crime' in Brazil

By Staff Writers, Rio De Janeiro (AFP), March 21, 2012
http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Chevron_accused_of_environmental_crime_in_Brazil_999.html

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Nuclear power only option despite Fukushima: industry

By Staff Writers, Seoul (AFP), March 23, 2012

http://www.nuclearpowerdaily.com/reports/Nuclear_power_only_option_despite_Fukushima_industry_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Japan does not have domestic alternatives to generate electricity.]

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind

Study: it takes 10 units of alternative electricity sources to offset 1 unit of fossil fuel-generated power

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Mar 21, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/03/21/study-it-takes-10-units-of-alternative-electricity-sources-to-offset-a-unit-of-fossil-fuel-generated-power/#more-59751>

President Obama Doubles Down On Dim Renewable Energy Plan

By Margo Thorning, IBD, Mar 20, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/article/604964/201203201818/obama-stays-with-failed-energy-gambles.htm>

Carbon Schemes

Deep Saline Aquifers Could Provide Century’s Worth of CCS, MIT Study Says

By Staff Writers, Power News, Mar 22, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4487.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2408943&hq_l=16&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: At what cost? Will it be beneficial?]

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

Summit Surface Snow Temperatures of Greenland

Reference: Kobashi, T., Kawamura, K., Severinghaus, J.P., Barnola, J.-M., Nakaegawa, T., Vinther, B.M., Johnsen, S.J. and Box, J.E. 2011. High variability of Greenland surface temperature over the past 4000 years estimated from trapped air in an ice core. *Geophysical Research Letters* 38: 10.1029/2011GL049444.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/mar/20mar2012a1.html>

[SEPP Comment: Using different techniques than some prior studies, the researchers found somewhat higher temperatures over the last decade than the average over the past 4000 years – minus 29.9°C compared with minus 30.7°C. Yet, it was appreciably warmer for extended periods than for the last decade.]

Further Analyses of Hot and Cold Times on the Tibetan Plateau

Reference: Liu, Y., Cai, Q.F., Song, H.M., An, Z.S. and Linderholm, H.W. 2011. Amplitudes, rates, periodicities and causes of temperature variations in the past 2485 years and future trends over the central-eastern Tibetan Plateau. *Chinese Science Bulletin* 56: 2986-2994.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/mar/20mar2012a3.html>

"extreme climatic events on the Plateau, such as the Medieval Warm Period, Little Ice Age and 20th Century Warming appeared synchronously with those in other places worldwide."
the five researchers remark that the 1324-year cycle "approximates the well-known dominant climate change cycle of 1374±502 years in the Holocene (Bond et al., 1997) and the 1470-year cycle in

Dansgaard/Oeschger events in the last glacial period,"... "cold intervals corresponded to sunspot minimums."

Historical Simulations of an Astronomically-Based Climate Model vs. Those of the Global Circulation Models Promoted by the IPCC

Reference: Scafetta, N. 2012. Testing an astronomically based decadal-scale empirical harmonic climate model versus the IPCC (2007) general circulation climate models. *Journal of Atmospheric and Solar-Terrestrial Physics*: 10.1016/j.jastp.2011.12.005.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/mar/21mar2012a1.html>

[SEPP Comment: Project warming of 0.3-1.2°C by 2100 is considerably less than the IPCC models project and in line with empirical studies of the earth's sensitivity to increasing CO2]

The Post-1950 Activity of Western North Pacific Tropical Cyclones

Reference: Ren, F., Liang, J., Wu, G., Dong, W. and Yang, X. 2011. Reliability analysis of climate change of tropical cyclone activity over the Western North Pacific. *Journal of Climate* 24: 5887-5898.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/mar/21mar2012a3.html>

Three different data sets "show no obvious increasing or decreasing trend over the past 50 years."

Health, Energy, and Climate

2 California researchers win prestigious Tyler Prize

John H. Seinfeld, a professor at Caltech, was recognized for research into the origin and evolution of particles in the atmosphere. Kirk R. Smith, a professor at UC Berkeley, was cited for research demonstrating the debilitating risk of air pollution in developing nations.

By Scott Gold, Los Angeles Times, Mar 20, 2012

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-environmental-award-20120320,0,2557112.story>

[SEPP Comment: Indoor air pollution from traditional fuels is devastating.]

