



SMELL THE COFFEE
ALLISON FINN

Losing ground: global warming fight takes two steps back – again

At the end of 2006, America crawled reluctantly up to the awards podium and accepted its highly-coveted prize: first place in the race for No. 1 Global Warming Polluter of the Year.

Weren't we proud.

After 2006 was recorded as the hottest year on record (up to that point), several environmentalist groups united to sabotage the United States' chances in the 2007 worldwide race for Polluter of the Year. The Environmental Defense Fund said that "2007 must be a year for effective national action."

It wasn't.

Yes, we made a few small steps. Al Gore won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work fighting global warming. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a report strongly linking humans to global warming, calling the evidence "unequivocal." The panel threatened that the end of the century could see as much as a 7.1-degree increase in the globe's temperature and a 23-inch rise in its ocean levels. A few more stubborn Republicans reluctantly admitted that global warming (Oh, Mommy, do I have to say it?) *might* exist.

People are finally starting to speak up about this. There's so much scientific fact proving global warming exists that even the most stubbornly in-denial politicians have to admit they were wrong.

Slowly, the idea has begun to permeate our lives – from awards shows "going green" to car dealerships ranting on and on about their cars' (allegedly) increased fuel efficiency.

Yes, we're talking about it, thinking about it, perhaps even having nightmares about it – but we're still not *living* it.

In our day-to-day lives, we're not worried about our carbon footprints. We don't think that an individual can make a difference.

We're right.

One individual cannot significantly reduce emissions and stop global warming.

However, if *every* individual were to actively take steps to do this (things as simple as replacing all the lights in your house with fluorescent lightbulbs, only running your dishwasher or washing machine when there is a full load, unplugging appliances and chargers when they're not in use and eliminating meat from *one* meal every week), we would begin to see results.

People have tried to inspire the world to change and pull together in a cohesive community. However, we remain a society of individuals – unable to make a difference by ourselves.

Every time we take a step forward, we seem to take two steps back.

Another scientific study identifies the source of more carbon dioxide emissions – but we do nothing to control them. We call for China to limit its greenhouse gas emissions – but it responds by pointing out just how ineffective and hypocritical our anti-global warming practices are. We're aware of the problem – but we aren't actively working for the solution.

I write about the problem. I unplug my phone charger when I'm not using it. I don't eat meat and I drink organic milk. I read the news, try to stay aware of the issue and pass the information I learn along to others whenever I get the chance.

But I don't know how to truly reach people anymore, to inspire them to action when it's so much easier to be informed, but remain apathetic. Even in my daily life (which includes an average of six or seven political rants), I don't worry too much about it.

Still, the problem is there.

The *L.A. Times* recently printed a front page article chronicling the story of Kivalina, an Alaskan island that is one of the early victims of global warming. Within 10 to 15 years, the island will disappear, washed away by the rising ocean.

Global warming may not "affect" my daily life, but for those 400 people living on that strip of sand (which is only 600 feet wide at its largest point) it *is* daily life. And those 400 souls will just be the first casualties in the war against global warming.

But we don't seem to care. Forty percent of Americans now say environmental policy is one of the most important issues in the 2008 presidential election, but a very small percentage of those same Americans actually try to make a difference in their own lives.

I don't have an easy answer – or even a snide columnist's attempt at one. I don't know what to do.

But I don't want it to be too late before I – before *we* – figure it out.



Lauren Gray

Jacob Haren (11) sings in the Winter Choral Concert, Nov. 29. Due to the days lost during the October wildfires, the choir had to condense its practice schedule and cut songs from its concert.

Choir performs despite lost time

JESSICA CHANG
GRAPHICS EDITOR

Westview choir held its annual Winter Choral Concert last week. The performance featured instrumental, foreign language, holiday songs and solos by members of Bella Voce in its concert, Nov. 29 and 30.

Despite the October fires, which caused the choir to lose a week of preparation, Choral Director Doreen McCarty said the department produced a successful event.

"It was very difficult to lose that week," McCarty said. "We lost what most schools would consider ten days of instruction."

When the choir department returned to school, they had to focus on rehearsing for the winter concert and make up for lost time.

"We had to pick up the pace," McCarty said. "There were one or two songs we had to cut because we didn't have enough time to [perform them] with excellence."

However, McCarty and the choirs collectively decided to pull through with the concert.

McCarty said that it is hard to reserve time in the theater, especially during the holidays. Even if the department wanted to push back the concert date, none were available. She decided to keep the concert at its

original date, despite having to adjust. McCarty said she felt it was best to keep things as normal as possible. The department scheduled extra rehearsals in order to prepare for the event.

"We've worked really hard to make up [the time lost]," McCarty said. "The students have been practicing on their own and really holding together. I'm really proud of their efforts."

McCarty said that the choir department worked hard to make the concert the best it could be.

"The kids did a pretty good job," McCarty said. "We came back and the nice thing about choir is the kids are all pretty close-knit. They were ready to sing and get [back] to normal as fast as possible."

