

March 11, 2015

Kevin Williamson writes on the serial collapse of the left's silly dreams. This time in Venezuela.

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*That is all going down the memory hole. ...*

Another serial fraud of the left/media has been demolished by the Ferguson outcome. Bret Stephens has that story.

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**Business News Factor** tallies the cost of the year's serial snow storms in New England. Not as bad, they say, as last year's mid-west polar vortex.

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*Car dealers and real estate agents complained the poorly-timed storms -- many of which hit on or around weekends -- were disastrous to business. And with the exception of the region's famed ski resorts, many New England hotels, transportation companies and other businesses in the travel and tourism trade say they've struggled too. ...*

**Popular Science** posts on Panama Canal expansion.

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**Washington Post** says daylight "savings" time doesn't mean savings.

*Back in 1784, hanging out in Paris and heady with Enlightenment, Benjamin Franklin had an idea. Struck by the fact that Parisians were sleeping during sunlight hours and then staying up late at night by candlelight, he calculated the number of candles that were being wasted -- and came up with an impressive number, 64 million pounds worth of them. Franklin therefore jokingly proposed a massive schedule change, noting that a fortune could be saved through "the economy of using sunshine instead of candles," and even suggested at one point that perhaps cannons be fired at sunrise to get everybody out of bed.*

*Such was the germ of the idea that would eventually lead to daylight saving time -- that if we patterned our lives to rise and set with the sun itself, we'd save energy and money. Flash forward 230 years later, and this remains the basic reason why many of us will wake up Sunday and realize that it's darker outside than we're used to. After "falling back" in November to standard time -- setting our clocks back an hour -- we'll have sprung forward, adopting daylight savings time. Daylight savings moves an hour of light we had in the morning to the evening, which may make us a little groggy Sunday but at least promises to end the miserable practice of leaving work in the dark.*

*But there's a problem with this (well-lit) practice. It is increasingly looking like Franklin's idea about saving energy was wrong. ...*

**CBS News** had pictures of chunks of ice washed up on the shore of Wellfleet in Cape Cod. More likely, these are chunks of snow tossed into Boston harbor from the Boston Snow Party.

*The historic winter of 2015 has left giant chunks of ice on the Cape Cod National Seashore.*

*Cape Cod photographer Dapixara captured images of a person standing next to the massive pieces of ice that washed ashore in Wellfleet over the past few days. ...*

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**National Review**

**[The Left's Mess in Venezuela](#)**

***Another caudillo, another progressive darling***

by Kevin Williamson

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That is all going down the memory hole. The Obama administration has announced economic sanctions on Venezuela’s rulers and its intelligence agents, citing the [“erosion of human-rights guarantees”](#) – *erosion*, as though this were something new, as though Hugo Chávez hadn’t been a tyrant back when President Obama’s ally Representative Fattah was carrying his political water all over the eastern seaboard. In the *New York Times*’ account of Venezuela’s woes and Maduro’s misrule, there is no mention at all of the critical role the American Left played in lending legitimacy to *Chavismo*, of the so-called liberals and progressives who denounced legitimate protests against Maduro’s brutality as [nefarious U.S.-backed coup attempts](#), who remained — and remain — silent on the regime’s censorship, political repression, torture, and economic incompetence. William Neuman of the *Times* did find an economist — a leftist economist, he assures us — who went so far as to say that certain aspects of the Chávez program “needed to be revised or even discarded to set the nation’s economy on the right track.”

There is never a reckoning for the Left. An entire generation of American intellectuals found itself enraptured by the brutal, repressive, terroristic political apparatus of the Soviet Union — not only journalistic enablers like Walter Duranty of the *Times* and the various Hollywood reds and Communist party operatives, but the purportedly [enlightened liberals at The New Republic](#), who were consistent apologists for Soviet brutality at home and abroad at the height of Joseph Stalin’s reign of terror. Scores of Americans, some of them in high government office, were working on behalf of one of history’s most murderous and repressive regimes — and the bad guys in that story are, in the popular imagination, the people who worked to expose that conspiracy, rather than the people who worked to *advance* it.

