



Happy Fourth (Birthday that is)

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on March 22, 2009 - 9:00am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

Tags: [history](#), [the oil drum](#) [[list all tags](#)]

Happy Birthday, Gentle Readers, to you, Prof Goose, Nate, Gail and all those who form The Oil Drum community. It has been four years now since he who then was known only as Prof Goose, and I – Heading Out – decided to launch this site, as a way of both bringing attention to, and trying to explain some of the background behind what is happening to our Energy Supply. And, as a Birthday gift, hopefully you will enjoy a little history of the site, which you will find below the fold.

When we started the focus was only on oil (hence the name) – though we thought we might get some mileage out of [The Washington Monthly](#) if we called it “The Oil Drum”, since [Kevin Drum](#) then wrote their Political Animal column. (And it worked – he made a nice comment and brought us a bunch of readers that helped us build an audience). Kyle was, from the beginning the brains behind the organization, not only creating the site and doing all the management, but also writing posts, sending out links and drawing attention to the site from all those other sites, such as [The Energy Bulletin](#) that gave us the early publicity that helped us grow. Me, I just wrote.

The [introductory story](#) actually compresses time a little, since in the early days it was Kyle that did the site work, and it was not until after Ianqui joined us in June, 2005 after Prof had invited her to give a [guest post](#), that she in turn brought in Super G, [the following month](#). And he has managed the structure of the site since. It would never have worked without him.

As the Prof said [early in the game](#)

One of the goals HO and I have for this blog is to build a community that builds on itself with knowledge and purpose with regard to this ridiculously complex and salient topic. I would like to think we're moving toward that goal.

It happened more quickly than either he or I expected, again largely because of his behind the scenes work in promotion of the site. It is one of the unrecognized, and just darn hard and time consuming things, to market a new site, and he persisted, and should be given all the credit for bringing us the readership, and the interest, as quickly as he did. After [3 months](#) we had already reached 1400 visits and 2300 page views a day.

We were helped, later that first year, with the arrival of Hurricanes [Dennis](#), [Katrina](#) (which brought more readers than the site [could handle](#)) and [Rita](#). By being able to couple some of the dynamics of those events, and the threats they posed to GOM oil and gas supplies, Kyle again managed to crank the machine to up our readership. We also, in one of those unexpected but great developments started getting comments, and then guest posts from [some of the folks](#) (particularly Bubba) who were involved in trying to get the situation back under control.

These hurricane “diaries” are one of the things that the site was meant to do. It created a daily record of what was going on through some of the events that really affected oil supply, and the record is still there so that you can go back and browse over what we thought was happening, and what really was, at the time. (And what we might therefore go through “next time.”)

Dave Cohen showed up with a guest post that first summer, and became a steady contributor for eighteen months, before moving on. And thus we began the transition from the pair of us into the site that you see today, and the underlying community that supports it.

All-in-all we have had 35 folk write regular pieces (as opposed to single guest posts). Most start as did [Stuart Staniford](#) who joined us after Super G, with a guest post, that Kyle lined up, and then started contributing regularly. Stuart wrote a total of 205 posts, the last in August of 2008. Other than Kyle and myself, he has been the most prolific and popular of the writers of individual pieces. Except, that is for Leanan, who far surpassed us all, and has become the rock, around which the whole site revolves. The [Drumbeat itself](#) began on May 13th, 2006, and Leanan began getting the credit for it on [January 26th, 2007](#). Hers has been a stalwart effort, and in toasting the site she surely deserves a separate raising of the glasses on her own. Thanks again, Leanan.

The site grew from its initial location in America, to include daughter sites at home and abroad, (as shown on the panel on the right in current form). If I leave the history of those until next year, it will allow me another post then, but the wealth of information that has flowed to us, and the sterling graphs and insights from such folks as Chris, Euan, Jerome, Rembrandt and Luis, has helped keep all of us more aware of the different issues.

There are more than enough statistics to keep me writing this, and more folk to thank, than a reasonable post length will allow. But one thing I have learned is that we do need to keep some remarks short. So, I’ll resort to the speaker’s trick and do the “in conclusion” remark.

Having now met many of you, through ASPO and the other meetings that are now quite common, but once were rare, hopefully I will get to chat with more of you in meetings of the future. If not, it was a privilege to be part of the group, which I expect will continue to grow as this whole problem set gets worse.

Total number of posts on the site (up until the end of yesterday) was 3,778. There have been posts by 22 or more individuals in a month, instead of just the two of us when it began. We have thus, I believe, met that initial goal of the Prof’s. There have been regular contributors to the comments too many to mention, but even when we disagreed, that was why we are here, so keep writing there please, it’s how we all learn.

I wish you all future success, and a “Happy Birthday.”



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