

Rhododendron News

Newsletter of the Portland Chapter vol. LII no 02 February 2007
American Rhododendron Society www.rhodies.org

President's Message

PLANT AUCTIONS

If per chance you are cleaning out your greenhouse and come across a few extra plants, bring them to the next Chapter meeting and we will auction them off, with the proceeds going to support the activities of the Chapter. We will also give you a receipt for these plants so that you may deduct their value as a charitable contribution.

All plants are welcome at our auctions. The February auction's focus will be on companion plants for rhododendrons but you can be sure that the rhodies will be represented on the auction block.

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plant auctions
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BOARD MEMBERS: always check with the President to verify that Board meetings will be held as scheduled!

FEBRUARY 2007

06- Study Group-7PM Van Veen Nursery

15- Chapter meeting - Mike Bones:
Memberships and Rhodies,
Companion Plant Auction

20 - Board Meeting

MARCH 2007

06 - Study Group-7PM Van Veen Nursery

15- Chapter meeting - Larry Borlin:
Companion Planting in Portland

20 - Board Meeting

APRIL 2007

07 - Early Bloomer Rhododendron Show
at CSRG

10 - Study Group-7PM Van Veen Nursery

19- Ron Spendall: Composting
hybrid rhody auction

24 - Board Meeting

May 2007

24- Awards Banquet

Location: All Saints Episcopal Church on SE 40the and Wood-stock. There is parking onsite and on the street. When? We meet on the third Thursday each month beginning in September and ending with the Awards Banquet in May.



If anyone is looking for a particular rhododendron or companion plant, please mention this at a monthly meeting and maybe the plant will show up at a future auction. Let's have a little fun at these auctions. See if you can outbid Red Cavender or Mike Stewart or Jan Snyder for that special plant.

Possibly, in the excitement of the bidding, you may end up with a plant that your yard does not have a place for. You may bring the plant to the next meeting and we will hold a special auction to find it another home.



If you have trouble carrying the plant home and bringing it back to the next meeting, Snyder's Plant Storage and Transportation Service will be happy to make special arrangements.



Part of your yearly dues goes to the national office of the ARS, and the remainder stays with our Chapter. However, the amount that is retained by the Chapter barely covers the printing and mailing of the Newsletter. We need the auction income to pay for the rental of the room at the church, and for the coffee, tea and some of the refreshments each month. So the next time that we hold an auction, take a cup of coffee, grab a couple of cookies, and bid lively.

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---Irv

Irv Snyder and Ernie Metcalfe:
Who's the real auctioneer?

Spring Home and Garden Show.

**Portland Expo Center, Marine Drive
Portland. February 21-25, 2007**

---Dick Cavender

The Society will have a booth at the Spring Home and Garden Show. We need people to staff the booth. Shifts will be 3 or 4 hours and we hope to have 2 people in the booth per shift. This will allow you to take turns looking at the show during your shift.

Dick Cavender will have FREE admission tickets and a sign up sheet at the January & February meetings. General admission to the show is \$10.00 so this will be a bargain. On site parking is \$5. Sorry- Dick can't do anything about that this time. However, MAX does run out to the Expo Center.

This is a great opportunity to meet new people, hand out information and sign up new members. No experience necessary!

Hours are 11 - 9 PM Wed. - Fri, 10 AM - 9 PM Sat and 10 AM - 6 PM Sunday.

For the best selection of time and day, call Dick Cavender at 503-625-6331 or email him at red@redsrhodies.com.

SPRING REGIONAL RHODY CONFERENCE

The spring 2007 ARS Convention will be hosted by District 5 in San Francisco, California. We have included a convention registration form on-line which also has some description of the convention.

Many members have never attended a convention and should be encouraged to do so. Conventions are great fun even for "draggees" (the spouse or friend of a rhodo-holic). There are wonderful public and private gardens to see on tours, world-class speakers AND the nicest group of people one could ever meet.

Check out the web site,
www.ars2007conf.org

Carol and Fred Barrett provided a wild rice dish at the Banquet that was such a big hit that, by request, we are presenting their recipe here.

WILD RICE SALAD

In the fall of 2005 Fred and I were in Washington D.C. We enjoyed the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and found their food court, supplying authentic cuisine from many regions, a great place to eat. This tasty salad was on their web site for a while.

Wild Rice Salad

serves 4 to 6

- 1/2 cup pine nuts
- 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds
(not finding these I used pistachios)
- 2 Cups chicken stock
- 1 1/2 C wild rice
- 1 carrot, cut into 1/2 inch-long match sticks
- 3 Tablespoons dried cranberries
(orange flavored)
- 1 Roma tomato, finely diced
(grape tomatoes quartered)
- 4-5 scallions, finely chopped
- 3 bunches watercress
(or arugula or other spicy green)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread the nut and pumpkin seeds in a small baking pan, and toast them in the oven for about 10 minutes, until they are golden brown. Let them cool.

Combine the chicken stock and wild rice in a stockpot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer, covered, for about 45-55 minutes, until the rice grains are just opened up and tender. Drain, place on a towel-lined baking sheet and let cool.

Put cool rice in a large bowl and add carrots, cranberries, diced tomato, toasted pine nut pumpkin seed mixture, and scallions.

Toss all ingredients together with the vinaigrette, refrigerate for at least one hour. You can serve on watercress. (I mixed it in.)

For the Vinaigrette:

- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 2 tablespoons honey

Place cider vinegar in a bowl and slowly mix in oil. Sweeten with honey.

