



## DrumBeat: July 27, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on July 27, 2008 - 9:10am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Police: rising fuel costs are 'major public safety issue'](#)

Patrol cars pose a major fuel-savings obstacle for law enforcement. Most departments use an 8-cylinder Ford Crown Victoria, which has high-speed emergency breaking capacity and gear ratios suitable for police pursuits.

So far, hybrids and other fuel-efficient cars are not powerful nor big enough for police equipment or to sustain the wear and tear of patrol. "Hybrid vehicles will not be a replacement for front-line cruisers," said Fall River police Sgt. Thomas Mauretti.

### [Pakistanis go hungry as economic troubles bite](#)

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Until this year Fakharuz Zaman's Pakistani government salary was enough to get by on but now his weary wife lets their two-year-old son scabble in the dirt for pieces of mouldy fruit.

A wave of economic woes has plunged millions of families like Zaman's below the poverty line, posing a new challenge for the fragile coalition government and even overshadowing the threat of Islamic militancy.

Spiralling food and fuel prices, power outages lasting at least six hours a day, a plummeting stock market and soaring inflation have all caused mounting anger in the unstable nuclear-armed nation of 160 million people.

### [UK: 100,000 Jobs to go in crisis](#)

UP to 100,000 factory jobs will be lost unless more is done to tackle Britain's energy crisis, MPs will warn this week.

The stark message will add misery to families already struggling to keep up with the high cost of living, as the credit crunch risks becoming a full-blown recession.

## [Finding and Fixing a Home's Power Hogs](#)

WHILE we all worry about where we're going to get more energy in an increasingly energy-obsessed world, there's also another alternative: Use less power. That may soon be simpler, thanks to the introduction of a bevy of inexpensive devices that let homeowners monitor how much energy appliances, TVs, PCs, and heating and cooling systems actually use.

## [Wood becoming more attractive heating option](#)

Josh Vavra wants a cord of hardwood firewood so badly, he's offering tickets to a Red Sox-Yankees game to get it.

Vavra has used oil to heat his home in the past, but the 30-year-old Derry resident switched to using a wood stove last winter because of rising oil costs.

So far this year, he has found local dealers couldn't supply him with the dry hardwood he needs, which prompted him to turn to the online classifieds Web site Craigslist to trade what he calls one precious commodity for another.

## [A Modest Proposal: Eco-Friendly Stimulus](#)

ECONOMISTS and members of Congress are now on the prowl for new ways to stimulate spending in our dreary economy. Here's my humble suggestion: "Cash for Clunkers," the best stimulus idea you've never heard of.

## [Wind power: A reality check](#)

Plans are afoot to prod the nation into using much more renewable energy. Can it be done, and what's the cost?

## [Ice Free](#)

Greenland's ice sheet represents one of global warming's most disturbing threats. The vast expanses of glaciers — massed, on average, 1.6 miles deep — contain enough water to raise sea levels worldwide by 23 feet. Should they melt or otherwise slip into the ocean, they would flood coastal capitals, submerge tropical islands and generally redraw the world's atlases. The infusion of fresh water could slow or shut down the ocean's currents, plunging Europe into bitter winter.

Yet for the residents of the frozen island, the early stages of climate change promise more good, in at least one important sense, than bad. A Danish protectorate since 1721, Greenland has long sought to cut its ties with its colonizer. But while proponents of

complete independence face little opposition at home or in Copenhagen, they haven't been able to overcome one crucial calculation: the country depends on Danish assistance for more than 40 percent of its gross domestic product. "The independence wish has always been there," says Aleqa Hammond, Greenland's minister for finance and foreign affairs. "The reason we have never realized it is because of the economics."

### [Oil could be McCain's issue](#)

"I think this issue, the whole energy issue, offers (McCain) an enormous opportunity," said Peter Brown of the Quinnipiac University poll, whose surveys released Thursday found sizable support in Wisconsin and two other Midwestern battlegrounds, Minnesota and Michigan, for new coastal drilling.

"People are much more open to drilling," Brown said.

"I don't think I've ever seen an issue turn around so dramatically," said House Republican Paul Ryan of Janesville. "I've always voted for drilling, and it's always been a political liability for me. My mail used to run 10-to-1 against it. . . . Now it's 13-to-1 in favor."

### [Sen. Bernard Sanders: Oil costs causing an emergency](#)

Vermonters are especially hard hit by rising gas and oil prices. In our rural state, many people have to drive a long way to get to work or to a supermarket. In our cold-weather state, when winter comes the cost of heating homes will likely be double what it was last year. Refilling an oil tank is costing many families a thousand dollars – or more. Hundreds and hundreds of people have written or told me how the huge increases in the price of gasoline and fuel oil have made life exceedingly difficult for them and their families.

As a member of both the Senate environment and energy committees, here are four main proposals I am working on to address the energy crisis.

### [Ireland: Food crisis plan on the menu](#)

"There's probably not a week's supply of food here for everyone in Dublin, let alone the country. The shelves would empty of food very quickly in the event of an emergency. We've seen food riots around the world, but it could easily happen here" said Bruce Darrell, an expert with Feasta.

### [Community gardens growing in popularity amid rising food prices, health scares](#)

Community gardens are full for the first time in years, seed sales are up and memberships in home gardening groups are gaining -- part of a movement among Americans concerned with food prices, the environment and food safety.

In a growth spurt compared by some industry experts to the organic gardening movement spurred by the 1970s energy crisis, more people are raising their own fruits and vegetables.