Noam Chomsky has for decades been in the business of peddling excuses for every gang of murderers flying his preferred flag — the Khmer Rouge, the Sandinistas, and Mao Zedong’s regime among them. Professor Chomsky was, while it suited him, literally a holocaust denier — [a denier of a Communist holocaust](#) rather than a National-Socialist one. Jane Fonda was a game propagandist for the murderous Beijing-backed regime in Vietnam and proclaimed that if we really understood Communism we’d be [“on our knees praying”](#) for it. (On our knees: The Left always tells us what it wants, if we’re listening.)

The sundry Communist regimes coddled and celebrated by the American Left managed to kill something on the order of 100 million people during the 20th century. Consider that a lesson unlearned: In our own time, the [anti-fracking movement](#) does the bidding of ex-KGB boss Vladimir Putin's regime, and so-called progressives such as Thom Hartmann are quite pleased to work hand-in-glove with a [Kremlin-backed propaganda network](#).

Things will come to a bad end in Venezuela. Sean Penn won't be there for it, and neither will Chaka Fattah. Perhaps the ghost of Walter Duranty will file a report.

**WSJ**

### **[Ferguson, Lies and Statistics](#)**

***Here's a story for the media: a community in which honest people are afraid to tell the truth.***

by Bret Stephens

Darren Wilson has been exonerated, again, in last August's shooting death of Michael Brown, and that ought to be as much a vindication for the onetime Ferguson, Mo., police officer as it is a teachable moment for the rest of America.

It won't be. The story line has failed, so the statistics have been put to work.

That the claims made against Mr. Wilson were doubtful should have been clear within days of Brown's death, and again in November after a grand jury, having heard from some 60 witnesses, declined to indict the officer—an outcome one outraged commentator [denounced](#) as having “openly and shamelessly mocked our criminal justice system and laid bare the inequality of our criminal jurisprudence.”

Yet if anyone was openly and shamelessly mocking the criminal-justice system, it was so much of the media itself, credulously accepting or sanctimoniously promoting the double fable of Ferguson: that a “gentle giant” had been capriciously slain by a trigger-happy cop; and that a racist justice system stood behind that cop.

At least half that fable was put to rest last week by an exhaustive Justice Department [report](#). It demolishes the lie that Brown was shot in the back, along with the lie that he was surrendering to Mr. Wilson, hands in the air, when he was shot. It confirms that Brown physically assaulted the officer, who had good grounds to fear for his life.

And it confirms that eyewitnesses either lied to investigators or refused to be interviewed out of fear of local vigilantes.

“Witness 109 claimed to have witnessed the shooting, stated that it was justified, and repeatedly refused to give formal statements to law enforcement for fear of reprisal should the Canfield Drive neighborhood find out that his account corroborated Wilson.”

Witness 113 “gave an account that generally corroborated Wilson, but only after she was confronted with statements she initially made in an effort to avoid neighborhood backlash. . . . She explained to the FBI that ‘You’ve gotta live the life to know it,’ and stated that she feared offering an account contrary to the narrative reported by the media that Brown held his hands up in surrender.”

Now there's a story for the media: A community in which honest people can't tell the truth for fear of running afoul local thugs enforcing "the narrative reported by the media." Or is that more of a story *about* the media?

But let's move to the other Ferguson fable, which is the Justice Department's allegation, in an unfortunate [second](#) report, of systemic racism in the Ferguson police department.

For a flavor of this claim, it's worth noting an incident recounted in the report, in which a Ferguson man was killed "after he had an ECW [Taser] deployed against him three times for allegedly running toward an officer swinging his fist." The man "had been running naked through the streets and pounding on cars that morning while yelling 'I am Jesus.' "

According to the Justice Department, this incident is an example of "overreliance on force when interacting with more vulnerable populations."

This isn't to say that the report doesn't uncover more serious problems, including a number of racist emails in the department, policing that seems needlessly obnoxious or aggressive, and a municipal government desperate to prosecute every minor violation of the law in order to maximize city revenues—in effect, using cops as taxmen.

But this only demonstrates the journalistic truism that you can always find the "story" you're looking for. Using ticket revenue and other fines to raise revenues is one of the oldest municipal tricks in the book, so much so that the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis even published a [paper](#) about it in 2006. "As local tax bases have been exhausted and public opposition to increases in local tax rates have increased over time, local governments face increased pressure to find alternative sources of revenue," noted economists [Thomas Garrett](#) and Gary Wagner.

