



## DrumBeat: August 31, 2008

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 31, 2008 - 10:09am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Supply-side troubles](#)

Living Bread is one of a number of Massachusetts food pantries that are striving to meet rising demand. A plummeting economy, coupled with soaring food and fuel prices, has caused an unprecedented increase in need across the state, say pantry workers, even as donations in many cases have lagged, leaving agencies like Simon's struggling.

"Is it worse than I've ever seen?" said Eileen O'Shea, director of member services for the Greater Boston Food Bank, which provides 30 million pounds of food and grocery products a year to 600 hunger-relief agencies in Eastern Massachusetts that feed about 83,000 people a week. Based in Roxbury, the organization has an annual budget of nearly \$50 million. "Yes, definitely. And we haven't even hit the winter yet."

### [Russia's Collective Farms: Hot Capitalist Property](#)

PODLESNY, Russia — The fields around this little farming enclave are among the most fertile on earth. But like tens of million of acres of land in this country, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, they literally went to seed.

Now that may be changing. A decade after capitalism transformed Russian industry, an agricultural revolution is stirring the countryside, shaking up village life and sweeping aside the collective farms that resisted earlier reform efforts and remain the dominant form of agriculture.

### [Was the organic food revolution just a fad? Fear for farmers as shoppers tighten belts](#)

From new mums worried about their children's health to foodies seeking the very finest products, consumers have embraced organic food with more enthusiasm than most environmental trends.

But now the British love affair with organics has stalled in the face of rising prices and tightening budgets as mortgage and fuel bills bite and fears rise over job losses.

## [Indians' Water Rights Give Hope for Better Health](#)

GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY, Ariz. — More than a hundred years ago, the Gila River, siphoned off by farmers upstream, all but dried up here in the parched flats south of Phoenix, plunging an Indian community that had depended on it for centuries of farming into starvation and poverty.

If that was not bad enough, food rations sent by the federal government — white flour, lard, canned meats and other sugary, processed foods — conspired with the genetic anomalies of the Indians to sow an obesity epidemic that has left the reservation with among the highest rates of diabetes in the world.

Now, after decades of litigation that produced the largest water-rights settlement ever in Indian country, the Indians here are getting some of their water back. And with it has come the question: Can a healthier lifestyle lost generations ago be restored?

## [Too good to waste?](#)

Reports that sludge from sewage plants is routinely used to fertilise edible crops have caused outrage. Is this simply a prudent use of so-called 'biosolids' or a grave threat to our health?

## [OPEC to keep output same, Venezuela, Ecuador say](#)

AYACUCHO OIL BLOCK 5, Venezuela, Aug 29 (Reuters) - South American OPEC members Venezuela and Ecuador expect the oil exporters group to maintain current production levels at a meeting next month, the nations' oil ministers said on Friday.

Venezuela, the OPEC member with the largest reserves outside the Middle East, is a price hawk typically backed by Ecuador, which rejoined the group last year.

"Sounding out other OPEC ministers, I think the decision is to leave levels unchanged," Ecuador's oil minister Galo Chiriboga told reporters on the sidelines of a summit at a Venezuelan oil field.

## [Militant claims denied in Nigeria](#)

PORT HARCOURT, Nigeria: The Nigerian military on Sunday denied claims by militants that they killed 29 military personnel in three separate clashes in the southern oil region.

## [Italy Media Say Libya Deal Means More Oil, Less Immigrants](#)

ROME (AFP)--Italian media Sunday said an investment package signed by Rome to compensate Libya for damage caused during the colonial era would mean "more oil and less immigrants" for Italy.

"Thanks to this accord we will see the number of clandestine migrants arriving on our shores reduced and have greater quantities of gas and oil of the best quality," wrote the Turin daily La Stampa, citing comments Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi made to media.

### [After Fanfare, Hurricane Grants Leave Little Mark](#)

NEW ORLEANS — It was the largest housing aid program in American history, billed as the essential government tool that would make New Orleans whole after Hurricane Katrina.

Yet even though about \$3.3 billion of federal taxpayer money has been spent here on the cash grant program known as the Road Home, New Orleans on the third anniversary of the hurricane remains almost as much of a patchwork as it did last year, before most of the money was spent.

### [Boats for post-cheap oil survival](#)

I share the view that peak oil is going to have a big effect on our lifestyles, and the simultaneous arrival of economic troubles and climate change is setting up a "perfect storm". If things collapse as Dmitry, I, and many others are expecting, you may find yourself in the same situation as a third world hunter (fisherman), gatherer, and farmer. That was the normal situation for many in the South Pacific Islands when I lived there. I'm not saying that we will return to the stone age, or even to the dark ages, but cheap oil -- the basis on which the edifice of our current society is built -- is gone, and the debt bomb is about to explode at the same time. This combination could create a tipping point that could cast you into an economic and social situation which will rival the Great Depression. If you agree with this (and if you are visiting this site it suggests you might) then you should make some preparations, at least in your mind, about what you would do, and how you might survive in this scenario.