### [Russia's new Great Game](#)

Employing strategies redolent of a new Great Game, Russia has stepped up its diplomatic and trade activities in the Middle East and North Africa in a bid to enhance its geopolitical clout and gain access to, and at least partial control over, the region's oil and gas reserves.

Among the former global superpower's tactics: linking arms deals and debt-forgiveness to energy deals.

### [Cuban President Warns of Tough Times Ahead](#)

Citing the global economic downturn and the rising cost of oil, Raúl Castro said Cuba and other countries in the developing world face severe challenges that would require belt-tightening and patience.

### [James Kunstler insists suburbs are done for](#)

A lot of people (Realtors, builders, bankers) are waiting for the "bottom" of the housing crash, with the idea that we'll re-enter an up-cycle. I see it differently. There won't be a resumption of "growth" as we've known it, certainly not in suburban residential and commercial real estate. The suburban project is over. We're done with that. (I know people find this unbelievable.) The existing stuff will represent a huge liability for us for decades to come as it loses value and utility and falls apart.

However, I also believe our big cities will contract. They are simply not scaled to the energy realities of the future. The successful places, in my opinion, will be the smaller cities and towns that 1.) have walkable neighborhoods, 2.) have proximity to water for power, transport and drinking, and 3.) have a meaningful relationship with a productive agricultural hinterland. Some places you can forget about completely: Phoenix . . . Las Vegas . . . they're toast.

### [Point of Contact: James Howard Kunstler](#)

## **What kind of place will the Dallas area be to live in the Long Emergency?**

As you probably know from reading TLE, I think the Sun Belt generally is in for tough times. We're going to rediscover why the territory between Charleston and the Pecos was an agricultural backwater before 1945, with few cities of any size. You can't overestimate the importance of cheap air conditioning – and the prospect for that is looking pretty grim in years ahead.

## [Gulf oil producers stance appears vindicated](#)

OPEC countries, which supply about 40 per cent of world crude production, have already responded by increasing oil production by 350,000 bpd to 32.4 million bpd, with Saudi supply rising to 9.45 million bpd. Exports from offshore storage have also lifted Iranian supply to 3.8 million bpd.

Following Goldman Sachs' prediction that crude prices could hit \$200 a barrel before the end of 2008, analysts at Lehman Brothers are now saying they believe oil prices have reached 'a tipping point', with forecasts that the price per barrel will ease to \$110 by the fourth quarter and decline further to \$90 early in 2009.

## [Jordan plans regional railway, oil link with Iraq](#)

AMMAN - Jordan is seeking six billion dollars from international donors to build a railway link with its neighbours and plans to import Iraqi crude oil by rail, the transport ministry said on Sunday.

## [Iraq's oil exports decline in June](#)

BAGHDAD - The Iraqi Oil Ministry says oil exports in June amounted to 58.1 million barrels, a 4.3 percent decline from the previous month.

Sunday's statement says it sold for \$123 a barrel and yielded \$7.141 billion.

It adds that 43.6 million barrels were exported through the south and 14.5 million from Turkey's port of Ceyhan.

No reason was given a reason, but exports through Basra's ports were suspended for a few days last month because of sandstorms.

## [Now it's war at BP-TNK](#)

The oil giant's dispute with its Russian partners has erupted into open hostilities with

the stage set for a long battle in the international courts.

### [Troubles fail to drive down Hummer owners' passion](#)

Maybe mega-SUVs are going the way of dinosaurs. Hummer sales have dropped 40 percent this year. But these beasts and the men and women who love them certainly don't behave like endangered species.

"I told my wife when we bought this, 'Honey, we're investing in steel and rubber,' says William Welch, a Philadelphia surgeon who, cigar clenched between his teeth, offers a guided tour of his lovingly tended jet-black H1.

"If it was \$10 a gallon," he says, "we'd still be out there."

### [Customers getting pinched as oil profits go to investors](#)

HOUSTON - As giant oil companies such as Exxon Mobil get set to report what will probably be another round of eye-popping quarterly profits, just where is all that money going?

Companies insist they're trying to find new oil that might help bring down gas prices, but the money they spend on exploration is nothing compared with what they spend on stock buybacks and dividends.

### [Stagflation and Peak Oil: How Related Are They? \(Part I\)](#)

Two terms that definitely scare investors (at least those who don't know what implications both have on their portfolio) are Stagflation and Peak Oil. One (Stagflation) might be happening soon but could be avoided, while the other (Peak Oil) might not happen soon, but cannot be avoided.

### [What Is the Strategic Petroleum Reserve?](#)

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is a backup supply of crude oil that's pumped into deep underground salt caverns more than a half-mile deep along the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast. The complex, run by the Department of Energy (DOE), can hold a maximum of 727 million barrels of crude oil. The United States imports about 12 million barrels a day.

### [Life after oil](#)

Humanity is sitting on a railroad track, and a train is speeding toward us. The name of that train is global oil shortages.

### [Carbon credits' dirty secret](#)

First, buying and selling carbon credits doesn't remove one molecule of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Second, carbon credits weren't designed to lower emissions. They were designed to shift emissions around. Practically speaking, they will delay the day when we start lowering them.

### [Firefighting costs soar](#)

*As wildfire seasons have grown lengthier from year to year, the cost of fighting off the threat has skyrocketed -- and the funding situation is becoming dire.*

WASHINGTON -- The Forest Service has struggled for years to pay for fighting fires that last year alone scorched almost 10 million acres. As fire seasons grow longer and the blazes more intense in forests stressed by global warming, the agency's funding woes mount.

In fact, the Forest Service has already spent roughly \$900 million this year, almost 75 percent of its fire-suppression budget, and the season is just nearing its peak.



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