FRED and CAROL BARRETT
at www.alderpress.com

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PLANTING PREDICTIONS

by Irv Snyder

This is the time of year when my juices begin to flow and my fingers begin to tingle at the prospect of the coming spring. I employ a whole cadre of experts to help me determine when spring will arrive, when the seeds should be planted, and when the annuals should be removed from the greenhouse and left to the harsh outdoors.

Weather prediction is a tricky business, especially for the gardener who must integrate all the events of the past to arrive at a baseline from which to predict the future. One day at 20 degrees F is way different than a week or two at 20 degrees F. Fifteen degrees with a foot of snow on the ground is a different world from that of 15 degrees on the bare soil. In the Gorge, we sure notice the difference between 30 degree F with no wind and 30 degrees F with a 30 mile per hour wind.

So we need experts with an ability to take not only spot readings from the previous fall and winter, but with the computational ability to collect, accumulate, weigh and then disseminate all this knowledge for the benefit of a simple gardener. At great expense, I have assembled a group of experts whose collective wisdom will be offered free of charge to the members of the American Rhododendron Society.

Grape hyacinths and crocuses are employed to herald the coming of spring. When they pop their flowers up through the soil, you will know that Old Man Winter is in retreat and that spring is around the corner. However, these small bulbs are like teenagers. They are wild, energetic and sometimes charge out into the open and get cold running

about naked. A more reliable servant is Christmas Cheer. She does not lose her head over a few warm days. She is a more studious expert who holds back heralding the arrival of spring until she is confident that her resplendent new robe will not be tarnished by the new fallen snow.

Standing nearby is Cheer. She is waiting until Christmas Cheer has broken the news that spring is arriving, and then Cheer is ready to endorse the announcement with her own ovation. Meanwhile, there is a whole herd of PJM's growing restless. Those lucky enough to glean the spring sun have already burst forth in their wild coats of purple. Soon their shaded brothers will bloom, which is the signal for the geese to begin nesting on the island in the harbor.

Jean Marie certainly looks pregnant, although this is hard to believe since I am told by reliable experts that The Honorable Jean Marie de Montague is a male. Soon Jean Marie is screaming red all over the garden, and it is time to plant the dahlia bulbs. The Lem hybrids have behaved up to this point, but they are obviously jealous at the attention being heaped on the early bloomers. Out burst the Wallopers and the potentate of all the Lems, Point Defiance, opens up and looks over all the rhodies with a graceful yet forceful dominion. It is now time to plant the zinnias and the snap dragons in the soil.

Soon the garden is afire with blossoms. The cherry, the apricot and the pear trees are competing vigorously with the rhododendrons for attention. The iris start to burst open, signaling it is time to bring the geraniums out from the greenhouse.

As things start to calm down in the rhodie family, one short, well-dressed

gentleman makes his presence known. Grosclaude is dressed in an elegant deep green dinner jacket adorned with red bells. His quiet yet confident demeanor is reassuring to the rest of the rhodie family. He is also signaling that it is time to plant the tomatoes outdoors.

One lady has stood tall, distinguished, stoic amidst all this commotion. She is waiting her turn, the grand finale to the magnificent spring. It is the fourth of July and Polar Bear is displaying her delicate, fragrant blossoms.

It is summer now and my cadre of experts has once again served me well with flawless predictions of when the garden should be planted.

--I rv

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The CREELWAY PROPAGATION METHOD

part 3-Closing notes

Mike Creel sends this cautionary note to all of our readers:

Don't get confused as many folks do. There are a couple of problems in applying CreelWay propagation to new regions. You have to create your own fast draining (one eye blink) media because the components I use are not nationally distributed. To be really effective (until I perfect the vented dome pots) you will need to build a small shade enclosure similar to mine which is covered with a 64-70 percent Coolaroo medium density shade cloth.

You will need to drill pots to add drainage holes unless you use mesh pots and colanders.

And now to some specific afterthoughts by Mike:



Sat Oct 28:

I spent much of the day setting up my dome pots and sticking woody cuttings I had in the refrigerator, plus some fresh ones collected from my garden plants.



I used a variety of containers for pots, including one CD box filled with long fiber sphagnum. I filled up my garden cart once with dome pots, plus another 1/3 cart load to carry down to the shade bed. [Attached are photos of the pots ready for sticking cuttings, the finished pots in my garden cart and my new shade bed.]



Some native azaleas in my garden are still green leafwise, like *arborescens*, but most have started losing leaves and have fall colors showing. Refrigerating woody deciduous azalea cuttings at this time of year often causes them to drop leaves and appear fully dormant, which does not hinder their rootability over winter here outdoors in zone 8A. If additional desirable cuttings come my way during the winter, I will stick them in the same manner, but all my cutting domepots are pretty much filled, with several outdoor seed pots still planned



Date: Tue, 14 Nov 2006

The square mesh pots designed for garden pond plants are the BEST for rooting and growing difficult species requiring excellent drainage like the two native *Stewartia* species, flowering dogwood, Georgia Plume, sandhill endemics, *Baptisias* and other

plants. I use NO rooting hormone but do sprinkle local native humus fines on the media surface before sticking cuttings. All propagation is done outdoors in Zone 8A. My media is 5 parts GardenPlus soil conditioner (composted, milled pine bark) mixed with one part of Farfard 3. Other media need to be tested for drainage in this domepot since the availability of media varies greatly across the US

These pots were stuck June 24, 2006 as community pots with a variety of species in each, including *Stewartia malacodendron*, *Cornus florida* "Royal Red," *R. flammeum* "Neon Shine," *Hypericum densiflorum* "Creel's Goldstar," and *Elliottia racemosa* (Georgia Plume). In about 3 months all cuttings in the pots had rooted well enough for the vent caps to be unscrewed and removed. I left the vented domes in place to enhance growing and protect cuttings from squirrels digging, and I moved the pots out from under the shade cloth into partial sunlight. At this date the two pots still have domes in place, but vented. Leaves are green but changing to fall colors and beginning to fall from the stem, particularly the dogwood cuttings. Note that pots displayed on the bench are perched on pedestals to keep lower drainage holes open and prevent earthworm invasion. While rooting the pots were protected by a Coolaroo medium density 64-70 percent green shade cloth. I just like green, but the cloth also comes in a light sand color. Rain will pass through the stretched shade cloth. Pots received water once per week, one hour from a small vortex

Stewartias also root well earlier in the season at bloom time around May 5, as well as summer, AND in fall, mid-winter and early March before bud break. The two later times are using dormant, leafless cuttings.