Oh Mann!

Reader Rebuttal (Michael E. Mann): Climate change research

By Michael Mann, Orange County Register, Mar 16, 2012

<http://www.ocregister.com/articles/climate-345002-change-emails.html>

[SEPP Comment: Fred Singer's comments will appear next week.]

Prince William climate change case takes center stage

By Tom Jackman, Washington Post, Mar 21, 2012 [H/t Chris Horner]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-state-of-nova/post/pwm-climate-change-case-takes-center-stage/2012/03/19/gIQA1vLGQS_blog.html

[SEPP Comment: A solid review of the legal issues involved in the freedom of information demand for Mr. Mann's emails from the University of Virginia.]

Environmental Industry

Obama Sells Out Science for Campaign Cash

By Robert Goldberg, American Spectator, Mar 21, 2012

<http://spectator.org/archives/2012/03/21/obama-sells-out-science-for-ca>

Other Scientific News

Geomagnetic data reveal unusual nature of recent solar minimum

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Mar 19, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/03/19/geomagnetic-data-reveal-unusual-nature-of-recent-solar-minimum/>

Other News that May Be of Interest

Nitrate in drinking water poses health risks for rural Californians

By Staff Writers, Davis CA (SPX), Mar 19, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Nitrate_in_drinking_water_poses_health_risks_for_rural_Californians_999.html

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Chu: Better than A-Minus on Keeping Gas Prices Down

By CJ Ciaramella, Washington Free Beacon, Mar 20, 2012 [H/t Alexanian Moorad]

<http://freebeacon.com/chu-better-than-a-minus-on-keeping-gas-prices-down-2/>

Energy requirements make Antarctic fur seal pups vulnerable to climate change

By Staff Writers, Santa Cruz CA (SPX), Mar 23, 2012

http://www.terradaily.com/reports/Energy_requirements_make_Antarctic_fur_seal_pups_vulnerable_to_climate_change_999.html

[SEPP Comment: The Antarctic equivalent to polar bears? But polar bears eat seal pups – at the other pole.]

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ARTICLES:

1. Supremes 9, EPA 0

The Justices rebuke the bureaucracy's water torture.

Editorial, WSJ, Mar 22, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204257504577152830079320346.html?mod=ITP_opinion_2

These are hard times for economic liberty, but the Supreme Court on Wednesday offered a modest reason to hope. In a 9-0 ruling, they concluded that the Environmental Protection Agency can't terrorize Americans via regulation without allowing them a day in court.

In 2005, Michael and Chantell Sackett bought a small property in an Idaho residential neighborhood, intending to build a home. Once construction began, the EPA decided without any notice that the plot was a "wetland" because it was near a lake. There is no water on the property. The agency's pen pushers served the Sacketts with a "compliance order" that said they were violating the Clean Water Act and would be fined \$37,500 per day until they restored the property to its original condition, if not criminal charges as well.

As Deputy Solicitor General Malcolm Stewart revealed during oral arguments, the Sacketts were actually liable for twice that—\$37,500 per day for violating the Clean Water Act, and another \$37,500 for violating the compliance order. Mr. Stewart defended the double secret penalties by saying the EPA had no statutory obligation to disclose them.

The case landed at the High Court after the Sacketts tried to appeal the wetlands designation. But the EPA refused to grant a review or lookback hearing, because an appeals process isn't explicitly required by the Clean Water Act. Only after the EPA moved to enforce the compliance order would the Sacketts get their day in court.

The EPA almost never needs to enforce, however, because disobeying a compliance order—even one that is later overturned—is legal proof in its mind of "willfulness" or a tacit admission of guilt. The only way to defend yourself is to break the law and therefore invite even higher penalties. The Sacketts claimed this Star Chamber violates their due process rights.

As Justice Samuel Alito asked during oral argument, "If you related the facts of this case as they come to us to an ordinary homeowner, don't you think most ordinary homeowners would say this kind of thing can't happen in the United States?" Yes, which is why most Americans will welcome the decision that the Sacketts can challenge the compliance order in court under the Administrative Procedure Act.

