

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



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OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For the week of
Jan. 14, 2007

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Notes: Lonnie Thompson is a professor of geological sciences in Ohio State's College of Mathematical and Physical Sciences. His research, naturally, takes a team and teammates. Read more about their work at the Web site of Ohio State's Byrd Polar Research Center, <http://www-bprc.mps.ohio-state.edu/>. Sources included an Ohio State press release, "Snows of Kilimanjaro Disappearing, Glacial Ice Loss Increasing"; "The Iceman" in *Time*; "The Ice Hunter" in *Rolling Stone*; and "High-climbing Ice Expert Gets to Core of Climate Change" in *National Geographic* (all of them readily Googleable). Got a hot question for Twig? Send it to Kurt Knebusch, knebusch.1@osu.edu.

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Q. Dear Twig: What does global warming have to do with the snows of Kilimanjaro? [See last week.]

A.: Well, scientists think it's making them melt, that's what.
Wha?

Yes, the famous snows of Kilimanjaro, **Africa's tallest mountain**, soon may disappear.

Ohio State scientist Lonnie Thompson says the "snows" — great thick **fields of built-up ice** that give the peak a cap of white — have thinned by more than 50 feet since 1962. That three-quarters of these fields have vanished since 1912. And that the rest could go by 2015.

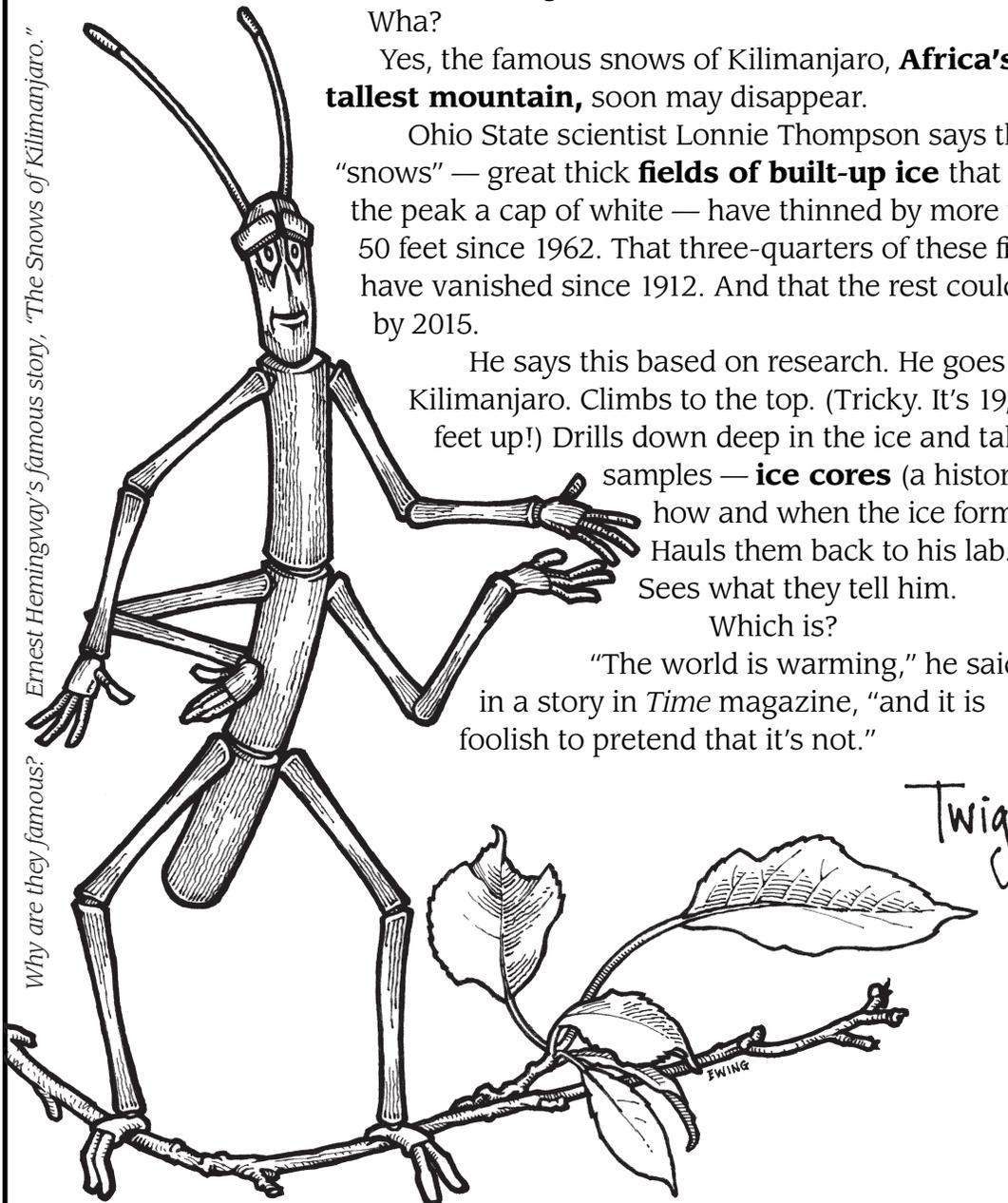
He says this based on research. He goes to Kilimanjaro. Climbs to the top. (Tricky. It's 19,340 feet up!) Drills down deep in the ice and takes samples — **ice cores** (a history of how and when the ice formed). Hauls them back to his lab. Sees what they tell him.

Which is?

"The world is warming," he said in a story in *Time* magazine, "and it is foolish to pretend that it's not."

Ernest Hemingway's famous story, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."

Why are they famous?



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).