### [The wind of change is slow to blow through Britain's energy policy](#)

In two years' time, the UK seems certain to miss one of the core environmental targets of the Blair-Brown years. The Government pledged that 10 per cent of the country's electricity would be generated from renewable sources, principally from wind farms, but also including tidal and solar power.

Press releases from the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (Berr) still boast of the target, which was first promised in 2000 and enshrined three

years later in the energy White Paper. And in a statement to The Independent on Sunday, a spokesman for Berr insists that all is well and that: "Estimates show there's more than enough renewables developments either up and running or in the pipeline to potentially meet the 10 per cent goal."

But the energy industry does not agree. Senior figures point out that less than 5 per cent of electricity was generated from renewable sources in 2007, up from just over 4 per cent the previous year. This is not, they argue, a sign of rapid progress from a country that has a far less buoyant renewables industry than Germany and Denmark, although it is far windier.

### [Invasion of Iran would Trigger World War III](#)

TEHRAN (FNA)- A senior military commander warned on Saturday that any attack on Iran would start a new world war.

"Any aggression against Iran would be the start of the world war, " deputy chief of staff for defense publicity, Brigadier General Masoud Jazayeri said.

### [Strapped for cash, some in New Orleans stay and hope](#)

"The thing is," he continued, "most people don't have cars to leave, don't have money for gas. Pay for a hotel for that long? I mean, you have to do whatever you have to do, and I guess I'm gonna stay and work."

### [Drought, Israeli restrictions hit Palestinian herders hard](#)

ISFEY FOQA, West Bank: Hard-hit by a severe three-year drought and tough restrictions on movement imposed by Israel, Palestinian shepherds are facing what some elders call their worst crisis in living memory.

"All we have left is hope," says Musa Abdullah Awad, a wizened 49-year-old herder as he looks down at the remaining water in his cistern, which he says is barely enough to keep his goats alive a little longer.

As far as the eye can see there is nothing but dust, rocks and grinding poverty.

### [GCC in \\$217bn power capacity expansion drive](#)

GCC countries are in a serious drive to expand their power capacity and have already earmarked \$217 billion (Dh797bn) on power projects to date.

Majority of the new projects are in Saudi Arabia, where power-starved mega projects are expected to go on stream from this year up to 2012, according to data from projects information specialist ProLeads.

### [Mr Cheney goes to Georgia](#)

The US-backed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline passes through Georgian territory and letting Russia dictate events in Georgia has a definite implication in terms of energy security, given the fierce pipeline geopolitics in the Eurasian landmass, Europe's heavy energy dependency on Russia and Moscow's willingness to rely on the energy card for security bargaining with Europe.

This alone may explain why the European Union, which has been divided over a response to the Georgian crisis, has largely consented to the US's muscular reaction. The issue has now turned into a defining moment of the post-Cold War era because of its broader implications.

From Russia's point of view, carving out Georgia into separate territories is the proper antidote to NATO's planned expansion, to offset the US's growing encroachment, and a clear warning to neighboring states, such as Azerbaijan and Ukraine, to refrain from cozying up to US or NATO.

### [Energy crisis: a time bomb about to go nuclear](#)

One of the main reasons for wars right now in this world is energy related, natural resources, oil, natural gas and pipelines. There are two critical reasons why we have to solve the energy crisis, and both reasons lead to the absolute annihilation of the human race. There will be more pollution as we consume ever more energy, hurrying global warming and our extinction, and as resources become more scarce, wars will continue to erupt everywhere in the last battle to secure the so-called remaining liter of "juice" on Earth. How can we avoid total destruction by solving our energy crisis?

### [Mich. residents may pay more of green power costs](#)

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Saying it's only fair, Michigan lawmakers plan to raise residential electricity bills and drop business rates so all customers are charged the true cost of their power.

But when it comes to figuring out who should pay what for new renewable energy requirements, the playing field wouldn't be even.

Though residents account for one-third of Detroit Edison's electric sales, they would contribute nearly two-thirds of what Michigan's largest utility could collect from customers for wind and other sources of alternative power under bills that have passed the House and Senate.

### [Pakistan: Two weekly holidays approved to save energy](#)

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet has approved, in principle, to grant two weekly holidays but decided to withhold formal notification in this regard to consult the Punjab government before making it public, it is learnt reliably.

### [Pakistan: Matching LPG prices with S Arabian rapped](#)

LAHORE: Efforts to revive the policy of equating local LPG producer prices with Saudi Arabian export prices have been strongly condemned by the LPG Association of Pakistan (LPGAP), a grouping of licensed LPG marketing companies.