With leafy cuttings I remove the terminal bud and cut all leaves in half on an angle. With leafless cuttings I just remove the terminal bud of the cutting. I much prefer large jointed cuttings and scarify the lower stem up to the lowest joint. I stick cuttings into media to cover the scarified area. Some cuttings of *Stewartia ovata*, dormant, rooted well when stuck the first week of March.



Sat, 23 Sep

The only limit on the size of woody cuttings one can root seems to be the size of the propagation dome. I now have that solved with larger domes in larger pots and large domes used over an in-ground shaded bed. When I stick cuttings of azaleas (or the many other plants I grow) propagation is always hoped for, but is sometimes

unexpected.



Where I live in the center of South Carolina, the weather makes it possible for the propagator to stick woody cuttings (and herbaceous cuttings in warm weather) literally 12 months of the year out of doors, no greenhouse involved. This week I repotted some native azalea cuttings that I stuck in late February and early March 2006. In both pots (along with normal sized cuttings) I had stuck some large diameter cuttings, one near pencil thick, of wood probably 3 years old from a deep pink *canescens* I call Hurricane Redbud since I found the plant in bud uprooted by a hurricane on our Williamsburg County farm.



The largest cutting was a main stem or Hurricane Redbud that had just broken off, so I had to stick it or discard it. So I stuck it.

I thought the root development was noteworthy, and unexpected. I did the repotting in the presence of a witness, a fellow gardener visiting from Seneca, SC, who thought there might be some value in learning more firsthand about my unorthodox, and mostly unaccepted, propagation methods. He took some photos of the cutting too.



The very next day I found a pot of dormant cuttings stuck Feb. 26, 2006, of the Knap Hill azalea Buzzard that I had received in the mail three days earlier from Charlotte, NC. And there was a similarly large cutting, very well the rooted in February pot.

No, rooting cuttings outdoors in winter without a greenhouse is NOT magic, just dumb luck by someone who tries odd, unrecommended propagation methods. Maybe it is just a matter of letting the plants think they are smarter than the gardener. I know of more than one fisherman who "out-dumbs" the fish and fills his stringer regularly. I still believe that if a woody cutting is kept alive and healthy long enough with good drainage, adequate fertility, porous media texture, just enough

moisture not to be saturated all day, just enough sunlight not to be roasted by heat buildup inside the clear humidity dome, once weekly watering by rain or human sprinkling, WILL eventually root.

I am beginning to believe the wise saying about "propagators math" by the late Marie Tietjens of Blue Bell, PA, who wrote in April 1985 in here article Crystal Gardening: If you strike ten cuttings and only one takes, that's 100 percent success. Why? It's one more plant than you had before so that makes it 100 percent. If two plants take, it's 200 percent and so on." I know this math doesn't work if you are trying to sell plants commercially.

---Mike

This concludes the Creelway Propagation series of articles. If you have any comments or questions, e-mail them to arsportland@wa-net.com soon so that we can include them in a future newsletter issue.

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The article SPECIES AND HYBRIDS, PART 3 has been moved to the March newsletter issue because of space limitations in the printed version of the newsletter

FEBRUARY PROGRAM MIKE BONES

from Jan Snyder

Tired of winter? Come warm your bones and enjoy an outstanding evening with Mr. Mike Bones! The Portland Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society is honored to have Mike as our February speaker. He will be talking to us about "Selecting a Rhododendron".

