



## Drumbeat: December 25, 2010

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 25, 2010 - 10:54am

### [Deepwater Horizon's Final Hours](#)

Nearly 400 feet long, the Horizon had formidable and redundant defenses against even the worst blowout. It was equipped to divert surging oil and gas safely away from the rig. It had devices to quickly seal off a well blowout or to break free from it. It had systems to prevent gas from exploding and sophisticated alarms that would quickly warn the crew at the slightest trace of gas. The crew itself routinely practiced responding to alarms, fires and blowouts, and it was blessed with experienced leaders who clearly cared about safety.

On paper, experts and investigators agree, the Deepwater Horizon should have weathered this blowout.

This is the story of how and why it didn't.

### [BP to look into locating anchors left over after oil spill boom was removed](#)

BP has agreed to examine how best to locate thousands of boom anchors left behind in the Gulf of Mexico and surrounding waters after the oil spill.

But after finding the anchors, the oil giant might not remove them, as Coast Guard officials say BP-hired "experts and contractors" will first determine whether the anchors pose a hazard and whether removal will cause more harm than good.

### [Kuwait in turmoil as opposition bids to oust PM](#)

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) – Kuwait has plunged into fresh political turmoil after opposition MPs unleashed a serious bid to unseat the oil-rich Gulf state's premier, a senior member of the ruling family.

The emirate has been rocked by almost non-stop disputes since 2006 when Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah was appointed prime minister.

### [38 killed in attacks on churches, festivities in Nigeria](#)

JOS, Nigeria — Explosions in Nigeria's central region killed 32 people on Christmas Eve and six people died in attacks on two churches in the northeast of Africa's most populous nation, officials said on Saturday.

On Friday night, a series of bombs were detonated during Christmas Eve celebrations in villages near the central city of Jos, killing at least 32 people while 74 were in a critical condition, the state police commissioner said.

### [Ivorian crisis provokes gas, kerosene shortage in Mali](#)

Cote d'Ivoire - The current political tension in Cote d'Ivoire has resulted in the scarcity of butane gas and 'jet A1' in Mali, the national daily, L'Essor, reported here Thursday. Jet A1 fuel is used by aircraft.

At the international airport of Bamako-Sénou, Mali aviation authorities had displayed notices, indicating the shortage of aviation fuel.

### [Botswana: Running on E](#)

After spending weeks or months preparing to go to various destination for the festive season many people might find themselves grounded as the country has been hit by fuel shortages.

### [Chesapeake Energy](#)

Shares in the natural gas producer surged on word that activist billionaire Carl Icahn had boosted his stake. Icahn filed a document with the Securities and Exchange Commission saying he raised his stake in the Oklahoma-based company to 5.8 percent.

### [Early Bid for a Reactor Site Draws Opposition in Texas](#)

WASHINGTON — Twenty years ago, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission rewrote its procedure for licensing reactors to cut the time it would take to build new ones. Now an important part of the system is getting its first test, as a Chicago-based nuclear utility clashes with a well-to-do group of Texas ranchers over preapproval of a site about 120 miles southwest of Houston.

### [Review: "Prelude" by Kurt Cobb](#)

Novels are good ways to impart information and put it into a social context. This one covers all the basics relating to our current predicament concerning peak oil without getting into an apocalyptic futuristic vision that has tempted so many writers.

In it a smart likable heroine, who is an oil analyst working for a big name company, meets a Russian channeling Dimitri Orlov (without the acerbic commentary). Skeptical at first, she puts his information to the test by breaking into the boss's files, thus risking her job and drawing the attention of an oil exporting entity. Meanwhile her personal life undergoes similar tensions as she sorts her feelings between her relationship with her boyfriend and the compelling information offered by the Russian.

### [Review: Coupland's no longer a player](#)

At parties of a certain type, there will usually be at least one guest who, while very smart and very witty, will veer off into something a bit weird or obsessive.

You know the type. They often have tenure and wear jeans and tell amazing stories about the time they met author X. But get them going on 9/11 or Julian Assange or sometimes on legitimate problems like climate change or local food and they get a glint – something in the eye that signals this conversation has become one-sided and that you are now a one-man audience in this person's personal, obsessive theatre.

### [The Words of the Year](#)

**peak water:** *Like "peak oil," a theory that humans may have used the water easiest to obtain, and that scarcity may be on the rise.*

### [World economy can withstand \\$100 oil price: Kuwait](#)

(Reuters) - The global economy can withstand an oil price of \$100 a barrel, Kuwait's oil minister said on Saturday, as other exporters indicated OPEC may decide against increasing output through 2011 as the market was well supplied.

Analysts have said oil producing countries are likely to raise output after crude rallied more than 30 percent from a low in May because they fear prices could damage economic growth in fuel importing countries.

### [Arabian Gulf tanker rates are little changed as demand slows](#)

The cost of delivering Middle East crude to Asia, the world's busiest route for supertankers, was little changed as demand slowed for loadings in January.

### [Russia adds record 5.5 bln barrels to prospected oil reserves in 2010 - minister](#)

Russia added a record 750 million tons (5.5 billion barrels) of oil to its prospected crude reserves in 2010, Natural Resources Minister Yuri Trutnev said on Saturday, citing

preliminary geological prospecting data.