In the meeting of the Federal Cabinet held Monday, a summary was moved calling for the "import parity formula to be introduced in LPG on the Saudi Aramco upper cap for ensuring availability." This proposal to revive the failed policy of the previous government was rejected in the meeting.

### [Australia coal emissions are worst, says global study](#)

The study of emissions from 50,000 coal-fired power stations put China, the US, India, Russia, Germany, Japan and Britain ahead of Australia in total carbon dioxide output.

But each Australian produced almost the same amount of emissions as Americans -- 9.5 tonnes per person -- and Indians -- 0.6 tonnes -- combined.

### [Rep. Bartlett pursues lonely energy crusade](#)

WASHINGTON - Charts at the ready, notes spread out before him, Rep. Roscoe G. Bartlett begins another address in the House of Representatives on the dangers of America's dependence on oil.

The Western Maryland Republican has given nearly 50 such speeches at the Capitol in the past three years, most of them variations on a theme: that a coming decline in petroleum production, coupled with growing demand for energy, will have a calamitous impact on the global economy.

"The world as a whole, and our country included, has appeared to behave as if these fossil fuels were inexhaustible," the former university professor lectures. "What we'll see shortly is that - as everyone will know, if you stop and think about it - that oil is finite."



## [What Happened to Peak Oil?](#)

Up until Tuesday, oil was crashing down toward \$110 a barrel as demand growth estimates have been clipped. So what happened to peak oil? Nothing happened; peak oil should still be a concern.

## [SchNews Drills For the Truth In Peak Oil Theory](#)

All of this has some anarcho-primitivists jumping with glee at the prospect of the imminent collapse of earth-raping industrial capitalist society. But, before you stock up on tinned goods, shotgun cartridges and bottled water, here's a few things to consider:

Firstly, there's no oil shortage. This may come as a bit of a surprise to all those who've been watching the prices rise and rise. As the Saudis recently pointed out to outgoing President Bush - pumping more oil won't lower the price. Actually, there's a glut of oil in the supply markets. The Iranians (one of the oil nations pumping under their maximum capacity) have tankers full of the stuff that they just can't shift because no one wants it. What's lacking is refining capacity.

## [Cold season will push up oil price says Iran](#)

Iran's oil minister suggested on Sunday crude at \$100 a barrel was the lowest appropriate level but said factors like the approaching cold season would push up demand and prices, an Oil Ministry website reported.

## [Oil sands: The storm over Canada's hottest commodity](#)

In this two-part series, the Independent Record examines Canadian oil sands production, its impact on the economy and the environment, and the potential connection to Montana's own energy development.

## [It may be too soon to exit oil-dollar bet](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The long oil/short dollar bet may be off the table for now as energy prices ease and the U.S. currency rises, but inflation and inherent risks in commodities supply could bring this popular trade back.

## [Understanding Putin and the conflict in the Caucasus](#)

And that brings us to the Caucasus/Georgia region, and why Putin pressed the Chechen war after he took office. He did so for good reasons – access to the oil and the Caspian

Sea. Georgia itself holds the keys to a quantum leap in Russian income and power. There is a pipeline through Georgia from Baku that is the only exit for oil from Central Asia that does not pay toll to Russia. Seizing control of that pipeline will both give Russia income from that oil, and it will provide Russia with the means to strangle the Central Asian former provinces into submission. The significance of these nations for Americans is primarily the economic impact on our pocketbook when the price of oil rises again because Russia gets control of another 46 billion barrels of oil to increase its own 74 billion barrels of reserves. In the larger picture, those Central Asian nations can serve as a tool to bring the USA lower by more and more rapid wealth transfer as prices rise.

### [Nigeria militants: 29 military personnel killed](#)

LAGOS, Nigeria - Nigeria's main militant group claimed Saturday that it killed at least 29 military personnel in three separate attacks across the restive southern oil region.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta said in an e-mail statement that the near-simultaneous battles came in the three main oil producing states of southern Nigeria, leaving 29 dead and others unaccounted for after they jumped from their military boats.

The group reported that six of its own fighters were also killed in the clashes, which they say they launched as reprisals for attacks they allege the military carried out on civilians.

### [South Korea: 'No Pole Sign' System Troubles Refiners](#)

Local oil companies are in trouble over a new policy starting today, which will demolish exclusive ties between them and gas stations.

Gas pumps will be allowed to sell oil products from all companies with the abrogation of what was called the "pole sign policy." A mixture of products from various companies will be also available as long as sellers inform consumers.

Under the previous policy, gas stations could only deal with the brand they displayed, with violation subject to legal punishment.

