

BLOWING SUNSHINE: TRANSFORMING INCONVENIENT TRUTHS TO CONVENIENT TRUTHS

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Never awake me when you have good news to announce, because with good news nothing presses; but when you have bad news, arouse me immediately, for then there is not an instant to be lost.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Though it be honest, it is never good to bring bad news.

William Shakespeare

Nobody likes the bringer of bad news.

Sophocles

Friends frequently comment that the subjects of my writing are depressing, so the following news items are an attempt at blowing sunshine ("good news").

1. Britain's first olive grove has been planted in Devon (McCarthy 2006). Now the British can produce locally one of the staples of the Mediterranean diet. Will mangos and papayas be next?
2. Robins are now in the Arctic. Inhabitants of the southern regions are delighted to share this wonderful bird with their neighbors to the north.
3. Sea levels are rising. Some less affluent inland folks may soon have beachfront property.
4. Mockingbirds are nesting in Toronto, Canada (Hall 2006), so Canadian ornithologists and northern birdwatchers generally can reduce fossil fuel travel by observing mockingbirds near home.
5. A mini-robot has been developed to stamp out cockroaches (Smith 2006). Isaac Asimov would be pleased.
6. Prometheus Energy Company has a project for transforming waste gases at landfills, coal mines, and dairy farms into liquid natural gas up to 4% cheaper than traditional diesel fuel (Cook 2006). So, everyone contributing to these sources, keep up the good work! Energy independence depends on everyone!
7. Help from another species illustrates the mutualistic interactions between humans and other life forms. By lying on warm roads, sheep on the west coast of Scotland inspired an invention to heat houses and offices by turning roads and driveways into huge solar panels (Ross 2006). Now that the sheep have done their part – roast mutton anyone?
8. A "dead" lake in the New York Adirondacks has come back to life (Esch 2006). Where are all the worrywarts who made a fuss when it was degraded by acid rain?

9. An intoxicated California brown pelican flew into the windshield of a car on the Pacific Coast Highway (Associated Press 2006). This incident was probably due to domoic acid. Flying while intoxicated indeed! Humans are certainly not good role models for birds.
10. A major storm visited the nation's capital and the larger area adjacent to it in June (Barringer 2006). It filled the lowlands of Maryland and northern Virginia and, in the process, flooded tunnels and a major subway station, disrupted Amtrak service, and knocked out power to government buildings. This devastation will save politicians from traveling to storm damaged areas. Perhaps citizens of the Gulf States will send a delegation to express sympathy and gratitude for the aid they received from Washington after Hurricane Katrina.
11. At long last, the US Supreme Court may decide which laws take precedence – natural laws or human laws. It matters not that natural law has been operative for billions of years and human law only for thousands of years. Humans are now in charge of the planet and Mother Nature had better not forget it! Mainstream scientists agree that greenhouse gases cause global warming and other types of climate change. Could climate change possibly affect disease transmission, food production, rainfall patterns, and the like? The US Supreme Court is considering requirements for greenhouse gas rules after 12 states requested a review, but 10 other states in the middle of the country joined the administration of US President George Bush urging the Supreme Court not to get involved in the auto emissions case (Stohr 2006). The US Environmental Protection Agency stated in 2003 that it could not regulate emissions from new cars and trucks because of “substantial scientific uncertainty” about the effects of climate change upon human health and the environment. All wimps who fled New Orleans and parts of the Gulf States, listen up! Health and well being are not endangered by the increased storm intensity caused by global warming. The Inuit who fled their homes in coastal Alaska and became environmental refugees because of global warming (sea level rise) can be assured that their health and well being were not affected.
12. The estrangement between smokers and nonsmokers has diminished. The US Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona has stated that “indisputable” evidence is now available that secondhand smoke is an “alarming” public health hazard (O’Neil 2006) and has confirmed harmful health effects from secondhand cigarette smoke! Nonsmokers can now get their fair share of money from Medicare and need not buy cigarettes.
13. A growing number of scientists now believe that humankind may have passed the point of no return on global warming. As a consequence, the future plans of a handful of scientists to fight global warming are now being given a serious look by some of the world’s most prominent scientists because of growing concerns about global warming (Broad 2006). If the problem is so serious, then do not miss this opportunity – when on the *Titanic*, go first class! Take that long postponed trip around the world. Avoid those troublesome people in the carpool – drive alone, turn up the air conditioner. Above all, do not let those hysterical mainstream scientists bother anyone! Enjoy!
14. Rejoice!! The human population of the United States will reach 300 million in 2066 (Ohlemacher 2006). Even though other resources are becoming less available, the ultimate resource (Simon 1981) is still increasing in the United States and globally. [Simon did not accept that natural resources should limit human population growth. He believed that human creativity, ingenuity, and technology could provide alternative resources whenever present resources became scarce. Therefore, humans are the ultimate resource.] Still, the United States has a much smaller ultimate resource base than China and India, so America cannot rest on its laurels. Fortunately, ultimate resources (people) can be produced by two unskilled people in their spare time. In the United States, a government subsidy (tax deduction) is even provided for this activity. The federal allowance does discriminate against the elderly, but scientists are working on this problem.

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