

March 22, 2015

Patrick Moore, a co-founder of Greenpeace and its director for 15 years writes on why he is a climate change skeptic.

I am skeptical humans are the main cause of climate change and that it will be catastrophic in the near future. There is no scientific proof of this hypothesis, yet we are told “the debate is over” and “the science is settled.”

My skepticism begins with the believers’ certainty they can predict the global climate with a computer model. The entire basis for the doomsday climate change scenario is the hypothesis increased atmospheric carbon dioxide due to fossil fuel emissions will heat the Earth to unlivable temperatures.

In fact, the Earth has been warming very gradually for 300 years, since the Little Ice Age ended, long before heavy use of fossil fuels. Prior to the Little Ice Age, during the Medieval Warm Period, Vikings colonized Greenland and Newfoundland, when it was warmer there than today. And during Roman times, it was warmer, long before fossil fuels revolutionized civilization.

The idea it would be catastrophic if carbon dioxide were to increase and average global temperature were to rise a few degrees is preposterous. ...

The Wall Street Journal reviews James McPherson's new look at the Civil War.

There is some new in this, and it is also worth being reminded of what an unmitigated disaster our country produced as it joined the world in abolishing slavery. The anti-slavery movement in Great Britain spread its gospel to all areas of the globe touched by British power. Even Russia freed the serfs peacefully. But not here. Not only were 750,000 killed, but the framework was created for the apparatus of the modern state. One form of slavery was abolished; to be replaced by another.

The shooting will have been over for a century and a half this spring, but the casualties keep mounting. As recently as a decade ago the best estimates of the soldiers killed in the Civil War put the number at 600,000; today’s scholarship has increased the toll to three quarters of a million. That was 2.4% of the American population when the war began. As James M. McPherson observes in his brisk and engrossing book, “The War That Forged a Nation,” if the same percentage of Americans were killed in a war today, “the number of war dead would be almost 7.5 million.”

But the appalling mortality rate is hardly the only reason the war lives on in our culture. Mr. McPherson sees the war as lying at the heart—and the midpoint—of the American past, a terrible clarification of the ideals on which the country had been established in 1776. “Founded on a charter that had declared all men created equal with an equal title to liberty,” the author writes, America had by the 1850s “become the largest slaveholding country in the world,” an irony that vexes us even today, so long after Appomattox.

Mr. McPherson has been writing about this war for 50 years, and in “The War That Forged a Nation” he distills a lifetime of scrupulous scholarship into 12 essays—two new, the others extensively revised from previously published versions. Yet the book has none of the haphazard

feel of an anthology, and readers will finish it with the sense that they have received a succinct history of the whole struggle, as well as numerous fresh and occasionally controversial observations. ...

OK, we know the following post from [Watts Up With That](#) is almost unreadable. But the main thing is to report that no tornadoes have occurred so far in the month of March, That's a notable event so the post is included. But, you don't have to try to read it now that you know the one important fact.

*The US tornado count for March 2015? Zero. That's right, so far this month there have been no tornadoes reported in the U.S. — this is only the second time this has happened since 1950, according to Weather Channel meteorologist Greg Forbes. **“We are in uncharted territory with respect to lack of severe weather,” Greg Carbin, a meteorologist at NOAA, said in a statement. “This has never happened in the record of [Storm Prediction Center] watches dating back to 1970.” ...***

March Madness will be happening through the beginning of April. [Slate](#) provided a guide on how to fake your way thru.

*So everyone in your office is talking about the NCAA Tournament, but you don't know the difference between [John Calipari](#) and calamari? (One is a slimy bottom-feeder; the other is squid.) Fear not! Your friends at **Slate** are here with a cheat sheet to help you fake your way through the early stages of the tournament.*

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Talking points: College basketball purists hate Kentucky coach John Calipari for building his teams around so-called one-and-done players who leave school as soon as they become eligible for the NBA draft. These people are assuredly aghast at the chance that the top-ranked Wildcats, who went 34–0 this year, might end up running the tournament and posting a perfect season, thus validating Calipari's tactics to those who claim he doesn't do things “the right way.” Talk these people off the ledge by noting that this year's Kentucky squad relies heavily on veteran players like junior forward [Willie Cauley-Stein](#) and sophomore guards—and identical twins—[Aaron](#) and [Andrew Harrison](#). Then push them back up on that ledge by noting that collegiate amateurism is a farce and that in a system that's already ethically bankrupt, “the right way” is any way that wins. ...