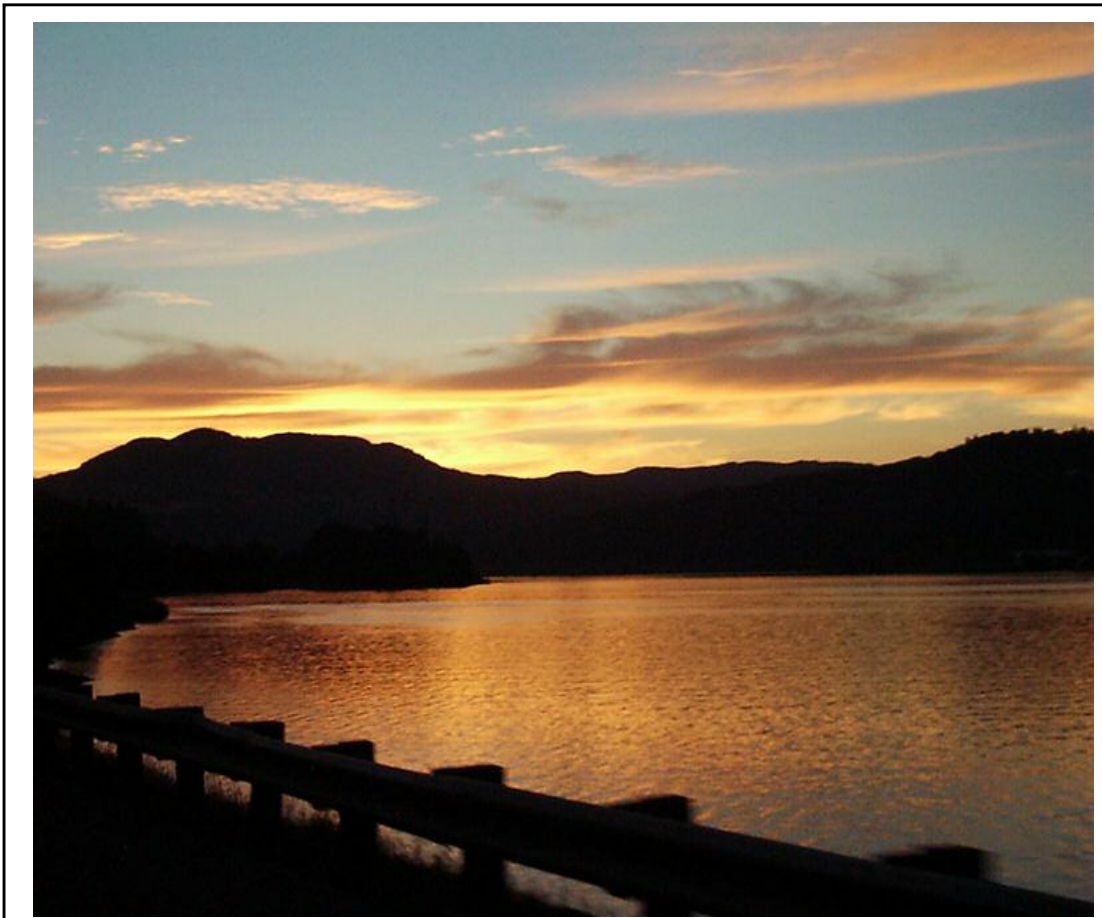
Mike is a recognized grower of rhodies and has been growing them for years. He is retired from the Oregon State Parks, has

had his own nursery and done just about everything there is to do regarding rhodies. He is a true addict and the rhodies love him too! He is currently serving as the Membership Committee Chair for the ARS.

If you haven't heard Mike, grab a friend and come on in for fun and learning on February 15th. He may even wear long pants to this meeting, but we all doubt it.

He has been, repeatedly, the President of the Siuslaw Chapter of the ARS in Florence Oregon. Many of you know that Siuslaw is one of the fastest growing chapters in the ARS; it proves that his enthusiasm is infectious.

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT ARTICLE FOR THE E-MAILED NEWSLETTER

CORRELATION IS NOT CAUSATION

Foreword by Luurt Nieuwenhuis, ed.

My college education included disciplines in oceanography and geology (Master's). Since then I read varied and diverse science and technical material. Climate change has left demonstrable geological evidence over the millennia. It is scientifically variable. The current infatuation with global warming appears, to me, to exhibit all the characteristics of an idea hijacked for social and political purposes regardless of the underlying causative science.

Watch the evening weather forecast on the television. When the weather is unstable, you'll be lucky to get an accurate prediction two days in advance. Yet the politicians and environmental activists want us to believe that the impact of human activities extrapolated over multi-year and multi-decade time spans are so accurate that the whole human race (actually only the industrial West) should modify its activities accordingly.

Discussion of the "global warming movement" should involve analytical evaluation of the science (especially in the light of the geologic history) as well as the social agenda driving the political environmental movement.

Two articles, with an introduction, appeared in the January 2007 issue of The Rhododendron Newsletter. This is sent out by the Victoria Chapter of the Australian Rhododendron Society, Simon Begg, editor, and provides a useful starting point for thinking about this matter. This is a lot of reading, but it is well worth learning more about this pivotal issue.

---Luurt

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GLOBAL WARMING

Introduction by Simon Begg, ed.

Rhododendron Newsletter is indeed fortunate to have two articles addressing the vital issues of global warming and climate change. And doubly fortunate that both authors, Peter Fisher and Mike Hammer, are Society members and both are well qualified to write. Peter teaches environmental economics at Central Queensland University. Mike is a research scientist for a Melbourne based high technology manufacturer and major exporter. As a science graduate from Melbourne University more than 50 years ago I appreciate both the issues Peter and Mike raise and the diverse choice of perspective they bring.

When I graduated I thought science was objective; a researcher in a given field either recorded facts, [perhaps temperatures at a particular place at different times, or perhaps how many rats developed cancer when exposed to a particular proposed drug] and then sought an hypothesis to explain the observations, or postulated an hypothesis and then devised a means to test it. Did the hypothesis explain all the observed data? Was the test rigorous? Did the test consider all the data the researcher and all his peers considered relevant. Because of the risk of bias did the test also consider all data known opponents thought relevant? If the hypothesis didn't fit all the observed data, no matter how small the discrepancy, it represented a potential

flaw in the hypothesis unless the discrepancy could be satisfactorily explained. It was never acceptable for a scientist to ignore any data that did not fit an hypothesis. In physics we were taught that tiny discrepancies in expected measurements led to discovery of new sub-atomic particles. Much insight can be gained from seemingly tiny discrepancies. If researching cancer in rats following exposure to a suspected carcinogen has development of cancer in non exposed rats been measured? In the climate change/global warming debate, much as in the cancer tobacco and asbestos debates, there is a lot at stake; the future of the world as we know it or millions of people suffering ill health or premature death. When the stakes are high the need for quality debaters increases. A comparison of Mike's and Peter's articles brings out different views of fundamental facts. Is there, really, global warming? Are the oceans rising? Do increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere cause global warming or does warming of the oceans cause increased carbon dioxide levels? If the latter, is man's part in increased carbon dioxide levels a major or minor one? You, the readers, are asked to think. Test what you read. Be skeptical. That is good. Let me know what you think. What is bad is the temptation towards bias that big issues, and big money, brings. If Mike is right some data is suspect, or major pieces of data are not being considered. If Peter is right about global warming is he right also about the consequences? We need to know the answers without delay so future planning and action happens fast. Read Michael Crichton's State of Fear. Michael is an entertaining novelist. He is also a medical doctor who has a keen interest in major world issues. Of course he writes to put across a particular view. But he researches thoroughly for his books. Look up the myriad references he cites for the message in State of Fear. Again think.

