

The Week That Was: 2018-11-24 (November 24, 2018)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

Quote of the Week: *“I have observed that not the man who hopes when others despair, but the man who despairs when others hope, is admired by a large class of persons as a sage.”* — John Stuart Mill [H/t Matt Ridley]

Number of the Week: \$1,096/MWh – An increase of 22 times

THIS WEEK:

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



Dear Reader of The Week That Was,

The Science & Environmental Policy Project (SEPP) is a 501-c-3 organization, incorporated in Virginia. Its Federal I.D. Number is 54-1645372 and donations are US tax deductible. Established in 1990 by S. Fred Singer to challenge government environmental policies based on poor science, SEPP stands for objective science, based on hard evidence.

No matter how elaborate, results from numerical models that are not thoroughly tested against hard evidence are speculation and can not be relied upon. Testing the results from using parts of a model against the results from the entire model is a ruse used by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It is like declaring a simple linear model with two unknowns has a unique solution. Major government policies based on speculation are a waste of resources.

Our founder, Dr. Singer, is Chairman emeritus. Physicist Dr. Thomas Sheahen is Chairman. Other distinguished scientists serve on the board of directors. Ken Haapala continues as president and oversees general operations. We continue to be very productive.

Two prevalent myths are damaging our economy and hurting the less fortunate: 1) greenhouse gases, chiefly carbon dioxide, are causing dangerous global warming; and 2) wind and solar can easily replace fossil fuels, nuclear, and hydro in electricity generation. Both are false, yet widely accepted. We continue to contest these myths, and others, with hard evidence.

In collaboration with like-minded groups, we produce hard-hitting comments for the public record and provide scientific testimony on Federal government climate and energy policy. We are actively attempting to eliminate or change the EPA's endangerment finding, that carbon dioxide, CO₂, poses a danger to public health, which lacks hard evidence.

In 2007, SEPP established NIPCC (Non-governmental International Panel on Climate Change) to respond to the false claims of the UN-IPCC, and its followers, who claim, without hard evidence, that the use of fossil fuels, and CO2 emissions, will lead to climate disasters. The Heartland Institute continues the NIPCC efforts with well-attended sessions of the International Conference on Climate Change and the NIPCC reports at www.NIPCCreport.org.

Contrary to frequent attacks, SEPP does not receive support from oil, tobacco, or chemical companies – or government organizations. SEPP accepts donations from private individuals and small contributions from foundations. The appropriate IRS tax filings are made by an independent CPA and are “Open to Public Inspection.”

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USGCRP Prophecies: On November 23, the US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) released the second volume of its two-part series on human caused global warming. The first volume, the “Climate Science Special Report (CSSR)” supposedly discussed the physical science but was largely confined to projections from poorly tested global climate models and physical events unrelated to increasing carbon dioxide. The current release came in time for the upcoming 24th Conference of Parties (COP-24) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Katowice Poland. According to official announcements, this conference will additionally include “the 14th session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) and the third part of the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1-3)” – international bureaucratic science at its best.

Unlike the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which supposedly provides scientific guidance on human-caused variations to climate, the USGCRP is obligated to provide scientific guidance on both human-caused and natural climate change. The USGCRP has conveniently forgotten the part concerning natural climate change. In the current report, the USGCRP avoids discussing nature and the need to substantiate its claims with physical evidence by stating:

“However, the assumption that current and future climate conditions will resemble the recent past is no longer valid.” Overview Chapter 1 p.1.

History is to be forgotten. In short, physical evidence cannot contradict USGCRP projections / predictions. The USGCRP created an illusory climate using complex climate models without a physical basis. As such, the entire 1100-page report can be viewed as an assembly of prophecies that may or may not occur in the next 25 to 100 years – no contradictory evidence needed. Only the evidence presented in the USGCRP report is valid. This attitude reflects the status of science in the parts of the 13 federal government agencies that participated in the report: Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Health & Human Services, Interior, State, Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, National Aeronautics & Space Administration, National Science Foundation, Smithsonian Institution and U.S. Agency for International Development.

Hopefully, the entire agencies will not base policies on long-term prophecies from poorly tested models. For example, the Department of Defense needs to defend the country against real threats, not imaginary ones. According to the report, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), part of the Department of Commerce, is responsible for the organization and administration of the report. Perhaps the claims without hard evidence to support them should not be a surprise. For some years, NOAA has been prophesizing sea level rise far beyond anything that can be concluded from actual measurements, to include that sea levels will rise exponentially (ever more rapidly). Who said bureaucrats don't have imagination?

Ironically, immediately prior to the new release, the Northeast US experienced, perhaps, the coldest Thanksgiving in 100 years. See links under Defending the Orthodoxy, Changing Weather, and <http://sdg.iisd.org/events/unfccc-cop-24/>

Trump v. Trump: The global warming chorus immediately seized on the new USGCRP report claiming the Trump administration is contradicting President Trump's claims about global warming. Amusingly, some of the chorus interviewed people who worked on the USGCRP, who were political appointees under the Obama Administration. Part of the problem stems from the disorganization of the Trump administration after his election. The administration was not prepared. Another part of the problem is the behavior of the President, which can be described as erratic.

Another major part of the problem is the "slow-roll" of confirming appointees to key administrative positions. Democrats in the Senate are taking the maximum amount of time legally possible to permit voting on confirming or denying appointments. Although somewhat different, the confirmation of Judge Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court was a televised, highly publicized example of the "slow-roll." Many key positions below heads of departments still need to be filled. See links under Defending the Orthodoxy.

Hard Evidence v. USGCRP: Much of the latest USGCRP report is vague and unsubstantiated. However, there are sections in the USGCRP report where the prophecies can be tested against hard evidence. It is far easier to explain these deficiencies to a non-expert audience than to explain deficiencies in the modeling. If the report were competently executed there should be no deficiencies in empirically testable claims.

Probably the most glaring deficiency, which goes to the overall competence of the report, is in the Agriculture section, apparently signed-off by the Department of Agriculture. Section 9 Agriculture of the Summary states:

“Rising temperatures, extreme heat, drought, wildfire on rangelands, and heavy downpours are expected to increasingly disrupt agricultural productivity in the United States. Expected increases in challenges to livestock health, declines in crop yields and quality, and changes in extreme events in the United States and abroad threaten rural livelihoods, sustainable food security, and price stability. [Italics in original.]

