



DrumBeat: March 23, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on March 23, 2007 - 9:04am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[The Year Without Toilet Paper](#)

DINNER was the usual affair on Thursday night in Apartment 9F in an elegant prewar on Lower Fifth Avenue. There was shredded cabbage with fruit-scrap vinegar; mashed parsnips and yellow carrots with local butter and fresh thyme; a terrific frittata; then homemade yogurt with honey and thyme tea, eaten under the greenish flickering light cast by two beeswax candles and a fluorescent bulb.

A sour odor hovered oh-so-slightly in the air, the faint tang, not wholly unpleasant, that is the mark of the home composter. Isabella Beavan, age 2, staggered around the neo-Modern furniture — the Eames chairs, the brown velvet couch, the Lucite lamps and the steel cafe table upon which dinner was set — her silhouette greatly amplified by her organic cotton diapers in their enormous boiled-wool, snap-front cover.

A visitor avoided the bathroom because she knew she would find no toilet paper there.

[Some rethinking nuke opposition](#)

"No Nukes" was once a familiar rallying cry for environmentalists opposed to nuclear power and all its scary risks.

With global warming a rising concern, some environmentalists are rethinking nuclear power because it emits zero greenhouse gases.

"You can't just write nuclear off," says Judi Greenwald, director of innovative solutions with the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, an environmental research and advocacy group. "I think everybody feels you have to at least look again" at nuclear power.

[Is Hugo Chávez Mr. Misunderstood?](#)

He roams Latin America, hurling insults at President Bush, sneering at the United States as the enemy "empire" and spending billions in oil money to undermine Washington wherever he can.

To many Americans, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez seems a Latin wild man. But to the millions of Venezuelans who adore him, he is the first leader who genuinely cares for the nation's poor majority, a welcome departure from politicians who traditionally catered to the elite.

[How you'll pay for renewable power](#)

Many have wondered if and when renewable energy will be cost-effective.

But when it comes down to your electric bill, the short answer may be: Who cares? The government may make you buy it anyway.

[Bill McKibben says we're stuffed](#)

The supply of fossil fuels that has put an end to scarcity in much of the Western world and continues to drive the dizzying economic growth of China and India, McKibben argues, is "a one-time gift." And rather than continue to gorge, we ought to be investing our surplus in figuring out how to live on less.

[Peak Oil Passnotes: Market Disconnect 2](#)

If supply and demand were in some kind of balance that just needed leaving alone, we would live in paradise. Unfortunately for neo-classical economists their narrow view of human existence - and the economic theories that emanate from it - fails to take into account people like OPEC, Gordon Brown and the American driver.

[Playing With War](#)

Of course Cheney/Bush are still in favor of the war. They are doctrinaire imperialists, so how could they be otherwise? Their plan was to assemble a staging area within the middle east from which to scourge tinpot regimes throughout the region, exploiting the petroassets of any and all, preparing against that day when "peak oil" was understood to have passed by during 2004. The Cheney/Bush plan was to "finesse" the civil discord in the region and make as much of a bloodbath of it as the residents could stand. Every dead Arab, in their view, was a dead terrorist or terror-symp. We can be assured that left to their own

[TSR Raises Forecast for Atlantic Hurricane Season](#)

Tropical Storm Risk (TSR), a consortium of experts on insurance, risk management and seasonal climate forecasting led by the Benfield UCL Hazard Research Centre at

University College London, has increased its forecast for Atlantic hurricane activity in 2007.

Based on current and projected climate signals, TSR's March forecast predicts Atlantic basin and US landfalling hurricane activity to be about 75% above the 1950-2006 norm in 2007, rising from 60% above norm (TSR long-range forecast issued December 2006). This is the highest March forecast for activity in any year since the TSR replicated real-time forecasts started in 1984.

[The elasticity of oil production and consumption](#)

Classical economists still insist higher prices will bring out increased production sufficient to give us the oil we humans need.

[Opec will meet global oil demands: president](#)

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries yesterday tried to soften global concerns about decreasing oil supplies, saying it was committed to providing enough for world consumption.

"Opec is committed to ensure steady, secure supplies of crude oil to all consumers at affordable prices both now and in the future," the group's president Mohammed al-Hamili said here.

[US experts seek India, China entry in global energy system](#)

Three US experts have suggested bringing the emerging major oil consumers, such as India and China, into the global energy system as a key diplomatic strategy to secure the stability of American oil supply.

[Report to feds on oil shale development due this month](#)

A federal task force mandated to recommend to Congress and President George W. Bush how the government can accelerate the development of oil shale and tar sands may have its report ready by the end of the month, a U.S. Department of Energy official said this week.