---SWB

COLD COMFORT IN CLIMATE CHANGE

January 6, 2007. Dr. Peter Fisher is an environment industry specialist who teaches environmental management at Central Queensland University. Peter is one of the Victoria Chapter's members.

Much of Australia has again suffered an extremely hot and dry year thanks to climate change. But these conditions could turn around with savage speed, writes Peter Fisher.

Climate change has customarily been viewed as a gradual, creeping process - not entirely human-friendly but unlikely to turn the world into an unruly, totally horrid place. That idea has been shaken by Hurricane Katrina, road-melting European summers, the drought and now cataclysmic wildfires sweeping down from the Victorian Alps. Even so, much of government and corporate thinking remains steeped in the idea that no matter how significant the changes turn out to be there will be enough time - maybe 30 years, maybe 50 or more - for social and economic adjustment.

A similar assumption underlies the rather leisurely search for technological solutions under AP6 (Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate) signed in Laos in July 2005 and recent emission reduction projects announced by the Federal Government. This has occurred against a backdrop of a United Nations

weather agency report that levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere hit a record high last year and are likely to keep rising unless emissions are radically cut.

In the circumstances, governments and business would be well advised to take a long, hard look at the growing body of research into the astounding, often unsuspected connections between the regular physical transformations of the planet's weather systems.

Chemical analyses of the tiny bubbles of air in Greenland ice cores establish that the last ice age started to teeter about 14,700 years ago. As it gathered momentum, melt-water poured into the oceans, raising levels by half a metre or more each decade. The sea moved inland like a slow tsunami at a rate of up to 450 metres a year.

But after a hesitant couple of millenniums of warmer conditions, the cold was back with a vengeance, turning western Asia and Europe into ice empires. This event, dubbed the Younger Dryas (after a plant that suddenly reappeared in Scandinavia), returned the planet to cool and dry conditions in the space of a few decades, with the average northern hemisphere temperature plummeting 7 degrees.

Just as rapidly, after 1300 years, warm and wet conditions resumed. Another abrupt but lesser cooling which converted the Middle East into a dust bowl began 8200 years ago, but it lasted only a century.

Both events are thought to have been caused by an interruption to the Gulf Stream, or "ocean conveyor", through large volumes of melt-water entering the North Atlantic. (The Younger Dryas probably stemmed from a cataclysmic collapse of an ice dam across Canada's Lake Agassiz.)

In fact, the Earth's geophysical history has so many climate flips that these can be considered normal rather than aberrant. James Hansen of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies says it is our own "relatively static experience of climate that is exceptional". The paleoclimatologist Peter deMenocal warns "that the climate system has much greater things in store for us than we think". Steven Mithen, in his book *After the Ice*, has even re-created the climatic maelstroms our forebears must have endured, while Brian Fagan provides a similar historical appraisal in *The Long Summer*. Since the cold snap that began 8200 years ago, the world's climate appears to have been remarkably stable. But about AD 540 the Earth ran into a cosmic swarm, clouding the sky and leading to prolonged cold (possibly triggering the Dark Ages). It was so sudden that even the scribes abandoned their quills to concentrate on survival. Another cooling ran from the 14th to the mid-19th century, the biting cold of that period often being portrayed on Christmas cards. New research points the finger at the Gulf Stream, which slowed by 10 per cent during this period. And the climate between ice ages may not have been so drab as commonly thought. Researchers at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in America reveal in a recent issue of the journal *Science* that sea levels (linked to the age of coral terraces) rose and fell by as much as 30 metres over intervals of 3000 to 9000 years between 70,000 and 240,000 years ago. A study of a fossilized West Australian coral reef has similarly deduced that the warming that occurred during the middle of the last interglacial period 125,000 years ago caused a catastrophic melting of ice and a rapid sea level rise of 3.5 to 4.5 metres. A glimpse of the scale and ferocity "climate transit" can assume comes from Philip Allen and Paul Hoffman in a paper in the journal *Nature*, with their reconstruction of a deglaciation of 635 million years ago when ice sheets poured

directly into warm seas. They inferred that the ripples in sediments deposited during this period of sea level rise corresponded to giant, long (21- to 30-second) waves "feeling the bottom", 200 to 400 metres below. These waves were estimated to have been produced by winds blowing at speeds of 20 metres a second over the water. On shore, they created huge dust storms, much of the debris layering into the sea. The course of past climate transitions from cooler periods suggests that they can be extremely rapid - perhaps within a matter of decades rather than a century or centuries. For instance, new research published in *Nature* has found that the glacial climate in the North Atlantic can swing very quickly, with temperatures rising by 8 to 16 degrees in just a few decades at the end of each ice age. Such disturbances stem from the elliptical nature of the Earth's orbit and variations in its tilt and spin. Life has long been at the mercy of these happenings, as demonstrated by a horrendous 10,000-year drought in Africa during the Pliocene epoch 2.5 million years ago, which devastated the gorilla population in southern Zaire (later providing a niche for a new breed of chimps) and no doubt brutally affected proto-humans.

