

From: "Dick Bernard" <dick_bernard@comcast.net>
Subject: P&J#1131 Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth"
Date: June 17, 2006 5:53:29 AM CDT
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A very happy Father's Day to all you Dad's, Granddads, and Dad-role models out there.

Friday night we went to see the new documentary on the crisis of Global Warming. Actually, we had seen much of it before (see below).

It is an incredible film, a must see.

If nothing else, you must see this one because no more than five minutes in...well, let Cathy describe it in her own words...as we were watching the opening scenes, no more than five minutes into the film, Cathy said out loud "that's me", and yes indeed, it was her, the sole focus of the camera, as she was moving towards Mr. Gore (see below). An aspiring actress would kill for exposure like Cathy gets in the film, even if only a couple of seconds. (Alas, I was right there, too, but didn't make the cut, except for part of my shirt!).

Anyway, see the film. It is powerful.

At the very least, visit the website: www.climatecrisis.net. And pass the word. We're running out of time on this issue – some would say we've already done irreversible damage – though Al Gore is clearly hopeful IF we, especially in the United States, cease our collective denial. Everything, Everyone is tied together. I'm at P&J (Peace and Justice) #1131 because I worry about the world we're leaving behind for kids of today and the future. Today's kids, world-wide, will be the ones who will ask "why" about our actions or inactions in this generation particularly.

Do see the film. It is an important place to start.

-----Original Message-----

From: Dick Bernard [<mailto:dick@chez-nous.net>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 13, 2005 6:44 AM
Subject: P&J#903 "Denial is more than just a river in Egypt"

Yesterday evening, according to previous plans, we would have been in western North Dakota on a little vacation after the family reunion, but Cathy opted to stay at home due to the impending birth of grandchild #9. Turned out, she could have gone to the reunion phase, but she was wise: Benjamin Anthony made his appearance Tuesday morning at 9:31 a.m.

I did go to the reunion, but came home immediately afterwards, rather than continuing our planned trip.

One of the e-mails greeting me Sunday night was an invitation via MoveOn to hear Al Gore talk about global warming in St. Paul. His visit to St. Paul was at the invitation of the Science Museum of MN, and two benefactors, the Gegax Family Foundation and Vance Opperman. Initially he was to speak to perhaps 200 leaders, but thanks to the organizers, they

scrambled to find a much larger venue, when they learned of the great interest in his talk.
Memo to myself: rejoin the Science Museum of Minnesota.

Last night as we shook Mr. Gore's hand after his speech, I mentioned our newest grandkid, born 11 hours earlier. I said our new youngster, along with his cohort around the world, is the major reason I've become and will remain an activist.

We are, as the cynical bumper sticker I sometimes see says so well "spending our kids inheritance" and I can't sit idly by.

Mr. Gore's 90 minute talk and slide show to over 1000 of us was spell-binding and extraordinarily powerful, and focused on the critical environmental issues facing this country and this world.

You know the issues he emphasized tonight. I wish you all could have seen the photographs and the graphics. It would take a book...or a documentary (which they apparently are filming as he makes his worldwide tour on this topic).

He effectively borrowed the Dire Straits quote, "Denial is more than just a river in Egypt" and near the end told us to avoid a mind-set that too often happens: denial followed by despair, without intervening efforts to fix the problem. Giving Up was not an option he entertained.

After spending most of his speech outlining truly dismal realities of the future for this planet as consequence of human induced global warming, perhaps even if we change course abruptly today, he said that there is hope...the technology – the solution to hopefully help fix the seeming insoluble problems - is already available and is being effectively used in other countries already, and even some U.S. corporate giants are waking up - but it will take an immense effort by all of us.

We need to work to change government and business attitudes. We can't give up.
It's up to us as individuals to make the change we seek.

While Mr. Gore was talking I thought back three days, to Saturday morning, July 9. That day, a bunch of us 'reunionites' traveled 30 miles or so west of the farm to see two sights that are only about 10 miles apart: the burgeoning wind energy 'farm' between Kulm and Edgeley ND; and the older Whitestone Hill Battlefield Historic Site a few miles to the south.

We first stopped at the wind farm, where currently, if I recall correctly, there are 57 immense wind turbines 'harvesting' natural energy for electricity. It is a small and recent start, but a start nonetheless, for alternative energy...and North Dakota is the windiest state in the United States! (You can probably learn more about it at the websites for Otter Tail Power and Florida Power and Light, the two main owners of the site. As of this moment, I haven't checked those resources.)

Then we drove south – about 10 miles 'as the crow flies' to a place I've often visited, but few have ever seen because it's off the beaten path for tourists: the Whitestone Hill Battlefield, which commemorates the largest single massacre of American Indians in American history when, in early September, 1863, a unit of the U.S. cavalry killed as many as three hundred Indian men, women and children who were minding their own business and completing their annual buffalo hunt. Their crime? A suspicion that they might be harboring insurgents of the time (they weren't). After winning the battle, for good measure the cavalry unit destroyed their food stuffs, ultimately forcing the survivors onto reservations as an alternative to starving to death. These 'Indian Wars' continued on in the west for about 30 years, till the American Indian was finally brought to heel. (There is the abundant irony at this tragic place: the monument first

erected, which dominates the site to this day is to the 20 U.S. soldiers who were killed that fateful day (attached). It was many years later that it occurred to someone that there should be a monument as well to the Indian victims. Their monument is a large and very tasteful boulder placed about 50 yards down the hill, in front of the soldier on the pedestal. North Dakota has tried to tell a balanced story of this tragic event.) I've found a good story about this massacre at www.emily.net/~schiller/whitston.html.

That Dakota Territory Indian massacre was, I thought to myself, at roughly the same time as petroleum was first 'mined' in the U.S. -1859, by Edwin Drake from shallow wells near Titusville PA. Less than 150 years later, earth time, we've gone from being the only producer of oil, to an increasingly frantic and dependent consumer of an increasingly scarce product. 150 years...in all of the history of this planet...we're well on the way to destroying an irreplaceable natural resource.

To say the least, we're leaving a troubling legacy.