



Grading My 2007 Energy Resolutions

Posted by [Robert Rapier](#) on December 28, 2007 - 9:43pm

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

Tags: [book review](#), [composting](#), [conservation](#), [oil prices](#), [peak oil](#) [[list all tags](#)]

At the beginning of 2007, as I was preparing to move to Scotland, I made a number of resolutions:

[My Energy Resolutions for 2007](#)

I updated the story once in [Walking the Talk](#).

Time to look back and see how I did. (Also, be sure to give me your book recommendations for 2008. It's been a while since we discussed books.)

1). I resolve to get the most fuel-efficient car I can find in Scotland.

While I could have found a more efficient car, I got a [Nissan Micra](#) which gets very good fuel efficiency. The cars that were more fuel efficient would not have fared well on my drive to work.

2). I resolve to search for a house that allows me to take public transport or my bike to work.

I consistently considered the public transport options as I looked for a house, but my work location made this difficult. I ended up getting a house not too far from work (4 miles) but there is no public transport available (unless I want to spend an hour and 2 bus changes getting to work). As far as being able to ride my bike to work, 4 miles would be a piece of cake most places. But on the winding, narrow country road I live on, it would have been a death wish. Most parts of Scotland are unfortunately not conducive to getting around by bike.

3). I resolve to place a very high priority on energy efficiency as I search for a new house.

Done. I rented a house with sky lights, a lot of natural lighting throughout, and a lot of southern exposure. During daylight hours, we never have to turn lights on in the house. Our gas and electric usage have both been very low since moving into our house.

4). I resolve to reduce the meat in my diet (it takes much more energy to produce meat than to produce vegetables).

Done. I have almost cut beef completely out of my diet (much to my father's chagrin, since he raises cattle). I eat a fair amount of fish and chicken, but I probably eat three times as many vegetables as I did a year ago.

5). I resolve to support local farmers' markets.

While I think there are some farmers' markets in the downtown part of Aberdeen, I live in the

country. So I never did encounter any farmers' markets this year.

6). *I resolve to continue instilling the importance of energy conservation into my family.*

This has been a challenge. My daughter proclaims that she is an environmentalist, and then leaves lights, televisions, etc. on all the time and takes 20 minute showers. (She has been learning a lesson while we are on vacation in Oklahoma, because the hot water only lasts 10 minutes). I point out her energy usage, and ask her - tongue in cheek - why she hates the environment so much. It's an uphill battle with kids (or adults, for that matter) who just can't connect the dots of their energy usage to the big picture. But I persevere. [I did get into composting this year](#), and I was able to get the kids involved in that. I think they understand the energy savings from doing this.

7). *I resolve to get completely out of debt (easy, since my only debt is a mortgage).*

Done. No debt at all.

8). *I resolve to talk to at least 1 person a month about Peak Oil and/or the importance of living sustainably.*

Done. High oil prices have made it very easy to talk with people about Peak Oil. This is especially true for someone working for an oil company, because oil and gas prices are one of the first things people ask me about. I have had Peak Oil conversations this year in the airport, on a bus, in Walmart, in a restaurant, at work (including one with a member of senior management), and sitting around the Christmas tree.

9). *I resolve to preach conservation as something each one of us can do to stretch energy supplies and better prepare for Peak Oil.*

Done. This resolution goes hand in hand with the previous resolution. Once people hear about Peak Oil, the first thing they ask is what can be done. I explain that the best thing you personally can do is to get out of debt and tailor your lifestyle toward using less energy. That way, if gas prices go to \$5 or \$10 a gallon, your budget will be less susceptible to these increases (acknowledging that it is impossible to completely inoculate yourself against escalating prices).

10). *Not energy related, but I resolve to read at least 40 books in 2007. I read [48 in 2005](#) and [34 in 2006](#).*

I fell way short on this one. Between my blog, The Oil Drum, starting a new job, an international relocation, and various other projects, something had to give. It was my reading time. [I still managed to read 21](#), but that was far short of my goal. The five best books I read in 2007 were [Cryptonomicon](#) by Neal Stephenson, [A Beautiful Mind](#) by Sylvia Nassar, [The Black Swan](#) by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, [Spin](#) by Robert Charles Wilson, and [1491](#) by Charles C. Mann.

Final grade? I give myself a B+. I would give myself an A if I had found a location that would allow me to bike to work. I know it's only 4 miles, but I chose to live instead.

For 2008, big changes are in store. More on this during Q1 of 2008.



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