*“Climate change presents numerous challenges to sustaining and enhancing crop productivity, livestock health, and the economic vitality of rural communities. While some regions (such as the Northern Great Plains) may see conditions conducive to expanded or alternative crop productivity over the next few decades, overall, yields from major U.S. crops are expected to decline as a consequence of increases in temperatures and possibly changes in water availability, soil erosion, and disease and pest outbreaks. **Increases in temperatures during the growing season in the Midwest are projected to be the largest contributing factor to declines in the productivity of U.S. agriculture.** Projected increases in extreme heat conditions are expected to lead to further heat stress for livestock, which can result in large economic losses for producers. Climate change is also expected to lead to large-scale shifts in the availability and prices of many agricultural products across the world, with corresponding impacts on U.S. agricultural producers and the U.S. economy. These changes threaten future gains in commodity crop production and put rural livelihoods at risk. Numerous adaptation strategies are available to cope with adverse impacts of climate variability and change on agricultural production. These include altering what is produced, modifying the inputs used for production, adopting new technologies, and adjusting management strategies. However, these strategies have limits under severe climate change impacts and would require sufficient long- and short-term investment in changing practices.” [Boldface and Italics added.]*

It is the decline of agriculture productivity with the projected (guessed at) increase in temperatures that is most interesting. US crop yields are growing significantly in the Midwest and elsewhere. But the USGCRP would probably call this a temporary condition that does not contradict its prophesy. But the USGCRP would probably call this a temporary condition that does not contradict its prophecy. But crop yields are growing world-wide, including in the tropics, which are considerably warmer than the US, and will remain so unless the equator shifts (or the axis of rotation changes significantly).

According to Investopedia, the four countries that produce the most food in calorie content are, in descending order: China, India, United States and Brazil. [Note this is food, not high-value agriculture products such as flowers, bulbs, dairy, etc. Using greenhouses made of petroleum products in which the ambient CO2 is often doubled or tripled, The Netherlands is a major producer of agriculture products, flowers, bulbs, garden vegetables, etc. and not included in the list of producers by calorie content.]

Two of the four largest agriculture producers, in calorie content, are predominately between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn with climates that can be predominantly described as warm and humid, with or without a dry season. China and the US are largely outside the tropics, [Hawaii is not a major food producing area]. Apparently, the authors of the report are so enthralled with their modeling skills that they failed to look at a globe.

Further, the US is the major food producing exporter, but it is facing increasing competition from Brazil, which is largely in the tropics. According to reports, Brazil has increased agriculture production by 400% in 20 years, particularly in food crops such as soybeans, grains, and maize

(corn) with much of the increase in Central Brazil, centered about latitude 16 degrees South. Parts of the Department of Agriculture are aware of this development, but apparently not those parts that participated in the USGCRP. See links under Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine.

USGCRP v. DQA (IQA) The first National Climate Assessment was released in 2000, in the last year of the Clinton Administration. It earned the distinction as being the first government report to be considered deficient under the Data Quality Act (DQA), or Information Quality Act (IQA), of 2001. The IQA is a simple, short rider to an appropriations bill that directs the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to issue government-wide guidelines that "provide policy and procedural guidance to Federal agencies for ensuring and maximizing the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information (including statistical information) disseminated by Federal agencies". Other federal agencies are also required to publish their own guidelines for information quality and peer review agendas.

Humanity evolved in the tropics about 200,000 years ago during periods of extreme climate change. The current warm period, the Holocene Epoch, started about 11,700 years ago. According to the International Commission on Stratigraphy, the earth has experienced three periods of climate change since emerging from the depths of the last Ice Age into the Holocene Epoch. Agriculture began during the Greenlandian Age, the warmest time of the Holocene Epoch. Civilization began during the Northgrippian Age, warmer than today, about 8200 to 4200 years ago. During the subsequent cooling, about 4200 years ago, humanity suffered and cultures disappeared. These changes appear to be unrelated to carbon dioxide (CO₂). Yet the USGCRP declares that climate has been stable for 12,000 years and humanity is threatened by global warming from CO₂?

The Fourth National Climate Assessment offers no hard evidence, just vague assertions and claims that past climate change is no evidence about future climate change. It earns the distinction that it does not meet the standards of the Information Quality Act, and each page should be stamped: "Based on speculation, not hard evidence." See

<http://www.stratigraphy.org/index.php/ics-chart-timescale>

Climate Change Act of 2008: Writing for the Global Warming Policy Foundation, Rupert Darwall states differences the UK's Climate Change Act of 2008 has made for energy in that country as compared with the lofty goals of the Act. Rather than energy that is affordable, secure, sustainable, government chooses clear losers which cost the consumers much more; price volatility has increased; consumers have high costs with no benefits; what is called "smart grid" is actually rationing; and fuel poverty is re-defined rather than eliminated.

Among additional issues, the Act shows the dangers of politicians adopting a herd mentality and taking action that "feels good" rather than carefully thinking the issues through. Also, it shows how clever economists can manipulate numbers to make that which is very expensive appear to be cheap, such as using tricks such as discount rates, which few people understand.

Thankfully, the US Congress did not adopt cap-and-trade and other measures that punish the public under the guise of protecting it. No wonder the USGCRP and the UN bureaucrats are so insistent "we have no time left" to fight global warming / climate change. The public is catching on to the games these politicians and their supporters play. See links under Challenging the Orthodoxy.

Correcting Errors: Last week's TWTW discussed errors independent British researcher Nic Lewis found in a widely-cited paper on ocean warming and how responsibly members of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography reacted to this discovery.

Both Nic Lewis and Judith Curry have further comments on the issue. Those involved are to be thanked for their professional behavior. See links under Challenging the Orthodoxy and Correcting Errors.

No Easy Energy Transformation: With detailed analysis, Roger Andrews of Energy Matters takes apart a report by the International Renewable Agency which claims to show that renewables can easily replace fossil fuels with low increases in costs to the consumer. The original study was supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy of Germany. It is doubtful that Andrews will receive any such support for his effective critique. But it is with appropriate critiques that our knowledge can advance – something bureaucratic government entities consider unneeded. See links under Questioning Green Elsewhere.

Number of the Week: \$1,096/MWh – An increase of 22 times. Roger Andrews did a rough analysis on how much electricity would cost in California if the state goes 100% wind and solar using battery storage. Andrews estimates that electricity will cost about \$1,096/MWh. This rough calculation has assumptions some may challenge.

Based on estimates by others, wind and solar would cost \$50/MWh without storage. The current EIA estimate of levelized cost of onshore wind is \$48/MWh. (Offshore wind is \$125/MWh; Solar PV \$59/MWh, Solar thermal is unknown). Compared with onshore wind alone, battery storage increases the cost of the electricity generation by 22 times.

Without storage, when wind and solar fail, electricity in California would have to come from elsewhere. Unlike Germany, where wind and solar failures tend to somewhat balance out depending on the season, lessening storage costs; in California wind and solar tend to seasonally fail simultaneously.