In addition to losing the important rehearsal dates for their concert, Bella Voce, Westview's top choir, did not participate in the Palm Desert Festival, which they usually attend each year.

The festival was scheduled on the Thursday of the week of the fires. Because of safety conditions, Bella Voce could not go this year.

McCarty said missing the festival was a disappointing for the group and herself as well, because it is usually a time for their choir to bond. It would have been their first public performance of the year.

Westview reading scores defy recent downward trend

JOLENE XIE
NEWS EDITOR

In "To Read or Not to Read," a study released Nov. 19, The National Endowment for the Arts concluded that Americans, especially teens, are reading less for fun. This reportedly leads to declining writing skills and reading scores.

The number of 17-year-olds who "never or hardly ever" read for pleasure has doubled since the past 20 years to 19 percent, according to the analysis. *Time* magazine also reported that 15- to 19-year-olds spend a total average of seven minutes reading on weekends.

Despite the results of the study, Westview's standardized test results have continued to improve. Westview's SAT I Critical Reading score averaged to 545 out

of 800 in 2007, a ten-point increase from 2006. The average overall score on the SAT I also increased by 25 points.

AP English Literature teacher Bob McHefey said that the number of AP English classes offered at Westview compared to that of other high schools around the nation may contribute to the increase.

"The more reading you do, the better [you perform on standardized tests]," he said. "So in our AP English classes, people tend read more. That prepares you better."

The study also reports that employers consider 72 percent of high school graduates to be "deficient" in English writing skills. However, McHefey said that because of the advanced classes Westview offers, the seniors he teaches are well prepared for post-high school careers.

"I would expect them to be [more]

well-read," he said. "They've had more experience with text because we're talking about academic reading. They have that extra three years in class where they're supposed to be doing academic reading."

Although teens are reading less for pleasure, McHefey said that students aren't necessarily reading less overall, even if they are reading less academically.

"What [teens] read is not [academically-oriented] reading," he said. "That doesn't mean they're reading less. They're just reading less of the things they're getting tested on."

"I know people who are much more aware of the world than I am because they read the Internet everyday, [and] I consider them very well-read [people]," he said. "Engagement with the text is what is important."

WV students gain edge in UC admission

MICHELLE MARSHALL
FEATURES EDITOR

Class of 2007 UC Enrollment

PUSD	
UCLA:	37
UC Irvine:	59
UCSD:	52
UC Berkeley:	47
Westview	
UCLA:	20
UC Irvine:	29
UCSD:	22
UC Berkeley:	19

Sidebar by
Kara Tsukashima

Data reveals that a larger percentage of Westview graduates enrolled at UC campuses than graduates from other Poway Unified high schools in 2007.

In Superintendent Don Phillips State of the District report for 2007, he reported that 55 percent of Westview graduates continued to four-year institutions, the highest percentage of students in the four comprehensive high schools in PUSD.

According to the National Student Clearinghouse, a non-profit organization that helps schools manage data about their students, the percentage of Westview students entering four-year institutions exceeds the PUSD average by 11 percent.

The distribution of Westview graduates enrolled in the UC system compared to other PUSD class of 2007 graduates is not proportional.

Westview graduates represent between 40 and 54 percent of PUSD students enrolled at select campuses, despite Westview being only one of four comprehensive high schools in PUSD.

At UCLA, there are 37 PUSD graduates enrolled from the class of 2007. Of these 37 students, 20 graduated from Westview.

Twenty-nine of 59 PUSD graduates enrolled at UC Irvine graduated from Westview.

Of the 52 PUSD graduates attending UCSD, 22 graduated from Westview, and in a similar fashion, 19 of the 47 graduates from PUSD who enrolled at UC Berkeley are from Westview as well.

The reason behind Westview graduates' perceived dominance in the UC enrollment remains speculation.

However, math teacher Sanjevi Subbiah said he thinks that the advantage originates from Westview's open-AP-enrollment philosophy, one of the only differentiations between the curriculums of Westview and the other three comprehensive PUSD high schools.

"More of our students take AP classes at an earlier age [than other PUSD students]," Subbiah said. "Because they take these classes earlier, they have more AP test scores on their transcript already when they apply to college."

Principal Dawn Kastner said she thinks that these percentages represent a degree of success for Westview's significant self-motivated students.

However, she said wanted to stress that the goal of Westview is not getting students admitted to UC schools, but meeting the diverse needs of all students.

"This year, the focus for teachers is to teach so that every single kid is learning, using strategies that grab everybody," Kastner said. "We have good teachers on this campus, but that takes them into the highest level of educational competence, really refining themselves to the highest levels of pedagogy."

Reading Statistics

• **19 percent** of 17-year-olds do not read for pleasure

• Americans aged 15 to 24 average **two hours** of watching TV per day

• **38 percent** of employers consider most high school graduates deficient in reading comprehension

Sidebar by Kara Tsukashima
<http://www.nea.gov/news/news07/TRNR.html>

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