East Region

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on TV. It's not the same Tony Bennett, but that joke doesn't wear thin until like the fifth or sixth time. ...

More on the NCAA tournament as a Louisville fan faces up to the thuggery. [Story from the WSJ.](#)

This was supposed to be [my annual column](#) for taunting the gimmick-riddled realm of Kentucky basketball.

Then three weeks ago, a shock came across my Twitter feed. The starting point guard for my hometown squad—Louisville—was charged with raping two women in one night.

The accusation rattled me to an extent I did not anticipate, forcing a difficult reckoning: Perhaps this team I held so dearly really was no different from the rest of college basketball, a sport of collapsing moral norms.

Energized by winning, I had grown desensitized to the sport's rolling scandals, the billions of dollars, the towering coaches' salaries. The Cardinals brought me pure joy, most recently in 2013 when they won the national championship. But something cumulative, something disgusted, emerged after those allegations.

What does it mean to be a fan in 2015? Does being loyal mean being unquestioning? In fact, does being a fan require willful ignorance? ...

[ZME Science](#) posts on salt and how it is mined or extracted.

Salt is one of the most common and yet most controversial substances on Earth – you can't really live without it, but too much of it might kill you. It used to be very expensive, now it's really cheap, and most of it is used for industrial purposes. It's in the foods we eat, in the planetary oceans, and in us... but where does it come from? ...

[Heartland.Org](#)

[Why I am a Climate Change Skeptic](#)

by Patrick Moore

I am skeptical humans are the main cause of climate change and that it will be catastrophic in the near future. There is no scientific proof of this hypothesis, yet we are told “the debate is over” and “the science is settled.”

My skepticism begins with the believers' certainty they can predict the global climate with a computer model. The entire basis for the doomsday climate change scenario is the hypothesis

increased atmospheric carbon dioxide due to fossil fuel emissions will heat the Earth to unlivable temperatures.

In fact, the Earth has been warming very gradually for 300 years, since the Little Ice Age ended, long before heavy use of fossil fuels. Prior to the Little Ice Age, during the Medieval Warm Period, Vikings colonized Greenland and Newfoundland, when it was warmer there than today. And during Roman times, it was warmer, long before fossil fuels revolutionized civilization.

The idea it would be catastrophic if carbon dioxide were to increase and average global temperature were to rise a few degrees is preposterous.

Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) announced for the umpteenth time we are doomed unless we reduce carbon-dioxide emissions to zero. Effectively this means either reducing the population to zero, or going back 10,000 years before humans began clearing forests for agriculture. This proposed cure is far worse than adapting to a warmer world, if it actually comes about.

IPCC Conflict of Interest

By its constitution, the IPCC has a hopeless conflict of interest. Its mandate is to consider only the human causes of global warming, not the many natural causes changing the climate for billions of years. We don't understand the natural causes of climate change any more than we know if humans are part of the cause at present. If the IPCC did not find humans were the cause of warming, or if it found warming would be more positive than negative, there would be no need for the IPCC under its present mandate. To survive, it must find on the side of the apocalypse.

The IPCC should either have its mandate expanded to include all causes of climate change, or it should be dismantled.

Political Powerhouse

Climate change has become a powerful political force for many reasons. First, it is universal; we are told everything on Earth is threatened. Second, it invokes the two most powerful human motivators: fear and guilt. We fear driving our car will kill our grandchildren, and we feel guilty for doing it.

Third, there is a powerful convergence of interests among key elites that support the climate "narrative." Environmentalists spread fear and raise donations; politicians appear to be saving the Earth from doom; the media has a field day with sensation and conflict; science institutions raise billions in grants, create whole new departments, and stoke a feeding frenzy of scary scenarios; business wants to look green, and get huge public subsidies for projects that would otherwise be economic losers, such as wind farms and solar arrays. Fourth, the Left sees climate change as a perfect means to redistribute wealth from industrial countries to the developing world and the UN bureaucracy.

