



Central Coast Climate Science Education
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Attacks on a Climate Scientist: A Deeply Personal Story
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If you keep up with climate science news, you will be aware of the personal attacks directed against both concerned private citizens and research climate scientists themselves as they present overwhelming evidence for human-driven climate change and the need to both adapt to the changes as well as reduce the use of fossil fuels causing it.

Notable recent examples are the nasty remarks directed at 16-year old Greta Thunberg, a remarkable human being mature beyond her years. These were in response to her cogent words directed to members of Congress and world leaders at the UN, many of whom were, in contrast, immature in spite of *their* years. She was, for example, called “*deeply disturbed*”, “*a millenarian weirdo*”, a “*mentally ill Swedish child who is being exploited by her parents.*”

Here in San Luis Obispo County, John Lindsey, local meteorologist and weekly columnist on weather and climate, has also been on the receiving end of some nasty and insulting emails. Here are three examples:

“If Lindsey was as good at predicting the weather as he is about spreading global warming pornography, we might actually know what the forecast predicts.”

“When you write a column like today's, you show yourself to be a corporate shill. Is it worth a paycheck to sell out your fellow human beings? You disgust me.”

“Now, for reasons unknown, you've fallen into goose-step with the whacko-liberal global warming imbeciles and your credibility is virtually shot!”

Regrettable as these are, they have not reached the viciousness directed at some of the most prominent research climate scientists.

Listen to the following audio recording featuring noted climate scientist Dr. Benjamin Santer recounting the aftermath to his role as the lead author in one of the chapters of the 1995 2nd IPCC report. This report was a turning point in the discussion of climate change with the portentous phrase “*the balance of evidence suggests that there is a discernable human influence on global climate.*”

Click here to listen to this nearly 30 minute recording:

[https://www.climateone.org/audio/my-climate-story-ben-santer.](https://www.climateone.org/audio/my-climate-story-ben-santer)

Dr. Santer is also a frequent contributor of essays appearing in Scientific American, and I believe readers will find the following two not only beautifully written but inspiring as well:

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/studying-climate-change-in-one-of-the-grandest-classrooms-in-the-world/>

<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/voyager-1-and-the-beauty-and-power-of-science/>

Dr. Santer is not alone in receiving vile attacks. Others, including Drs. Michael Mann and Katherine Hayhoe, have been the target of similar attacks. They, Dr. Santer and others have also been the targets of harassments by both elected officials and private citizens in the form of Freedom of Information requests that divert these scientists from pursuing their research and instead must spend time responding to frivolous requests for all their notes and emails, whether relevant or not.

After hearing Dr. Santer’s story, if you want to know what you can do to support these scientists against such attacks, I suggest that you visit the website of the Climate Science Legal Defense Fund (CSLDF):

<https://www.csldf.org/>. As you will learn further from the ABOUT and WHAT WE DO menu in this CSLDF website, among other activities they provide *pro bono* legal assistance to climate scientists who are under attack. Without such help, legal representation can be prohibitively expensive.

More generally, CSLDF is an advocate for the role of science in today's society. Science and scientists are under assault more than ever and need and deserve our support.

Some Biographical Information about Dr. Benjamin Santer

Here is the link to the Wikipedia general biography about Dr. Santer, followed by a brief description of Dr. Santer's professional activities:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_D._Santer

Ben Santer is an atmospheric scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). His research focuses on such topics as climate model evaluation, the use of statistical methods in climate science, and identification of natural and anthropogenic "fingerprints" in observed climate records. Santer's early research on the climatic effects of combined changes in greenhouse gases and sulfate aerosols contributed to the historic "discernible human influence" conclusion of the 1995 Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). His recent work has attempted to identify anthropogenic fingerprints in a number of different climate variables, such as tropopause height, atmospheric water vapor, the temperature of the stratosphere and troposphere, ocean heat content, and ocean surface temperatures in hurricane formation regions.

Santer holds a Ph.D. in Climatology from the University of East Anglia, England. After completion of his Ph.D. in 1987, he spent five years at the Max-Planck Institute for Meteorology in Germany, where he worked on the development and application of climate fingerprinting methods. In 1992, Santer joined LLNL's Program for Climate Model Diagnosis and Intercomparison.

Santer served as convening lead author of the climate-change detection and attribution chapter of the 1995 IPCC report. His awards include the Norbert Gerbier-MUMM International Award (1998), a MacArthur Fellowship (1998), the U.S. Department of Energy's E.O. Lawrence Award (2002), a Distinguished Scientist Fellowship from the U.S. Dept. of Energy, Office of Biological and Environmental Research (2005), a Fellowship of the American Geophysical Union (2011), and membership in the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (2011). He recently visited the Juneau Icefield in Alaska, and enjoys rock-climbing, mountaineering, and exploring the beautiful state of California with his wife Kris.