Add to these natural cataclysmic events the potential effect of climate forcing from rising carbon dioxide levels, and the outlook becomes much more unpredictable. James Lovelock, in his book *The Revenge of Gaia*, posits that the planet has already been pushed over the brink, with rapid rises in temperature of as much as 8 degrees now likely.

Hansen, one of the US President's most respected (if not loved) climatologists, doesn't go quite that far. He concludes in an article in *Climatic Change* on the storing of heat in the oceans that "any increase in global temperature beyond 1 degree could trigger runaway melting of the world's ice sheets". Shrinking ice means less sunlight gets reflected and more gets absorbed, exacerbating the problem of warming. "Even 1 degree additional warming may be highly undesirable; 2 to 3 degrees is clearly a different planet," he says. The first act looks to have played out in the Arctic Circle this northern summer, when large freshwater lakes formed on the Greenland ice sheet and then drained away to the depths. Fred Pearce, writing in Britain's *The Guardian*, records how scientists observed, within hours of the lakes forming, that the vast ice sheets rose up, as if floating on water, and slid towards the ocean. The Penn State University glaciologist Richard Alley commented: "We used to think that it would take 10,000 years for melting at the surface of an ice sheet to penetrate down to the bottom. Now we know it doesn't take 10,000 years; it takes 10 seconds." Pearce says: "This highlights why scientists are panicky about the sheer speed and violence with which climate change could take hold. They are realizing that their old ideas about gradual change - the smooth lines on graphs showing warming and sea-level rise and gradually shifting weather patterns - are not how the world's climate system works." (New research on the Ross Ice Shelf reveals that collapses over the past 3 million years have taken place very rapidly, with sea levels rising by between 7 and 17 metres.) The quickening pace of that understanding is proving daunting to climate-change science watchers (but not, it would seem, the politicians). Hansen stresses the urgency of the policy response. "I think we have a very brief window of opportunity to deal with climate change, no longer than a decade," he said last year. If he is right we now have nine years at most, and there has been no let-up in emissions growth since then. And the latest UN conference on climate change could not even agree on a timetable for vital decisions on curbing emissions. Bill McKibbin, reviewing Lovelock's book in *The New York Review of Books*, says: "Our problem now is that there is no way forward, at least if we're serious about preventing the worst

ecological nightmares, that doesn't involve working together politically to make changes deep enough and rapid enough to matter. A carbon tax would be a very good place to start."

Meanwhile, our governments continue to canvass solutions that invoke long lead times - 15 years or more to come fully on stream - which prudence suggests is time we simply don't have. With climate transit looking to be in full swing (in the lead-up to a flip?), extreme extremes in weather patterns due to rising sea levels will force even the most obstinate to take stern action.

---Peter Fisher

GLOBAL WARMING

Mike Hammer is a Society Member and a frequent point of reference when scientific issues are topical; for example sourcing a digital camera/microscope and enlightening us about DNA and genetic modification ED.

My name is Michael Hammer and for the last 30 years I have worked as a research scientist for a high technology manufacturer and major exporter based in Melbourne. My output is measured not in papers or theories but in commercial patents and new products brought to market. So far my work has generated over 20 patents and more than \$500 million in high tech exports for Australia. To do this I have had to work across a broad range of fields and often challenge entrenched wisdoms.

Like all of us I have heard increasingly dire doomsday predictions from the global warming advocates; sea levels rising by many metres, Europe plunged into an ice age, climate tipping points, and the like. From my knowledge physics and feedback systems, these predicted outcomes seem to me to be extreme and indeed strike me as more reminiscent of "people with a cause to push" than serious science. My response has been to look at the available data for myself. I write this article to present to you some of my findings and resultant concerns.

There is overwhelming data available showing that the earth's weather is highly variable. We are all familiar with the year to year variability from personal experience and the geological time scale variations from historical reports however we need to remember that apparently random variations occur at all time scales. Global warming websites refer to several significant warming and cooling periods in the last 2000 years. The same sites also present graphs showing data in support of warming from 1910 to 1940, cooling from 1940 to 1970 and warming again from 1970 to 2000 (indeed some of the current global warming activists were apparently global cooling activists in the 1970's). All the previous climate variations occurred without human contribution. If the claimed warming between 1970 and the present is real, we need to be very careful about jumping to the conclusions that this is uniquely due to human activity and is uniquely the start of a one way slide into a doomsday outcome.

We need to know firstly; are we seeing the start of a significant long term change in climate and secondly; if so is it due to human activity?

Global warming claims suggest future temperature rises of up to 8-10 C; an alarming prospect. Currently reported data to date however only supports claims of an 0.3 C rise [1]. I question whether such a modest rise, even if true, can be responsible for the current climatic events being attributed to global warming. However even this modest rise is the subject of significant controversy. The calculations are based on

data from ground based weather stations. For convenience such stations are located in towns and cities. Towns and cities have fewer trees, more masonry buildings, more roads and more heat emission from home heating, cars and industry all of which make the city hotter than the surrounding countryside. As the town grows, this temperature difference increases. This is called the urban heat island (UHI) effect and is typically several degrees for a city. Because cities were smaller and less affluent in the past, their heat island effect was smaller. Thus a direct comparison between recorded temperatures today and a century ago would show clear temperature increases even in the absence of any global warming. The UHI effect is much larger than the magnitude of the claimed global warming. Global warming calculations claim to make some adjustment for UHI effects but even a few percent error in such adjustment is enough to create or deny global warming of the magnitude currently claimed. Reference [1] shows a particularly interesting graph where the amount of warming found is plotted against the size of the town (plotted on a logarithmic axis). The data shows a linear relation between the two with zero warming for towns of less than 10,000 people. Since 1970 we also have temperature data from satellite borne microwave sounding units. These measure temperatures averaged over a large area thus greatly reducing the UHI problem. It is interesting that this data seems to show less and in some cases negative global temperature rise [1]. Of course, if you live in a city (or down wind of a city), as most of us do, then your immediate environment has almost certainly warmed but it is overwhelmingly a local, rather than global, phenomenon and due to UHI not CO₂ emissions. Such warming may well have some effect on local weather (for example, I recall reading a report several years ago which suggested warming cities may have reduced the incidence of tornados in the US tornado alley) but is extremely unlikely to have any global impact.