So we are told carbon dioxide is a "toxic" "pollutant" that must be curtailed, when in fact it is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, gas and the most important food for life on earth. Without carbon dioxide above 150 parts per million, all plants would die.

Human Emissions Saved Planet

Over the past 150 million years, carbon dioxide had been drawn down steadily (by plants) from about 3,000 parts per million to about 280 parts per million before the Industrial Revolution. If this trend continued, the carbon dioxide level would have become too low to support life on Earth. Human fossil fuel use and clearing land for crops have boosted carbon dioxide from its lowest level in the history of the Earth back to 400 parts per million today.

At 400 parts per million, all our food crops, forests, and natural ecosystems are still on a starvation diet for carbon dioxide. The optimum level of carbon dioxide for plant growth, given enough water and nutrients, is about 1,500 parts per million, nearly four times higher than today. Greenhouse growers inject carbon-dioxide to increase yields. Farms and forests will produce more if carbon-dioxide keeps rising.

We have no proof increased carbon dioxide is responsible for the earth's slight warming over the past 300 years. There has been no significant warming for 18 years while we have emitted 25 per cent of all the carbon dioxide ever emitted. Carbon dioxide is vital for life on Earth and plants would like more of it. Which should we emphasize to our children?

Celebrate Carbon Dioxide

The IPCC's followers have given us a vision of a world dying because of carbon-dioxide emissions. I say the Earth would be a lot deader with no carbon dioxide, and more of it will be a very positive factor in feeding the world. Let's celebrate carbon dioxide.

Patrick Moore (pmoore@allowgoldenricenow.org) was a cofounder and leader of Greenpeace for 15 years. He is now chair and spokesman for Allow Golden Rice.

WSJ

[Drum-Taps That Still Echo](#)

Was the Civil War a just war? Yes. But three quarters of a million soldiers lost their lives, and the nation nearly extinguished itself.

by Richard Snow

The shooting will have been over for a century and a half this spring, but the casualties keep mounting. As recently as a decade ago the best estimates of the soldiers killed in the Civil War put the number at 600,000; today's scholarship has increased the toll to three quarters of a million. That was 2.4% of the American population when the war began. As James M. McPherson observes in his brisk and engrossing book, "The War That Forged a Nation," if the same percentage of Americans were killed in a war today, "the number of war dead would be almost 7.5 million."

But the appalling mortality rate is hardly the only reason the war lives on in our culture. Mr. McPherson sees the war as lying at the heart—and the midpoint—of the American past, a terrible clarification of the ideals on which the country had been established in 1776. "Founded on a charter that had declared all men created equal with an equal title to liberty," the author

writes, America had by the 1850s “become the largest slaveholding country in the world,” an irony that vexes us even today, so long after Appomattox.

Mr. McPherson has been writing about this war for 50 years, and in “The War That Forged a Nation” he distills a lifetime of scrupulous scholarship into 12 essays—two new, the others extensively revised from previously published versions. Yet the book has none of the haphazard feel of an anthology, and readers will finish it with the sense that they have received a succinct history of the whole struggle, as well as numerous fresh and occasionally controversial observations.

One chapter is called “A Just War?” The author’s answer is an unqualified “yes.” But the judgment is by no means facile or triumphalist. The next chapter, “Death and Destruction in the Civil War,” is fully cognizant of what that justice cost and how the conflict that meted it out continues to form our own times, from its well-known legacy of racial inequities to its surprising role in the development of the modern funeral “industry.”

Our war also affected the entire world. The watchers overseas were very much aware that democratic republics had not fared well in the past, and America’s seemed on the verge of extinguishing itself. Indeed, its fragility came close to bringing on a world war, and the book is particularly interesting on the eagerness of Britain and France to join the struggle with their navies.

The naval role in the Civil War is in general overlooked. This is hardly surprising: The seaborne forces on both sides suffered fewer casualties in the entire conflict than could be harvested during a single bad day on land. Yet, Mr. McPherson says, the dimly remembered Adm. David Glasgow Farragut should stand with Ulysses Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman in the pantheon of victorious commanders.