These calculations go to the extremely important point that wind and solar promoters and many politicians ignore – the costs of reliable electricity to the consumer. The cost of wind or solar generation may come down, but the costs of storage are devastating. It is in storage that major technological break-throughs are needed. Deploying more wind and solar does not benefit the public until the storage issues are solved. See links under Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy – Storage and https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/aeo/pdf/electricity_generation.pdf

NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Commentary: Is the Sun Rising?

NASA Detects a Sunspot from the Next Solar Cycle

By Staff Writers, Spaceweather.com, Via GWPF, Nov 20, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/nasa-detects-a-sunspot-from-the-next-solar-cycle/>

Challenging the Orthodoxy -- NIPCC

Climate Change Reconsidered II: Physical Science

Idso, Carter, and Singer, Lead Authors/Editors, 2013

<https://www.heartland.org/media-library/pdfs/CCR-II/CCR-II-Full.pdf>

Summary: <http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/ccr2a/pdf/Summary-for-Policymakers.pdf>

Climate Change Reconsidered II: Biological Impacts

Idso, Idso, Carter, and Singer, Lead Authors/Editors, 2014

<http://www.nipccreport.org/reports/ccr2b/pdf/Full-Report.pdf>

Summary: <https://www.heartland.org/media-library/pdfs/CCR-IIb/Summary-for-Policymakers.pdf>

Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming

The NIPCC Report on the Scientific Consensus

By Craig D. Idso, Robert M. Carter, and S. Fred Singer, NIPCC, Nov 23, 2015

<http://climatechangereconsidered.org/>

Download with no charge

<https://www.heartland.org/policy-documents/why-scientists-disagree-about-global-warming>

Nature, Not Human Activity, Rules the Climate

S. Fred Singer, Editor, NIPCC, 2008

http://www.sepp.org/publications/nipcc_final.pdf

Climate Change Reconsidered II: Fossil Fuels

By Multiple Authors, Bezdek, Idso, Legates, and Singer eds., Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change, Draft Summary for Policymakers, NIPCC, Oct 3, 2018

<http://climatechangereconsidered.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/10-05-18-DRAFT-CCR-II-Fossil-Fuels-Summary-for-Policy-Makers.pdf>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

In the Climate Deception Game Where The End Justifies the Means, the Objective is the Headline.

Guest Opinion: Dr. Tim Ball, WUWT, Nov 17, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/11/17/in-the-climate-deception-game-where-the-end-justifies-the-means-the-objective-is-the-headline/>

Ten Years On, The UK Climate Change Act Is Harming the Poor Press Release, GWPF, Nov 22, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/ten-years-on-the-uk-climate-change-act-is-harming-the-poor/>

Link to report: The Climate Change Act at Ten: History's Most Expensive Virtue Signal

By Rupert Darwall, GWPF, Report 31, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.org/content/uploads/2018/11/10years-CCA.pdf>

The Froth of the Fourth

Guest Post by Willis Eschenbach, WUWT, Nov 23, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/11/23/the-froth-of-the-fourth/>

Challenging the Orthodoxy and Correcting Errors

Admitting mistakes in a 'hostile environment'

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc. Nov 19, 2018

<https://judithcurry.com/2018/11/19/admitting-mistakes-in-a-hostile-environment/>

Resplandy et al. Part 4: Further developments

By Nic Lewis, Climate Etc. Nov 23, 2018

<https://judithcurry.com/2018/11/23/resplandy-et-al-part-4-further-developments/>

“They nevertheless illustrate why publication of computer code is so important. In this case, the Methods section was commendably detailed, but in reality the derivation of annual mean O₂ and CO₂ data and the weighting given to data from the three stations used was different from that indicated in the Methods, radically so as regards the station weighting.”

Defending the Orthodoxy

Fourth National Climate Assessment: Volume II: Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States

The National Climate Assessment (NCA) assesses the science of climate change and variability and its impacts across the United States, now and throughout this century.

By Multiple Writers, U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2018

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>

Federal report sounds alarm on growing impact of climate change

By Emily Birnbaum, The Hill, Nov 23, 2018

<https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/418036-federal-report-sounds-alarm-on-growing-impact-of-climate-change>

"Global average temperature has increased by about 1.8 [degrees (F?)] from 1901 to 2016, and observational evidence does not support any credible natural explanations for this amount of warming," the report reads. "Instead, the evidence consistently points to human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse or heat-trapping gases, as the dominant cause."

U.S. Climate Report Warns of Damaged Environment and Shrinking Economy

By Coral Davenport and Kendra Pierre-Louis, New York Times, Nov 23, 2018

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/23/climate/us-climate-report.html?emc=edit_th_181124&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=598318591124

Greenhouse gases triggering more changes than we can handle

Prediction is, by 2100, the number of hazards occurring concurrently will increase, making it even more difficult for people to cope

Press Release, University of Hawaii at Manoa, No 19, 2018

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-11/uoha-ggt111518.php

Link to paper: Broad threat to humanity from cumulative climate hazards intensified by greenhouse gas emissions.

By Camilo Mora, et al. Nature Climate Change, Nov 19, 2018

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0315-6>

Climate change is going to make life on Earth a whole lot worse, report predicts

“The evidence was absolutely mind-blowing to me,” said the lead researcher.

By Maggie Fox, NBC News, Nov 19, 2018

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/climate-change-going-make-life-earth-whole-lot-worse-report-n938101>

Link to paper: Broad threat to humanity from cumulative climate hazards intensified by greenhouse gas emissions

By Camilo Mora, et al. Nature: Climate Change, Nov 19, 2018

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-018-0315-6>

“We found 27 attributes of human health impacted by climate hazards, of which death, disease and mental health were the most commonly observed,”

“People can die from heat stress, drown during hurricanes, starve during droughts and suffocate in fires. Disease patterns can change as the insects that carry disease proliferate and spread yellow fever, malaria and dengue. The destruction of forests spreads disease, also, the team said.”

From the abstract: “We found traceable evidence for 467 pathways by which human health, water, food, economy, infrastructure and security have been recently impacted by climate hazards such as warming, heatwaves, precipitation, drought, floods, fires, storms, sea-level rise and changes in natural land cover and ocean chemistry.”

[SEPP Comment: And yellow fever, malaria, and dengue did not exist before CO2-caused warming?]

Climate Change, Markets, and Marxism

The belief that climate change is a hoax is comforting to anyone who thinks that government must play no role in the economy. But combating climate change threatens neither prosperity nor private enterprise.

By Adair Turner, Project Syndicate, Nov 22, 2018

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/low-cost-zero-carbon-economy-needs-competition-by-adair-turner-2018-11>

“Market competition is not only compatible with a zero-carbon economy. It is essential. Carbon prices and appropriate regulation can provide the required incentives, but competition among profit-motivated firms is crucial to ensuring that decarbonization is achieved at the lowest possible cost.”