If the above mentioned temperature rise is both real and significant, what is the likely cause? Current popular wisdom suggests rising levels of CO₂ due to fossil fuel use. We know for sure that CO₂ levels are rising, I believe the Mauna Loa measurements can be relied on [1]. Also we know that CO₂ is a green house gas, it strongly absorbs between 14 microns and 15 microns, which is near the maximum emission wavelength for the earth's surface. We also know that CO₂ emissions from burning fossil fuels represents about 3% of the total annual CO₂ generation on Earth [5]. This is not a dramatic increase but it is also not trivial. One way of testing the above hypothesis is to calculate the change in energy absorption with increasing CO₂ levels. Having some knowledge of spectroscopy I have done this and I find that, even at 280 ppm CO₂, more than 99.9% of all the energy in the CO₂ absorption band has been absorbed within the first 50 metres. This absorbed energy is then transferred via collisions to the oxygen and nitrogen molecules which radiate it away at other wavelengths. Subsequently I found a paper [6] which does a similar analysis in more depth and comes to the identical conclusion. The situation is akin to putting a sheet of metal over a window to block out the light and then thinking that putting a second sheet of metal over the first will make it still darker. It won't because the first already blocks all the light. Ref [8] also comes to the same conclusion. Another way to test the hypothesis is to look at the correlation (cause and effect relationship) between CO₂ levels and reported temperature rise. The two graphs are given in [1]. They show;

between 1890 and 1940 temperature rose 0.5 C; CO₂ rose from 295 to 310ppm.

between 1940 and 1970 temperature fell 0.2 C; CO₂ rose to 330 ppm

between 1970 and 1990 temperature rose 0.3 C; CO₂ rose to 350 ppm.

This is almost zero correlation. The greatest temperature rise preceded most of the CO₂ rise and there have been both significant temperature falls and rises reported in the face of rising CO₂ levels. Indeed we need to question cause and effect. The oceans store a colossal amount of CO₂ dissolved in the water. Rising water temperature reduces CO₂ solubility releasing more to the atmosphere so, does rising CO₂ cause rising temperature? or is it the other way round?

CO₂ causation of global warming also predicts that the troposphere would warm before the surface of the earth since this is where the CO₂ absorbs the re-radiated energy and it must warm before it can warm the surface. Yet the data suggests the troposphere has warmed less than the surface. It also does not explain earlier warming periods when human CO₂ emissions can be ruled out. I believe there are grounds to be cautious in accepting CO₂ emissions as causing global warming.

There are also other hypothesized causes for potential global warming. To mention two, reference [1] shows a graph comparing sun spot activity with global temperature for the period 1750 to 2000. If the data is accurate the correlation is interesting. Another possible cause documented in [5] is that a hot spot in the earth's rotating magna moves under an ocean. This heats the ocean, which in turn raises global temperatures and CO₂ levels. Interestingly, if true, it could also be a very good explanation of ice ages since warmer oceans increase water evaporation and thus cloud cover, cooling the land (the oceans being heated from below are less affected). A warmer ocean and cooler land encourages water transfer from ocean to land collecting as ice near the poles.

Another concern is that global warming will lead to very rapid melting of the polar ice caps leading to massive sea level rises and coastal flooding. Predicted sea level rises range from significant fractions of a metre to many metres. These claims are backed up with claims of rapid glacier retreat, melting ice shelves and massive icebergs. From what I can find, however, measurements show essentially no change in sea levels over the last few decades. At most a few mm rise or fall depending on the measurement site chosen [1]. (the variation is not surprising, sea level is measured relative to a coastline and tectonic plate movements means some land is rising, some sinking). More recently, it has also become possible to measure sea levels via satellite altimeter and these measurements show essentially zero change [1].

With regard to melting polar ice, one must remember that only melting of ice on land can contribute to sea level rise since ice on water already displaces its own weight of water. 90% of the world's ice on land is in Antarctica with a further 6-7% in Greenland. The ice over water in both Antarctica and Greenland, (particularly around the Antarctic peninsula which is significantly warmer than the rest of Antarctica) is indeed melting but inland ice, far from melting, is increasing in thickness [5] [11]. This fact is rarely mentioned by global warming activists. Of course one could argue that increasing temperature will cause this ice to start melting as well. However, the average temperature in inland Antarctica is - 50C and even at the height of summer it does not rise above about -30C. Ice only melts at 0C so that many degrees of warming would be necessary for such a scenario.

Another frequently cited doomsday scenario is that the melting northern hemisphere polar ice will stop the gulf stream and that stopping the gulf stream will plunge Europe into ice age conditions. I have found rather technical papers on the web disputing both these predictions. The matter is too technical for the available space

here, however consider two simple points. First if the above scenario were correct, the gulf stream slowed and Europe started to cool, such cooling would increase ice deposits. Wouldn't that reverse the very process acting to stop the gulf stream? Second, if the gulf stream is the dominant effect giving Europe a balmy climate at latitude 50 to 55 north how come Seattle and Vancouver at around 49 north also have a balmy climate without the benefit of the gulf stream yet New York at latitude 42 north has a much more extreme climate?

