

Our Most Deadly Habit

All Canadians who are even unconsciously aware of what is going on with global “warming” are acting like teenage boys. Even when many young men see the carnage of horrendous automobile accidents, they continue the same dangerous driving behaviour, because nature endows or perhaps more accurately, handicaps them with a testosterone based “knowledge” that they can survive risky behaviour because they are the invincible ones. Is it no wonder that we have always used this age group as cannon fodder in our wars.

Canadians who continue to be addicted to wanton conspicuous consumer habits are like reckless teens who know that smoking kills many but not all, thus teens of both genders start the habit because they have a built in mindset of invincibility which convinces them THEY will be the one who will not get cancer. So it is with our consumer habits. Somehow, we ignore our own environmentally destructive behaviour trusting that scientists will find a solution.

So it is also with the current attitude of Canadians towards global frying. “Science will find new ways to keep us safe”. “Technology will find a magick bullet to solve our problems”. “Alternate energy sources will solve the deadly issues.”. We excuse and continue our behaviour fooling ourselves that a solution will be found by the powers that be, when in actuality the only thing that can save us is a near complete discontinuation of our frivolous consumer lifestyle. The most deadly habit we have today.

At the moment nothing other than nuclear energy will work. The energy required to produce solar cells is a net carbon loser; it is cleaner energy in the end of course, but the per unit carbon manufacturing costs are enormous. Solar cells are a grand idea, but manufacturing costs to the environment and their wimpy output per unit means households would need dozens of square metres in sunny climates to

be useful. Worse yet, the massive amounts of energy that go into building wind turbines means decades must pass per unit before a net carbon saving is realized. The gigantic environment costs involved in manufacturing the concrete, metal and perhaps composite fiber structures for tidal generation facilities will take many many decades to break even in the carbon output to savings ratio. Every kilogram of cement created from burnt clay and lime requires the energy equivalent of up to three times the weight of the cement in wood and the resulting carbon gases released into the atmosphere are huge. Those gases are killing us.

The only way to stop the cycle of carbon production is to reduce or eliminate all activities unnecessary for survival - right now.

The environmental heat inducing carbon costs in manufacturing what we need to replace our global frying energy systems will slow but not eliminate our problems. Retrofitting massive transport ships with carbon or composite fiber rigid sails will help... but what will almost eliminate the problem is not having to transport most of what we need in the first place. Hundreds of COSTCO, Canadian Tire and Walmart containers a day arrive in Vancouver and Seattle from China to feed our gluttonous consumer habits. These goods are produced with very environmentally harmful cheaper soft coal energy that spews huge amounts of global warming carbon based gases into our very thin shell of an atmosphere, the thickness of which has been likened to the skin of a 20 cm or 8 inch diameter balloon.

Only kicking this most dangerous of human habits, cold turkey, has a hope of saving us. The time to do it is today, tomorrow is already too late.

Lance Read – A Canadian in Cuba