

End of the World *cont. from page 12*

Even worse, this administration has been guilty of deliberate suppression of the overwhelming scientific evidence for human-caused climate change. Tim Flannery writes in *The Weather Makers* how "Philip A. Cooney, a Bush aide and oil industry lobbyist fighting against the regulation of greenhouse gases, removed or adjusted descriptions of climate research that government scientists and their supervisors had already approved." In her book, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*, Elizabeth Kolbert writes that "Shortly after his editing efforts were disclosed, Cooney resigned from his White House post and took a job with Exxon Mobil."

Kolbert also describes how in 2002 our own Environmental Protection Agency produced a 263-page report for the *United Nations* in which they essentially agreed with the scientific consensus that humanity's continuing emission of greenhouse gases "is likely to lead to annual average warming over the United States that could be as much as several degrees Celsius (roughly 3 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit) during the 21st century." President Bush dismissed the report as something "put out by the bureaucracy." The next year the White House directly interfered with the newest EPA report on climate science to such an extent that agency staff members complained that what was left "no longer accurately represents scientific consensus." Kolbert said that when the report was finally published "the climate-science section was missing entirely."

Unfortunately, this administration, the oil and coal industries, an array of fake but well-paid "scientists" and a largely silent media have allowed most Americans to remain confused and uninformed about the creeping disasters laying siege to our planet, as the richest and most powerful among us reap the grotesque rewards of

"business as usual."

In his book *Thin Ice*, Mark Bowen describes how NASA's climate scientist, Jim Hansen has been accurately predicting the future of climate change for 25 years. Even if we were to completely stop emitting greenhouse gas emissions today (which is as likely as Osama bin Laden being elected our president) we would still watch the world grow warmer by at least one more degree, according to Hansen. He reports that the last time it was this warm was "125,000 years ago when the sea level was between sixteen and twenty feet higher than it is today." Hansen states that it would only take a two degree rise (much less than what is predicted) to bring us to "the threshold of ice sheet collapse."

Many believe we have lots of time before disaster befalls us, but Lovelock disagrees. He warns us that "the evidence coming in from the watchers around the world brings news of an imminent shift in our climate towards one that could easily be described as Hell: so hot, so deadly that only a handful of the teeming billions now alive will survive."

Many feel so overwhelmed by the complexity of global warming that they have given up trying to understand it. Others still cling to the false reassurances of the "deniers and liars", the slick spokesmen and women for the "lethargy lobby" who successfully persuade all of us to delay action until we are certain of our extinction and it is too late to act. Many Americans have succumbed to despair, embraced their impotence and surrendered responsibility for a problem in which just by living, 6 tons of carbon dioxide is added to the already clogged atmosphere each year (Americans comprise only 5% of the world's population but we are 25% of the problem, annually spewing 6 billion tons of greenhouse pollution into the air).

So what can we do?

1) Reduce your carbon footprint. Drive less, purchase a vehicle which gets higher mileage, use less electricity, and switch to solar, wind or hydroelectric power.

2) Challenge our leaders. While we like to imagine we are independent and self-sufficient, the truth is we are interdependent and we look to our local, state and national leaders to speak to and act on our most important concerns. It is hard to take global warming seriously when our officials

ignore the problem, validating avoidance and inertia. We need to demand that anyone in a position of power or influence actually demonstrates leadership on this crucial issue and not pretend it doesn't exist or that it's up to someone else to address it. Such abdication is criminal in the face of what we now know.

3) Read books, become informed, write letters and speak out. Educate yourself and others. This is a planetary problem and will require a planetary solution in which all of us participate. We need everyone.

4) Whether you believe in renewable energy, sustainable development or nuclear energy as the solution, put your beliefs into practice. Demand that politicians, media professionals, church, civic and business leaders all work together to develop education programs and enact vital policies which can begin to transform the way we live, work and play, and effectively end our suicidal "war against Gaia" before it is too late.

Sir Crispin Tickell is described by Lovelock as a "diplomat climatologists," as well as "friend and mentor" who made an important address before an environmental conference in England in 2002. Tickell said, "The ideology of industrial society, driven by notions about economic growth, ever-rising standards of living, and faith in the technological fix, is in the long run unworkable." In changing our ideas, we have to look toward the eventual target of a human society in which population, use of resources, disposal of waste and environment are generally in healthy balance. Above all, we have to look at life with respect and wonder. We need an ethical system in which the natural world has value not just for human welfare but for and in itself. The universe is something internal as well as external.

Stipe was right of course. It is "the end of the world as we know it." It's up to each of us whether "the new world" we are creating for our children and grandchildren out of our ignorance and arrogance, will be the blessing we inherited, or the worsening curse that many now predict and fear. It all depends on what we do next. Gaia's survival and ours hangs in the balance.

It's your move now. What will you do?

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OF THE GREEN PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES:

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- Social Justice**
- Ecological Wisdom**
- Non-Violence**
- Decentralization**
- Community-based Economics**
- Feminism**
- Diversity**
- Responsibility**
- Future Focus**

The Green Party of Shasta County meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm, at the DMV in Redding. September 12: The Greens will host State Assembly candidate Phil Dynan of the Peace and Freedom Party, and there will be an election of two new Green Party Council Members. Call Don at (530) 241-8421 for more info or go to www.cagreens.org **Live Green!**

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