### [Will Brazil Really Nationalize Oil?](#)

Brazilian oil workers with the FUP oil union have threatened a nationwide strike, in what seems like another step toward nationalized oil in Brazil

The saber rattling is aimed at Brazil's biggest oil company, Petrobras. While contentious union relations at Petrobras are part and parcel of the company's operations, what's different here is that the conversation focuses on the pre-salt layer off Brazil, triggered by last year's massive Tupi find.



### [Kuwait inflation spurred by external factors: banker](#)

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) - Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait Sheikh Salem Abdulaziz al-Sabah has said inflation in the oil-rich emirate, which has hit record levels, is mainly caused by external factors.

"Inflation in Kuwait is imported ... since the country imports most of its commodities from abroad," Sheikh Salem said in statements cited by the official KUNA news agency late Saturday.

External factors such as prices in exporting nations, insurance fees and transport costs influence Kuwaiti imports, said the governor, adding that 30 percent of Kuwaiti imports come from Europe and 14 percent from the United States.

### [Saudi Arabia positioned to become solar power](#)

In the wake of the first Gulf War, the U.S. Army assessed Saudi Arabia's solar energy resource potential in a classified effort to determine how oil fires had affected the region.

The results were clear and surprising. In addition to being a vast petroleum repository, the desert nation was also the heart of the most potentially productive region on the planet for harvesting power from the sun. In other words, Saudi Arabia was the Saudi Arabia of solar energy.

### [Indiana's Amish embracing wind, solar power](#)

GRABILL, Ind. - Northeastern Indiana's large Amish community is starting to embrace wind and solar energy to power their homes' lights, refrigerators and other equipment.

Although many Amish rejected high-voltage electricity in the early 1920s because of the power lines that would have connected their people to the outside world, limited use of site-generated, low-voltage electricity is acceptable to many Amish.

### [Solar panels are hot for the stealing](#)

They turn the sun's rays into usable electricity, with proponents calling it an environmentally friendly alternative that saves money on utilities.

But the growing number of solar panels being installed on roofs of government buildings, private businesses and homes are becoming a hot commodity in a way many say they didn't expect.

## [The Heat is on: America's next president must play a key role averting crisis over global warming](#)

Reflecting a consensus of hundreds of scientists around the world, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, has affirmed that greenhouse gas emissions are raising the Earth's temperature. The Earth is on a trajectory to warm more than 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit by around mid-century. Exceeding that threshold could trigger a series of phenomena: Arable land will turn into desert, higher sea levels will flood coastal areas, and changes in the convection of the oceans will alter currents, such as the Gulf Stream, that determine regional weather patterns.

Manhattan and Florida would be under water, while Nevada would have no water at all. Some Russians quip that they would welcome a more temperate climate, but they would probably be sorry to lose St. Petersburg. Countries such as Bangladesh and Mali do not have the resources to mitigate or even to adapt to the impact of climate change; millions would flee coastal flooding and the desertification of farmlands, creating instant "climate refugees."

## [Ireland: Fears for landmark bridge](#)

The National Conservation and Heritage Group believe higher tides caused by climate change are eroding the bridge's structure and may have dangerously weakened its foundations.

## [The catastrophe behind climate change](#)

As the estimated cost of measures proposed by politicians to "combat global warming" soars ever higher - such as the International Energy Council's \$45 trillion - "fighting climate change" has become the single most expensive item on the world's political agenda.

As Senators Obama and McCain vie with the leaders of the European Union to promise 50, 60, even 80 per cent cuts in "carbon emissions", it is clear that to realise even half their imaginary targets would necessitate a dramatic change in how we all live, and a drastic reduction in living standards.

## [Sierra climate change puts range's species on the run](#)

One century ago, alpine chipmunks owned the upper half of Yosemite. They skittered under logs and darted across rocks from the rugged Sierra crest down to the conifer forests at 7,800 feet. Today, they are missing in action below 9,800 feet.

"It's lost half its geographic range," Patton said. "Climate is the culprit. I don't think there is any iota of reason not to think that."

### [For the first time in human history, the North Pole can be circumnavigated](#)

Open water now stretches all the way round the Arctic, making it possible for the first time in human history to circumnavigate the North Pole, The Independent on Sunday can reveal. New satellite images, taken only two days ago, show that melting ice last week opened up both the fabled North-west and North-east passages, in the most important geographical landmark to date to signal the unexpectedly rapid progress of global warming.

Last night Professor Mark Serreze, a sea ice specialist at the official US National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC), hailed the publication of the images – on an obscure website by scientists at the University of Bremen, Germany – as "a historic event", and said that it provided further evidence that the Arctic icecap may now have entered a "death spiral". Some scientists predict that it could vanish altogether in summer within five years, a process that would, in itself, greatly accelerate.

But Sarah Palin, John McCain's new running mate, holds that the scientific consensus that global warming is melting Arctic ice is unreliable.



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