That turns out to be as true in Milwaukee, Nashville and Washington, D.C., as it is in Ferguson. So are we talking about institutional racism or just the usual government bloodsucking?

Then there's the report's abuse of statistics, notably of the fact that African-Americans are 67% of Ferguson's population but are disproportionately arrested for crime.

Is this racism? The Missouri Statistical Analysis Center notes that in [2012](#) African-Americans, about 12% of the state's population, constituted 65% of murder arrests and 62% of murder victims. To suggest that the glaring statistical disproportion between relative population size and murder rate is somehow a function of race would be erroneous and offensive. Yet tarring a police force as racist for far smaller statistical discrepancies is now one of the privileged "truths" of 21st century America.

The lesson of Darren Wilson is that there is no truth in narrative. And the lesson of Ferguson is that there is no truth in statistics. There is truth in fact. There is truth in reason. There is truth in truthfulness. Nothing less.

## NewsFactor Business Report

### Epic Snows Cause Economic Woes Across All Industries

by Phillip Marcelo

Ignore anyone who tells you snow is free. Every work day lost during New England's historic winter has meant millions of dollars taken out of the regional economy.

IHS Global Insight, an economic analysis firm, estimates Massachusetts alone suffered roughly \$1 billion in lost wages and profits, as storm after storm pummeled the region, delivering over eight feet of snow in roughly a month.

Retailers and restaurants were among the hardest hit, as customers held off on big purchases or chose to stay at home rather than enjoy a night on the town.

A survey released this week by Massachusetts business groups representing those and other industries reported sales dropped an average of 24 percent and payroll dropped about 7 percent among their small businesses members.

Car dealers and real estate agents complained the poorly-timed storms -- many of which hit on or around weekends -- were disastrous to business. And with the exception of the region's famed ski resorts, many New England hotels, transportation companies and other businesses in the travel and tourism trade say they've struggled too.

"January and February are always tough months for us because people just don't want to travel," said Christopher Crean, a vice president at Peter Pan, a Springfield-based long distance bus company. "But when you add in all the snow and cold and highway closures, that just compounds the injury. It's hard to make a profit."

Manufacturers, meanwhile, report they're just starting to catch up on nearly a month of lost productivity.

During the worst of the storms, assembly lines shut down, work orders were delayed or cancelled outright and treacherous roads and iced-over rail lines hindered transport of finished products.

"Not only were we losing sales on the front end of the storms, now we're paying a lot more on the back end to get product out," says Michael Tamasi, CEO of AccuRounds, a Massachusetts maker of shafts, valves and other parts for medical, defense, aerospace and IT companies. "We've been adding hours, stretching out the work day, working on Saturdays, whatever we need to do."

Business leaders say the storms, if anything, laid bare the shortcomings of two critical pieces of the regional economy: greater Boston's road and transit systems.

"We still have congested streets and longer commutes and that's meaning lost productivity," says Timothy Murray, president of the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. "The system has really been no match for Mother Nature."

Economists expect the ripple effects of New England's storms will be felt nationally, but it's too early to say to what extent.

Doug Handler, chief North American economist at the Massachusetts-based IHS Global Insight, says the storms likely won't have the economic punch of last year's winter, when a "polar vortex"

exposed large swaths of the country to subzero temperatures and snow. That weather phenomenon caused widespread economic disruptions. Estimates for its overall economic impact have been pegged at anywhere from \$15 billion to \$50 billion.

"This is much more localized and in a region that can handle it, to a degree," Handler said, acknowledging that parts of the South and Mid-Atlantic are also seeing snows this week, albeit nothing on the scale of what New England has seen this winter. "We're prepared for it in New England, whereas last year, some regions just weren't."

Indeed, U.S. employers added 295,000 jobs in February, exceeding expectations, the Labor Department reported Friday. Within that data, Handler noted the number of workers in nonagricultural jobs that were unable to work because of inclement weather was roughly on par with February's historical average.

Elsewhere, Autodata Corp reported U.S. car sales in February were up about 5.3 percent from January but still fell short of expected gains. Analysts predict lost sales should be made up as the weather warms; U.S. new car sales are still on track to hit their highest level in more than a decade.

