



## DrumBeat: June 8, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on June 8, 2007 - 9:13am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Why we need big hybrid SUVs](#)

*Think a GMC Yukon Hybrid sounds silly? It can save more gas than a Civic Hybrid.*

Outrage. Disbelief. Downright disgust. Those were readers' reactions to our recent story about [13 great fuel efficient cars](#), which featured several trucks and SUVs.

Many of the emails went something like this: "Did you sell your soul to Detroit? Since when is 16/24 'great' fuel-efficiency?"

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### [Honda Civic tops teen driver list](#)

SUVs are becoming less popular among teen drivers and performance cars don't make the list.

### [Drilling jobs scene bleak](#)

Thousands of rig hands in Western Canada are waiting for callbacks from their drilling-company employers, but industry observers say the high Canadian dollar and a crash in the royalty trust and junior part of the oilpatch mean they could be idle for a long time.

### [Iraq: Pipeline Strike Reaching Crisis Point](#)

The Iraqi military has surrounded striking oil workers in southern Iraq, labor organizers report, as the workers' remained defiant in their action to block strategic pipelines near Basra.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has vowed a harsh response as the shutdown's effects begin to ripple through Iraqi markets, and at least one neighboring province braces for worsening fuel shortages.

### [Garrison Keillor: Making a case for simple life in a small town](#)

You look at the Amish and you see the past, but you might also be looking at the future. Our great-grandchildren, faced with facts their ancestors were able to ignore, might have to do without the internal-combustion engine and figure out how to live the subsistence life. Maybe someone will invent a car that runs on hydrogen or horse manure, or maybe people will travel on beams of light like in old radio serials, but the realist in you thinks otherwise.

### [Azerbaijan Announces Oil Reserves](#)

The resource-rich Caspian Sea nation of Azerbaijan has an estimated 1.35 billion metric tons (9.45 billion barrels) of proven oil reserves, a top official in the state oil company SOCAR said Thursday.

### [Dave Cohen: The little sheikdom that could](#)

Middle East proved oil reserves numbers are suspect. Each country's estimates made questionable leaps in the past, and then remained constant, all the while disregarding all the oil produced over the years. Qatar provides the most recent example. Examining this small sheikdom's reserve numbers underscores some of the problems in assessing the world's proved oil stocks. Qatar could take a step toward resolving this uncertainty by allowing an independent audit of their reserves numbers. They seem to have little to hide.

### [Iran Seeks to Undermine U.S. Energy Plan for Europe](#)

Iran plans to import more oil and gas from Central Asia as it seeks to undermine a U.S.-backed project to build pipelines from the Caspian Sea to Europe.

### [US House Panel OKs Bill to Force Renegotiation of Oil Leases](#)

The U.S. House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee approved an amendment Thursday to an Interior budget bill that would require oil companies to renegotiate 1998-99 lease contracts that neglected price thresholds to obtain future exploration leases.

The Government Accountability Office estimates that around \$1 billion in royalties have already been lost as a result of the omission, and could cost tax payers an additional \$9 billion in future royalties.

### [CNBC's Yergin: What the U.S. Can Learn From Brazil About Ethanol](#)

Brazil is ahead of the US but not in terms of volumes. The U.S. produces more, and output is growing fast. But Brazil is ahead in terms of experience -- 30 years of commercial activity-- and cost. It's great advantage is that it is by far the low-cost producer.

### [Pumping Palm Oil](#)

IOI's Lee Shin Cheng is a master at squeezing every drop from his vast plantations. The craze for biofuels is driving up prices, but caution is the watchword at this Malaysian company.

### [The Business of Peace](#)

This morning I sat down with the founders of the Arava Power Company. Yossi Abramowitz is a bespectacled American-born Israeli with plenty of hair. Suleiman Halasah is from Karak, Jordan, and his shaved head is not framed by glasses. At Kibbutz Ketura, a cooperative agricultural settlement and renewables laboratory in southern Israel's Arava Valley, Suleiman lives with his "kibbutz father" Yossi as both work on a bi-national solar power project with major profit potential.

### [Greenest energy is energy saved](#)

There is a quicker, cheaper and more effective way of reducing carbon dioxide emissions that can be applied right now: energy-efficient technologies that are commercially available and proven. Energy efficiency is the low-hanging fruit in the campaign to protect the environment because the technologies exist and we know the savings they will deliver.

### [Top CEOs Release Energy 'Blueprint'](#)

Business Roundtable, an association of 160 CEOs of leading U.S. companies, has released an energy plan calling for a more diversified and domestic-based energy supply mix, increased energy efficiency and greater investment in new energy technologies.