The author is just as interesting about the widely disparaged Union “political generals”—leaders with few qualifications who were given the command of troops. Most notorious is perhaps the flamboyant Tammany Hall politico Daniel Sickles, who nearly lost Gettysburg on the second day of fighting by moving his men out of the Peach Orchard into what turned out to be an indefensible position.

The Union Gen. Henry Halleck, who had spent his life in the military, said that “it seems but little better than murder to give important commands to such men.” But as Mr. McPherson notes: “The main purpose of commissioning prominent political and ethnic leaders [many of them German and Irish] was to mobilize their constituencies for the war effort.” When the war broke out, the U.S. Army was a little over 16,000 strong. A year later, “the volunteer Union army consisted of 637,000 men. This mass mobilization of volunteers could not have taken place without an enormous effort by local and state politicians as well as prominent ethnic leaders.” Nor were all volunteers useless: Gen. Sherman was one.

The War That Forged a Nation

By James M. McPherson
Oxford, 217 pages, \$27.95

The last chapter in the book, “War and Peace in the Post-Civil War South,” is as lucid and lively as it is dispiriting. It details how the conquered South dismantled Northern attempts to establish equality for the freed slaves. The long, slow fuse lighted during the doleful Reconstruction years

sputtered and smoldered but never quite died and finally ignited the civil-rights battles of the mid-20th century. It was during this time that Mr. McPherson began to be drawn to the Civil War. While a graduate student in Baltimore, he came to realize that the “civil rights movement eclipsed the centennial observations during the first half of the 1960s.”

Abraham Lincoln towers over “The War That Forged a Nation,” as he towered over his own era. Mr. McPherson is especially good—and consistently fascinating—on how the president’s thinking, both strategic and moral, evolved during the war, as he moved from using the emancipation of the slaves as one more weapon against the South to seeing it as the mainspring that drove the cause he led. Lincoln knew that American freedom was always imperfect, a work continuously in progress.

Shortly after his first election, speaking of the weaknesses of a Declaration of Independence that did not embrace the enslaved, Lincoln said that although the Founders knew their work was flawed, “they meant to set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be . . . constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere.” He also made clear that he saw his own efforts in the same way: “The struggle of to-day,” he said in his first message to Congress, “is not altogether for to-day; it is for a vast future also.”

Mr. Snow is the author, most recently, of “I Invented the Modern Age: The Rise of Henry Ford.”

Watt's Up With That

[‘Climate to Severe Weather Linkage’ Falls Flat – No US tornadoes reported in March](#)

by Anthony Watts

For The First Time Since 1969, No US Tornadoes Reported In March

The US tornado count for March 2015? Zero. That’s right, so far this month there have been no tornadoes reported in the U.S. — this is only the second time this has happened since 1950, according to Weather Channel meteorologist Greg Forbes. **“We are in uncharted territory with respect to lack of severe weather,” Greg Carbin, a meteorologist at NOAA, said in a statement. “This has never happened in the record of [Storm Prediction Center] watches dating back to 1970.”** –Michael Bastasch, [Daily Caller, 18 March 2015](#)

So there you have it, despite what projections there may be for the future, and remember projections are not reality until they have been shown to be accurate, the consensus regarding Cyclone Pam is that there is no clear evidence for a link between it and climate change. This means that any responsible scientist would not assume such a link exists, as it hasn’t been proven. The answer must not be *‘it’s difficult to say’* – the only scientifically valid answer is *‘there is no link.’* –David Whitehouse, [Global Warming Policy Forum, 17 March 2015](#)

The BBC, Tim Palmer & Cyclone Pam

The global Accumulated Cyclone Energy shows no trend, since satellite monitoring began in the 1970's, and the frequency of major hurricanes is not increasing. Even the IPCC admits there is no evidence that intense cyclones have been increasing. It appears that making up numbers as you go along, and making claims that are negated by a few simple checks, have become the norm for climate scientists. John Humphrys seemed to suspect that he was being lied to, but was so poorly briefed that he was unable to effectively challenge Tim Palmer. Honest scientists must be pulling their hair out at the damage being done to their good name. –Paul Homewood, [Not A Lot Of People Know That, 17 March 2015](#)