I admit I do not know whether significant long term global warming is real or not but what I have tried to show in the above material is that the reality of global warming, human activity as a causative factor and the predicted outcomes are nowhere near as well supported by hard data as global warming proponents would have us believe. In reality we are trying to find and quantify very small data trends buried beneath very large natural random variations and then trying to draw profound conclusions from extrapolations of the extracted data. This is a risky process and one exceptionally susceptible to bias on the part of the researcher. Such bias can come about in many ways. I have referred to slight under or over estimations of UHI effects earlier. Another way is to select only a part of the complete data, that best matches the hypothesis or only those measurement sites which match the predictions. A good example is documented on page 14 of [1]. Sadly I see possible bias from both sides.

Science has evolved ways to combat such problems. Firstly by free debate in the literature between proponents of each side forcing theories to be continuously challenged and rigorously tested. Secondly by judging hypotheses according to their ability to correctly predict future events. Thirdly by the use of double blind experiments. And this leads me to my very great concern over the current situation.

As far as I have been able to ascertain none of the global climate models has successfully predicted climate even a few years into the future let alone being the basis of valid predictions out a century or more. Yet this has not stopped calls for such model outputs to be the basis for extreme action.[3].

I see strong action on the part of global warming proponents to suppress debate even to the point of personally attacking those seeking to present an alternative point of view. For example [7] [10], Bjorn Lomborg presented a statistical analysis of experimental data in a book titled *The Sceptical Environmentalist*. The global warming community first put pressure on his publisher not to publish and, when that was not successful, formally accused him of scientific fraud (he was eventually acquitted). A major scientific journal then sought and published strenuous criticisms of his work while, at the same time, denying him an effective right of reply. When he sought to answer these criticisms on his own website the same journal threatened him with legal copyright action for citing parts of the material they had published. Richard Lindzen [3] (professor of Meteorology at MIT) gives a detailed record of the suppression of global warming critics dating back to the 1980's. He gives specific references to researchers who have lost their funding and even their jobs for publishing findings not supportive of global warming. He cites researchers subject to personal criticism and denigration for their lack of support for global warming and cases where major journals have rejected papers critical of global warming, claiming lack of public interest, without the step of peer review of the material. It is worthwhile reading for anyone interested in this sad history. David Demming [2] gave evidence before the US Senate committee of his personal experience of deliberate pro global warming bias by both scientists and the media dating back to the 1990's. I personally read a review of Michael Crichton's book *State of Fear* [11] in "New

Scientist" where the author was made out to be grossly irresponsible - almost criminal - in daring to put his point of view to the public.

I find such tactics indefensible and appalling. To me they are more reminiscent of an organization focused on imposing their ideology on society than serious scientists seeking truth.

Nor is the media blameless in these proceedings. Every undesired climatic event is presented as proof of global warming even though the events at issue are not necessarily atypical in either severity or frequency. Hurricane Katrina, for example, was not a particularly powerful hurricane nor is it abnormal for New Orleans to experience hurricanes. The extreme damage seems to be more due to government apathy towards hurricane preparations, despite warnings, than the severity of the storm itself. In fact more objective analyses of Atlantic hurricane frequency and severity suggest both have been decreasing [1]. As another example, 2005 was claimed as the hottest year on record. 2006 was clearly cooler but what was reported was the hottest spring on record. This change of reported parameter allows the media to again use the "hottest on record" label but it encourages a false comparison and thus represents bias. If 2007 is cooler again will we maybe hear about the hottest February the 23rd on record? Such reporting acts to inflame the situation, promoting an emotional response when what is needed more than anything is a careful rational approach.

Reducing our reliance on fossil fuels through research into alternative energy sources is clearly desirable. However precipitous significant reductions of CO2 emissions is almost certain to be both expensive and significantly damaging to our society.

It may also severely curtail our ability to respond to the possible scenario of global warming being real but not related to human activity. Surely it is worth doing every thing we can to find out the truth before such extreme action. We need to know more and that can only happen by welcoming free and open debate. I would encourage readers to look at the web references below. They in turn give further references and represent a good starting point for personal exploration of this topic.

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---Mike Hammer

Snow in January y

By Peter Kendall

In the spitting snow
The caw of the crow has
fallen silent.

From a world
without light, a new world
bound in hoarfrost.

The hoarfrost has fled
and with it the character of
each tree.

Before dawn, swirls of snow
And to think—not one flake to
match its companions.

Shiftless snow flurries
the naked cherry begins
its transformation.

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The Portland Chapter is a local chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. Combined annual dues to both the Society and the Chapter are \$35 per year. Annual subscription price to the 9+ times yearly newsletter **Rhododendron News** is included in Chapter membership

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Newsletter articles

Newsletter article and idea deadline is at the Chapter meeting. Items received after that time might not be included in the current issue.

Send articles, events or ideas for the newsletter to: arsportland@wa-net.com

or via the US Postal service, to:

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Meeting time and place

Portland Chapter regular meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month except in June, July, and August. Meetings start at 7 pm with a social half-hour which includes refreshments. A short business meeting at 7:30 pm is followed by an informative and entertaining presentation of about 45 minutes.

Potlucks, parties, auctions, tours and garden events are also included in the Chapter's events calendar. The December's meeting is a potluck and May's meeting is the annual awards banquet..

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