### [Biofuels no threat to Opec, says IEA](#)

Biofuels will provide only a small proportion of the world's demand for fuel in the next decade, the developed countries' energy watchdog has said in an attempt to reassure Opec that the need for oil will continue to grow.

### [Africa: Rwandan President Unveils Biggest Solar Energy Plant on Continent](#)

As Rwanda marks 25 years of cooperation with the Federal State of Rhineland Palatinate of Germany, President Paul Kagame yesterday inaugurated Africa's biggest solar energy plant. The infrastructure, which is installed at Jali hill in Gasabo District, was funded by the German state through a company called Stadtwerke Mainz and Rhineland Palatinate citizens to the tune of Euro one million (approx. Frw700m).

### [Investors in 'fuel-from-algae' scheme left high and dry](#)

De Beers Fuel, which had promised South Africa biodiesel produced from algae, to date seems not to have made good on any of its pledges.

Most investors in the company, who invested up to R6-million each in biodiesel plant, in what was trumpeted to be the world's first fuel-franchising scheme, today have nothing but paper to show for their money.

As far as Engineering News can establish, not one plant has been built.

### [Lisa Margonelli: Time to shift gears, step on gas myths](#)

Whew, gas prices are high. Higher than they've ever been. During the week of May 21, the Lundberg Survey, a biweekly gas price tracking service, put the average cost of a gallon of unleaded at \$3.18. Adjusted for inflation, that topped the 1981 price spike that had held the record for 26 years. Prices have since slipped a bit, but many predict they'll stay up near the stratosphere all summer. Wondering why? The answers may not be what you think. Here are five common myths about why we're paying so much at the pump.

### [Nigeria: We'll Shut Down the Economy, Says NLC](#)

Labour unions yesterday called for mass protests and strikes for as long as it takes to get the government to withdraw what it calls "anti-people policies".

The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), warned Nigerians to start stockpiling food and carry out bank transactions before the strikes come into effect on June 18.

They want the government to return Value Added Tax to 5 per cent, reduce the price of fuel, rescind the sale of refineries, stop the sack of civil servants and pay those who have already been sacked their severance pay.

### [Four Companies to Jointly Work on Gulf of Mexico Pipeline Repairs](#)

Four companies that work in the Gulf of Mexico oilfield have formed a partnership they

say will allow them to dramatically expedite deepwater pipeline repairs after a hurricane or other emergency, though the equipment won't be available for this storm season.

### [Drought endangers crops and electric supply](#)

Unless South Carolina sees some serious rain soon, farmers and power customers will be paying the price.

### [Building up biodiesel](#)

As interest in biodiesel to fuel vehicles and heat homes and businesses in Maryland grows, the state is ramping up efforts to make the alternative renewable fuel more accessible to the public and less expensive.

### [Is America Headed for a Food Shortage?](#)

A new study suggests that ethanol production could drive up corn prices, leaving U.S. grains and meat in short supply

### [House Appropriations Panel Rejects Expanding OCS Gas Drilling](#)

The U.S. House Appropriations Committee Thursday rejected a proposal that would open up more of the U.S.'s Outer Continental Shelf to natural gas exploration and development.

By a vote of 39 to 25, the panel voted down an amendment by Rep. John Peterson, R-Penn., to end the moratorium on drilling for natural gas exploration beyond 25 miles off the coasts of the United States.

### Trinidad-Tobago: [Fuel shortage grounds TnT Express](#)

Passengers had purchased tickets for the 12 pm sailing. However, at 2.24 pm the passengers had not yet boarded. Passengers who travelled from Rio Claro and Penal waited for five hours before the authorities offered an explanation. Passengers heard over the public sound system that the ferry did not have any fuel and steps were being made to have fuel sent from NP's Pointe-a- Pierre service station.

### [Gasoline and food supplies running low](#)

BC, CANADA - Gas pumps were dry and some grocery shelves empty in the city on Thursday as Highway 16 remained closed in both directions due to flooding.

"We have run out of gas," read the signs Shell gas station manager Brenda Kinney posted over her pumps Wednesday evening.

...She explained the Petro-Can had just run out, and the Esso station was saving its fuel for emergency vehicles only.

### [British Airways increases fuel surcharge again](#)

Customers will pay an extra £5 on one-way long-haul trips, taking the surcharge to £38 for flights under nine hours and £43 for longer flights.

This is the second rise that the airline has announced in six weeks and the seventh in about two years.

### [Utilities, Miners Bitterly Divided on Uranium Price Rise](#)

It lacked the body slams of a WWF wrestling championship, but the World Nuclear Fuel Market conference, held this past week in Athens (Greece), emphasized the bitter divisions between uranium buyers and sellers. Underlying the gentility often found in a typical major mining executive and his utility counterpart, spectators witnessed verbal fencing, if not articulated pugilism, during some of the less self-centered presentations.