Despite reports of utter devastation six days after Cyclone Pam pummeled the impoverished South Pacific island nation, Vanuatu appears to be providing something of a lesson in how to survive a category 5 storm. The United Nations says the official death toll is 11 and Prime Minister Joe Natuman told Reuters it would not rise significantly. **“Hurricanes or cyclones are not a new thing, since when people started living in these islands maybe about 5,000 years ago this type of event occurs every year,”** said Natuman. **“I think also we are now more organized in terms of our disaster management.”** –Stephen Coates, [Reuters, 19 March 2015](#)

Slate

[Cocktail Chatter: NCAA Tournament Edition](#)

How to fake your way through March Madness.

by Justin Peters



Will the Wildcats go all the way for a perfect season? Above, Karl-Anthony Towns dunks the ball in the SEC championship game in Nashville, Tennessee, on March 15, 2015.

So everyone in your office is talking about the NCAA Tournament, but you don't know the difference between [John Calipari](#) and calamari? (One is a slimy bottom-feeder; the other is squid.) Fear not! Your friends at **Slate** are here with a cheat sheet to help you fake your way through the early stages of the tournament.

Midwest Region

Talking points: College basketball purists hate Kentucky coach John Calipari for building his teams around so-called one-and-done players who leave school as soon as they become eligible for the NBA draft. These people are assuredly aghast at the chance that the top-ranked Wildcats, who went 34–0 this year, might end up running the tournament and posting a perfect season, thus validating Calipari's tactics to those who claim he doesn't do things "[the right way](#)." Talk these people off the ledge by noting that this year's Kentucky squad relies heavily on veteran players like junior forward [Willie Cauley-Stein](#) and sophomore guards—and identical twins—[Aaron](#) and [Andrew Harrison](#). Then push them back up on that ledge by noting that collegiate amateurism is a [farce](#) and that in a system that's already ethically bankrupt, "the right way" is any way that wins.

Historical context: The last men's Division I collegiate basketball team to post a perfect season was the 1976 Indiana Hoosiers. This year's Indiana squad, seeded 10th in the Midwest region, would have to make it to the Elite Eight in order to have a chance to help preserve the school's legacy by toppling Kentucky. The Hoosiers are relying on junior guard [Yogi Ferrell](#), who can score from anywhere on the floor, and who wreaks havoc on opposing teams by sneaking into their locker rooms before the game and stealing their picnic baskets.

Upset threat: The [University at Buffalo Bulls](#), coached by former Duke star Bobby Hurley, are making their first-ever tournament appearance this year. The 12th-seeded Bulls play fast, and their up-tempo game will give them a fighting chance against fifth-seeded West Virginia. You're not quite sure why the Buffalo Bulls have a name that sounds so similar to the NFL's Buffalo Bills, but you nevertheless hope that the eighth-seeded Bearcats will jump on this trend and change their name to the Cincinnati [Rods](#).

Conversation starter: "It doesn't matter that Notre Dame hasn't reached the Sweet 16 since 2003. Did you see what [Jerian Grant](#) did in the ACC tourney?"

Conversation stopper: "Or maybe they could change their name to the Cincinnati Bangles. Get it? The *Bangles*? (pause) I need another beer."

East Region

Talking points: While the first-seeded [Villanova Wildcats](#) haven't lost a game since Jan. 19, you know that the team to watch in the East is [Virginia](#). The second-seeded Cavaliers don't score a lot, but they play a smothering help defense that leaves opponents desperate. Coach Tony Bennett's "[pack line](#)" scheme is designed to minimize paint scoring while forcing low-percentage jumpers, and it's very effective. Feel free to yell "Defense wins championships" at the top of your lungs whenever the Cavaliers force their opponents to take an ugly outside shot. You can also feel free to croon a few bars of "[I Left My Heart in San Francisco](#)" whenever the coach is shown on TV. It's not the same Tony Bennett, but that joke doesn't wear thin until like the fifth or sixth time.