Economists also expect many New England industries will recover most lost productivity.

The region's population centers are now largely built around hospitals, universities, and the financial, health care and information technology sectors -- industries that are somewhat resilient to weather-related shutdowns. Many workers can work from home or simply spend more time in the office catching up. But even among those high skill industries, there are limits to what can be done to soften the blow of bad weather.

Many drugmakers, research labs and other large health care and biotech institutions maintained 24/7 operations through the storms, taking on overtime costs or covering hotel stays and other travel expenses that likely won't be recouped, industry officials said.

"There's certain research that you just can't stop," said Peter Abair, of the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council, which represents more than 650 biotechnology companies and academic institutions. "To stop a project midstream is very difficult. All your expenses go out the door. You have to start from scratch."

## Popular Science

### Massive Panama Canal Upgrade Could Transform Global Shipping, Again

*An expansion will allow for boats up to three times the current size*

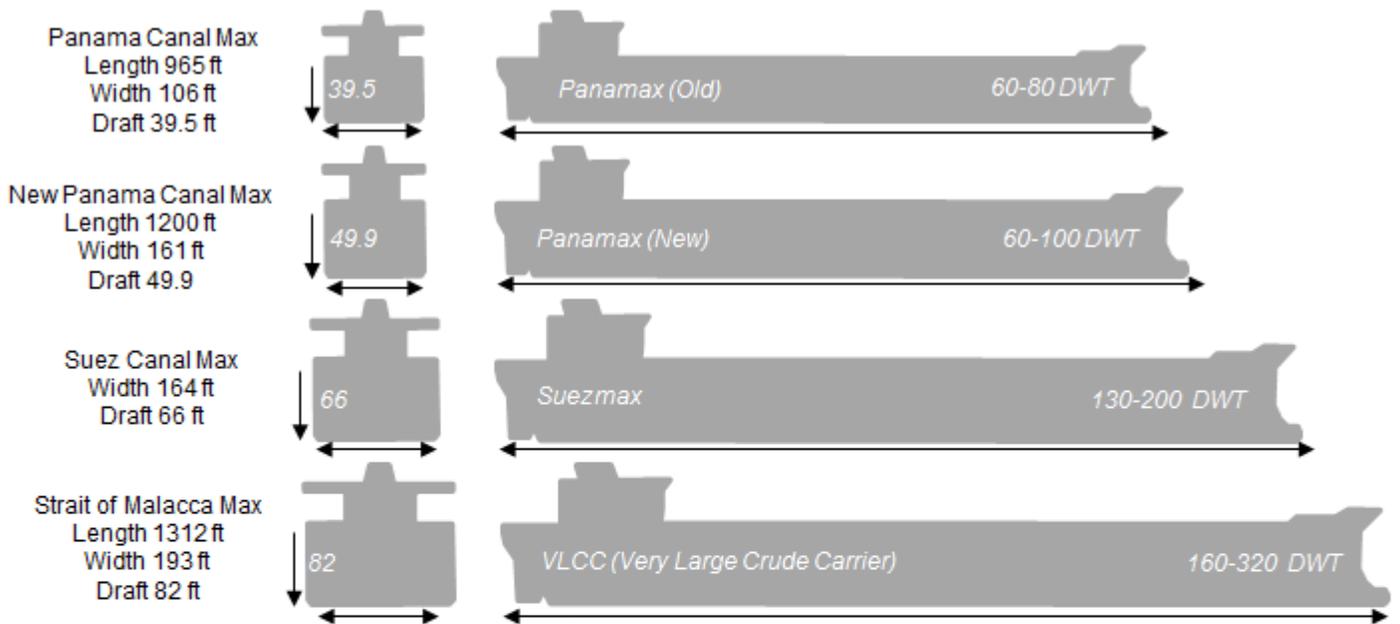
by Rebecca Boyle



*Freighters are classified according to how many 20-foot containers they can hold, measured in 20-foot equivalent units (TEU). Bigger vessels have enabled ever-more efficient ocean shipping over the past century. In the image above, the old 4,500-TEU Panamax is shown in red; the new Panamax, at 13,000 TEU, is shown in green; and the global max, at 19,000 TEU, is shown in blue.*

## Big Boats

## Maximum ship sizes for the Panama and Suez Canals, Strait of Malacca



Over the past 20 years or so, traffic on the world's oceans has quadrupled. Ships now carry 95 percent of the cargo imported to American shores. To move those goods more quickly and cheaply, cargo ships have grown nearly four times bigger--and many are now too large to fit through the Panama Canal.

