

Opinion

Science supports climate change claims

by Michael Mann

Climate change is real. Those who assert otherwise do not have the science on their side.

This nation's highest scientific body, the National Academy of Sciences, is firmly on record in concluding that the scientific case for human-caused climate change is clear. The evidence includes independent assessments of thermometer records documenting the degree and extent of modern warming. It includes the unprecedented melting of glaciers and, as documented in more recent years, the diminution of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheet. As a consequence of melting ice and warming oceans, the global sea level is rising and at an accelerating rate. Continental drought is becoming more pronounced in many extratropical regions, such as the deserts of the U.S. Southwest, and there is an increase in the destructive potential of Atlantic hurricanes that influ-

ence the east and Gulf coasts.

Theoretical climate models predict these things to happen, but only when human influences—in particular, increasing greenhouse gas concentrations due to fossil fuel burning—are included. Those same models project far more profound and potentially damaging impacts of climate change if action is not taken to stabilize greenhouse gas levels this next decade. The Union of Concerned Scientists with scientific input from a large number of Penn State researchers, recently published an extensive report documenting the threat that future climate change could pose specifically to Pennsylvania, where both my parents grew up and where I am



"...climate change deniers have exploited and misrepresented thousands of personal emails between scientists stolen from a university computer server in the UK."

raising my daughter.

And what of the so-called "climate change deniers?"

Sadly, some who are opposed to taking action to combat the potential threat have engaged in a smear campaign that appears intended to distract the public and policymakers from the reality of the threat as policymakers begin to consider taking more serious action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

As documented in numerous news reports over the past two months, climate

change deniers have exploited and misrepresented thousands of personal emails between scientists stolen from a university computer server in the UK. It is true that there are some things that were said or requested in e-mails I received from colleagues that I cannot condone. And there are some things that I myself said in these private correspondence that I would have stated differently—in clearer and more formal language—had I known that e-mails of my own would be released, through a criminal act of theft, to the world.

But the bottom line is this: What is evident in these emails is healthy discourse and debate, scientists arguing what the data and models show, challenging each other on their findings and interpretations. What is clearly not in evidence is the sort of collusion or overstating of the science among

see *Climate*, pg.32

Penn State should move beyond coal

by Nathaniel Meyer, Rose Monahan and David Knoppers

Being home to the Pennsylvania State University should make residents of State College proud. This university has a strong reputation in a host of areas and is an especially strong research institution. But with an 80-year-old coal plant sitting right on College Avenue, the forward-thinking character of the Penn State community is being tested.

Pennsylvania has a proud history of powering this country with its abundance of coal, but the time is here for Penn State to lead this state into the future by embracing renewable technology and moving Happy Valley away from one of the most destructive industries currently operating in this country.

Mining and burning coal, as well as disposing of coal waste, all cause substantial damage to environmental and public health. Throughout Pennsylvania and the rest of Appalachia, cancer rates are significantly

higher in coal-mining communities than in non-mining ones—a result of coal dust and toxic heavy metals polluting the air and groundwater. It's easy to forget externalities like these, which allow us to live here comfortably

while the true cost of our energy goes unheeded.

What is perhaps more unnerving is that by burning approximately 75,000 tons of coal each year (that's 24 pounds per second), the West Campus Steam Plant poisons the air State College residents breathe every day. Coal plants are the nation's top source of mercury pollution, which is proven to cause brain damage and a myriad of developmental problems. Other air pollutants from coal plants substantially increase heart attack risk and aggravate asthma. Is this the



David Knoppers

kind of air our football players should be gasping for after a touchdown or that we should be breathing as we wander the farmers' market?