[Rahall Pans Effort to Extend Gulf Leases to Recoup Lost Royalties](#)

Rep. Nick Rahall (D-W.Va.) said the proposal floated by the Interior Department in the Senate is not strong enough to get companies to play ball. "I think we ought to be more

forceful," Rahall said in an interview yesterday. "We ought to be more demanding of what the taxpayers are owed."

[Kurdish oil move could signal start of Iraqi energy rush](#)

A scramble for Kurdish oil licences is expected this summer after Ashti Hawrami, the oil minister for Iraq's Kurdish region, said yesterday that he wants to achieve a production goal of one million barrels a day by 2012.

The Kurdish move signals that Iraq is poised to open its doors to foreign oil investment.

[Venezuela's PDVSA to begin US\\$5 billion \(€3.75 billion\) bond offer next week](#)

The upcoming bond issue comes amid speculation by some industry analysts that PDVSA, despite soaring revenues from high oil prices, is facing a cash flow problem and turning to the financial markets for capital.

[Greenhouse-friendly Airbus to halve its fuel use by 2020](#)

Airbus vice-president, environmental affairs, Philippe de Saint-Aulaire, said the manufacturer was looking at airframe improvements to provide about 25 per cent of the reduction, while between 10 and 15 per cent would come from engine manufacturers.

"The remainder, about 10 per cent, will come from air traffic control - to ensure there are more direct flights, to ensure that aircraft are not (circling) around the airport before they land," he said.

[Seoul seeks to widen economic ties with Middle East to IT sector](#)

Amid rising oil prices, the president's trip is also expected to provide an opportunity to expand South Korea's practical partnership with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the fields of energy resources, infrastructure construction, defense industry and information technology, the aides said.

['Africa must set alternative energy agenda'](#)

Many of the plans being considered by African governments, including huge hydropower dams and fossil fuel plants, were simply "more of the same", UN Environment Programme executive director Achim Steiner told a development conference in Kenya.

Many would be able to supply the huge appetite of industry and city dwellers on the

world's poorest continent, he said, but they would "lock in" the rural majority to decades without power.

[The car of tomorrow is here today](#)

Before joining the staff of the Union of Concerned Scientists, I worked as a consultant for the major automakers, so I know first-hand that they can do better. Working with other UCS vehicle experts, I recently designed a "virtual" vehicle that combines a number of pollution-cutting technologies under one hood. Our blueprint, which we call the Vanguard, is not a hybrid. It doesn't use fuel cells. It merely puts together conventional off-the-shelf technologies that can already be found piecemeal in more than 100 vehicles on the road today. Installing these technologies in everything from two-seaters to SUVs could cut their global-warming pollution by as much as 40 percent. Adopting the Vanguard "package" in California alone would be the equivalent of taking 19 million of today's vehicles off the road.

[Nevada lawmakers hear good news from solar, geothermal power companies](#)

Nevada is making steady progress toward becoming a national leader in solar and geothermal energy, state lawmakers were told Thursday.

[China's Hu heads to Russia urgently seeking fuel](#)

Chinese President Hu Jintao goes to Moscow on Monday, confidently offering trade deals with an economy roaring back home, but urgently seeking oil, gas and assurance as the two countries eye each other's resurgent power.

Hu's three-day state visit to Russia will be his third as president, showing how seriously Beijing is courting its neighbor and President Vladimir Putin. Above all, Russia has the energy supplies China needs to fuel its growth.

U.S. Congressional Research Service: [Ethanol and biofuels](#)

Issues facing the U.S. biofuels industry include potential agricultural "feedstock" supplies, and the associated market and environmental effects of a major shift in U.S. agricultural production; the energy supply needed to grow feedstocks and process them into fuel; and barriers to expanded infrastructure needed to deliver more and more biofuels to the market. This report outlines some of the current supply issues facing biofuels industries, including the limitations on agricultural feedstocks, infrastructure constraints, energy supply for biofuel production, and fuel price uncertainties.

[The Deception Behind Oil's Future](#)

Oil prices over the next ten years are going to alter the way our world operates. Peak oil is the reason. Oil companies may denounce peak oil as a "myth," but in a few short years they'll have nothing more to hide behind.

[Analyst: Labor Hunt Will Drive Offshore Driller Consolidation](#)

A growing labor shortage in the offshore drilling industry will be a major driver behind any consolidation that might occur, Raymond James & Associates analyst J. Marshall Adkins said Thursday.

[GM tries to unplug Volt hype](#)

The Volt grabbed headlines, lit up online chat boards and dominated the buzz at the auto show in Detroit.

There's just one problem: The Volt may never get built.

