



The day global warming stood still

As scientists confirm the earth has not warmed at all in the past decade, others wonder how this could be and what it means for Copenhagen. Maybe Al Gore can Photoshop something before December.

It will be a very cold winter of discontent for the warm-mongers. The climate show-and-tell in Copenhagen next month will be nothing more than a meaningless carbon-emitting jaunt, unable to decide just whom to blame or how to divvy up the profitable spoils of climate change hysteria.

The collapse of the talks coupled with the decision by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid to put off the Kerry-Boxer cap-and-trade bill, the Senate's version of Waxman-Markey, until the spring thaw has led Oklahoma Sen.

James Inhofe, the leading Republican on the Environment and Public Works Committee, to declare victory over Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and the triumph of observable fact over junk science. "I proudly declare 2009 as the 'Year of the Skeptic,' the year in which scientists who question the so-called global warming consensus are being heard," Inhofe said to Boxer in a Senate speech.

"Until this year, any scientist, reporter or politician who dared raise even the slightest suspicion about the science behind global warming was dismissed and repeatedly mocked."

Inhofe added: "Today I have been vindicated."

The Ada (Oklahoma) Evening News quotes Inhofe: "So when Barbara Boxer, John Kerry and all the left get up there and say, 'Yes. We're going to pass a global warming bill,' I will be able to stand up and say, 'No, it's over. Get a life. You lost. I won.'" Inhofe said. Now we have the German publication Der Spiegel, which is rapidly becoming the house organ for climate hysteria, weighing in again with the sad news that the earth does not have a fever so we really don't have to throw out the baby with the rising bath water.

In an article titled, "Climatologists Baffled By Global Warming Time-Out," author Gerald Trautfatter leads off with the observation: "Climatologists are baffled as to why average global temperatures have stopped rising over the last 10 years." They better figure it out, Der Spiegel warns, because "billions of euros are at stake in the negotiations."

We are told in sad tones that "not much is happening with global warming at the moment" and that "it even looks as though global warming could come to a standstill this year." But how can it be that the earth isn't following all those computer models? Is the earth goddess Gaia herself a climate change "denier"?

(Source: Investor's Business Daily)

Atlantis astronauts install gadgets on second spacewalk



WASHINGTON (AFP) — Shuttle Atlantis astronauts on Saturday completed the second of their mission's three spacewalks to maintain and install more high-tech gadgets on the International Space Station.

The sortie was delayed by over an hour after false depressurization alarms earlier rang through the orbiting outpost and jolted mission specialists Mike Foreman and Randy Bresnik awake after just two hours of sleep, rattling preparations.

Bresnik, venturing out into space for the first time, was most likely already restless as he awaited the birth of his daughter back on earth.

His wife Rebecca Burgin was due to give birth to the couple's second child on Friday. If the baby is born during the Atlantis mission, Bresnik would be only the second person to become a father in space.

But he was forced to set aside family concerns and concentrate on the task at hand, as the second exterior work effort of the shuttle's 11-day mission got underway more than an hour late, at 1431 GMT.

It was shortened by about 30 minutes due to the false alarms, but the duo completed all their scheduled tasks during the six-hour,

eight-minute spacewalk which ended at 1939 GMT, said US space agency NASA.

"Congratulations on another amazing day of work in space," mission specialist Megan McArthur told the astronauts from mission control in Houston, Texas.

The pair installed a cargo attachment system on the space-facing side of the station's Starboard 3 truss and set up a wireless video system to transmit images to the station and relay them to Earth.

During a separate mission next year, the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer will be installed at the attachment point.

Foreman and Bresnik also tackled a task that had been planned for the third spacewalk — deploying the final attachment system on the Earth-facing side of the truss, where a logistics carrier will be installed next year.

In addition, they installed two antennas on a Columbus European lab assembly to track ships on Earth, and relocated a floating unit that measures electric charges on the station.

Prior to the spacewalk, two other astronauts used the station's robotic arm to transfer a cargo pallet containing 10,000 pounds (4,545 kilograms) of spare parts.