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## A New Contender In Nicaragua

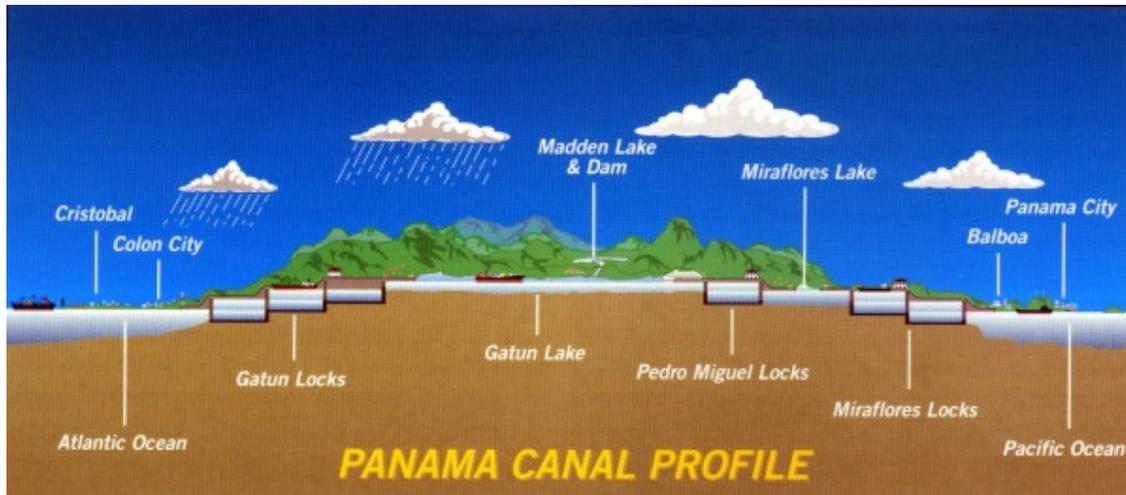
Just north of Panama, the proposed \$50 billion Nicaragua Grand Canal would stretch 172 miles from Atlantic to Pacific, half of that through Lake Nicaragua, the country's largest source of drinking water. Chinese entrepreneur Wang Jing announced plans (and funds) for the canal last summer,

and work began at the end of December. The canal aims to accommodate 18,000-TEU ships, capacity that Hofstra University geographer Jean-Paul Rodrigue and other critics say far exceeds demand, unless global trade doubles in the next few years. "Transportation is of course an enabler of trade," Rodrigue says. "But it's not the magic wand that creates it."

## How It Works

Traveling the Panama Canal involves nine steps, each of which will be upgraded in order to raise bigger ships from sea level up to lake level and back down again

Traveling The Panama Canal



1. **Sea Level:** Enter the canal at Port Cristobal  
A wider entrance will cut down on wait times, which can last a few days.
2. **0 to 85 Feet:** Rise through Gatun Locks  
New, bigger locks will accommodate ships three times today's "Panamax".
3. **85 Feet:** Cross Gatun Lake  
The lake's level will be raised two feet to boost reservoir capacity.
4. **85 Feet:** Pass through the lake's channels  
Deeper channels will enable navigation by new Panamax ships.
5. **85 Feet:** Navigate the Culebra Cut  
The cut connecting Gatun Lake and the Pacific locks will be four feet deeper.
6. **85 to 54 Feet:** Enter the Pedro Miguel Locks
7. **54 Feet:** Cross Miraflores Lake  
Currently, ships nearing the Pacific encounter two sets of locks, separated by an artificial lake. A new Pacific access channel will bypass these steps altogether.
8. **54 to 0 feet:** Descend through Miraflores Locks  
The locks on the Pacific side will be expanded to match the Atlantic's.
9. **Sea Level:** Enter the Pacific Ocean  
Dredging, completed in 2013, will make exiting the canal faster.