Production depends on advances in battery technology that could be years away. The uncertainty led to intense debate within GM over whether it was wise to show the Volt in Detroit. And now that the world's waiting for GM to deliver what could be the biggest environmental breakthrough so far this century, company officials are actively trying to temper expectations.

[Global Warming Response – Markets or Taxes?](#)

Perhaps the time has finally come to revive yet another radical idea: a carbon tax, which charges anyone who burns fossil fuels for the problems that ensue.

[Richard Heinberg: Bridging Peak Oil and Climate Change Activism](#)

The problems of Climate Change and Peak Oil both result from societal dependence on fossil fuels. But just how the impacts of these two problems relate to one another, and how policies to address them should differ or overlap, are questions that have so far not been adequately discussed.

[Russia pledges to help Namibia develop nuclear energy](#)

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov said this week that his country is ready to help Namibia develop its uranium deposits to generate nuclear energy in the country, Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) radio reported.

[Green Electronics – Do They Matter](#)

With concerns growing about global warming and peak oil, squeezing greater efficiencies out of consumer electronics is bound to be a larger issue.

Or is it?

[Potential Solutions to Peak Oil Crisis](#)

The potential consequences of peak oil are for now a matter of projection but the early signs can already be seen. Last year's hike in energy prices is just one symptom of fossil fuel scarcity and it is clear that as depletion continues costs for producers and consumers alike will continue their increase.

[Mystery of the Missing Meters: Accounting for Iraq's Oil Revenue](#)

Heavily armed soldiers spend their days at the oil terminals scanning the horizon looking for suicide bombers and stray fishing dhows (boats). Meanwhile, right under their noses, smugglers are suspected to be diverting an estimated billions of dollars worth of crude onto tankers because the oil metering system that is supposed monitor how much crude flows into and out of ABOT and KAAOT - has not worked since the March 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq.

[Apocalypse Soon?](#)

A horse and buggy will be more useful than a Hummer after the fall, says UA Professor Guy McPherson.

['Brown playing games on oil'](#)

"Brown is playing games on oil just as he is on income tax. When Brown talks about falls, they are not real falls they are only corrections from his original forecasts," he said.

"Indeed the chancellor is becoming as bad at forecasting oil and gas revenues as he is at estimating the cost of the London Olympics."

[EU biodiesel firms blame politicians as demand falls](#) - *Politicians blamed for not delivering promised tax relief*

Many new biodiesel plants have been built in recent years, but many of them have hardly any markets in which to sell, as several countries have been slow to implement promises to increase biofuel use.

[Catholic Bishops Slam Brazil Ethanol Growth Plan](#)

Roman Catholic bishops warned on Thursday that a rapid increase in cane ethanol production in Brazil could have a devastating social and environmental impact in the countryside.

[US energy secretary says pipeline could help Iran build bomb](#)

US Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman has called for the planned Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline to be abandoned, saying it could help Iran build nuclear weapons, according to a report on Friday.

"There have been talks among Iran, India and other countries about finding ways of developing Iran's oil and gas assets," Bodman was quoted by the Hindu newspaper as saying.

"If that is allowed to go forward, in our judgment, this will contribute to the development of nuclear weapons," Bodman told reporters, the Hindu said.

"We need to stop this," Bodman said after attending a discussion on "Indo-US Nuclear Cooperation" organised by a business group in Mumbai, India's financial capital.

[The rape of Iraq's oil](#)

The Baghdad government has caved in to a damaging plan that will enrich western companies.

[ADM: Canadian biofuels could stall on clawback](#)

A Canadian government proposal to claw back biofuel subsidies from profitable processors could backfire and discourage investment in the sector, a vice-president of Archer Daniels Midland said on Wednesday.

[Warmer world puts squeeze on U.S. maple syrup](#)

Long skeptical of claims that the planet is warming as a result of human activity -- the release of greenhouse gases through the burning of fossil fuels -- syrup-maker Doug Rose said he's started to wonder.

..."We're seeing production go down, we really are."

[Returning as the 'Oracle'](#)

The doors swung open and he made his entrance with cameras clicking, the wooden politician denied the presidency and derided as "Ozone Man" was coming home to the Capitol. But this time they called him a movie star and likened him to a prophet.

[Plutonic Warming](#)

Some people think that our planet is suffering from a fever. Now scientists are telling us that Mars is experiencing its own planetary warming: Martian warming. It seems scientists have noticed recently that quite a few planets in our solar system seem to be heating up a bit, including Pluto.

[New efforts to predict when polar ice will melt](#)

The loss of sea ice in the Arctic may have reached a "tipping point" that could "trigger a cascade of climate change" reaching much farther south. As Arctic warming accelerates, polar waters could become ice-free by the turn of the century, or, under one scenario, as early as 2040.



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