

## ***TV Reporters and Global Warming***

*By Meteorologist Art Horn*

As a meteorologist who has worked in the television news business for 25 years I've had the good fortune to work with many street reporters. Given my length of service and the significant turnover of reporters that I have observed in that span of time I have worked with hundreds of them. Some remain on the local level for their entire careers and a few climb the ladder and make it all the way to the network level. In many cases there is very little if any difference in the ability of those who make it to the top to those who stay local. It is my observation that those who make it to the network level are simply those who network management feels can help generate the largest audience. This is fine, after all if you have a circus and there is no one under the tent than there is no circus.

The vast majority of these reporters are just trying to do the job presented to them each day. It is difficult to be an expert on everything. The reporters job is to get the facts (as well as can be determined in a very short period of time) shoot some video and then organize all of that into a story that might be a minute and a half long. My point here is that to examine an issue as complex as global warming takes much more time than most reporters are given to do a story. With tighter budgets and reduced staff reporters are being asked to do more with less in less time. This does not lend one to look deeply into most issues especially one as deep as global warming. An added complication to this is the lack of science education given to reporters in college. Based on my experiences with news reporters most if not all have almost no background in science.

This is not their fault and it is not my intention to slam reporters because the required courses in college were not geared to evaluating science issues. But when it comes to global warming stories most reporters and add to this news anchors because most anchors started as reporters, simply don't understand the fundamental science involved. So if you're a reporter what do you do? Well the first thing is to do the story in a way that advances you're career. That means don't tick off the news director or the general manager. These managers have to answer to the bosses at the network or corporate level. Television networks and their affiliated stations are owned by corporations. Many of these corporations are invested in "going green" to attract more advertisers. Of course anytime you see "going green" on television or in print or on some product it's 1984 code speak for "We believe in manmade global warming and our product will help cure that sin". So as a reporter it is not a wise move to advance any thinking that might bring into question who or what is behind global warming, especially that it might be a natural cycle of the sun and oceans. This could be the fastest way to ending any career moves upward. So is there pressure on reporters and anchors to keep their mouths shut and go along with the environmentalists gloom and doom predictions? Yes.

Many television meteorologists have expressed their concern about the one sided global warming reporting. And many of them have been called into the news directors office and been told to clam up or move out. This is fact but of course this is news that will never be reported. Only those in the business and who know the meteorologist personally know this. This is the strange "climate" will live in. As the world temperature continues to go down (also never reported) reporters and anchors both at the local and national level are in a difficult position. They don't have the science background to understand the issue and pressure from above could spell disaster to their careers if they question the corporate dictates and motivations.