



DrumBeat: April 5, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on April 5, 2008 - 9:31am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

[Can't drive 55? How about 65 instead](#)

NEW YORK (CNMMoney.com) -- Sammy Hagar's protest ballad for speeders would need a 10-mile-per-hour update if a trucking group gets its way.

The American Trucking Associations, which represents trucking companies, is calling for the return of a uniform national speed limit, something this country hasn't seen since the 1990s. But this time the ATA is after something a little more modest: It wants to drop the limit to 65 mph for all cars and trucks.

[Skybus becomes third airline this week to close](#)

(CNN) -- Skybus Airlines announced Friday it is shutting down its passenger flights -- becoming the third airline this week to cease operations.

The low-cost carrier couldn't overcome "the combination of rising jet fuel costs and a slowing economic environment," the company said Friday. "These two issues proved to be insurmountable for a new carrier."

[Diesel's second coming - Will Americans finally warm to diesel cars?](#)

So, two decades after vanishing in a puff of smoke, diesels seem poised to reappear on the American landscape. Your correspondent will be among the first to plonk down his cash the moment diesel versions of family runabouts arrive. But he wonders where all the fuel will come from if Americans take to diesels as much as they've embraced hybrids.

Fact is, there's a global shortage of the stuff. That's why, shorn of tax breaks, diesel costs so much more than petrol. Over the past year, the average price of diesel in America has risen by 117%—twice as fast as petrol. While both carry the same taxes in America, diesel now costs 60 to 70 cents a gallon more than regular gas.

[Thailand: Bunker-oil imports to maintain power](#)

Thailand will import 110 million litres of bunker oil to keep generating power until the broken pipeline from Burma's Yetagun gas field can be repaired in 10 days.

[Tower Colliery closure prompts coal shortage](#)

SOUTH Wales has been hit by a shortage in top quality fuel since the closure of the area's most famous colliery.

Coalfields in the region became famous for their anthracite coal, which is the best quality and popular with householders.

But since the closure of the Tower Colliery, coal merchants say they are struggling.

[Shell Trans Niger Pipeline Fully Repaired After 'Tampering'](#)

Shell reported that the fire had been started by locals trying to steal oil from the pipeline. The individuals reportedly used a hacksaw to cut into the pipeline.

[Middle East atomic moves](#)

A period of hiatus following a wave of Arab nuclear announcements appears to have ended with the signing of a Franco-UAE atomic pact, as Egypt prepares to launch a tender for the country's first nuclear energy plant.

There are strong indications that the UAE deal could constitute the first step in a developing trend of atomic development and competition promoted both by pressing energy needs and regional instability.

[Thailand: Rising rice prices fuel fears of food shortages and starvation](#)

BANGKOK (IRIN) - International aid agencies are increasingly worried by the recent dramatic rise in food costs, and particularly rice prices, across Asia and the effect this will have on food assistance projects for the poorest people in the region.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is watching the rising price of rice, especially in Thailand, with alarm. "I have sleepless nights," Jack Keulemans, regional procurement officer for the organisation, told IRIN.

[Cuba's organic revolution](#)

The collapse of the Soviet Union forced Cuba to become self-reliant in its agricultural production. The country's innovative solution was urban organic farming, the creation of 'organoponicos'. But will it survive a change of government?

[Jordan faces oil price bind](#)

The sharp rise in oil prices over the past year has provided a massive economic boost for many Arab states. In Jordan, however, it has forced the government into a delicate balancing act in order to preserve political and fiscal stability.

Unlike most of its neighbours, Jordan does not sit on vast oil and gas riches. All the same, the kingdom has for many years offered citizens generous subsidies to buy cheap petrol and heating fuel. Yet with oil climbing towards – and recently topping – the \$100-a-barrel mark, the cabinet has been forced to reduce subsidies steadily to prevent soaring deficits. In February, they were eliminated entirely.

[New Zealand: How long can oil fuel our leisure?](#)

BP says that, taken together, these factors should push the price of petrol past \$2 a litre, perhaps as high as \$2.40.

That is going to be painful enough if you are filling the family car. What if you run a Cessna C180, a '55 Chevy dragster, a Fi-Glass Dominator outboard boat, or a Centurion battle tank at the weekend?

Is the end fast approaching for petrolheads? Or do people love their hobbies so much they will take the bus to work and save their petrol money for recreation?

[Social critic warns, offers hope](#)

WILKES-BARRE – Oil has fueled the engine driving America's growth, but James Howard Kunstler warned it's also greasing the nation's slide down the slippery slope to trouble.

In a wide-ranging hour-long talk Friday morning, the social critic and author of "The Long Emergency" predicted regional fuel shortages, forecasted the end of suburbia, championed a return to railroad travel and held out hope for change.

