

Republican Perspective

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by John Littig

Global Warming Strikes Again

Indulge me a little trip down memory lane. My Jan. 22, 2014 column “An Akademik Lesson” described the voyage of 52 scientists and tourists into the Antarctic. The leader of their expedition was Professor Chris Turney of the University of New South Wales. Their mission was to study global warming---especially “to discover how quickly the Antarctic sea ice is disappearing.”

Their Russian ship Akademik Shobalskiy became icebound on Christmas Eve. Apparently the professor and his mates had overlooked the analyses by NASA and by Colorado University’s National Snow and Ice Data Center. Both had reported Antarctic sea ice was increasing and had reached its greatest extent since 1979, when measurements began.

Attempts by Chinese, Australian, and French icebreakers failed to reach the Akademik. Eventually the tourists and global warming scientists were rescued by helicopter. The Russian crew stayed behind and waited for the ice to break up.

I don’t know whether the global warming adventurers had been unaware of the NASA and CU data. Or perhaps they were aware but discounted the data because it did not match their beliefs. Either way, their headlong plunge into the Antarctic in search of global warming sure made them look foolish.

Fast forward exactly and coincidentally four years to Jan. 22, 2018. On that date weather.com reported that the U.S. Navy’s newest warship had become icebound.

The USS Little Rock, commissioned at Buffalo on Dec. 16, was headed south to its new home port in Florida. But global warming intervened. The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway froze up tight and became impassable.

Unlike the Akademik Shobalskiy, the Little Rock was not on a mission to gather evidence of global warming. It was minding its own business, steaming for its home port in the Sunshine State when global warming caught up with it in Montreal and froze it in solid for the duration of the winter.

Fortunately, the Little Rock's crew will be able to soldier (sailor?) on. They have been given cold-weather gear, their supplies are sufficient, their morale is high (so we're told) and they are using their forced dockside situation to perform training drills. Maybe they are even able to get shore leave and to practice their French with the Montreal natives. I hope so.

On opposite sides of the globe, the Akademik Shobalskiy and the Little Rock do share a common place in the annals of global warming. Their circumstances demonstrate that global warming acts in strange and mysterious ways. At times it even reveals itself as its own nemesis doppelganger---a record-setting hard freeze.