



Written by [Ralph R. Reiland](#) on January 12, 2010

From Florida: Where's the Global Warming?

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA — The column headline here in this morning's newspaper: "So where's my global warming, dude?"

"Dude" could be Al Gore, the doomster Dracula figure of global-warming hysteria. Or it might be Hillary or Obama, running off to Copenhagen with the promise that the United States, with nothing but red ink in the government's coffers, will gladly pick up the tab for the lion's share of the \$100 billion per year in guilt money that the world's richest countries are supposed to fork over to Third World dictators for allegedly causing their coastal villages to be threatened by rising oceans.



We're at The Breakers Hotel, built by Florida pioneer and railroader Henry Flagler as a wooden structure in 1895, destroyed by fire in 1903, rebuilt in 1904 (rooms were \$4 a night at that time, three daily meals included; now a cheese steak is \$25 and a piece of apple pie is \$13.75), destroyed by fire again in 1925, and grandly reopened as a non-wood structure in 1926 in its current form, an opulent and world-acclaimed hotel in an Italian Renaissance style.

I heard a man from Europe say to the cashier in the hotel's fancy gift shop this morning, "Why all this when people are so poor?" The cashier nicely explained that the hotel is one of the largest employers in the local economy, thereby helping people to be not poor. When it was my turn to pay, I told her that she gave him a good answer — good economics. I wondered if the European might be a French communist, living off the people in some government bureaucracy.

In any case, it's 20 degrees below normal here in the Sunshine State as I write, but still in the mid-60s in the afternoon, like Pittsburgh (my hometown) in the spring, plenty nice enough to pull up a chaise lounge by the pool and read a few chapters of Freakonomics and get pink.

The locals, however, are acting like the weather is the worst thing they've even seen. A hotel employee passing out towels by the pool today was wearing gloves. The valet guys waiting for cars by the front portico are all huddled around patio heaters.

"I'm from Jamaica and I've never seen anything this cold," one of them said to me this morning. "But we have hurricanes in Jamaica. I went through three by the time I was a teenager. Whole houses near the beach were flying through the air. After it was over, there were fish all over our yard."

An overly chipper and cheery woman by the pool this morning called out to her friend, "It's not bad in the sun." Replied a woman nearby to me to no one in particular, a less chipper type in a heavy jacket, "She must be from Antarctica."

What's most worrisome here is the impact of cold nights on the state's \$100 billion a year agricultural crop, Florida's second largest industry after tourism.



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The orange crop can be ruined if temperatures fall below 28 degrees for more than four hours. Last night it got down to 27 degrees, but only for an hour right before sun up.

More sensitive to cold temperatures than the citrus crop are the state's strawberry fields and the millions of tropical fish in ponds around Tampa.

Strawberry growers last night turned on sprinklers to form a protective layer of ice over the strawberries, creating what's referred to as the heat of fusion.

With the tropical fish — angel fish, mollies, etc. — farmers are saying they'll see massive fish kills if the ponds' temperatures fall into the mid-50s. Last night, news reports showed water temperatures in the ponds falling to 58 degrees.

A few days ago, temperatures in Miami hit their lowest levels since 1919, the state lifted the weight limit on trucks hauling produce in order to get things out of the freeze, and the local zoo announced that the monkeys were getting portable heaters.

And from Hillary, Obama, and Gore, nothing yet about cancelling the guilt money to Robert Mugabe and the other tinpot dictators.

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