February 8, 2016

To the Editor:

 The February 6, 20916 edition of the *Marietta Times* contained an article, "This Winter has Everyone Confused." The article contained information on the record-setting warm temperatures of December 2015, the snow fall of last month from storm Jonas, and the reactions of some local persons to these events. Nowhere in this article was there mention of the possibility of human-induced climate change as the reason for these unusual weather events. Of course, one warm winter does not a trend make. But there are two possible explanations for these strange weather events: one is that it is a natural abnormality; two is that it is part of the pattern of human-caused climate change. Let us look at some of the facts about climate change to see what this pattern might be. The year 2014 was the hottest year on record worldwide, and 2015 was even hotter. In the past 650,000 years the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has never exceeded 300 parts per million; in April 2014 it reached 400. Sea levels throughout the world have risen 6.7 inches in the past 100 years. Ten of the warmest years in recorded history have occurred in the last 12 years. Oceans are warming; ice sheets are shrinking (36-60 cubic miles of ice was lost between 2002-2006); the sea ice in the Arctic Ocean is declining; glaciers are retreating in the northern hemisphere; oceans are becoming acidified, causing bleaching and destruction of coral reefs, the engine of marine life; snow cover in mountain areas is decreasing, and there is extreme weather all over the world.

 I have heard a few people say that some experts believe in human-caused climate change and other experts do not. This is a false equivalence--over 80% of scientists and most credible scientific organizations accept the compelling evidence of climate change caused by human activity. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is composed of 235 scientists from 57 countries. The IPCC recommends reducing carbon emissions by 40-70% by 2050 in order to address climate change. They also identify actions we can take individually and collectively to address the effects of climate change; among them - plant trees, increase energy efficiency, obtain three times more energy from renewable sources. If you deny climate change, you are in lonely company; nearly 200 countries signed on to concerted action to address human-caused climate change at the Paris Agreement in fall 2015. Polls show that a majority of citizens of these countries accept the reality that scientific evidence is showing us about climate change and are willing to take action to address its effects.

 Here in the Mid-Ohio Valley a group of citizens has organized for this purpose. The Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action was formed last year by a collection of concerned citizens in our area. They hold group meetings on the first and third Thursdays of each month, 7-9 p.m., at the Judge Black Annex in Parkersburg. Social media presence is on Facebook @ Parkersburg and Mid-Ohio Valley Citizens Climate Lobby. Group leader is Eric Engler (ericengle85@yahoo.com). In Marietta the Green Sanctuary Committee of the First Unitarian Universalist Society is also committed to dealing with this issue. These groups and other involved citizens are beyond confusion about weather extremes--they are concerned and alarmed about climate change and willing to work to save our planet for our children, grandchildren, and our future.

George Banziger

Marietta