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**WELCOME KARA DOHRENWEND...**

I was a resident of Moab, Utah for more than 30 years. I had every intention of spending the rest of my life there, but over a period of three decades, Grand County changed so dramatically that I felt like a stranger. I wanted to live in a small rural town in the West. But Moab, even a decade ago, was fast becoming a mini-urban population center, with a shifting demographic and a dwindling rural atmosphere.



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I pondered my options. I'm reminded of the lyrics of an old country song---

*"East or west on Main Street.  
That's the choice that I make every day.  
And I don't know which one takes more courage,  
the stayin' or the runnin' away."*

Eventually, I fled south. I simply couldn't bear the changes that were happening to Moab at a speed that, even then, was faster than my worst fears. But I still know and admire brave souls and kindred spirits from those 'Golden Moab' days who chose to stick it out in their beloved home town. Their love and dedication to the community survives the upheaval of change. Clearly, they are a lot braver than I could ever hope to be.

One of them is Kara Dohrenwend. She and her husband Ray have lived in Moab and Grand County for more than two decades and Ray's family has a rich history in southeast Utah, going back a century to the legendary Doc Williams.

As Grand County's citizens have debated and quarreled over the community's future, I've looked for honest, sincere, and intelligent voices, and most of the time, I've been stymied in my search. In the Age of Facebook, we're all able to offer a public voice and during the last Moab election cycle, many of its citizens revealed their very darkest and pettiest sides. But there were a few bright lights as well. One of them was Kara.

I came to have a greater appreciation for Kara's comments and observations, each time she offered them, usually on the more politically driven facebook pages. Her articulate examination of the issues and her passion and genuine concern for the future of her community meant a lot to many, including this Moab expatriate.

And she has always possessed an inclination to be even-handed and fair-minded, when it might have been easier to follow the hot-headed flow of local politics. Rubbing against the grain is not usually a popular road to take, but Kara does it with grace and gentle candor. It's for these reasons that I asked if she'd like a regular column in The Zephyr, and I am honored that she accepted.

Kara and I both share a certain cynicism for the future, but like I noted earlier, I'm the one who fled--she continues to add a thoughtful voice to the conversation as she contributes to the effort to make Moab and Grand County a better place to live for everyone.

Thanks Kara, welcome to The Zephyr.

**"IT'S THE SCIENCE, STUPID!"  
But for Conservatives and Progressives Alike, the 'Science' has to FIT.**

Climate change 'deniers' are a never-ending source of frustration and dismay to those who believe that global warming is real and already having an adverse effect. To them, the time for debating its existence is over and the conclusion inescapable--- human-caused activity is altering our world in ways we never dreamed possible. Unless a comprehensive global plan to combat these effects is implemented very soon, the future of our earth, as we know it, is in peril.

It's no longer a debate because the evidence, studied and analyzed and critiqued by scientists the world over, overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that human activity, specifically the use of fossil fuels to power almost every component of our society, is altering the planet's climate in adverse way.

It's the science.

**But those who invoke science as the last word cannot pick and choose its application, any more than a conservative can reject the science out of hand.**

Efforts to discredit the scientific evidence are often financed by the fossil fuel industry and multi-billion dollar corporations with a vested interest in maintaining the conventional energy industry. Consequently, the 'denial' movement is most often ridiculed and criticized for either its greed and self-interest or its ignorance and stupidity. Science is not, and should not be, a political football, to be altered, modified, or ignored, to suit anyone's preconceived beliefs or prejudices.

There is an inference in this debate, that if one wants to find the heart and soul of backward, un-informed, uneducated, anti-scientific thought, one need not look further than the right-wing Christian, conservative political movement in America.

But those who invoke science as the last word cannot pick and choose its application, any more than a conservative can reject the science out of hand. While 'progressives' mock their conservative cousins for their climate change denial tendencies, there are some inconsistencies and contradictions--even hypocrisies--- that need to be explained by them as well.

For example, one of the most respected climatologists in the world is NASA's James Hansen. He is to many, the Father of Climate Change. Hansen believes we must end our use of fossil fuels soon or face catastrophe. But Hansen also believes that the best way to meet our ever-expanding energy needs is to embrace nuclear power on a massive scale. In fact, most of the scientific community believes that the latest technology can make nuclear power safe and economical and help drastically reduce green

THE CANYON COUNTRY  
**ZEPHYR**  
Planet Earth Edition

**JIM & TONYA STILES, publishers**  
PO Box 271  
Monticello, UT 84535  
[www.canyoncountryzephyr.com](http://www.canyoncountryzephyr.com)  
[cczephyr@gmail.com](mailto:cczephyr@gmail.com)

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house emissions. But most opposition to nuclear power comes from the same constituency that cites the science as proof of global warming.

