



## DrumBeat: December 10, 2006

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Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Update by Leanan on 12/10/06 at 8:59 AM EDT]

[Running on Fumes](#): *How bad is the current energy crisis? Really, really bad, says oil expert Charley Maxwell.*

I think we'll get through this problem by about 2020 to 2025. My worry is how we get there. We have a time when oil is winding down before anything is able to slide over and solve the problem. A lot of nuclear development is being brought along by the incipient shortage of future oil, and it's putting people into a proliferation mode. The whole world could come under this threat, and it's a terrible one. We could also be in deep trouble as a social system. How do we achieve fairness [in rationing scarce energy supplies] when the gridlock between rich and poor already stops us from having an energy policy in this country? We could see democracy entering its death throes.

*Discover* magazine's January issue always features "The Top 100 Science Stories of the Year." The January 2007 issue is out now, and the #1 science story of 2006 is about alternative energy: [How To Live the Good Life Without Oil](#).

In September Chevron announced the discovery of a field containing up to 15 billion barrels of oil beneath the Gulf of Mexico, touting it as "a platform for growth for years to come." Read the fine print, though, and you get a different story. To recover the first samples of oil there in 2004, engineers floating 175 miles off the Louisiana coast had to send drill gear into 7,000-foot-deep water and penetrate four miles of rock. The company spent tens of millions of dollars on computer modeling, cutting-edge seismological tools, and exploratory drilling; just renting the drill rig cost Chevron and its partners more than \$200,000 a day. The results suggest that oil from the new reservoir, called Jack 2, could cost three to four times as much to extract as oil from traditional locations, including rigs on land.

[Peak oil era will be hard on Hawaii](#)

In the next decade or two, a global energy crisis will be thrust upon us; the changes it brings will be felt first in Hawaii, possibly with a more devastating effect here than in the rest of the world. Hawaii must begin preparations now to cushion the effects, say the authors of this cautionary essay. The writers are a University of Hawaii political

scientist and a UH-educated civil engineer. In addition, it was signed by 21 others representing a range of scientific disciplines in Hawaii; three chose to sign as private citizens.

### [Wind farms 'are failing to generate the predicted amount of electricity'](#)

The claimed benefits of wind energy are called into question today by a study that finds few wind farms in England and Wales produce as much electricity as the Government has forecast.

### [Solar energy's day is dawning](#)

...the initiative is aimed at driving down the cost of solar-generated power to the point that it's comparable to producing power from burning coal and natural gas.

### [Democrats Plan Oil Royalties Inquiry](#)

House Democratic leaders vowed Friday to pursue a broad overhaul of tax breaks and other subsidies to oil companies in January, saying that their first target would be an investigation of how the government collects billions of dollars in royalties on oil and gas produced on federal property.

### Lecture series: [Energizing the Rockies: Energy Challenges in Global, National and Regional Perspectives](#)

Raymond Plank, chairman and founder of the Apache Corp. is scheduled to deliver a lecture Jan. 24. Randy Udall, director of the Community Office for Resource Efficiency in Aspen, will talk about renewable energy possibilities Feb. 27. Matthew Simmons will discuss the end of “cheap oil: what should the U.S. and the Rockies do?” on March 5.

### [Running On Empty Again](#)

What [the peak oil] theory is not taking into consideration is that in every industry in a free market, there is a natural tendency toward significantly increasing efficiency and declining costs with new technology and improved methods. This can be readily seen in the oil industry over the years. New methods of extraction make previously unprofitable reserves profitable, more oil is extracted from fields that were thought to be depleted.

### [The road ends in post-petro future](#)

And when Hoosier Environmental Council activists tapped on my door a few years back with their petition to stop I-69, I told them I was not opposed to it. New construction is the quintessential "can't-please-everyone" issue. There will always be tree huggers prostrating themselves before bulldozers. If they had their way every time, nothing would ever be built.

Then I heard the phrase "peak oil production" at a presentation by self-confessed tree hugger Scott Russell Sanders at last year's Spirit & Place Festival. And it occurred to me that those words I'd heard many times before had fallen on deaf ears until that moment.

### [OPEC set to cut output amid carping over quotas](#)

### [Antarctica works as living global warming laboratory](#)

MCMURDO STATION, Antarctica - For scientists at this ice-encircled outpost, global warming is not a matter of debate. It is a simple fact and crucial research questions center on what its consequences will be.

### [As World Warms, Africa's Waters Going Dry](#)

The outflow through two hydroelectric dams at Jinja is part of the problem — a tiny part, says the Uganda government, or half the problem, say environmentalists. But much of what is happening to Victoria and other lakes across the heart of Africa is attributable to years of drought and rising temperatures, conditions that starve the lakes of inflowing water and evaporate more of the water they have.

### [Cow 'emissions' more damaging to planet than CO2 from cars](#)

### [Gaddafi: Oil behind Darfur crisis](#)

Muammar Gaddafi has accused the West of trying to grab Sudan's oil wealth with its plan to send UN troops to Darfur.

### [Oil and the New Anti-Capitalist](#)

Imagine it's January 2000 and you are asked to look into a crystal ball and predict the course of the global economy over the next six years. The misty glass gives you some hints: the coming stock-market collapse, followed by suicide airliner attacks on the Twin Towers and two wars, all leading to a quadrupling in the price of oil. Faced with these facts, no one would have foreseen the economy's response: between 2000 and 2006, global per capita GDP rose by 3.2 percent a year, the fastest six-year growth spurt ever.

[The Edison of our age?](#) The inventor of the NiMH battery is working on hydrogen power...and has been for fifty years.

Daniel Yergin in *Newsweek*: [Will oil prices lead to a new tech boom?](#)

High oil prices are transforming the world's political landscape—and launching an era of high-tech innovation that could rival the Internet boom.

[Students on Campus Work for a Greener Future](#)

[Democrats May Give Alternative Energy a New Push](#)

THE fortunes of alternative energy companies have been linked to two factors outside their control: oil prices and politics.



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