As far as coal plants go, Penn State's is actually very efficient. Hard-working engineers at the Office of Physical Plant (OPP) have been able to keep the plant running for 40 years past its initial lifespan. Nevertheless, OPP spokesperson Paul Ruskin stated recently that "it is still coal, and we want to change to a better technology." We applaud OPP's work on the old plant and their demonstrated enthusiasm for clean energy and efficiency. The OPP is on track to reach 20 percent renewable electricity by 2012, has an award-winning recycling program, and has implemented aggressive efficiency projects that have



Rose Monahan

already saved the school millions of dollars. These are important steps in building a sustainable community in State College, and we should be proud. But until a concerted effort is made to move beyond coal, the elephant in the

room remains sitting at the corner of College and Burrowes. In addition to the pollution associated with mining and burning this dirty fuel, coal plants are the United States' top contributors to global warming, a crisis that will have dire consequences in Pennsylvania. We may have had a freak snowstorm this October, but according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, if global warming

see *Beyond coal*, pg. 32



Nathaniel Meyer

from **Beyond coal**, pg. 31

continues unaddressed, central Pennsylvania will likely have over a month of 100-plus-degree weather (and be over 90 for the entire summer). That's the kind of extreme weather that damages Pennsylvania's ecosystems, irreparably disturbs agricultural livelihoods and literally endangers people's lives.

Despite these realities, it is an exciting time to be addressing these challenges because alternative solutions exist and are ready to go. Other big schools are already moving away from coal, like University of Wisconsin at Madison, which is transitioning to a mixture of biomass, natural gas and fuel oil by 2012, and Ball State, which is installing the country's largest closed-loop geothermal heating system.

We cannot claim to know the specific combination of approaches that will fit Penn State, but with some of the world's leading renewable energy researchers, an active and intelligent student body and an effective and proactive facilities staff, this institution is perfectly situated to spearhead a clean energy movement. Penn State is already in the process of assessing which

energy source is going to make most sense for the university and the environment, and the administration has

Stadium seat prices are just fine

By David M. Silverman

I was talking the other day to Whitey Blue, longtime Centre region resident and hard nose.

Whitey, have you heard about the large increase in costs that PSU will be imposing on seats in Beaver Stadium for football games?

"Yes, I have, and I think they are doing the smartest thing, financially, that they can."

But the price of all seats will be going up an awful lot.

"Hey, that stadium and the football

even included students in the brainstorming process.

By committing to retire the coal plant, developing a plan to replace it with clean energy and following through on an aggressive and realistic timeline, Penn State will be on a path to becoming a true sustainability leader and removing itself from a dangerous and polluting 19th century energy technology. But in order to harness the technological innovation and creativity continuously fostered here, Penn State needs to make this commitment.

In the Penn State Beyond Coal Campaign we have seen overwhelming student support for a clean energy vision. Since launching the campaign in September, over 1,500 students have signed a petition calling on Penn State to retire its coal plant, over 100 students have volunteered for the cause, and numerous faculty members and student organizations have endorsed this movement.

Former civil rights leader U.S. Rep. John Lewis quoted the Talmud asking, "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?" There is an urgent need to end the use of such a dirty energy source, and isn't this community the place to show how it's done? President Graham Spanier says, "Penn State thinks big." Penn State needs to live up to this reputation as a forward-thinking leader and spur the country toward a future of green jobs, a safe environment and clean energy by making a commitment to moving beyond coal.

Rose Monahan is a Penn State student and president of Penn State Beyond Coal.

David Knoppers is a Penn State student and a Sierra Club intern.

Nathaniel Meyer worked in State College as a Sierra Club organizer last semester.

games played there are a terrific state and regional attraction!"

Many people will no longer be able to afford seats!

"Let'em stay home or go to some bar and watch the game on TV."

Obviously, you don't think that the increases are going to lower game attendance.

"To the contrary—I think the higher cost of seats will keep the riffraff out of Beaver Stadium and thus make more seating available to those of us that can afford top dollar accommodations."

from **Climate**, pg. 31

scientists that those leading the attacks would like you to believe exists.

There have been suggestions made that the e-mails reveal an effort to "suppress dissent," blocking contrarian views from being expressed in the "peer reviewed" scientific literature, and that the peer review process is supposedly biased against climate change deniers. The only bias that exists, however, is for backing up claims with hard evidence and valid reasoning. That is why some climate "skeptics" such as Richard Lindzen of MIT or John Christy of the University of Alabama—who are widely regarded as credible and whose work contributes meaningfully to the scientific discourse—have no problem publishing their work in mainstream scientific journals.