### [From Russia With Love](#)

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Gazprom desperately needs to invest massive amounts of capital into mitigating production declines at its existing properties. Companies that provide drilling services, drilling equipment, and enhanced recovery technology stand to benefit. At first glance, many would say that this projection going out to the year 2020 is too pessimistic since it doesn't include much of a bump from potential future discoveries.

This may be true, but in order to bring potential discoveries into production, Russian operators will require more drilling and more rig equipment. It's not a stretch to assume that the Russian rig fleet is old, overtaxed, and must be refurbished in order to accomplish a very busy future.

### [Has OPEC Lost Its Moorings?](#)

Perhaps Mr. Badri can explain to us how the private companies might invest and

presumably operate in a group of countries that, with few exceptions, prohibit such activities. For now, however, I'm treating this latest surprise from the cartel as yet another indication that mankind's ability to keep up with global energy demand in the coming years is anything but guaranteed.

### [Poverty Amid Plenty - Why?](#)

The challenges for the natural resource sector in the 21st century are numerous and closely interrelated. They include: macroeconomic conditions (terms of trade, investment regimes), climate change, high consumption rates, peak oil, energy security, social and environmental impacts, corruption, human rights abuses, and conflict resources.

### [Visclosky bill ups funding for new energy research](#)

With gas prices hovering at record levels, U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-1st, is using his position as chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development to address this nation's energy needs, a statement released by his office on Wednesday said.

In his energy and water appropriations bill, Visclosky has boosted funding for investments in biofuels, vehicle technologies, renewable energies, and energy efficiency, the statement said.

### [China grants three firms oil products wholesale license](#)

The ministry said in a statement that the two Sinopec joint venture companies to win oil product wholesale rights are Fujian Petrochemical Co, which is in partnership with ExxonMobil Corp and Saudi Aramco, as well as their marketing joint ventures.

The third company is Langfang Rongli Oil Storage Co based in northern China's Hebei province, it said.

### [Pakistan: Citizens and traders protest power outages](#)

Protests against power outages continued on Thursday as citizens and traders took to the streets in various parts of the city.

After an eight-hour long power outage, Tariq Road shopkeepers closed their shops at 3 p.m. and marched towards the Dubai Shopping Center where they staged a sit-in and blocked access to Tariq Road for over three hours. The protesters shouted slogans against the KESC and demanded an immediate solution to the electricity problem.



### [Cyclone Gonu wanes after slamming Oman and Iran](#)

Oman's Mina al Fahal oil terminal resumed operations after a three-day closure after tests on the pipes. Petroleum Development Oman said on Thursday that operations and facilities had escaped damage.

PDO, a majority state-owned firm, produces most of Oman's crude. PDO expects its output to decline by around 20,000 bpd this year to between 560,000 and 570,000.

The main liquefied natural gas terminal at Sur, which was badly hit, was not operating, a shipper said. Sur terminal handles 10 million tonnes per year of LNG.

### [A drought for the ages](#)

Drought, a fixture in much of the West for nearly a decade, now covers more than one-third of the continental USA. And it's spreading.

### [Prices at pump stinging retailers](#)

Wal-Mart and its customers are hurting as high gas prices hit the world's largest retailer harder than almost any other retailer.

### [How Oil Companies Saved the Electric Car](#)

Outrageous gas prices and worldwide concern about global warming have spurred a new wave of automakers to make the long-awaited dream of practical -- and yes, stylish -- electric vehicles a reality. These green machines will soon be coming to a showroom near you.

### [Oil Pipeline Politics Steadily Intensifies](#)

While the "mission was accomplished" in a manner not befitting the planners of "shock and awe," a new and aggressive search for incremental and secure energy supplies continue all around. This energy-rich region continues to enjoy the global focus, yet other energy rich areas could now increasingly be witnessed on the global radar screen.

The craving to dominate these new emerging areas also could be deciphered all around. Indeed when Michael Collon said, "If you want to rule the world, you need to control oil, all the oil, anywhere," he has a point.



## [US oil company abandons Venezuela](#)

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has said a US oil company has abandoned oil wells in Venezuela during his nationalization drive this year.

..."There is one Yankee company that left and left the wells abandoned," Chavez said at a political event with university students, without naming any company.

## [Hong Kong winters may vanish in 50 years: weather expert](#)

Hong Kong's winters could vanish within 50 years, with the number of cold days declining virtually to zero due to global warming and urbanization, the head of the city's weather observatory warned on Friday.

## [Looking for Leadership](#)

President Bush has now finally moved beyond denial on climate change. But his proposal for a conference of 15 of the biggest greenhouse gas emitters can hardly be called global leadership. It pins its hopes on wishful technological breakthroughs and sidesteps mandatory ceilings.



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