



DrumBeat: May 18, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on May 18, 2007 - 9:04am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Inspired by Ancient Amazonians, a Plan to Convert Trash into Environmental Treasure](#)

When Desmond Radlein heard about Richard Branson and Al Gore's Virgin Earth Challenge, a contest in which the first person who can sequester one billion tons of carbon dioxide a year wins \$25 million, he got out his pencil and began figuring whether or not his company was up to the task.

Radlein is on the board of directors at Dynamotive Energy Systems, an energy solutions provider based in Vancouver, British Columbia, that is one of several companies pioneering the use of pyrolysis, a process in which biomass is burned at a high temperature in the absence of oxygen. The process yields both a charcoal by-product that can be used as a fertilizer, and bio-oil, which is a mix of oxygenated hydrocarbons that can be used to generate heat or electricity.

[Coming Soon: \\$5 a gallon gasoline](#)

Americans might be able to adjust to \$3 a gallon gasoline without major changes in their life styles. But what happens if it hits \$4 a gallon here? Or \$5?

Remember the movie "Three Days of the Condor"? At the end, the CIA official muses that if Americans start running out of gasoline, they won't ask where we get it or how.

Australia: [Climate threat in military's sights](#)

The Australian Defence Force has identified climate change as a national security threat for the first time, as it predicted the military would become more involved in stabilising failing states than fighting conventional wars.

[Saboteurs have upper hand in an endless war, says Iraq's Oil Minister](#)

"It is as bad as it has ever been," says Dr Shahrstani in an interview with The Independent. "If we can protect the pipeline we can add half a million barrels to our exports immediately."

[Venezuela oil export revenues fall sharply in first quarter, central bank says](#)

Venezuela's revenues from crude exports by the state oil company fell 10 percent in the first three months of this year amid lower prices, OPEC-mandated production cuts and reports of falling production at the South American country.

[Smart card - Ahmadinejad's answer to petrol consumption](#)

Now, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his administration aims to put end to the dilemma by rationing petrol with the so-called 'smart card' initiative scheduled to begin on May 21.

The plan of reducing lavish consumption of petrol is basically supported by most Iranians, but Ahmadinejad seems to have gotten cold feet about the plan's social and economic consequences.

[More people leaving power lines and going "off the grid"](#)

A growing number of Americans are shunning power lines, choosing to live "off the grid," without commercial power — and still enjoying their computers and large-screen televisions.

[Changing energy paradigm](#)

More than 1,000 consumers were asked, 'If utilities buying renewable power on your behalf raised your rates 5 percent for the same amount of power and the entire cost was attributable to the higher price of renewables, would you be willing to pay an extra 5 percent?' More than half of respondents, with a margin of error of about 3.5 percent, said they would be willing to pay the increase.

[Weekly Offshore Rig Review: Leading Indicator - Jackups](#)

Over the course of the last two weeks, we have been examining the relationship between contract lengths and day rates. While we initially expected to see day rates decreasing as contract lengths increased (a "volume discount"), we found a markedly different pattern. We've seen that for competitive jackups over the last three years, day rates were actually higher for longer contracts than for shorter ones. Among competitive floating rigs, a similar trend was also found with day rates increasing as contract lengths increased. However, for floating rig contracts longer than three years, day rates went back down.

[Study: U.S. Near Tipping Point in Corn-Based Ethanol](#)

The study, conducted by the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development at Iowa State University (ISU), finds that U.S. retail food prices already have increased \$14 billion annually. They could climb \$20 billion annually if crude oil prices reach \$65 to \$70 per barrel and U.S. corn prices reach \$4.42 per bushel, compared to \$2 per bushel in mid-August 2006. At that crude oil price range, U.S. ethanol production could reach 30 billion gallons by 2012, consuming more than half of U.S. corn, wheat and coarse grains, and triggering higher meat and poultry prices for consumers, reduced meat and poultry production, and significant reductions in grain and meat exports.

[How to do nothing about global warming](#)

Confronted with soaring gasoline prices, a Congress growing more restless by the day about oil dependency and a Supreme Court demanding executive action on global-warming emissions, President George W. Bush stepped before the cameras in the Rose Garden the other day and said, essentially, nothing.

[A cracking trade](#)

THIS week average petrol (gasoline) prices in America reached a new record of \$3.10 a gallon, according to the Department of Energy. Drivers are up in arms and politicians are getting twitchy. Congress is even considering legislation against price-gouging. The culprit is not the oil price, which has hovered above \$60 a barrel for months, well below last year's record of \$78. Instead the squeeze comes from a shortage of refining capacity. The difference between the price of the crude oil refineries buy, and that of the petrol they sell, has risen above \$30 per barrel—a record for this time of year. Refining, long a marginal business, is becoming lucrative.