I myself have published scientific work that has been considered by some as representing a skeptical point of view on matters relating to climate change (for example, my work demonstrating the importance of natural oscillations of the climate on multi-decadal timescales). Skepticism in the truest scientific sense of the word is good and is indeed essential to science. Informed skepticism should not be confused, however, with mere contrarianism that fails to meet even the most basic standards of scientific inquiry.

Since my work on the "Hockey Stick"—indicating that recent warming is unusual in the context of at least the past millennium—was featured in the 2001 summary report of the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change (IPCC), it has been a favorite object of attack by climate change deniers. The National Academy of Sciences reviewed that work in 2006. Their findings were summarized by the Washington Post as "Study Confirms Past Few Decades Warmest on Record," by the New York Times as "Science Panel Backs Study on Warming Climate" and by the BBC as "Backing for Hockey Stick Graph." As for claims that there was any impropriety in our work, members of the NAS panel dismissed such accusations out of hand, stating that they "saw nothing that spoke...of any manipulation" and that the study was "an honest attempt to construct a data analysis procedure."

But the evidence for human-caused climate change hardly is based just on my work or the work of any small subset of scientists. Instead, support for the existence of climate change comes from thousands of scientists and diverse lines of evidence as noted above. It rests on basic principles of physics and chemistry governing the behavior of so-called "greenhouse gases" and the favorable comparisons of thus far observed changes with what theoretical climate models predict in response to increasing greenhouse gas concentrations.

In this situation, the record truly does speak for itself.

Michael Mann is a professor in the Departments of Meteorology and Geosciences and the Earth & Environmental Sciences Institute at Penn State. He also directs the Penn State Earth System Science Center.

SEND LETTERS TO OPED@VOICESWEB.ORG

Affordable solutions for membership based groups and non profits who cultivate donors as members of their community



Keep your alumni or members connected to each other and to your group with online tools, highly personalized mailings, and volunteer training and management. We can help grow your membership or annual fund, engage your members in communications and events, and build a solid foundation for your group's future.

Accelerate your membership.

www.affinityconnection.com
 Call to find out how we can help your group. 800.598.4050 ext. 131
 2160 Sandy Drive, Suite D • State College, PA 16803

Instructions:

Fill in the grid so every row, every column and every three-by-three box contains the digits 1 through 9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reason and logic.

Thanks to Peter Morris for contributing this puzzle.

The solution to this month's puzzle can be found on page 31 of this issue.

Sudoku

3			5	1	2			4
2			7		8			6
	1							
	9						6	2
	2		9		6		8	
5	7						4	
							5	
1			6		4			9
7			1	3	5			8

SEND LETTERS TO OPED@VOICESWEB.ORG

Be You.

Come and explore all that our unique and vibrant community has to offer.



Call 238-3322 for current availability.

Foxdale Village

A Quaker-Directed Continuing Care Retirement Community

www.foxdalevillage.org
500 E. Marylyn Avenue
State College, PA 16801



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Letters to the editor

Tax gas drilling

The windfall from leasing state forests to natural gas drillers demonstrates that it's time for Pennsylvania to tax producers in this lucrative energy boom.

A recent auction for the rights to drill on 32,000 acres of state forest in north-central Pennsylvania earned the state \$128.5 million, more than twice the amount called for by legislators.

Given the clamor by the oil and gas industry to get at Pennsylvania's fields, it is time for a production tax on natural gas wells. The industry has argued that imposing a production tax would discourage energy companies from drilling in Pennsylvania. But the money flowing in this game shows that argument is no longer valid, if it ever was. Close to 1,000 Marcellus wells are now operating in Pennsylvania, with many more expected this year. The boom is on.

In spite of this new gold rush, and in spite

of the state's budget woes, some legislators still oppose a tax on gas production. By not instituting this tax, opponents are asking ordinary taxpayers to pay a greater share of the bill for state services while allowing gas producers who are extracting the state's natural resources to pay less than their fair share. It makes no sense.

A production tax also makes better sense than raising money through an unlimited leasing of state forests. About one third of Pennsylvania's 2.1 million acres of state forest is now open to oil and gas development.

The state needs to take a careful look before leasing more of this precious resource. Conservation policy must not depend simply on how much money can be raised in an auction for drillers.

Stan Kotala, M.D.