Historical context: 2015 marks the 30th anniversary of Villanova’s last—and only—NCAA Tournament title. Back in [1985](#), the Wildcats rose from the eighth seed to topple Georgetown in one of the [most exciting college championship games in history](#); they remain the lowest-seeded team ever to win the NCAA Tournament. Tell everyone who will listen that this year’s Villanova squad should try to “recapture the magic” by surreptitiously dressing [Ed Pinckney](#).

Upset threat: The 13th-seeded UC–Irvine Anteaters have a secret weapon: 7’6” center [Mamadou N’Diaye](#), who is the tallest player in Division I college basketball. Like Shawn Bradley, Manute Bol, and other [man mountains](#) before him, N’Diaye isn’t particularly skilled: He’s good at dunking the ball, occasionally [rejecting opposing players’ shots](#), posing for comical photographs with very short people (presumably), and other things where the primary qualification is “being one of the world’s tallest men.” You, however, know that N’Diaye doesn’t need to be [Dirk Nowitzki](#) in order to give the Anteaters a chance. He just needs to stand in the paint, wave his long arms like a wraith, and intimidate [Louisville](#) into settling for a bunch of outside shots.

Conversation starter: “[Michigan State](#) wasn’t particularly great during the regular season, but you should never, ever, count out a [Tom Izzo](#) team come tournament time. There’s a reason why they call him ‘[Mr. March](#).’ ”

Conversation stopper: “Coincidentally, Izzo is also ‘Mr. March’ in my homemade ‘Coaches of the Big Ten’ boudoir calendar. Here, have a look!”

West Region

Talking points: The University of Wisconsin Badgers won their first-ever No. 1 seed this year largely behind the play of senior forward [Frank Kaminsky](#), a goofy-looking white dude who is favored to win the [Wooden Award](#), honoring the collegiate player of the year. Kaminsky is a fearsome scorer and defender, and he’s also immensely likable—he rides around Madison, Wisconsin, on a [moped](#), is known on campus as Frank the Tank, and [really, really enjoys being a college student](#). While it’s hard to begrudge Kaminsky his fame, his teammates deserve some recognition, too. So while your friends chant for Frank the Tank, you should raise your voice for some of the Badgers’ lesser-known talents, like junior forward Sam “the Sham” Dekker. That’s not actually his nickname, but it could be, if you scream loud enough.

Historical context: Former Pennsylvania Sen. [Harris Wofford](#), who is 88 years old, has had a very interesting life. He was the first white man to enroll at Howard Law School, advised President John F. Kennedy, was involved in the civil rights movement, and helped found the Peace Corps. To be clear, Harris Wofford is not at all affiliated with the 12th-seeded [Wofford Terriers](#), who will probably lose to Arkansas on Thursday. But if the watercooler conversation somehow shifts from basketball to underrated senators, then you’ll be golden.

Upset threat: While the 14th-seeded [Georgia State Panthers](#) probably won’t go deep into the tournament, they’ve got something to play for in the first round: Head coach Ron Hunter tore his Achilles tendon while celebrating the team’s Sun Belt Conference title on Sunday. “Let’s win one for our clumsy coach” isn’t quite as stirring a slogan as “Win one for the Gipper,” but the Panthers need *something* to get them going against a much better [Baylor](#) team. Will Hunter’s tragic and [sort of funny injury](#) inspire his players to come together and beat the Bears? If so, I hope the lesson he draws is “Now we know we can play with anyone,” not “Let’s keep this train rolling with another, even stupider injury!” (Falls off ladder while attempting to cut down the net.)

Conversation starter: “Watch out for VCU at the 7 seed. [Shaka Smart’s teams](#) always seem to go farther than you’d expect.”

Conversation stopper: “Watch out for the Coastal Carolina Chanticleers at the 16 seed. Their [Renaissance choral harmonies](#) are breathtaking!”

South Region

Talking points: Every year around this time, college basketball fans fall to their knees, clasp their hands, and pray that Duke will lose in the first round of the NCAA tournament. Last year, those prayers were answered when 14th-seeded [Mercer](#) upset the third-seeded Blue Devils in the Midwest region. Duke is a No. 1 seed this year, and a first-seeded team has never, ever lost in the first round. That’s not going to stop you from finishing up your hand-crafted Christian Laettner voodoo doll with lifelike [super-punchable face](#). Take that, Christian Laettner!

