



# ROSSMOOR NEWS

WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

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## Republican Perspective

*By John Littig*

### An Akademik Lesson

It was certainly a happy new year for the 52 scientists and tourists rescued on Jan. 2 from the Russian ship Akademik Shokalskiy. Their ship had gotten stuck amid Antarctic sea ice on Christmas Eve.

I don't know what possessed the tourists to take a pleasure cruise to the Antarctic aboard the Russian ship. But the scientists were there studying - are you ready for this? - Global warming. O Henry, master of irony, would have loved this.

Professor Chris Turney, leader of the scientific expedition, is a professor of climate change at the University of New South Wales. Turney's team had been carrying out experiments "in an attempt to discover how quickly the Antarctic sea ice is disappearing." The website for the expedition warns that the Antarctic ice is threatened by "ocean warming."

In contrast to Arctic ice that is shrinking, Antarctic sea ice is actually increasing. In fact, NASA, which studies such things, reported last Oct. 1 that Antarctic sea ice had reached its greatest extent since 1979, when measurements began. In addition, Colorado University's National Snow and Ice Data Center reports a parallel finding. Neither organization knows the reason for the increase.

But, off the global warming scientists went, into the frozen Antarctic. And, as you know from media reports, their ship became icebound. A nearby Chinese icebreaker, the Xue Long (Snow Dragon) tried to reach them but could not break through the record-thick ice. Later, the Snow Dragon itself became stuck in the ice. The Aurora Australis, an Aussie icebreaker, then tried to get through but failed. Finally, the French icebreaker L' Astrolabe tried - but it too was turned back by the historically thick ice.

Those on board awaited rescue. They had a Christmas feast and a secret Santa gift exchange. They had yoga and Spanish classes. They observed the penguins observing them back.

Presumably (and ironically), for the duration of their research voyage plus the extra nine days the environmental advocates were trapped by the ice, their ship shared its carbon footprint of diesel exhaust with the pristine Antarctic environment.

And in the end they were rescued - shuttled out by helicopter. The Russian crew of 22 remained on board the Akademik Shokalskiy, waiting for the ice to break up.

Perhaps news of NASA's report had not reached New South Wales. More likely, the global warming scientists were just so heavily invested in their belief that they refused to consider contrary evidence. Either way, Turney and his fellow scientists have been rescued from the grip of their ice prison.

The global warming adventurers have had an embarrassing, highly public, up-close-and-personal experience with record-setting ice formation. So what are the chances this will shake their confidence that the ocean is warming and the Antarctic ice is melting? Probably zero. Maybe even sub-zero.

In fact, after his rescue, the professor of climate change said, "I'm a bit sad it's ended this way...but we got lots and lots of great science done." Science most likely confirming his position that the Antarctic ice is melting. Alternatively, he'll probably find a way to blame the ice growth on "global warming." Wanna bet?

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