## One Hell Of A Shortcut

It takes eight to 10 hours to traverse the Panama Canal, plus 15 more while waiting on either end. That's still a lot faster than the shortest alternate ocean crossing, which tacks on some 3,000 miles. A freighter from East Asia, averaging 19 knots, could get to the Gulf of Mexico in 41 days going

around Cape Horn or 43 using the Suez Canal. With the Panama Canal, the trip takes only 25 days, slashing time by 40 percent, not to mention fuel costs.

## A Bigger, Faster Suez

As Panama's eight-year upgrade wraps up, it's getting more competition. In August, Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi announced plans to add another lane to the Suez Canal. The expanded waterway will accommodate two-way traffic, doubling its capacity from an average of 49 ships a day to 97, and cutting transit time from 18 hours to 11. It is ambitiously scheduled for completion in August 2015, making the two projects a race to the finish.

## Washington Post

### [Why turning your clocks forward Sunday actually costs you money](#)

by Chris Mooney

Back in 1784, [hanging out in Paris](#) and heady with Enlightenment, Benjamin Franklin had an idea. Struck by the fact that Parisians were sleeping during sunlight hours and then staying up late at night by candlelight, he [calculated](#) the number of candles that were being wasted -- and came up with an impressive number, 64 million pounds worth of them. Franklin therefore jokingly proposed a massive schedule change, noting that a fortune could be saved through "the economy of using sunshine instead of candles," and even suggested at one point that perhaps cannons be fired at sunrise to get everybody out of bed.

Such was the germ of the idea that would eventually lead to daylight saving time -- that if we patterned our lives to rise and set with the sun itself, we'd save energy and money. Flash forward 230 years later, and this remains the basic reason why many of us will wake up Sunday and realize that it's darker outside than we're used to. After "falling back" in November to standard time -- setting our clocks back an hour -- we'll have sprung forward, adopting daylight savings time. Daylight savings [moves](#) an hour of light we had in the morning to the evening, which may make us a little groggy Sunday but at least promises to end the miserable practice of leaving work in the dark.

But there's a problem with this (well-lit) practice. It is increasingly looking like Franklin's idea about saving energy was wrong. Genius though he was, he seems to have forgotten one thing: Moving around daylight hours doesn't *only* change how much people need to rely on artificial lighting, whether in the form of candles or modern halogens. It also changes the overall complexion of temperatures that we experience while we're awake. And in an age of heating and air conditioning, that may cause us to reach for the thermostat -- with big, probably negative nationwide impacts on energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, and your wallet.

It should be noted, incidentally, that this view of daylight saving time is not fully accepted. Indeed, some authorities [still suggest](#) that the massive scale shift in human behavior known as daylight saving time may save energy, rather than waste it. But the contention has come under [attack](#) by researchers, and indeed, one of the most impressive studies out there calls it into serious question.

The [paper](#), published in 2011 in *The Review of Economics and Statistics* by Matthew Kotchen of Yale and Laura Grant of the University of California-Santa Barbara, took advantage of what the

researchers dubbed a "natural experiment" with the effect of daylight saving time in the state of Indiana -- which has some serious time issues. Much of the state is on Eastern Time, but some western parts use Central Time. And until 2005 -- when the state passed a law to make daylight saving time uniform -- some Indiana counties also practiced saving time while others didn't. In effect there were three groups of counties as far as time went: Eastern Standard plus daylight saving, Central Standard plus daylight saving, and Eastern Standard without daylight saving.

This isn't just temporal chaos -- it's a scientific dream come true. Knowing the coming law (effective 2006) would switch everyone in Indiana to daylight saving time, the researchers realized they could jump in and examine before-and-after energy use in Indiana counties that were already using daylight saving, vs. those that had just switched to it. Not unlike a drug trial, there was a "control" group and a "treatment" group.

The researchers also had the cooperation of Duke Energy, which provided a massive data set of monthly utility bills for nearly 230,000 Indiana residents, organized by their locations. And they had weather data, meaning that they could chart energy use against temperature fluctuations (which are obviously a very central factor in heating and cooling). And the results, at least for followers of Franklin, were shocking: Daylight saving time *increased energy use* in the counties that had just switched to it, by about 1 percent during the period when it was in effect. The overall cost translated into \$3.29 per person per year -- nearly \$9 million overall across Indiana. And on top of that, the added pollution resulted in an additional \$1.7 to \$5.5 million per year in "social" costs. Ouch.