[SEPP Comment: If SEPP is correct and the influence of CO2 on temperatures is minor, the solution is a waste of resources.]

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Peer Review: Selfie-Sticks & Snobbery

By Donna Laframboise, Big Picture News, Nov 21, 2018

<https://nofrackingconsensus.com/2018/11/21/peer-review-selfie-sticks-snobbery/>

The threat to the environment that the green lobby tries to ignore

By Andrew Montford, The Spectator, UK, Nov 20, 2018 [H/t Paul Homewood]

<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2018/11/the-threat-to-the-environment-that-the-green-lobby-tries-to-ignore/>

“The problem is that as soon as you start looking for solutions to possible climate change, it very quickly becomes obvious that the cure is far, far worse than the disease. Nevertheless, the green lobby needs to raise funds to keep itself in business. Talk of “huge additional action” can therefore be a good way to keep the money flowing in, just so long as there is a certain reticence about precisely what that action is. Expect the silence of the greens to continue.”

Zhores Dedvedev, 93, Dissident Scientist Who Opposed Soviet Pseudoscience, Is Dead

By Staff Writers, The New York Times, Via GWPF, Nov 18, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/zhores-medvedev-93-dissident-scientist-who-opposed-soviet-pseudoscience-is-dead/>

After Paris!

Climate Catch-22 in Poland

By Michael Kile, WUWT, Nov 19, 2018

<https://wattsupwiththat.com/2018/11/19/climate-catch-22-in-poland/>

Pakistan goes against the grain with coal power spree

By Ashraf Khan, Phys.org, Nov 15, 2018

<https://phys.org/news/2018-11-pakistan-grain-coal-power-spre.html>

Seeking a Common Ground

Ban the Beef?

By Bjørn Lomborg, Project Syndicate, Nov 21, 2018

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/meat-production-overstated-effect-on-climate-change-by-bjorn-lomborg-2018-11>

“As a vegetarian for ethical reasons, I will be the first to say that there are many good reasons to eat less meat. Sadly, making a huge difference to the climate isn’t one of them.”

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by CO2 Science

The Recovery of Three Caribbean Corals Following a Simulated Bleaching Event

Levas, S., Schoepf, V., Warner, M.E., Aschaffenburg, M., Baumann, J. and Grottole, A.G. 2018. Long-term recovery of Caribbean corals from bleaching. *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology* 506: 124-134. Nov 21, 2018

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V21/nov/a12.php>

“In the words of the authors, ‘despite all treatment corals having significantly reduced endosymbiont concentrations and calcification at some point during the first 1.5 months [of recovery], all physiological variables in treatment corals of all three species had recovered by 11 months.’”

Recent Observations of Temperature-related Mortality in India

Fu, S.H., Gasparrini, A., Rodriguez, P.S. and Jha, P. 2018. Mortality attributable to hot and cold ambient temperatures in India: a nationally representative case-crossover study. *PLoS Medicine* 15: e1002619, doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1002619. Nov 19, 2018

<http://www.co2science.org/articles/V21/nov/a11.php>

“Clearly, cold temperatures pose a far greater human mortality risk, killing considerably more people than do warm temperatures.”

Models v. Observations

Climate change is making hurricanes even more destructive, research finds

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 23, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/11/23/climate-change-is-making-hurricanes-even-more-destructive-research-finds/>

“The use of climate models in this sort of exercise may have value. However, they should not be confused with reality.

“I am prepared to accept the theory that a warmer atmosphere may lead to greater rainfall. But the theory needs to be proven against real world data, and explain how earlier storms, such as Claudette and Amelia, tell a different story.”

Changing Weather

Was Global Warming A Significant Factor in California's Camp Fire? The Answer is Clearly No.

By Cliff Mass, Weather and Climate Blog, Nov 20, 2018

<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2018-11-21T22:18:00-08:00&max-results=2>

“It is more than unfortunate that some politicians, environmental advocacy groups, and activist scientists are attempting to use this tragedy as a tool for their own agenda, make the claim that the Camp Fire was result of global warming.

“As I will discuss below, this claim has little grounding in fact or science. Global warming is a profoundly serious threat to mankind, but it has little impact the Camp Fire and many of the coastal California fires of the past few years (e.g., the Wine Country Fires of October 2017). And blaming global warming takes attention away from the actions needed to prevent such tragedies from happening again.”

Finally! Heavy Rain, Wind, and Snow Headed for the Pacific Northwest AND California

By Cliff Mass, Weather and Climate Blog, Nov 18, 2018

<http://cliffmass.blogspot.com/2018/11/finally-heavy-rain-wind-and-snow-headed.html>

Did You Know the Greatest Two-Year Global Cooling Event Just Took Place?

By Aaron Brown, Real Clear Markets, Apr 24, 2018

https://www.realclearmarkets.com/articles/2018/04/24/did_you_know_the_greatest_two-year_global_cooling_event_just_took_place_103243.html

2 More New Climate Reconstructions Indicate Rapid COOLING In The Last 100+ Years

By Kenneth Richard, No Tricks Zone, Nov 22, 2018

<http://notrickszone.com/2018/11/22/2-more-new-sea-surface-reconstructions-indicate-rapid-cooling-in-the-last-100-years/>

Global Warming Snowed Under

By Brian C. Joondeph, American Thinker, Nov 19, 2018

https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2018/11/global_warming_snowed_under.html

Extreme Precipitation Events In China, Australia Show No Increase At All Over Past Decades!

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Nov 18, 2018

<http://notrickszone.com/2018/11/18/extreme-precipitation-events-in-china-australia-show-no-increase-at-all-over-past-decades/>

Millions of Americans to experience coldest Thanksgiving in more than a century

By Aris Folley, The Hill, Nov 21, 2018

<https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/417962-millions-of-americans-to-experience-the-coldest-thanksgiving-in>

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

4 Countries That Produce the Most Food

By Sean Ross, Investopedia, Oct 6, 2018

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/100615/4-countries-produce-most-food.asp>

A glance at Brazil’s agricultural future

What are the next moves for one of U.S. agriculture’s biggest competitors?

By Ben Potter, Farm Futures. Feb 28, 2018

<https://www.farmfutures.com/trade/glance-brazil-s-agricultural-future>

Lowering Standards

How the BBC Quietly Obliterates and Rewrites Science News

By David Whitehouse, GWPF, Nov 22, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/how-the-bbc-quietly-obliterates-and-rewrites-science-news/>

[SEPP Comment: History as rewritten in 1984.]