Alas, the High Court's narrow ruling does not provide greater relief to the thousands who are tortured by the EPA's expansive interpretation of the Clean Water Act. That law was meant to prevent pollution in "navigable waters." It says nothing about wetlands. But the EPA created that writ through rule-making, and last May the Obama EPA issued new regulations that expand this discretion even further.

In a concurring opinion in *Sackett v. EPA*, Justice Alito accurately noted that, despite the ruling, "the combination of the uncertain reach of the Clean Water Act and draconian penalties imposed for the sort of violations alleged in this case still leaves most property owners with little practical alternative but to dance to the EPA's tune."

Congress ought to amend the Clean Water Act to make the law's jurisdiction clearer. Meantime, the ordeal of the Sacketts shows once again how this agency with a \$10 billion budget and 17,000 agents has become a regulatory tyranny for millions of law-abiding Americans.

2. Cheap Gasoline and Human Rights

By Sam Kazman, Letter, WSJ, Mar 19, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304459804577285420604906582.html?mod=ITP_opinion_1

The notion of \$2.50 gasoline would not only be a "veritable policy revolution" domestically ("Newt Is Right About Gas Prices" by Holman W. Jenkins, Jr., *Business World*, March 10), it would be a gutsy display of American exceptionalism for the rest of the world. This is not because Americans are divinely entitled to federally subsidized fuel (they're not), but because they do have a right to gas prices that aren't artificially jacked up by government drilling restrictions and taxes.

Americans aren't the only ones. As booming car ownership in India and China demonstrates, automobility satisfies some pretty basic human needs and desires. Unfortunately for central planners around the world, there's nothing worse than a technology that lets people go where they want to, when they want to. For an American leader of whatever party to take the lead in shedding gasoline's sin-product status would be downright revolutionary.

In the early 1800s, as railroads spread across Britain, the Duke of Wellington supposedly sneered that trains would "only encourage the common people to move about needlessly." Aristocrats could always move about; only when the rest of us were able to do so did this become a so-called problem. A decade ago our aristocrats looked down on SUVs; today they look down on affordable gas. Either way, their attitudes toward mobility are no different than the Duke's views two centuries ago, and no less backward.

3. Gas Set to Test Capacity Limits

By Dan Strumpf, WSJ, Mar 22, 2012

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303812904577295873283143892.html>

[SEPP Comment: *The unexpected natural gas problem – where to store it?*]

The boom in natural-gas production has hit a new pressure point: The U.S. is running out of storage space.

Gas output has reached record levels in recent months, thanks in large part to the expansion of shale-gas fields. And the warm U.S. winter has reduced the amount of gas needed to heat homes and offices. That has filled storage facilities—often underground salt caverns or depleted oil and gas fields—to 57.8% capacity.

The boom in natural-gas production has hit a new pressure point: The U.S. is running out of storage space, Dan Strumpf reports on Markets Hub. (Photo: Reuters/Tim Shaffer)

With forecasters anticipating a mild summer, reducing the need for air conditioning, and fields continuing to pump out gas, many market experts anticipate storage facilities will fill up by the end of October.

"It's like two trains coming together on the same track," said Alan Armstrong, chief executive of the gas-and-liquids pipeline-and-storage company Williams Cos. WMB -2.58%

That is bad news for producers, who would likely be forced to cut their prices even further to unload their natural gas, and possibly stop production altogether if inventories fill up. But it could be good news for homeowners, as it would lower heating costs further. That could help offset rising prices for other goods, notably gasoline at the pump.

Natural-gas prices already are down 46% over the past 12 months, settling Wednesday at \$2.36 per million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Gas-heating costs fell to a nine-year low this winter, according to government estimates.

"A lower power price and a lower natural-gas price is going to be helpful in preserving some of the economic momentum we're seeing right now," said Jason Schenker, president of Prestige Economics, a consultancy. "If we had high natural-gas prices and high oil prices, which is more what it looked like in 2008...we'd be in a different situation."

Gas in storage now is at its highest ever for this time of year. Usually, inventories drop considerably in winter, then build up again over the spring and summer, when less gas is used.

On Thursday, the U.S. government is expected to report stockpiles of natural gas increased last week for the first time since November. Typically, gas still would be flowing out of storage through March.