Historical context: The sixth-seeded [SMU Mustangs](#), making their first tournament appearance since 1993, are coached by temperamental drifter [Larry Brown](#), who is the only coach to win both an NBA title and an NCAA championship. The 74-year-old Brown has coached 13 different teams in his more than four-decade head-coaching career, one of which was [UCLA](#), which is SMU’s first-round opponent this year. Make your friends laugh by quipping that the only way the Bruins will win this game is if Brown somehow gets disoriented and starts coaching from the UCLA sideline. Then, make things weird by insisting that you turn off the television and have a serious conversation about the horrors of late-onset dementia.

Upset threat: [Eastern Washington Eagles](#) guard [Tyler Harvey](#) leads the nation in scoring with 22.9 points per game. If Harvey gets hot, the 13th-seeded Eagles could overwhelm an overrated [Georgetown](#) squad. You’re rooting for this to happen, both because it’d be fun to see a former walk-on like Harvey succeed on the national stage and the “Hot Harvey” is a sex move that you’ve been trying to popularize for quite some time.

Conversation starter: “Gonzaga’s [Mark Few](#) might be the most underrated coach in college basketball.”

Conversation stopper: “Seriously, guys, I’m starting to get worried about Larry Brown.”

WSJ

[My Sold Kentucky Home: A College Basketball Fan’s Disillusionment](#)

The NCAA tournament is here, but for one observer, it now takes willful ignorance to get excited

by Dennis Berman

This was supposed to be [my annual column](#) for taunting the gimmick-riddled realm of Kentucky basketball.

Then three weeks ago, a shock came across my Twitter feed. The starting point guard for my hometown squad—Louisville—was charged with raping two women in one night.

The accusation rattled me to an extent I did not anticipate, forcing a difficult reckoning: Perhaps this team I held so dearly really was no different from the rest of college basketball, a sport of collapsing moral norms.

Energized by winning, I had grown desensitized to the sport's rolling scandals, the billions of dollars, the towering coaches' salaries. The Cardinals brought me pure joy, most recently in 2013 when they won the national championship. But something cumulative, something disgusted, emerged after those allegations.

What does it mean to be a fan in 2015? Does being loyal mean being unquestioning? In fact, does being a fan require willful ignorance?

You've probably read just what a pained season this has been for the college game. On the court, I've watched it in the valiant, flawed Cardinals, who have often had trouble scoring more than 20 points a half; who seem to know only one offensive set; and who play in an NBA-quality arena where blaring promotions long ago flushed out the pep band.

The rape allegation—which the player's lawyers have heavily disputed—hangs over those petty things. The school and fans are quick to point out that the player is now a former player, as if mere dismissal makes it all go away. Is it really that simple?

Beyond Louisville, the game is plagued on all sides. Just days ago, a 94-page NCAA enforcement report accused senior Syracuse University officials of scheming to write papers and doctor grades for a shot-blocking Brazilian center. The school disputes some of the findings and the Syracuse coach, Jim Boeheim, remains in his job. He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2005. Wins from that season, and others, have since been vacated.



Despite earning a No. 4 seed, it has been a difficult season for Rick Pitino and Louisville.

Similar sanctions possibly await North Carolina for a years-long academic scandal. Another 18 Division I schools are under investigation for academic fraud, according to the Chronicle of Higher Education.

There is mounting belief that player lawsuits over financial compensation will [eradicate the current system](#). As someone who looks at the world through the eyes of business, I find this preposterous. The NCAA has a contract to fulfill, putting on the annual men's basketball tournament through 2024, and collecting a cumulative \$10.8 billion for it.

This money has become essential to universities, who are pinched by state budget cuts and rising costs. Schools need to make their athletic departments self-sustaining, and for most, basketball and football are their only meal ticket.

Today students are directly bearing nearly 50% of the cost of college, up from 24% in 1988, which makes it tougher to ask them to subsidize athletics. This is precisely why the sports are being packaged, ever grandiosely, into well-paid TV contracts.