UK Media Refuses to Correct the Record on Flawed Climate Paper

Press Release, GWPF, Nov 19, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/uk-media-refuses-to-correct-the-record-on-flawed-climate-paper/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Monbiot’s Disaster Journalism,

By Andrew Montford, GWPF, Nov 20, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/monbiots-disaster-journalism/>

The Oil Price Is Now Controlled By Just Three Men

Bin Salman, Trump and Putin are calling the market shots. The prince may struggle to defend output cuts against a hostile Trump and indifferent Putin.

By Julian Lee, Bloomberg, Nov 18, 2018

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-11-18/bin-salman-trump-and-putin-control-the-oil-price-now>

[SEPP Comment: Bunk! Trump does not control the shale drillers and he has relaxed US government controls, not expanded them. Obama tried to control shale drilling and failed.]

Communicating Better to the Public – Go Personal.

‘A form of Violence’?

By Andrew Montford, GWPF, Nov 12, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/a-form-of-violence/>

Questioning European Green

How a Green Energy Policy Is Causing an Environmental Disaster

By Abrahm Lustgarten, ProPublica, Nov 20, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/how-a-green-energy-policy-is-causing-an-environmental-disaster/>

Link to full article: FUEL to the FIRE: How a U.S. law intended to reduce dependence on fossil fuels has unleashed an environmental disaster in Indonesia.

By Abrahm Lustgarten, ProPublica and New York Times, Nov 20, 2018

<https://features.propublica.org/palm-oil/palm-oil-biofuels-ethanol-indonesia-peatland/>

Macron’s Climate Waterloos

By Geoff Chambers, Climate Scepticism, Nov 17, 2018 [H/t GWPF]

<https://cliscep.com/2018/11/17/macrons-climate-waterloo/>

Europe’s Energy Uprising ...Hundreds Injured, “Warlike Conditions” As Protests Against High Fuel Prices Rage

By P Gosselin, No Tricks Zone, Nov 23, 2018

<http://notrickszone.com/2018/11/23/europes-energy-uprising-hundreds-injured-warlike-conditions-as-protests-against-high-fuel-prices-rage/>

Questioning Green Elsewhere

How to save the world from climate catastrophe – the IRENA study

By Roger Andrews, Energy Matters, Nov 20, 2018

<http://euanmearns.com/how-to-save-the-world-from-climate-catastrophe-the-irena-study/#more-22737>

Link to report: Global Energy Transformation: A Roadmap to 2050

By Staff Writers, International Renewable Agency, 2018

<http://irena.org/>

[/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2018/Apr/IRENA_Report_GET_2018.pdf](http://media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2018/Apr/IRENA_Report_GET_2018.pdf)

Peter Foster: Another report reluctantly admits that 'green' energy is a disastrous flop

This report should be profoundly embarrassing to the government of Justin Trudeau

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Canada, Nov 22, 2018 [H/t WUWT]

<https://business.financialpost.com/opinion/peter-foster-another-report-reluctantly-admits-that-green-energy-is-a-disastrous-flop>

“Amid hundreds of graphs, charts and tables in the latest World Energy Outlook (WEO) released last week by the International Energy Agency, there is one fundamental piece of information that you have to work out for yourself: the percentage of total global primary energy demand provided by wind and solar. The answer is 1.1 per cent.”

Greens want to put you in jail for seven years for burning coal after 2030

Let's lock up the whole country

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Nov 21, 2018

<http://joannenova.com.au/2018/11/greens-want-to-put-you-in-jail-for-seven-years-for-burning-coal-after-2030/>

Greens policy would outlaw thermal coal as it is 'no longer compatible' with human life

Under Greens policy, it would no longer be legal to dig, burn or ship thermal coal by 2030

By Katharine Murphy, The Guardian, Nov 15, 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/nov/16/greens-policy-would-outlaw-thermal-coal-as-it-is-no-longer-compatible-with-human-life>

“Coal is a product that kills people when used according to the seller's instructions.”

Funding Issues

UN environment chief quits after he is accused of 'obscene CO2 hypocrisy' for spending £390,000 flying around the world in 22 months while lecturing on climate change

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 22, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/11/22/un-environment-chief-quits-after-he-is-accused-of-obscene-co2-hypocrisy-for-spending-390000-flying-around-the-world-in-22-months-while-lecturing-on-climate-change/>

The Political Games Continue

Election Slaughter for Climate Activism

By James Taylor, American Thinker, Nov 20, 2018

https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2018/11/election_slaughter_for_climate_activism.html

The New Politics of Climate Change

The dust is settling on the 2018 midterms—and no plan to fight global warming has emerged unscathed.

By Robinson Meyer, The Atlantic, Nov 16, 2018

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/11/midterms-2018-now-nobody-has-perfect-climate-strategy/575422/>

Litigation Issues

Dutch state will appeal against climate change verdict

By Staff Writers, Dutch News.nl, Nov 16, 2018

<https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2018/11/dutch-state-will-appeal-against-climate-change-verdict/>

UK Electricity Prices could Double Due to EU Court Ruling

By Staff Writers, The Sunday Times, Via GWPF, Nov 18, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/uk-electricity-prices-could-double-due-to-eu-court-ruling/>

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Why A Carbon Tax Is the Wrong Solution

By William O'Keefe, IBD, Nov 23, 2018

<https://www.investors.com/politics/commentary/carbon-tax-global-warming/>

[SEPP Comment: As O'Keefe states, the benefits of carbon dioxide are ignored in such proposals.]

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Contra-Capitalist Tesla: Enron Lives!

By Robert Bradley Jr. Master Resource, Nov 23, 2018

<https://www.masterresource.org/contra-capitalism/contra-capitalist-tesla-enron-lives/>

“Much of the blame for the Tesla fiasco goes to government, which, in the name of green virtue, decided to subsidize the hobbies of millionaires to the tune of a \$7,500 federal tax credit per car sold, along with additional state-based rebates.”

[SEPP Comment: Is Tesla going the way of Fisker Automotive, the car company no one in government talks about?]

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Imperiled fish listed as endangered species

By Timothy Cama, The Hill, Nov 28, 2018

<https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/417812-imperiled-fish-listed-as-endangered-species>

“The fish is native to hundreds of miles of streams in the Kanawha River basin in West Virginia and Virginia. But it’s no longer present in about half of its historic range, due mainly to hybridization, or breeding, with another species that was introduced due to fish stocking.”

[SEPP Comment: If natural breeding represents a threat under the Endangered Species Act, shouldn't the Act be reviewed?]