The industry faced a similar situation in late 2009, when inventories peaked at 98.7% of storage capacity, sending prices tumbling. The problem was resolved in a matter of weeks amid a colder-than-average winter.

This time, though, the U.S. is starting the year with fuller storage tanks than at this time in 2009 and little chance of a big pickup in demand to take up the excess gas.

Biju Perincheril, an analyst at Jefferies & Co., predicts prices could fall below \$2 per million BTUs if inventories fill up later this year.

Hedge funds are placing bets that will pay off if prices fall further. They are buying put options, which become more valuable as gas prices decline—put options convey the right to sell at a set price. The number of open positions in July put options that pay out if natural gas falls to \$2 or lower has risen more than 700% since January, according to exchange data.

"The overall sentiment is that we're going to be at max" inventories, said Mike Guido, associate director of energy hedge-fund sales at Macquarie.

Gas in storage rose 12% to end last year at 3.472 trillion cubic feet. It dropped slightly as winter progressed. Analysts expect the government to say storage rose six billion cubic feet, to 2.375 trillion cubic feet, last week. As of last year, the Energy Information Administration estimated gas storage capacity at 4.103 trillion cubic feet, the latest figure available.

Still, some market observers say storage is unlikely to reach capacity. Prices are likely to remain low, they say, and that will drive more power producers to switch to burning gas instead of coal.

"Coal displacement is at record levels for this time of year and has climbed significantly with the drop in gas prices," said Mike Zenker, an analyst with Barclays Capital. He added that utilities could further boost their use of natural gas if prices continue to fall.

Some industry participants say the shortage of storage space may be the catalyst the industry needs to curb production, a step that would be needed if gas prices were to rebound.

Chesapeake Energy Corp. CHK -3.02% already has announced plans to cut production. And the number of rigs dedicated to exploring for gas in the U.S. has fallen to 663 from 811 so far this year, according to data from oilfield-services company Baker Hughes Inc.

"I'm not looking for fundamental upward pressure on prices this week or this month or maybe not even in the second quarter," said Tim Evans, energy analyst at Citi Futures Perspective. "But there is some potential for weaker production numbers to translate into some support for prices into the second half of the year."

Gas producers, though, have plenty of reasons to keep the valves open. For one, they have spent billions of dollars investing in new production. And, in many fields, the cost of production is still lower than prices, analysts say.

Also, natural-gas wells typically yield a mix of crude oil and so-called natural-gas liquids, both of which fetch much higher prices.

"If gas went to zero, you'd still see drilling" in certain parts of the country, said Adam Bedard, senior director at consultancy Bentek Energy.

4. Climate Wars Continue With More Heat Than Light

By Michael Mann, Letter, WSJ, Mar 21, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304724404577291600175012584.html?mod=ITP_opinion_1

[SEPP Comment: Some may disagree with Mr. Mann's interpretation of scientific facts.]

Anne Jolis's review of my book "The Hockey Stick and the Climate Wars: Dispatches From the Front Lines" (Bookshelf, March 15) tries to make a book about climate science and my experiences being attacked by politicians come across as a polemic.

For instance, Ms. Jolis labeled me "anti-carbon" in an attempt to politically pigeonhole my story. For the record, it would be difficult for any scientist to be against an element in the periodic table.

The article's online headline claims I "argue" that fossil-fuel burning is driving climate change. But communicating scientific facts is not arguing. Every national academy of science in the world, including

our own, agrees that climate change is due to increased fossil fuel use. Only politicians and ideologues want to argue about basic, established science.

Ms. Jolis repeats criticisms of research I conducted that showed modern-day temperatures are unusually high ("the hockey stick"). My book explains that research, its critics and independent studies that have since validated and extended its original findings. But Ms. Jolis tries to dismiss these scientific discussions as "score-settling" and "sound bites."

The biggest oversight in Ms. Jolis's review is that it doesn't describe any of the stories I tell about being attacked by politicians. Those experiences are what prompted me to write the book.

Luckily, since the book was published, the Virginia Supreme Court stopped Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli from invading scientists' privacy because he doesn't like our research conclusions.

Nevertheless, our national dialogue about climate change remains broken. The Journal's decision to publish Ms. Jolis's review has done nothing to repair it.

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