There's more.

Most scientists believe that GMOs---genetically modified organisms---as a food source of the future, are safe and, indeed, essential for a world population that may exceed 10 billion by mid-century. But opposition comes mainly from progressive environmentalists.

**But Hansen also believes that the best way to meet our ever-expanding energy needs is to embrace nuclear power on a massive scale. But most opposition to nuclear power comes from the same constituency that cites the science as proof of global warming.**

More...The recent outbreak of measles across the country has exposed a growing irrational opposition to vaccinations that can prevent this kind of childhood disease. The scientific community overwhelmingly, almost unanimously, believes that the resistance to these vaccines borders on insanity. Some have even suggested that parents who fail to provide vaccinations for their children should be held criminally responsible.

But where is the resistance coming from? Not from rural Mississippi. One of the lowest vaccination rates in the country can be found in Marin County, California. It is one of the most affluent and educated areas in the United States and one of its most liberal--it cast 78% of its votes for Obama in 2008.

In Portland, Oregon, one of the most progressive and open-minded cities on the West Coast, its citizens recently voted to ban the fluoridation of its water supply. Science says fluoride is safe; Portland's progressives say 'no.'

Clearly, when it comes to science, both sides of the political spectrum are inclined to pick and choose their 'proof,' depending on their own political and ideological beliefs. By embracing only the science

that 'fits' their particular philosophies, and rejecting the ones that don't, both sides run the risk of dumbing down any intelligent, fact-based discussion of the issues, and their own credibility as well.

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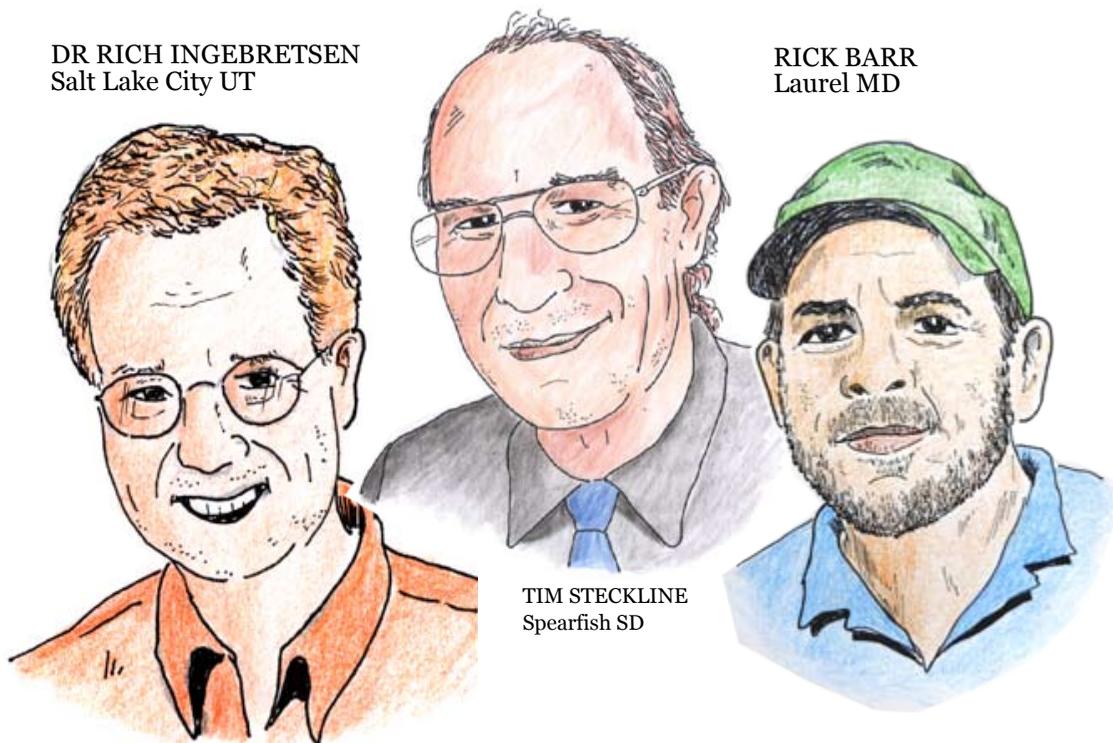
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