So what caused daylight saving to apparently backfire? "In the spring, you are basically making people wake up in the early morning, the coldest time of day, when they might turn up their heat," explains Yale's Kotchen. "And in the summer, if you take an hour of sunlight and you move it from the morning and put it in the evening, people are more likely to be running their air conditioner harder in the evening." That's because heat from the sun builds up over the course of the day, making that particular hour of sunlight hotter than it would have been if it occurred in the morning rather than the evening. So the "Benjamin Franklin effect" -- people using less artificial lighting -- turns out to be overwhelmed by heating and cooling choices.

Kotchen warns that you can't robotically extrapolate these findings to other states, but he does think that Indiana is likely to be a fairly good test case. He also says that "I think 1 percent would be an underestimate for what you'd get for the whole country" in terms of added energy use. That's mainly because a lot of parts of the U.S. use way more air conditioning than Indiana does. And needless to say, 1 percent or more increased energy use across America is a seriously big deal.

So on Sunday, when you wake up and it's darker than you expect, you can thank Ben Franklin -- but maybe also remember that he could have used a better study design.

**CBS News**

**Giant Chunks Of Ice Wash Ashore On Cape Cod**



BOSTON (CBS) – The historic winter of 2015 has left giant chunks of ice on the Cape Cod National Seashore.

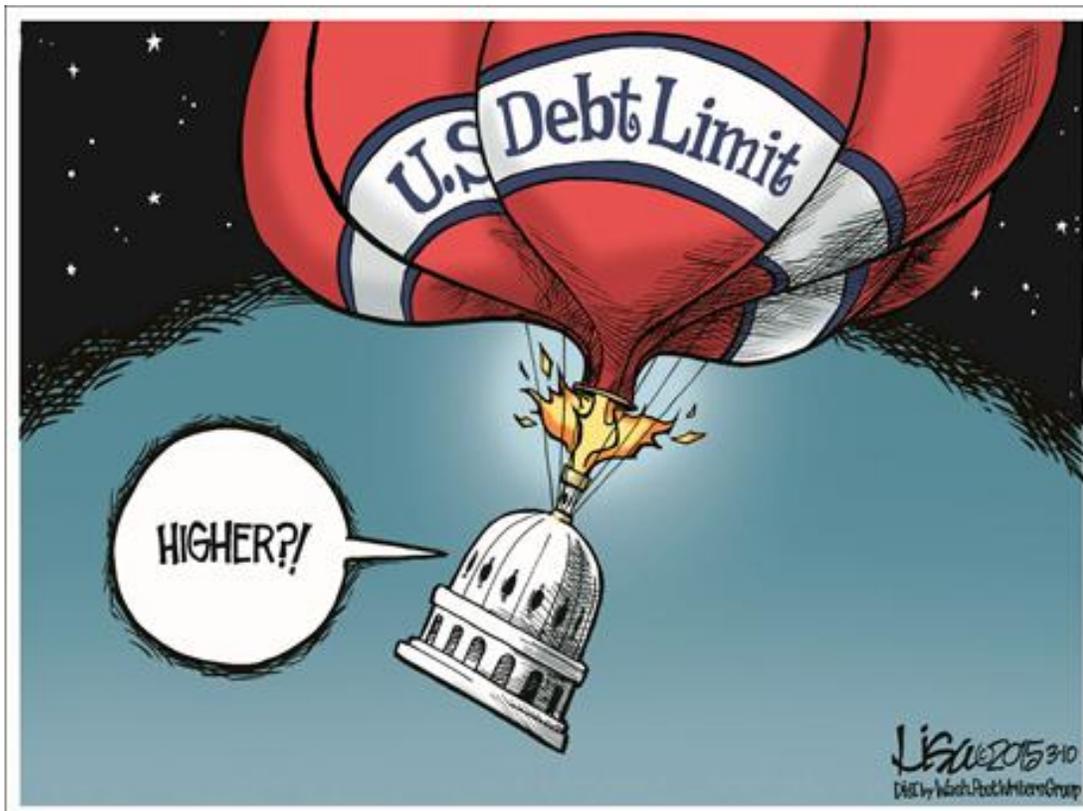
Cape Cod photographer Dapixara captured images of a person standing next to the massive pieces of ice that washed ashore in Wellfleet over the past few days.