[Crude Oil Rises to a Three-Week High on U.S. Refinery Shutdowns](#)

Crude oil rose to a three-week high in New York on speculation breakdowns and production halts mean refiners will have trouble replenishing U.S. gasoline stockpiles with the summer driving season approaching.

Delaware: [Time is running out, yet legislators avoid highway fund shortage](#)

A 4-cent per gallon tax on lightered crude oil could produce \$100 million. That's money worth talking about and a cost that oil companies can easily afford.

[Embracing a World of Peak Oil](#)

With major oil companies posting multibillion-dollar profits, our friends in Washington are suddenly pointing their fingers and insisting these companies are "gouging" the innocent gas-guzzling citizens of our country.

But, dear readers, let me show you a little picture I keep in my wallet.



We got over the feeling of being gouged at \$2.27 a gallon. Don't worry, we'll get over the same feeling at \$3.15.

Canada: [Lingering gas pains](#)

A new study released the other day seems to confirm what Niagara drivers already know: they're getting gouged at the gas pumps.

[Bangladesh says must up power output or face blackouts](#)

Bangladesh could face nationwide blackouts within four years if it fails to find more natural gas to fuel new power plants, a government official said on Friday.

Frequent power failures due to a daily power shortfall of nearly 1,500 megawatts (MW) cut the country's gross domestic product by around \$1.0 billion annually, the World Bank says, and gas reserves are running down quickly as demand multiplies.

[Who Is Stealing Iraq's Oil?](#)

It took quite a while, but it appears that the Bush Administration has finally gotten around to acknowledging that Iraq has an oil problem. The Government Accountability Office is about to release a report that estimates 100,000 to 300,000 barrels of oil goes missing every month. According to the *New York Times*, the GAO will not offer a conclusion about what specifically is happening to the missing oil, other than it is

probably lost to corruption, smuggling or just bad accounting.

Iraqis oil traders, on the other hand, tell me they think they know exactly where the stolen oil is going – the militias appropriate it to arm and feed the rank and file. The same traders also tell me there's a lot more pilfered oil than the GAO acknowledges, and that the practice started as soon as Saddam fell. And why would anyone be surprised? Saddam's regime itself survived off stolen oil during the 12-year U.N. embargo.

[Our big secret: oil shale reserves](#)

The United States of America has about 70 percent of the world's known oil shale reserves in the western states of the lower 48. These reserves contain approximately 1 to 2 trillion barrels of oil. This is about 4 to 8 times the current oil reserves of Saudi Arabia. If this country commits itself to performing a crash development of this reserve, we could eliminate our dependence on foreign petroleum sources and most of its geopolitical consequences. As world petroleum supplies become depleted in the next few decades, we may find that the United States will have become the world's most important supplier of synthetic crude petroleum and its products.

[Senegal facing energy crisis](#)

A wave of power cuts in Senegal could reach "unprecedented" levels as the West African state has a maximum of eight days of fuel left to run its power plants, energy sector sources said on Thursday.

[Zimbabwe: Will Privatisation End Power Woes?](#)

AFRICA is battling a serious power crisis on her doorsteps, whose impact is now more pronounced in the Sub-Saharan region, where Zimbabwe now risks plunging into total darkness if nothing is done to improve her power-generation capacity.

[EU offers to help develop Jordan's nuclear energy programme](#)

The European Union (EU) this week said it would help the Kingdom develop its nuclear energy programme by providing the necessary expertise for the formation of a legal framework, including the principles of energy crisis management.

[Visclosky bill aims to reduce foreign oil dependence](#)

Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Ind., introduced legislation Thursday to reduce dependence on foreign oil by investing in new U.S. energy technologies, including ethanol.

[Forestry leaders debate biomass potential as nation's newest energy source](#)

Biomass energy derived from trees could be the short-term answer to the energy crisis for most of America, particularly in regions like East Texas. And then again, it might not.

[Drivers cut back — a 1st in 26 years](#)

The growth in miles driven has leveled off dramatically in the past 18 months after 25 years of steady climbs despite the addition of more than 1 million drivers to the nation's streets and highways since 2005. Miles driven in February declined 1.9% from February 2006 before rebounding slightly for a 0.3% year-over-year gain in March, data from the Federal Highway Administration show. That's in sharp contrast to the average annual growth rate of 2.7% recorded from 1980 through 2005.

[Orinoco Seizure by Hugo Chavez Threatens Global Oil Stability](#)

By seizing control of the Orinoco tar sands, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez delivered a stunning blow to US oil security. If the world economy worked in the way postulated by the globalizers his action would hardly have mattered, except to the unfortunate shareholders of the affected oil companies. However, the world economy doesn't work that way, and Chavez's seizure is thus of major long-term importance.