Conservation Chair

Juniata Valley Audubon

Hollidaysburg

Our country lost?

Left-wing idealists, also known as "liberals," chafe when they hear the phrase, "I want my country back." They do what they always do when those to their right (i.e. centrists) question their views: insult them, call them "racists" and dismiss their protestations. But I started seriously thinking about what people mean when they say this and how far back people want to go to get back their country. Presumably, people are referring to the tone-deaf, top-down approach the government has taken. There will always be a certain amount of graft and back-room dealing in government, but it needs to be a manageable amount. For example, under Clinton, there were regular assertions of improper lobbying and corruption. However, it did not dramatically alter our country's functioning. While imperfect, the system was still able to function and even prosper. When a nation prospers, it can afford to look at problems on a more micro level—such as murders, poverty, etc.

When external forces manipulate our government to the detriment of its people too greatly, the people suffer and the system starts to rot. Two dates come to mind when this blatantly happened. The first was Nov.

22, 1963: the execution of a president followed by an attack on America in the Tonkin Gulf followed by an escalation of a war people did not want. Who profited from this? Those who financed the war mostly.

The second date was sometime in early 2000 when Dick Cheney chose himself to be vice president. He could have chosen from dozens of qualified, energetic, ambitious, up-and-coming Republican politicians to balance off the youthful and optimistic Gore/Lieberman. Instead, he chose himself. And who profited? We know what happened next—a tone-deaf, crony-oriented approach to governing.

Little has changed with the latest administration forgoing a common-sense approach in favor of a top-down dictatorial style. And they can conveniently blame the previous administration for its own divisive, ideologically-driven approach.

What do other people think? Have we lost our country? Do people no longer matter? Are we increasingly powerless pawns? And if so, when in our country's long, unfolding journey did this happen?

Joel Carlson

State College

In memory of Rick Madore: 1958-2010

As president of the State College Area School Board, Rick Madore had a visible role in carefully balancing the needs and wants of a diverse community. He was always willing to take time to explain issues and approaches in the pages of Voices. We will miss his efforts to balance many views during community discussions about our schools.

As one example, Managing Editor Suzan Erem had the following e-mail communication with Madore just a few months ago. Long before the debate about next year's calendar had begun, Erem, the mother of a high school student, had asked him to explain the logic of this year's calendar. While he asked, at the time, that it remain off the record because he was tired and feeling "punchy" that day, we thought it would make a fitting tribute to a man who struggled so hard to hear the voices of so many.

Thank you Rick Madore, for your service to our community:

OK, let me try to run through this with you.

There are a bunch of people who want to start the school year in August, even mid-August.

There are a bunch of people who don't want to start the school year until after Labor Day.

Many of our buildings don't have AC (but we're working on it).

Grange Fair represents a huge educational component for a segment of our kids and an educational opportunity for many others who don't take advantage of it.



Many families have traditional travel plans up to the Labor Day weekend.

Many families have traditional jobs and need childcare year round M-F, 8-5.

Ramadan starts.

Labor Day varies between Sept. 1 and Sept. 7 (this year it falls as late as possible).

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Columbus Day, Veterans Day.

Thanksgiving.

First Day of Deer Season (remember, only a small percent of your bus drivers will show up if you hold school).

Christmas, er, ... no WINTER Break & New Years Day.

Before we go on, remember the State requires by law 180 days of instruction.

The State also requires a minimum number of hours as well in both primary and secondary.

Contractually we are obligated to 181 instructional days.

Contractually we are also obligated to a number of in-service, professional development, and records days.

Use 190 scheduled days (without week-ends).

Consider that we live in Central Pennsylvania and several times per year on average our weather dictates unsafe conditions for school.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

President's Day.

Remember that many people in our community work on and around these holidays and still require childcare.

Penn State Spring Break (which may or may not coincide with Easter).

Many parents work at Penn State, travel during spring break and assume that everyone else does too.

Many parents don't work at Penn State, don't get spring break, need childcare, and assume that everyone else does too.

Many parents don't travel during spring break, and assume that no one else does either.

Many parents don't have real strong opinions on this and will do what is in their children's best interests educationally. (Honest—there are some out there!)

Memorial Day.