Energy Issues – Non-US

China overtakes Japan as world's top natural gas importer

By Jessica Jaganathan, Reuters, Nov 12, 2018

<https://www.reuters.com/article/china-japan-Ing/china-overtakes-japan-as-worlds-top-natural-gas-importer-idUSL4N1XN3LO>

Subsidy cut deals blow to wind farms

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 21, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/11/21/subsidy-cut-deals-blow-to-wind-farms/>

“The budget is barely a third of the value of subsidies awarded via the last auction in 2017, when wind farms with a capacity of 3.2 gigawatts got the go-ahead.”

“The maximum price that new offshore wind farms will receive for the electricity they generate will be at least 40 per cent lower than the price for power from the Hinkley Point C nuclear plant.”

Smart meter roll out could cost households an extra £100

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 23, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/11/23/smart-meter-roll-out-could-cost-households-an-extra-100/>

Energy Issues – Australia

Bill Shorten wasting your money on batteries

By David Evans, Jo Nova’s Blog, Nov 22, 2018

<http://joannenova.com.au/2018/11/bill-shorten-wasting-your-money-on-batteries/>

Link to article: Bill Shorten unveils \$15bn energy plan to help tackle climate 'disaster

Labor leader says he will top up Clean Energy Finance Corporation and unveils \$5bn fund to modernise infrastructure

By Katharine Murphy, The Guardian, Nov 21, 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/nov/22/bill-shorten-reveals-15bn-energy-plan-to-help-tackle-climate-disaster>

Energy Issues -- US

Steve Goreham: Taxpayers Are Being Ripped Off By New ‘Green Energy’ Project

By Steve Goreham, The Western Journal, Nov 19, 2018

<https://www.westernjournal.com/steve-goreham-taxpayers-ripped-off-new-green-energy-project/>

Oil and Natural Gas – the Future or the Past?

How Fracking Turned OPEC Into The Walking Dead

Editorial, IBD, Nov 23, 2018

<https://www.investors.com/partner-perspective/usbank/5-ways-to-elevate-your-international-travel/>

Is a Shale-Sized Oil Boom Hiding in Britain’s Atlantic Bedrock?

Maverick geologist Robert Trice believes there are billions of barrels of crude ready to drill from granite rock buried under the ocean floor

By Kelly Gilblom, Bloomberg, Nov 22, 2018

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-11-22/is-a-shale-sized-oil-boom-hiding-in-britain-s-atlantic-bedrock>

Romania could challenge Russian grip on Europe's energy

By Mihaela Rodina, Phys.org, Nov 18, 2018

<https://phys.org/news/2018-11-romania-russian-europe-energy.html#jCp>

“But the energy majors have put their ambitions on hold after Bucharest passed legislation that will tax revenues from offshore drilling and stipulate that half of output must be reserved for the domestic market—even though the country still lacks much of the infrastructure needed to distribute and consume it.”

[SEPP Comment: Government regulations do not create prosperity, but under many circumstances can prevent it.]

Return of King Coal?

Advancing the coal power plants of the future

By John, International Mining, Nov 13, 2018

<https://im-mining.com/2018/11/13/advancing-coal-power-plants-future/>

Why Japan finds coal hard to quit

Addiction to coal-fired power undermines Tokyo's green credentials

By Eri Sugiura and Akane Okutsu, Nikkei Asian Review, Nov 21, 2018 [H/t GWPF]

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Cover-Story/Why-Japan-finds-coal-hard-to-quit>

[SEPP Comment: According to a graph the 2016 energy mix was 40% LNG; 33% Coal; 15% Renewables; 9% Oil, and less than 5% Nuclear and others – Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. . The goals for 2030 are: 28% LNG; 25% Coal; 24% Renewables; 20% Nuclear and less than 5% Oil and others.]

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Solar and Wind

Colossal Cover-up: German Government Suppresses Damning Wind Turbine Noise Evidence

By Staff Writers, Stop These Things, Nov 17, 2018

<https://stopthesethings.com/2018/11/17/colossal-cover-up-german-government-suppresses-damning-wind-turbine-noise-evidence/>

Link to WHO report: Environmental Noise Guidelines, for the European Region

By Staff Writers, WHO, 2018

<https://stopthesethings.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/who-noise-guidelines-2018.pdf>

Explaining the plummeting cost of solar power

Researchers tease apart the factors that have caused photovoltaic module costs to drop by 99 percent

By Staff Writers, EurekAlert, Nov 20, 2018

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-11/miot-etp111818.php

[SEPP Comment: Why are subsidies and mandates needed? No link to study.]

You Did Say Your Costs Had Been “Slashed” Didn’t You?

By Andrew Montford, GWPF, Nov 21, 2018

<https://www.thegwgf.com/you-did-say-your-costs-had-been-slashed-didnt-you/>

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy -- Other

Palm Oil Was Supposed to Help Save the Planet. Instead It Unleashed a Catastrophe

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 22, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/11/22/palm-oil-was-supposed-to-help-save-the-planet-instead-it-unleashed-a-catastrophe/>

Link to article: Palm Oil Was Supposed to Help Save the Planet. Instead It Unleashed a Catastrophe.

A decade ago, the U.S. mandated the use of vegetable oil in biofuels, leading to industrial-scale deforestation — and a huge spike in carbon emissions.

By Abrahm Lustgarten, ProPublica and NYT Magazine, Nov 20, 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/20/magazine/palm-oil-borneo-climate-catastrophe.html>

Soil Association warns against use of maize for biofuel production

By Paul Homewood, Not a Lot of People Know That, Nov 22, 2018

<https://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2018/11/22/soil-association-warns-against-use-of-maize-for-biofuel-production/>

[SEPP Comments: The charity presents interesting arguments against the cultivation of maize in the UK, where it was scarcely grown 50 years ago. Is the new cultivation maize an example of dangerous climate change?]

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Energy -- Storage

The cost of wind & solar power: batteries included

By Roger Andrews, Energy Matters, Nov 22, 2018

<http://euanmearns.com/the-cost-of-wind-solar-power-batteries-included/#more-22760>

Alternative, Green (“Clean”) Vehicles

Will BEVs Need New Power Plants?

By Donn Dears, Power For USA, Nov 20, 2018

<http://www.powerforusa.com/2018/11/20/will-bevs-need-new-power-plants/>

Health, Energy, and Climate

Winds Of Change? 10 New Papers Document The Evident Harm Wind Turbines Afflict On Humanity

By Kenneth Richard, No Tricks Zone, Nov 19, 2018

<http://notrickszone.com/2018/11/19/winds-of-change-10-new-papers-document-the-growing-harm-wind-turbines-afflict-on-humanity/>

Environmental Industry

Environmentalists Knock Themselves Out On The Keystone XL Pipeline

By Francis Menton, Manhattan Contrarian, Nov 18, 2018

<https://www.manhattancontrarian.com/blog/2018-11-18-environmentalists-knock-themselves-out-on-the-keystone-xl-pipeline>

Environmental activists are turning to the courts to block pipelines

By Josh Siegel, Washington Examiner, Nov 14, 2018

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/energy/environmental-activists-are-turning-to-the-courts-to-block-pipelines>

Other Scientific News

Airplane with no moving parts takes flight

By Frankie Schembri, Science, Nov 21, 2018 [H/t Toshio Fujita]

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/11/airplane-no-moving-parts-takes-flight>

[SEPP Comment: What about surface controls, the great advance by the Wright Brothers which they patented?]

