

7/2006

Re: An Inconvenient Ignorance

Dear Editor,

Don Richey is right about one thing- when he gets to thinking, it is indeed a thoroughly dangerous proposition. Too bad he didn't think to look up the word "buoyancy" in the first place. Then he would have discovered what people who didn't flunk physics in high school already know- that water expands by some 9% when frozen (which is why ice floats) and therefore the volume which is projected above the water line is equal to the decrease in mass below. Which means, as educated people already know, iceberg melting does not cause an increase in ocean volume.

However, what scientists are saying (listen carefully Don- I'll say it slow-ly), is that ice cap melting on land (not floating in the water) does cause ocean volumes to increase. In fact satellite measurements show that the Greenland ice cap alone is melting at a rate of some 250 cubic kilometers per year- double the rate of just 10 years ago. If Don Richey needs empirical evidence of this scientific fact he should move to a South Pacific atoll where residents are leaving in increasing numbers as the waters rise. Please Don, would you move there, please?

John Donovan
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