The false depressurization and smoke alarms had sounded around 0253 GMT, forcing Bresnik and Foreman to exit the Quest airlock, where astronauts "camp out" before spacewalks to purge nitrogen from their bloodstream to prevent decompression sickness.

The alarm originated from the Russian Poisk Mini-Research Module — which astronauts delivered to the ISS on November 12 — with the station's automatic response shutting down ventilation systems, thus setting off two smoke detectors.

It took about an hour for conditions to return to normal.

After Atlantis, just six space missions will remain in the shuttle program before the fleet's three orbiters are retired.

NASA's shuttle program is due to be mothballed next year, but the White House could still decide to extend it through 2011 to reduce America's future reliance on Russia for transporting astronauts to the space station.

The shuttle remains the only spacecraft that can carry heavy, bulky equipment that is key to maintaining the ISS, itself set to remain operational until 2020.



Tree-eating bugs threaten Monarch butterfly in Mexico

MORELIA, Mexico (AFP) — The mysterious Monarch butterfly, which migrates en masse annually between Canada and Mexico, is now facing a new peril: another insect thriving in Western Mexican forests.

Some 8,000 oyamel fir trees — the butterflies' unique mountain habitat each winter — were cut down in July in a bid to remove beetles that threaten the Monarch's ages-old migration.

But now another small beetle has since taken to devouring the savory tree trunks, further endangering the butterflies' winter colonies.

"We are working to determine how many trees have been affected," said Homero Gomez, president of El Rosario Sanctuary, a premier migrating spot for the Monarch in the western Mexican state of Michoacan.

Local residents, who help manage and maintain the sanctuary, have asked the authorities to fight the new intruder by using natural substances and without felling trees.

Millions of the orange and black butterflies migrate each year when the weather grows cold in Canada to make habitat in Michoacan's oyamel firs, in an annual ritual that has yet to be scientifically explained.

The Monarchs blaze a trail of some 4,500 kilometers (2,800 miles) — to the tune of 80 kilometers (50 miles) per day — arriving in early November in the high mountain massifs of Mexico's transvolcanic belt, where they hibernate until February in huge colonies, completely masking tree trunks.

Thousands of tourists come to observe their majestic aerial dances in the El Rosario Sanctuary, home to five million trees of various species.

Yahoo jumps on Twitter bandwagon to improve search

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Yahoo Inc. is jumping on the Twitter bandwagon in its latest attempt to get people to use its Internet search engine more frequently.

Beginning Thursday, Yahoo will mine the short messages posted on Twitter to find fresher information about hot topics.

Microsoft Corp. and Google Inc. had earlier announced plans to incorporate Twitter messages into search results, but Yahoo said it will be the first among them to include such "tweets" on its main search results.

The addition comes at a pivotal time for Yahoo. The company, based in Sunnyvale, Calif., is bogged down in a three-year financial slump partly because it has losing ground in the lucrative Internet search market to Google and, to a lesser extent, Microsoft.

The Twitter twist is the latest sign of Yahoo's resolve to spice up its search results even as it prepares to lean on Microsoft for most of the technology powering its search engine. That transition is scheduled to begin next year.

Microsoft so far is listing Twitter results in a special section of its search engine, Bing.

Google, the Internet's search leader, also plans to include Twitter's chatter in its search results, but has yet to say when that change will occur or how it will do it.

Yahoo is relying on Twitter to highlight the latest news about specific subjects. When a user enters a search request tied to breaking news, Yahoo will top the results page with four tabs — one for direct links to news sites, one for photos, one for video and one dedicated to Twitter.

Clicking on a Twitter tab will show news links posted by Twitter users. Some of the links will be drawn from Twitter accounts set up by the news media, such as CNN and The Associated Press, while others will be pulled from people pointing out a story they find interesting.

Yahoo is relying on its own algorithms to identify the tweets containing the most relevant information. Twitter's own search engine, by contrast, shows results in chronological order and doesn't focus exclusively on posts containing news links.

This probably won't be Yahoo's only foray into "real-time" search — a term used for indexes consisting of the freshest information posted on the Web.

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