Senior graduation—don't have it too late in June as summer college sessions begin.

Last Day of school—did you get all the snow make-up days in?

Can't have the last day be too late in June as we don't have AC in many buildings.

Can't have the last day be too late because some families have vacations scheduled.

Can't have the last day too late because some kids have summer camps to attend.

Can't have the last day too late because of the law of diminishing returns after Memorial Day.

SO,

Did you follow State law?

Did you abide by the contract?

Did you appease all your constituents?

And, most importantly, did you make educationally sound decisions for the students?

If you have the answer to ALL of the above please let me know.

OR, let me know whose ox you're willing to gore (understanding of course that THEY are probably willing to gore yours).

Just a couple rhetorical questions to ponder.....

Should a school district be concerned with, or responsible for, the childcare needs of the dual income parents in their area?

What is a higher priority for a parent—a spring break trip or their child's education?

Logic ???

Hahaha , sorry, I am punchy.

;-)Rick

HOW SMART PEOPLE MANAGE THEIR MONEY...

They don't

Live life to the fullest. Leave the day-to-day investment and money management work to experienced professionals who understand your needs. Contact us today.

RAYMOND JAMES®
FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.
Member NASD/SIPC

**1348 South Atherton St.
State College, PA 16801**

**814-234-3300
800-336-7869**

dick.gold@raymondjames.com

**Independence
Integrity
Experience**

**DICK GOLD
Registered Principal**

You first.

from Yoga, pg. 35

Act without attachment to results.

Everything she does is calculated.

I attempt a shoulder stand. Almost immediately, I fall over.

There is a disturbance in my force. Dang.

Preserve vital energy. Steady the body and soothe the nervous system.

Time to roll up the mat, go home, drink in moderation, read a good book, buy some new clothes on someone else's credit card and avoid cable news until 2013.

Movement is beneficial to optimal health.

Back-up plan--Move to France.

Mary Louise Markle is an American cultural historian and lives in State College.

ASK Cosmo



Dear Cosmo,

I am hating the holidays. It seems like when I had to be with someone else's family for Christmas I hated it. Now that I can spend them all alone, I can't stop crying. Everyone asks me what I'm doing for Christmas and I would like to tell them something to make them go away. Like I'm going to go ahead with the organ donations now. What would you suggest, Cosmo? It seems unfair that people with spouses or kids who might need working organs couldn't use mine. I don't need them or want them anymore. I'm pretty much done here. Love, Way Out-of-Town and Hopeless

Dear Sub-Par Sub-Sub-Suburban,

If you're bent on organ donation, maybe start small. Like a Kimball Funmaker or a Lowry Chord Cadet. Maybe even an accordion. I'm sure some church would be deeply appreciative...unless you just tithed an accordion. But if musical donation rings your bell, maybe just toss a few bucks in the bucket in front of the fat guy trying to ring your bell outside Mal-Wart as he hammers out the Guilty Shopper Panhandler's Dirge.

If you're hooked on the idea of bodily organ donation, it still might be a good idea to start small. I think the smallest organ is the pineal gland, but I'm not sure what it does, what happens if you remove it or whether anyone is even looking for a spare. I know that the skin is the largest organ, and I do know what it does. It keeps you together, which sounds like the very thing you're struggling with. Even if you feel like you no longer belong in your own skin, you probably don't want to donate all of it at once. I've donated little chunks here and there to other dogs, feisty cats or the occasional veterinarian, and that's more than enough.

Or maybe donate just ONE kidney. Or one LUNG if you're feeling REALLY generous. But maybe you can be of service without losing major pieces of yourself. Lend an ear to a friend, lend a hand to someone who needs help, or give someone

Campus and Culture from the Canine Perspective

a shoulder to cry on. If you are still in a self-destructive, anti-social mood, give the eye to someone at the grocery store if you find them intriguing. Or just give the finger to the next annoying tailgater or a little lip to the traffic cop who pulls you over. You'll have your shoulder to the wheel (or the pavement) and your nose to the grindstone (or the pavement) in no time.

Dear Cosmo,

Did you make any New Year's resolutions? Don't you think people feel better when they do?

