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Donald B. Crawford, President

THE STAND
GLOBAL WARMING
AL GORE
CARBON OFFSETS

Al Gore is a wealthy man. He and his wife Tipper are the proud owners of a large and lavish spread in the good state of Tennessee. Mr. Gore has an indoor swimming pool. It costs \$500 month to heat that swimming pool with natural gas. That's a lot of money for everyone to produce toasty swimming lanes.

I for one do not in any way begrudge Mr. Gore the fruits of his labors. He is entitled, like all Americans, to pursue life, liberty and happiness as he sees fit, as he can afford. Obviously, Mr. Gore can afford to live in luxury, and can also afford the large natural gas bills he must pay each month, just for the privilege of swimming.

Another interesting fact is that the Gore manse uses more electricity in one month than the average American household does in one full year. Again, I for one do not begrudge Mr. Gore his right to live as he pleases, no matter how large the house, or how expensive it is to energize that house, as long as he can afford to do so. He can indeed for he is quite wealthy as so many politicians are.

Al Gore is the champion of the global warming cause. Gore is the global warming's threat most visible spokesperson. He has written a book, he lectures, and he attempts to establish programs which will raise the consciousness of Americans regarding excessive energy use. One interesting concept Gore has come up with is the concept of carbon offsets.

No matter how much energy the Gore household burns, and no matter how much carbon is released into the atmosphere, which according to Mr. Gore, greatly increases global warming, Gore can do that as long as he can fund the projects elsewhere that may reduce the total carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere. In other words, Al and Tipper Gore can burn up hundreds of dollars of natural gas to keep a pool house warm and then do penance (as the Wall Street Journal states) for this carbon sin by paying someone else to put up solar panels. If someone else burns less (less carbon dioxide emissions), then a person like Al Gore can burn more. That produces an atmospheric trade off, no more carbon dioxide emissions from two persons, even though the same amount of pollution occurs in total. That policy led Drew Johnson of the Tennessee Center for Policy Research, the think-tank that broke the story, to call these offsets championed by Gore a way of "buying his way out of his guilt".

Strange indeed it is how the rich, especially the super rich, justify their lifestyles all the while telling all the rest of us how we should live and what we should do. We are constantly admonished to save fuel, drive less, pay more for the incredible amount of fuel burned by airplanes, get squashed into tight seats with foul air on an airplane, again to conserve costs and fuel, while Mr. Gore thinks little of flying in a private jet to talk

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political strategy with actor Leo DiCaprio. An actor, no less? The super rich fly in private jets, ride in humongous stretch limousine, heat and light dozens of rooms in mansions, and in so many other ways, burn energy without compunction, while you and I turn off the lights and lower the thermostat every chance we can. The oil and gas bills we pay are serious business. But, I doubt the super rich ever give a thought to how much energy is burned, how much carbon dioxide is produced, and perhaps they never even pay or see an electric bill as their luxurious life goes on. Would anyone think that Bill Gates, one of the wealthiest men in the world, would pay his own electric or gas bills?

John Edwards, candidate for President, has a huge estate in North Carolina which burns an incredible amount of energy. Hillary Rodham Clinton flies in private jets, rides in stretch limousines, lives the life of luxury, a multimillionaire many times over. Ted Kennedy has lived his entire life from the proceeds of a trust established by his father. George Bush has a huge ranch in, you will pardon the name of the town, Crawford, Texas, another very wealthy man. And I for one, do not begrudge any of them the fruits of their labors. They are entitled to acquire whatever they wish, and can afford, and to live as they please within the law and in socially acceptable ways. These rich and super rich individuals are entitled to their energy indulgences so long as they can pay for them.

But they are not entitled to lecture the rest of us on the damage and danger of global warming. They are not entitled to preach the virtues of conservation. They are not entitled to come up with sham programs like carbon offsets and attempt to get the rest of us to live and invest that way when they themselves live exactly the opposite, luxuriously and hypocritically. Different strokes for different folks, rich folks, like laws and the application of those laws. Practice, Mr. Gore, and all like you, what you preach, or don't bore us with your hypocritical preaching. Al Gore won an Oscar for a documentary on global warming. If Al Gore really believes that carbon dioxide emissions, the remnants of spent energy, are causing global warming, shut down the indoor swimming pool, cut off the natural gas waste and install solar panels. Use clean energy to fuel a lavish lifestyle.

There are no limits to the amount of electricity we Americans can use, or natural gas we can burn, or gasoline we put in our cars. Until such limits exist, lawfully so, we can purchase all such fuels and do with them as we wish. Mr. Gore has that right, so do you, and so do I. Virtually every American who pays his own bills is conscious of the cost of energy, everywhere and every kind. We are careful and concerned. Even if we are rich enough to build an indoor swimming pool, we do so knowing what it will cost to heat and clean the pool. We make those choices because the resources are available and we can afford them. That is the American way of life.

I hope Al and Tipper Gore keep their luxurious indoor swimming pool, pay for the natural gas and enjoy it as much as they possibly can. I also hope that Mr. Gore will stop with the hypocrisy and stop lecturing about global warming unless he really does something, really sacrifices himself. In short, practices what he preaches.

By their fruits ye shall know them.

DBC/msl