Termite colony the size of Great Britain ‘has been being built since the dawn of the Pyramids’

By Rob Waugh, Yahoo News, UK, Nov 20, 2018 [H/t WUWT]

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/termite-colony-size-great-britain-built-since-dawn-pyramids-132724663.html>

Other News that May Be of Interest

The Basement, the Penthouse & the 2-Stop Elevator in Between

By Donna Laframboise, Big Picture News, Nov 19, 2018

<https://nofrackingconsensus.com/2018/11/19/the-basement-the-penthouse-the-2-stop-elevator-in-between/>

BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Back to the ...

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions.org, Nov 23, 2018

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/8783>

“Here’s a simple solution to global warming: vacuum carbon dioxide out of the air.

“Klaus Lackner, a physicist at Columbia University, said placing enough carbon filters around the planet could reel the world’s atmosphere back toward the 18th century, like a climatic time machine.

“He estimates that sucking up the current stream of emissions would require about 67 million boxcar-sized filters at a cost of trillions of dollars a year.

“The orchards of filters would have to be powered by complexes of new nuclear plants, dams, solar farms or other clean-energy sources to avoid adding more pollution to the atmosphere. LA Times, 29 Apr 2008”

[SEPP Comment: An added bonus, the new dams and nuclear power plants can back-up California wind and solar?]

Rewriting history

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions.org, Nov 20, 2018

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/10157>

“Global warming could wipe out more than half the world’s animal and plant species, according to a study that links rising temperatures with mass extinctions of the past 520 million years.

“By comparing fossil data with temperature estimates, British researchers have found that four of the five mass extinction events were linked to warm “greenhouse” phases.

“The scientists, from the universities of York and Leeds, say their work shows for the first time a close association between Earth’s climate and extinctions in the past 520 million years.

“Lead author Dr Peter Mayhew said: ‘If our results hold for current warming ... they suggest that extinctions will increase.’ Sydney Morning Herald, 25 Oct 2007”

King Canute still lives!

By Staff Writers, Climate Change Predictions.org, Nov 18, 2018

<http://climatechangepredictions.org/uncategorized/5728>

“The (Paris) accord achieved one major goal. It limits average global warming to 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial temperatures and strives for a limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) if possible.’ CNN News, 14 Dec 2015”

ARTICLES:

1. Matt Ridley: Why Is It So Cool to be Gloomy

By Matt Ridley, WSJ, Via GWPF, Nov 17, 2018

<https://www.thegwpf.com/matt-ridley-why-is-it-so-cool-to-be-gloomy/>

The author of “The Rational Optimist” writes:

“The world is in better shape than most people think, but we’re more inclined to focus on bad news than good. Psychology can help explain why.

“Has the percentage of the world population that lives in extreme poverty almost doubled, almost halved or stayed the same over the past 20 years? When the Swedish statistician and public health expert Hans Rosling began asking people that question in 2013, he was astounded by their responses. Only 5% of 1,005 Americans got the right answer: Extreme poverty has been cut almost in half. A chimpanzee would do much better, he pointed out mischievously, by picking an answer at random. So people are worse than ignorant: They believe they know many dire things about the world that are, in fact, untrue.

“Before his untimely death last year, Rosling (with his son and daughter-in-law as co-authors) published a magnificent book arguing against such reflexive pessimism. Its title says it all: ‘Factfulness: Ten Reasons We’re Wrong About the World—and Why Things Are Better Than You Think.’ As the author of a book called ‘The Rational Optimist,’ I’m happy to include myself in their platoon, which also includes writers such as Steven Pinker, Bjorn Lomborg, Michael Shermer and Gregg Easterbrook.

“For us New Optimists, however, it’s an uphill battle. No matter how persuasive our evidence, we routinely encounter disbelief and even hostility, as if accentuating the positive was callous. People cling to pessimism about the state of the world. John Stuart Mill neatly summarized this tendency as far back as 1828: ‘I have observed that not the man who hopes when others despair, but the man who despairs when others hope, is admired by a large class of persons as a sage.’ It’s cool to be gloomy.

“Studies consistently find that people in developed societies tend to be pessimistic about their country and the world but optimistic about their own lives. They expect to earn more and to stay married longer than they generally do. The Eurobarometer survey finds that Europeans are almost twice as likely to expect their own economic prospects to get better in the coming year as to get worse, while at the same time being more likely to expect their countries’ prospects to get worse than to improve. The psychologist Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania suggests a reason for this: We think we are in control of our own fortunes but not those of the wider society.

“There are certainly many causes for concern in the world today, from terrorism to obesity to environmental problems, but the persistence of pessimism about the planet requires some explanation beyond the facts themselves. Herewith a few suggestions:

“Bad news is more sudden than good news, which is usually gradual. Therefore bad news is more newsworthy. Battles, bombings, accidents, murders, storms, floods, scandals and disasters of all kinds tend to dominate the news. ‘If it bleeds, it leads,’ as they used to say in the newspaper business. By contrast, the gradual reduction in poverty in the world rarely makes a sudden splash. As Rosling put it, “In the media the ‘newsworthy’ events exaggerate the unusual and put the focus on swift changes.”

“Plane crashes have been getting steadily scarcer, but each one now receives vastly more coverage.

This is part of what psychologists call the ‘availability bias,’ a quirk of human cognition first noticed by Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman in the 1970s. People vastly overestimate the frequency of crime, because crime disproportionately dominates the news. But random violence makes the news because it is rare, whereas routine kindness doesn’t make the news because it is so common.

“Bad news usually matters; good news may not. In the prehistoric past, it made more sense to worry about risks—it might help you avoid getting killed by a lion—than to celebrate success. Perhaps this is why people have a ‘negativity bias.’ In a 2014 paper, researchers at McGill University examined which news stories their subjects chose to read for what they thought was an eye-tracking experiment. It turns out that even when people say they want more good news, they are more interested in bad news: ‘Regardless of what participants say, they exhibit a preference for negative news content,’ concluded the authors Mark Trussler and Stuart Soroka.

“People think in relative not absolute terms. What matters is how well you are doing relative to other people, because that’s what determined success in the competition for resources (and mates) in the stone age. Being told that others are doing well is therefore a form of bad news. When circumstances get better, people take those improvements for granted and reset their expectations.

