

# The New Millennium

## Should we keep it?

by Fred Stenson



**T**hat's three years for the New Millennium. Let's review it. If it fails, we'll go back to the old one.

The first thing about the New Millennium is that it clearly belongs to the United States. The rest of us are just bystanders. The United Nations is just a handy gathering of national representatives, so the U.S. doesn't waste time telling each country it is about to take action, with or without UN consent.

Akin to this is a return to the Red Menace and McCarthyism, only now the menace isn't red but some Islamic extremist colour, and McCarthy isn't McCarthy but

George Bush. In the olden days, American presidents didn't do their own witch hunting; they left it to some party nutter with a penchant for jingoist cant and runaway paranoia. But George Bush Jr., being the kind of Oval Office handyman he is, has taken on the chore himself and given us such memorable phrases as "the Axis of Evil."

There is some debate whether this phrase is borrowed from a Marvel comic book or from a

smuggled Osama Bin Laden videotape. If the latter, Mr. Bush Jr. will probably be calling Iraq "the Great Satan" any day now, or, in the interests of originality, might opt for "the Big Fat Beelzebub."

Another thing I find bothering about the New Millennium is the rapid acceleration of Genetic Modification. Most every day in the newspaper there is a new Gen Mod idea, followed by expressions of worry about its environmental consequences. A recent article promised a genetically modified Giant Salmon:

"Imagine! A salmon steak ten times the size of the current super-market standard!"

Being as paranoid in my way as George Bush Jr., I immediately conjured up an image of the Giant Salmon in the hands of inventive terrorists.

“Imagine! A six-foot salmon mistaking you in your Speedo for plankton!”

If they make it amphibious, we’re doomed.

By extension, genetic modification could transform the forests of the New Millennium back into “evil places where man-eating beasts do dwell.” I’m not thinking of cougars and bears here, but of giant rodents—no doubt grown on the backs of smaller rodents—which ate all the cougars and bears.

Moving on, I blame the New Millennium for global warming. Yes, yes, I realize it started in the Old Millennium, but the fact remains that the years of the new one have been the hottest on record. Our continent has yet to grow a decent crop in this brave new world.

Industry spokespeople are telling me, “Why worry, be happy,” based on the claim that the melting of the polar ice caps, the drought and so on may not be caused by the exhalation of industrial and automotive greenhouse gases. Whew! What a relief! If it’s only a *normal heating trend*, of which there were probably many before the keeping of records or even before the dawn of man, I won’t mind half as much living on algae and blind albino snakes in a stilt house next to a bubbling underground aquifer. If I get homesick for endurable sunlight and edible grains, I’ll remind myself that at least we didn’t fall for the mug’s game of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. We may be snaring cockroaches for a living now, but at least we didn’t economically penalize ourselves relative to the United States back in 2002.

Friends tell me I’ve got this all wrong anyway. Global heating is actually just a temporary phase which will soon shift to global chilling. Once the polar ice shelves have broken off and started roaming

around the world’s oceans like ice cubes in a mammoth gin and tonic, world temperatures will precipitously decline. Though near-universal crop loss will probably remain the rule, there’s an excellent chance that we will be able to live above ground until the ice sheets creep over us. Another optimistic approach is to gaily predict that we’ll all be dead by then anyway.

And by the way, I didn’t say any of this. I didn’t because of *FBI chill*. (FBI chill is defined as silence caused by the fear that men in black suits and sunglasses will come to your house and demand to know if you have said anything derogatory about George Bush Jr. or the war on terrorism—which as we all know is as good as admitting that you are a terrorist yourself.)

“Did you or did you not say, on July 12, 2002, that the sight of President Bush’s nose and eyes gives you an urge to cry, ‘Fan out, boys, there’s lots of room?’”

I consulted my lawyer, who has advised me on libel chill in the past. She warned that FBI chill is a tougher rap to beat, because technically it has nothing to do with the law at all. It’s strictly an extralegal procedure.

She corrected me on calling it FBI chill. The FBI being an internal secret service, designed by the Americans to spy on themselves, the organization would have no business spying on a Canadian in Canada.

“This is clearly a matter for the CIA,” she said. “But let me know which one turns up. It will be a meaningful test of our sovereignty.”

“But I must be able to do something to protect myself!”

My lawyer said she doubted it, but that, if it made me feel any better, I could try the old standard of an entirely dishonest disclaimer. So here goes:

The writer of this article is fictitious. Any comparison between the author of this piece and any writer living or dead is purely coincidental.