This brings us around to the Kentucky team, undeniably transcendent and undefeated. As a Nike bastion, its collection of nine McDonald's All-Americans has become the capping symbol for this spectacle-at-large, like a troupe of special-ops strongmen guarding the NCAA treasury.

Its coach, John Calipari, is intimate with his team's TV ratings and brazenly coddles celebrities as part of his marketing schemes. The rapper Drake, who didn't grow up in London, Ky., but rather Toronto, Ontario, even ran in the layup line at the Wildcats' Midnight Madness ESPN special.

That Kentucky fans can't see through these machinations is no longer a surprise to me. For so long, I could not see Louisville's own faults, the absurdity of private donors who pay for coach Rick Pitino's private-jet recruiting visits, or the discouraging fact that of six potential seniors this year, only one remains.

You can bet that I will watch this year's tournament, still rooting for Louisville to win and Kentucky to implode. Along the way, there will be wonderful moments where this beautiful game will entertain and even teach. But somehow, unexpectedly, I am losing a taste for the whole sordid thing.

Perhaps the sport won't change. That doesn't mean we can't.

Dennis Berman is the Journal's business editor.

ZME Science

[Where our salt comes from – a dive into the spectacular and harsh world of salt extraction](#)

Salt is one of the most common and yet most controversial substances on Earth – you can't really live without it, but too much of it might kill you. It used to be very expensive, now it's really cheap, and most of it is used for industrial purposes. It's in the foods we eat, in the planetary oceans, and in us... but where does it come from?



Ponds near Maras, Peru, fed from a mineral spring and used for salt production since the time of the Incas.

Salt is actually a mineral composed of sodium chloride (NaCl). In its natural form, it's called rock salt or halite. Salt is extremely important for the alimentation of all mammals, including humans. Iodine (a secondary element commonly found in dietary salt) is an important micronutrient for humans, and a deficiency of the element can cause a myriad of hormonal problems.

For this purpose, it was sought after since before the Antiquity – the first evidence of extracting salt (by boiling spring water) comes from Romania, and there is evidence of a saltworks in China in about the same period. It was highly valued by the Chinese and Arabs, as well as the Romans and Greeks. Roman soldiers were actually sometimes paid in salt – this is where the word 'salary' comes from. For the coastal countries, the resource was accessible by boiling the oceanic water – open ocean has about 35 grams (1.2 oz) of solids per litre, a salinity of 3.5%. But for continental countries, it was a highly disputed resource; wars were fought over salt, as strange as that may sound now; it was a rare and highly valued resource.



The Turda salt mine in Romania.

But today, we don't value salt almost at all! We just eat it, without giving it much thought... but where does our salt come from?

The major source of salt today is seawater – seawater is basically an inexhaustible source of salt. There are two main techniques to extracting salt from seawater, and you can also mine salt from the depths of the Earth. The main ways of obtaining salt are:



Salt mounds in Salar de Uyuni, Bolivia

- solution mining; in solution mining, wells are erected over salt beds and fresh water is injected to dissolve the salt. The salt solution is then pumped out and taken to a special plant for evaporation – most of the salt we eat is actually produced this way.
- solar evaporation; this is the simpler, more old-school way of obtaining salt. You just leave the evaporation part to wind and the Sun, leaving the salt behind. Salt evaporation ponds are filled from the ocean and salt crystals can be harvested as the water dries up. It is usually harvested once a year when the salt reaches a specific thickness. This only works in areas with a specific climate (high temperatures and low precipitations), like in the Mediterranean area.
- deep shaft mining; you basically mine salt just like any other mineral. Salt exists as deposits in ancient underground sea beds, and you can mine and then process the rock salt.
- manual collection; in some areas, there is so much salt at the bottom of a lake or sea, that you can collect it manually.

In terms of which countries produce the most salt, China once again takes the crown, followed by India, Canada and Germany.



Salt mining in Africa

Interestingly enough though, we eat only 6% of the salt we produce, globally. Out of the rest, 12% is used in water conditioning processes, 8% goes for de-icing highways and 6% is used in agriculture. The rest (68%) is used for manufacturing and other industrial processes. PVC, plastics and paper pulp are all obtained with the use of salt.

Lefty Lucy

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