Signed, Promise Maker

Dear Premise Monger,

Sure, people feel better when they make resolutions, just the same way right before they fall asleep when they tell themselves they'll quit smoking, drinking, will start eating sensibly and will begin working on term papers the day they get the assignment. The next morning both the day and the reality of bad habits dawn once again, and people immediately feel weak, hopeless, depressed and empty when the habits

trump the aspirations...or they just pretend that never happens. My resolution for 2010 is to be irresolute. I figure I win either way—I'm either successful at being irresolute, or I've kept my New Year's resolution. Ta-Daaaaa.

My peace of mind is inversely proportional to my expectations, so if I keep 'em low, I tend to be happier. I don't put much stock in the magical New Year's myths that a flip of the calendar page can substantially change human nature between one day and the next. That's what intention and effort and prayer are for. Big ceremonies are fine for some folks, but I don't put a lot of effort into staying up and waiting for the Ball Drop. It'll happen or it won't, with or without me witnessing it. That goes for the fancy, sparkly one in Times Square or the fuzzy, stringy one on my buddy Hunter the Weimaraner pup, who at this tender age, still has one that is undescended. If it drops this year, I'll sound off like I've got a pair, and send him a YouTube link with me howling the castrato version of Auld Lang Sine. That ought to make for a yappy new year for everyone.

Dang, ommm, the Palin yoga way to enlightenment

by Marylouise Markle

No longer large-as-life in the book-store windows, Sarah Palin's ghost-written book "Going Rogue" with its plagiarized title now sells for under dollar.

The failed VP candidate and retreating Governor of Alaska says she's just "reloading"—her bank account. This word choice from she who incited angry mobs of white guys yelling "kill him" with reference to Barack Obama. She learned this incendiary technique in Republican Populist Idiot Campaign School.

She's back. She's sassy. She's playing at a tea-party convention for \$75,000. Apparently in a fake interview with Bill O'Reilly, she began her new career as pundit for FOX. The role she was marginally liter-

ate Palin told Oprah after the initial high-five, near-tearful-clasp-hug on national television that she's annoyed about media rumors of a divorce. "Dang. Have you seen Todd!?" she asks. Shirtless, penetrating blue eyes, silent, armed secessionist who hates the United States. Sarah's warm smile on the face of friendly neo-extremism in haute couture. Their attraction is animal, visceral, Neanderthal.

I wonder what *he* reads.

The highly caffeinated Palin is still confounded and yes, "annoyed" that Katie Couric would ask what *she* was reading.



The nerve of suggesting a vice presidential candidate with one finger on the button and another in the dyke holding back national and global catastrophe should reveal those sources that inform her world view. Dang.

The new and improved Ms. Palin disclosed to Oprah that she "loves books and reading newspapers." Stay tuned for the whole reading list after grooming for the impending campaign for President. OMG!!

I want to pull her hair.

I go to Yoga class instead.

The studio is serene, softly illuminated, the perfect setting for quieting the mind and working the body.

Control my breath...

She who cannot construct a coherent sentence told Barbara Walters she would rate President Obama a four out of 10.

Withdraw my senses from the external.

She who can't see her amoebic ancestors as fish with feet and believes only parts of evolution wants to legislate science policy.

Be satisfied with what I have.

Tell that to her. How much money is enough and why would anyone pay to hear Sarah Palin single-handedly massacre both the truth and the English language?

NPR describes one Palin speech as "sounding as though she were narrating her own acid trip." Dang, I wish I'd written that!

My mind unsettles.

Surrender to God.

Now we're talking. Her witch-hunting minister drives out the demons! I think I need his phone number.

see Yoga, pg. 34



Voices of Central Pa
P.O. Box 296
State College Pa 16804
www.voicesweb.org

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
State College, Pa
Permit No. 213

Get Voices at home *and* build the free press!

OK, so we can't deliver you a *home*.
But, if you sign up today, we *can*
deliver a copy of *Voices* 10 times
a year to your doorstep.

**Support our local free press and
keep our democracy strong.**

Send a check for \$25 or more to:

P.O. Box 296
State College, PA 16804
or call (800) 975-6699 anytime

Questions? Write to us at:
VOICES@VOICESWEB.ORG

Thoughtful, Fearless and Free