[Fed-up drivers begin to look 'outside the box'](#)

From forming car pools and riding bicycles to taking trains and cutting back on pleasure trips, drivers across the USA are finding creative ways to drive less. Their methods vary but share a common goal — to lessen the financial impact of skyrocketing gasoline prices.

[Can America's masses get charged on electric cars?](#)

While others hammer away at battery technology to make all-electric cars go further and cost less, ZAP (as in zero air pollution) believes it has the formula in its tiny Xebra cars made in China: Plug it in at home and go up to 40 miles per hour for up to 25 miles.

Carolyn Baker - [Unprepared, Uncompensated, and Clueless: Prophets Have Become Historians](#)

I do not claim to be an expert on collapse, but I am quite certain that the custodians of empire are. They have engineered collapse over several decades, and will be essentially unscathed by it—if they can control the resultant chaos. I don't wish to speculate about what form that control will take, but I don't need to. They are making it abundantly clear that while they are unwilling to do anything to prevent climate chaos, the

devastating consequences of Peak Oil, and economic Armageddon, they are formulating elaborate plans to control and contain an unruly and traumatized population.

[The Peak Oil crisis will not just impact on transport but also on agriculture in a massive way!](#)

Some of the responses received are to be blunt - short-sighted. Suggestions of switching to public transport, driving less, driving hybrid/electric or more fuel-efficient cars, switching freight from diesel lorries to electric railways are of course positive suggestions but only address one issue - vehicular movement; such measures are akin to moving the deckchairs on a sinking ship.

[Belarus-Russia gas transit deal delayed](#)

A deal for Russia to acquire a stake in the Belarus pipeline network which carries Russian gas to Europe will not be signed on Friday as planned owing to continuing disagreements, officials said.

[Screening of Cuban films sets off firestorm](#)

The Princeton Public Library has inadvertently set off a firestorm of criticism involving Cuba, health care and human rights.

According to some critics, two of the 15 films shown during the library's annual Human Rights Film Festival last weekend are "propaganda" and do not accurately reflect life in Cuba.

"I think it's outrageous to have a film festival at a public library that leaves out all the realities of Cuba, especially when you have thousands of witnesses to the human rights violations," said Maria C. Werlau, executive director of Cuba Archive, an organization that collects information about the country.

Ms. Werlau and Princeton Township resident Fausta Wertz raised issue with the documentaries "The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil" and "Salud! What Puts Cuba on the Map in the Quest for Global Health Care."

[Green building expo highlights fossil fuel](#)

EVER wonder how much fossil fuel your garden consumes? Probably not, but in this day of rising energy costs there's talk about whether truly "sustainable" landscaping can be achieved without oil-based products.

It's a provocative idea that landscape architect Owen Dell, an expert on sustainable landscapes, will discuss at Saturday's fourth annual Alternative Building Materials & Design Expo (Altbuild), at Barker Hangar at Santa Monica Air Center. He is founder of

Fossil-Free Landscaping in Santa Barbara, thought to be the first working garden group to explore author and oil expert Richard Heinberg's notion that "if you can't do it without fossil fuel, by definition, it ain't sustainable."

[Program to Feature Energy Problems in the Arkansas](#)

On June 18-19, the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute will present "All About Energy," a public awareness program focusing on issues related to energy usage and its impact in Arkansas. This program will provide you with valuable information and a plan of action that will make a difference in your life, and allow you to become part of the solution.

[Dow says Aramco JV IPO stock to be listed in Saudi](#)

Dow Chemical said on Friday it and state-owned Aramco plan to list on the Saudi exchange shares they sell in an initial public offering in a chemical joint venture.

"It'll be Saudi Arabia," Earl Shipp, president of Dow in India, the Middle East and Africa, told Reuters on the sidelines of an economic conference in Jordan.

[Sabic to Buy GE Plastics for \\$11 Billion](#)

Saudi Basic, known as Sabic, has doubled sales since 2002 because of the Riyadh, Saudi Arabia-based company's unparalleled access to the world's biggest reserves of oil, used as a raw material for plastics and petrochemicals. GE, by contrast, put its plastics unit up for sale in January after the soaring cost of crude cut into earnings. The U.S. company may plow proceeds into less volatile areas such as health care.

[Deep-sea oil platforms may aid sea life: study](#)

Deep-water oil and natural gas platforms may become be as beneficial as a federal study has shown shipwrecks to be in creating habitats for undersea plants and animals, the U.S. Minerals Management Service said on Thursday.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).