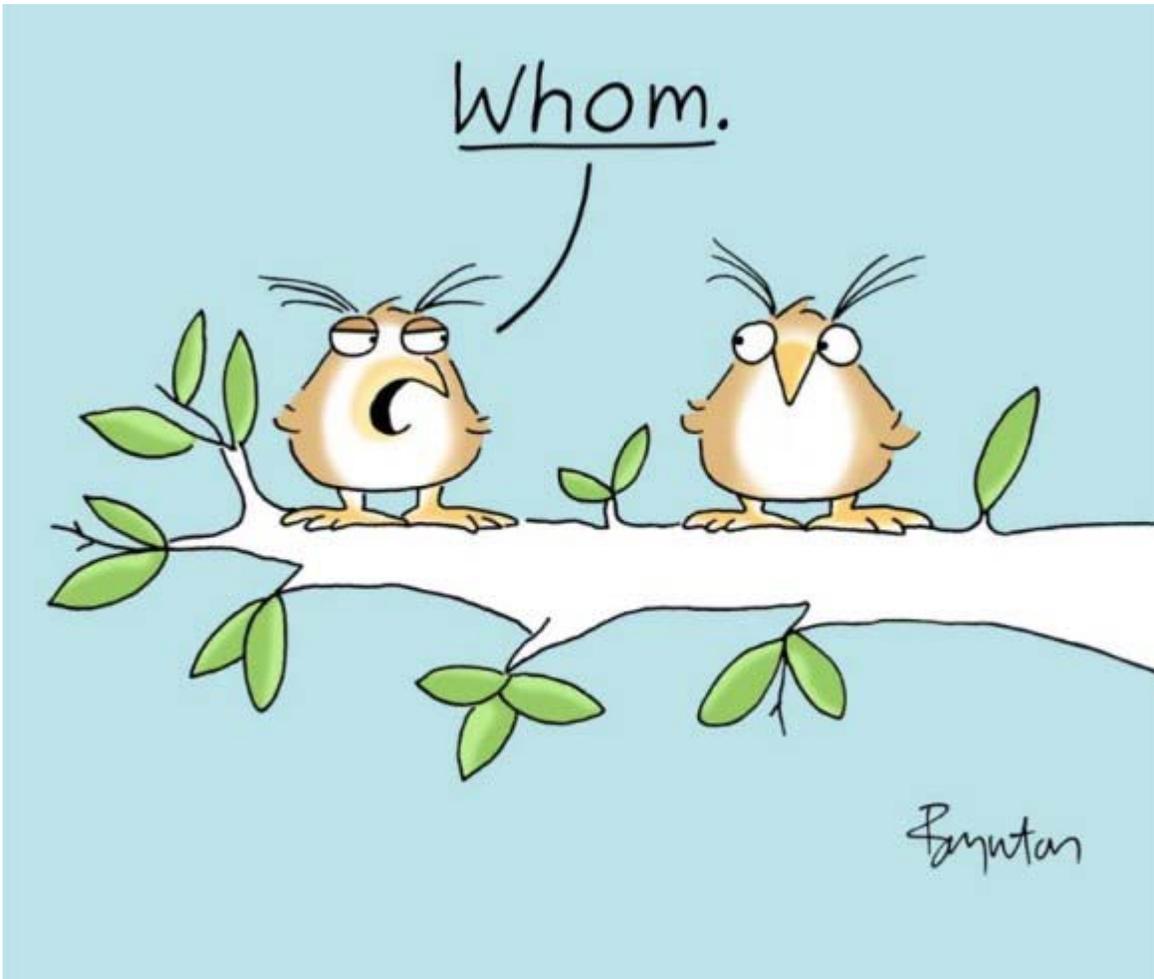


*Chunks of ice washed ashore in Wellfleet*

WBZ-TV Chief Meteorologist Eric Fisher says this could be a “once-in-a-generation” event due to the extraordinary amount of ice on the Massachusetts Bay. Fisher says the ice won’t be around for long.

There have been several remarkable images left from the record-setting winter, including the [nearly frozen waves](#) captured off the coast of Nantucket last month.





New photo released of the  
Harrison Ford plane crash