“Such relativizing behavior affects even our most intimate relationships. An ingenious 2016 study by David Buss and colleagues at the University of Texas at Austin found that ‘participants lower in mate value than their partners were generally satisfied regardless of the pool of potential mates; participants higher in mate value than their partners became increasingly dissatisfied with their relationships as better alternative partners became available.’ Ouch.

“As the world improves, people expand their definition of bad news. This recent finding by the Harvard psychologists David Levari and Daniel Gilbert, known as ‘prevalence-induced concept change,’ suggests that the rarer something gets, the more broadly we redefine the concept. They found in an experiment that the rarer they made blue dots, the more likely people were to call purple dots ‘blue,’ and the rarer they made threatening faces, the more likely people were to describe a face as threatening. ‘From low-level perception of color to higher-level judgments of ethics,’ they write, ‘there is a robust tendency for perceptual and judgmental standards to ‘creep’ when they ought not to.’

“Consider air travel: Plane crashes have been getting steadily scarcer—2017 was the first year with no commercial passenger plane crashes at all, despite four billion people in the air—but each one now receives vastly more coverage. Many people still consider planes a risky mode of transport.

“We’re even capable of fretting about the bounty of prosperity, as ‘Weird Al’ Yankovic highlights in his clever song, ‘First World Problems’: ‘The thread count on these cotton sheets has got me itching/My house is so big, I can’t get Wi-Fi in the kitchen.’ Sheena Iyengar of Columbia Business School became a TED star for her research on the debilitating modern illness known as the ‘choice overload problem’—that is, being paralyzed by having to choose from among, say, the

dozens of types of olive oil or jam on offer at the grocery store. North Koreans, Syrians, Congolese and Haitians generally have more important things to worry about.”

*****”

2. In Oil’s Huge Drop, All Signs Say Made in the U.S.A.

Rising U.S. production and inventory, changing policies and a stronger dollar add to pressure on price of crude

By Stephanie Yang and Amrith Ramkumar, WSJ, Nov 23, 2018

https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-oils-huge-drop-all-signs-say-made-in-the-u-s-a-1543003398?mod=trending_now_2

SUMMARY: The journalists write:

“The downward spiral in oil prices is accelerating as a surge in crude production from a turbocharged U.S. petroleum industry runs into weaker global economic growth.

“Crude prices slid 7.7% Friday, their largest one-day drop since July 2015, and are now down by nearly a third since the start of October. The U.S. benchmark, West Texas Intermediate futures, closed at \$50.42 a barrel—its lowest level in over a year.

“As economic growth outside the U.S. has flagged, producers and traders are beginning to worry that demand for crude will also decline. In export-dependent Germany, a purchasing managers index hit a four-year low, well below the level economists were expecting. The steepness of the drop has prompted Saudi Arabia and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to consider a plan to quietly cut production to bolster prices, according to people familiar with the matter.

“The idea would see the cartel retain the official output targets it set in 2016. But, because Saudi Arabia is overshooting those targets by nearly 1 million barrels a day, it would effectively be a cut. Such a move may help support prices without raising the ire of President Trump, who has been calling on OPEC to keep prices lower.

“Investors remain skeptical that the OPEC meeting in Vienna on Dec. 6 will be able to turn the tide on oil supply enough to support prices.

“A big reason why: the emergence of the U.S. oil industry as one of the world’s most important players. Ballooning shale production—American output has nearly doubled since the start of 2012—has made the U.S. a key supplier and exacerbated worries about a global glut of crude.

“‘I never thought I would hear these kinds of numbers coming out of the U.S.,’ said Bob Yawger, director of the futures division at Mizuho Securities USA. ‘This is going to force OPEC’s hand.’

“This summer, the U.S. surpassed Saudi Arabia and Russia as the largest crude-oil producer—a title it hadn’t held since 1973, according to the International Energy Agency. Monthly output in the U.S. was a record 11.65 million barrels a day in September and nearly the same amount in October, according to energy consulting firm Wood Mackenzie, while Saudi Arabia’s supply was nearly 11 million barrels a day last month and Russian production stood at 11.4 million a day.

“It used to be the world was divided into OPEC and non-OPEC,’ said Daniel Yergin, vice chairman of IHS Markit, which projects the U.S. will be a net exporter of petroleum in the early 2020s. ‘Now it’s the world of the big three.’

“In recent weeks, that has been reflected in a bumper amount of oil in storage. U.S. crude stockpiles have climbed for nine consecutive weeks. Inventories advanced by 4.9 million barrels in the week ended Nov. 16, and rose more than 10 million barrels the week before, the largest one-week increase since February 2017.

“Bottlenecks in getting oil out of the prolific Permian basin in Texas have led to a big divergence in the benchmark prices of oil. The global benchmark, Brent crude, trades for roughly \$9 more than West Texas Intermediate, which is harder to get to global markets.

“However, the U.S. has continued to pump oil and many expect those hurdles to be cleared next year as new pipelines are built, unleashing even more crude on the rest of the world.

“Uncertainty on the geopolitical front has also contributed to worries about oversupply.

“Mr. Trump has signaled a willingness to look past the killing of a prominent U.S.-based journalist in his relations with Saudi Arabia. And the U.S., after months touting strict enforcement of sanctions on Iran, granted more generous waivers than expected for eight governments to buy Iranian oil. This could lead to higher-than-expected supply from the Islamic Republic. Saudi officials said Mr. Trump pressured their country into ramping up oil production to record levels ahead of the sanctions on Iran’s petroleum industry, the Journal has reported.

“‘They are trying to be as cooperative with us as possible,’ said Douglas Hepworth, chief operating officer at Gresham Investment Management LLC, a \$7 billion commodities firm with about one-third of its assets in energy. ‘What triggered the whole thing was everybody in the world moving to full capacity to try and make the world safe for Iranian sanctions.’

“The strength of global production now threatens to overwhelm demand. This could pressure OPEC and its allies such as Russia to cut back when the group meets next month in hopes of regaining more direct control of global supply.

“Such a combination helped rein in the last oil price rout two years ago—defying skeptics who previously warned OPEC’s grip on world markets had slipped thanks to U.S. shale. In 2016, the cartel teamed up with Russia and a group of like-minded, non-OPEC oil producers. They throttled back hard and stayed disciplined, slowly draining the world of the buildup of inventory that now is starting to slosh around the world again. The big question is whether they can pull off the same sort of deal now, and how long it might take to drain supply again.”

The journalists discuss some future possibilities. But one thing is clear, oil production and price are not controlled by one group such as OPEC, Russia, independent producers, or big oil. All have an impact, but the independence of North American producers creates problems for those who seek to control the oil market.
