

# Dead Pigeons, Mad Cows, and the Death of an American Way of Life

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Inside the bag was a dead pigeon Sarah Speed had brought home from a pigeon shoot. She told me that the pigeon had died in her arms after she had tried to rescue it from this so called "sport."

Speed is the Pennsylvania state director for the Humane Society of the United States. She holds a Bachelor's degree in American Literature from the University of California at Los Angeles and a law degree from the University of San Diego, School of Law. In law school, Speed concentrated on public interest law and was president of the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund. Observing pigeon shoots is just one of the many tasks she performs under this title, "I am a Jack of all trades...if there is any animal issue in Pennsylvania I am the first person to respond to it."

So what exactly is a pigeon shoot? "It is essentially target

practice using live pigeons." She goes on to say that this is "irresponsible, unethical, and something most hunters do not condone." The pigeons are often trapped illegally in New York City, transferred across state lines, penned up for several days without food or water, only to be released in front of a barrage of bird shot. The original point of pigeon shoots was that pigeons have a very erratic flight pattern and are therefore hard to hit; however, Speed says "when the cage opens the birds rarely fly out, they usually just flop around on the ground until they are shot." HSUS has offered to supply these shoots with clay pigeons but have not been taken up on that offer. "From witnessing several of these shoots, I think that clays are too difficult for most of these shooters, because they actually go into the air," Speed says cynically.

While in Law School, Speed researched and lobbied for State Senate Bill 353, which allowed owners to include their pets on restraining orders to prevent violence towards animals, often

perpetrated in domestic violence situations. The bill was sponsored by California State Senator Sheila Kuehl, and passed through the legislature the first session it was introduced. State Senate Bill 353 was signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in August of 2007.

I asked Speed how becoming involved in animal welfare has impacted her life. She said that since she started becoming aware of how much animal cruelty goes on in the meat industry she had to become a vegan. A vegan is someone who does not eat or use any animal products, including milk, cheese, eggs and meat. "I try to live a cruelty free lifestyle," she says, "...the most horrific cruelty that animals face is the animals we raise to eat." In the last fifty years we have seen a "mass exodus" of the family farm. Animals have gone from being humanely raised and slaughtered on locally owned farms to becoming a gross product run through an assembly line for sheer profit by large corporations. Sarah warns that this is not only horrific for

the animals but also detrimental to our environment. Confined Animal Feed Operations, specifically battery cage hen facilities, are responsible for up to twenty-five percent of the methane gases attacking our ozone. Perhaps even worse is that the small farmer cannot compete with these corporations and thus goes out of business or sells out to the corporations. According to Speed, it is truly the death of an American way of life.

Speed does not believe that eating meat is unethical, but she does believe that you should do your research and find out exactly where your food comes from and how it was handled. That is being responsible and ethical. She states that the United States Department of Agriculture is failing the American public. The USDA decided not to intervene in the Mad Cow scare we had a while back until there was a reported case in humans. By that time Japan and Europe had already banned all importation of U.S. meat, as it had not been tested for Mad Cow. Then the USDA threatened criminal

sanctions on a U.S. company who wanted to set up a mad cow test site, at their own expense, so that they could export their meat to Japan. "Criminal sanctions, because the USDA is so consumed with protecting the industry, their finances, and their image that they are willing to put the health of the consumer at risk."

The Humane Society of the United States is a lot more than just puppies and kitties. They strive for the humane treatment of all animals, even those raised for slaughter. The amount of meat Americans consume per capita has risen sharply in the past fifty years. This is due to the convenience and low prices created by factory farms; however, this convenience comes at a price. If you want to learn more visit [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org).

Sarah Speed is married to The Capital Times staff writer James Speed

## CLIMATE CHANGE: A liberal fantasy?

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warming can be directly linked to a state of grand maximum, or a particularly active sunspot cycle. Because sunspots deflect cosmic rays that penetrate Earth, an increase in solar activity would inhibit ions from forming in the lower atmosphere. These ions are vital to cloud cover, and thus, their absence is consistent with less global cloud cover. Hence, the reflectivity of the planet decreases, as it absorbs more of the sun's ultraviolet rays, in turn contributing to higher global temperatures.

As of last year the sun began to wane from its solar maximum, characterized on planet Earth by a more severe winter. Much like the one North America just experienced.

Misconception number two: a warmer planet is synonymous with a cataclysmic apocalypse and the end of civilization as we know it.

The global warming movement has indoctrinated the general public to believe that a mild warming of the planet is undeniably harmful to everyone and everything thriving in our ecosystem. However, this couldn't be further from the truth.

Carbon dioxide is essential for plant nourishment, and it allows for plants during times of drought to remain hearty and stave off death. The agricultural implications of a modest warming stand to benefit both humans and animals alike. Economics professor Robert O. Mendelsohn of the Yale School of Forestry &

Environmental Studies contends that agricultural development in Canada, Russia, Northern Europe, and Mongolia will thrive; much like throughout the medieval warming period.

Furthermore, economic studies indicate that increases in carbon dioxide emissions are beneficial to the gross national product and the standard of living for many countries, thus fostering the exponential growth in human population and technological advances, characteristic of the 20th century.

Misconception number three: Earth's climate is completely understood; therefore, we can precisely predict the effects that warming and cooling have on global sea levels.

The climate is an intricately fashioned web of both internal

and external forces. Science cannot and should not ignore these external factors (e.g. solar activity, cosmic rays, and volcanic activity) when hypothesizing about the future of the human race as it relates to carbon emissions.

Now, these misconceptions are not absolutes. However, neither are the alarmists' supposed truths that the mainstream media immediately digests as fact and inevitability.

So how does this environmental pressure group relate to the advancement of authoritarian socialistic policies and abhorrence towards capitalism? Well it is simple and self-evident; control through taxation and regulation in the name of saving the planet.

Obama's cap-and-trade proposal

intends to tax carbon emitting businesses to the tune of \$645.7 billion appreciated by 2019. That is an additional \$645.7 billion generated in tax revenue, removed from the private sector and distributed by the government for clean energy projects and discretionary usage as it pleases.

It's no secret that the global warming movement is nothing more than socialism disguised as preserving God's green earth for the sake of humanity. It's the amalgam of displaced communists, authoritarian politicians, and those who have a knack for redistributing wealth. Saving the planet is this supposed objective of this policy, but its achievement comes at the expense of individual liberty and economic prosperity.