[Kunstler: Upscale](#)

Lovins's long-running emblematic project with that outfit is something they call the

"hyper-car," a car that gets such supernaturally great mileage that it will save the human race's threatened Happy Motoring program from extinction. The hyper-car program, which RMI still trumpets to this day, has, of course, the unintended consequence of promoting future car dependency -- which is about the last thing that America needs -- but that hasn't prevented RMI from pushing it. Beyond that, Lovins's RMI program-for-America resembles an actuarial exercise in "carbon credits" and other statistics-based fantasies aimed at inducing theoretically rational behavior among the WalMart executives (and "greening" up WalMart has been another of RMI's consulting projects -- I'm not kidding).

[Vermont senators call for oil-price investigation](#)

MONTPELIER -- The state Senate called this week for Attorney General William Sorrell to launch a criminal investigation of major oil companies to see if recent petroleum price increases might involve price-fixing, consumer fraud or other violations of law.

"At the same time that we are paying \$3 and \$4 a gallon for gas and oil, the oil companies are making record profits, billions and billions of dollars," said Senate President Pro Tem Peter Shumlin, D-Windham. "It's puzzling to us that so few politicians, both on a state and national level, are saying enough is enough."

[Oil firms no longer need tax break, but renewable energy does](#)

Bipartisanship is welcome, and renewable energy is essential. But senators shouldn't be so quick to forget about fiscal responsibility.

[U.S. DOE To Continue Royalty-In-Kind Strategic Oil Stocks](#)

The U.S. Department of Energy Friday solicited bids for royalty-in-kind, or RIK, oil to fill the Strategic Petroleum Reserve by up to 13 million barrels from August to December.

[Outcry Muted Over New Colorado Oil and Gas Rules](#)

After all the griping and gnashing of teeth over the new rules for oil and gas production in Colorado, it was perhaps inevitable that the actual draft regulations, which were released this week, were less inflammatory than the industry rhetoric would have led you to believe.

[Central Asia's Looming Water Wars](#)

Fans of Thomas Homer-Dixon know the story—way back in 1992 (pdf), he was one of the early voices raising serious concern about conflicts arising from resource competition. And to bring things close to home for our readers, Tajikistan is thirsty, and this past winter has faced severe electricity shortages because its hydroelectric power plants froze. Indeed, since the Pamirs in Tajikistan see the head of so many rivers that flow into neighboring countries, Tajikistan has seen a rise in tension over water use rights and national boundaries along the Ferghana Valley.

[A Crude Source of Welfare](#)

"In short, apparently these countries need the price of oil to stay high to pay for their welfare expenses...which means that they will necessarily be raising oil prices again pretty soon..."

[Fuel shortages cause price hikes Nigeria](#)

With massive fuel shortages in the north of Nigeria since mid March, transport costs have doubled exacerbating food prices.

[Pakistanis face food shortage](#)

Due to the previous administration's reluctance to reduce subsidies for food and fuel, the government is saddled with a widening fiscal deficit.

While wanting to alleviate the hardship of the poor, the new government will face some painful economic choices.

[Chile sees higher diesel imports in '08](#)

SANTIAGO (Reuters) - Chile's diesel imports should grow 5-10 percent in 2008 from a year earlier due to a domestic fuel shortage, state oil company ENAP said on Friday, with consumption expected to spike in the coming winter months.

[Bangladesh: Biofuel production hits food security?](#)

Biofuel emerged as an alternative fuel to benefit the biotech companies and the transnational corporations (TNCs) which claim that biofuel is a unique 'green innovation' of the modern technology sensitive to the environment, ecology and the poor. Refuting this TNC claim, reputed and established scientists of the world are saying that the TNC claim is contrary to the reality as biofuel production causes food scarcity and environmental degradation. That by propagating this, they are rather committing crime against humanity.

[Fuel prices will make big trucker shortage even bigger](#)

Albany-- Gas prices hit another record Friday and truck drivers say they continue to be hit the hardest. This week, many independent truckers went on strike. Some even threatened to leave the industry altogether because of rising fuel prices.

This adds to the already huge trucker shortage nationwide. It'll only get bigger. The record diesel prices even has future truckers worried about their livelihood before they even get in the cab.

[Diesel fuel cost a big load for truckers](#)

Reducing idling time can only save so much, and some drivers claim the big trucking firms are cutting corners by reducing the number of employees for whom they pay benefits.

"I've been a truck driver for 17 years," said Brian Chrans, originally from Indian Harbor Beach, Fla., but now of Ludington. "Three years ago I was making \$140,000 a year, plus, but now, as of about two weeks ago, the company I was working for can't afford to pay me anymore."

Chrans claims the trucking industry is telling the public there is a driver shortage to keep the turnover high, so they don't have to pay benefits. "A trucking company will entice you to work with them, and in 90 days, they will look at a driver to try and see how to get him out the door," Chrans said.

[Fukuda calls for people's effort to fight global warming](#)

"Efforts by only the government and the industry are not good enough for measures against global warming," he said after the meeting in Toyako, a mountain resort on the northern island of Hokkaido, where the next Group of Eight rich nations summit will be held in July.

"We want all the people to participate. We want them to seek a change in lifestyle," he added.

[Nations take first step to climate deal](#)

BANGKOK (AFP) - More than 160 nations agreed late Friday on the first step to drafting an ambitious new treaty on global warming after hours of haggling between rich and poor countries.



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