"Now we can say with confidence that we have achieved expanded reproduction of the basic group of natural resources. The increment in oil reserves has registered a record growth of at least 750 million tons. This is 50% more than Russia extracts," Trutnev said at a working meeting with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

### [Central Arkansas growing weary of relentless tremors](#)

Although drilling for natural gas has been ruled out as a cause for the quakes, experts want to continue looking at salt water disposal wells, said Scott Ausbrooks, geohazards supervisor for the Geological Survey. Disposal wells occur when drilling waster is injected back into the earth after drilling.

Earlier this month, the Arkansas Oil and Gas commission issued an emergency moratorium on permits for new disposal wells. The commission will ask for a six-month extension for the moratorium at a January regulatory meeting.

The state also will soon become one of a few to require companies to disclose the chemicals used in fracking fluid, the water-and-chemical solution used in high-pressure drilling operations, said Shane Khoury, deputy director and general counsel for the Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission.

### [Schlumberger Warns of Looming Shortage of Petroleum Engineers](#)

Oil companies face a dwindling pool of engineers and other technical staff needed for exploration and production, the head of the world's largest oilfield services company said.

The number of young recruits hired to replace aging petroleum engineers has declined over the last 10 years, as many college graduates choose managerial positions over engineering jobs and other field assignments, said Andrew Gould, chairman and chief executive officer of Schlumberger Ltd.

### [Saudi 2011 budget includes \\$10 billion shortfall](#)

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia—Saudi Arabia on Monday published a budget for 2011 that includes a \$10 billion deficit, but the year might end with a surplus because of high oil prices.

Past budgets have undervalued the sale price of oil, skewing projected income downward. Saudi Arabia is world's largest oil exporter, and most of its income is from oil sales.

### [Sunoco Dumps Refineries to Chase Pipeline Profits](#)

Sunoco Inc. Chief Executive Officer Lynn Elsenhans has figured out the best strategy for stanching losses from the refining business: get rid of refineries.

### [China Gas says top executives "escorted away"](#)

(Reuters) - China Gas Holdings Ltd , which has 114 gas projects in China, said two of its top executives had been "escorted away" by people who identified themselves as security officials in the city of Shenzhen and trading in its shares will remain suspended.

### [Neb. lawmakers: Pipeline route is out of our hands](#)

LINCOLN - The State of Nebraska should explore enacting regulations to protect landowners and taxpayers from problems associated with pipelines, three state senators said Wednesday.

But the state is probably powerless to tell a Canadian company to reroute a proposed 36-inch crude-oil pipeline around the sensitive, groundwater-rich Sand Hills region, they said.

### [Iraq to activate Kurd foreign oil deals: minister](#)

CAIRO (AFP) – Iraq will recognise contracts the government of its Kurdish north has signed with foreign oil companies, the country's new oil minister, Abdulkarim al-Luaybi, said on Saturday.

"Yes, we will recognise them," Luaybi told Dow Jones Newswires at a meeting in Cairo of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries.

### [Female bomber kills 43 at food center in Pakistan](#)

KHAR, Pakistan (AP) — A female suicide bomber detonated her explosives-laden vest killing at least 43 people at an aid distribution center in northwestern Pakistan on Saturday, while army helicopter gunships and artillery killed a similar number of Islamic militants in neighboring tribal regions near the Afghan border, officials said.

The bombing appeared to be the first suicide attack staged by a woman in Pakistan, and it underscored the resilience of militant groups in the country's tribal belt despite ongoing military operations against them.

### ['Father of plug-in hybrids' gets new Volt](#)

SACRAMENTO, Calif. --Andrew Frank's new Chevrolet Volt is literally the car of his dreams.

The University of California, Davis, engineering professor is often considered "the father of plug-in hybrid vehicles," a field that is entering into the mass marketing stage with this month's rollout of the new Volt.

"I've been working on this idea for 30 years," said Frank, as he handled his new car's plug-in cords like a proud father. "This is kind of like a culmination of all my work."

### [African Huts Far From the Grid Glow With Renewable Power](#)

KIPTUSURI, Kenya — For Sara Ruto, the desperate yearning for electricity began last year with the purchase of her first cellphone, a lifeline for receiving small money transfers, contacting relatives in the city or checking chicken prices at the nearest market.

Charging the phone was no simple matter in this farming village far from Kenya's electric grid.

Every week, Ms. Ruto walked two miles to hire a motorcycle taxi for the three-hour ride to Mogotio, the nearest town with electricity. There, she dropped off her cellphone at a store that recharges phones for 30 cents. Yet the service was in such demand that she had to leave it behind for three full days before returning.

That wearying routine ended in February when the family sold some animals to buy a small Chinese-made solar power system for about \$80. Now balanced precariously atop their tin roof, a lone solar panel provides enough electricity to charge the phone and run four bright overhead lights with switches.

### [ADB Considering Loans for 580-Megawatt Solar Power Project in India](#)

The Asian Development Bank may provide loans to a 580-megawatt solar power park in India's Gujarat state as the country aims to increase its solar power capacity to meet growing demand.

### [METI OKs project for nuclear power plant in Aomori](#)

TOKYO — The Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry on Friday approved a plan by Tokyo Electric Power Co to set up a nuclear power plant in Aomori Prefecture following a prolonged safety review in light of a major earthquake in a neighboring region and additional inspections of active faults.

### [Environmentalists deplore Schwarzenegger's corporate turn](#)

As the governor's tenure draws to an end, activists say, his policies grow less green.

### [Siberian park gets new population in climate change test](#)

A Russian scientist hopes to prove that bringing back animals will save the permafrost and reduce global warming.

### [Will Santa's reindeer survive climate change?](#)

Santa may need to start looking for back-ups, since reindeer herds are dwindling across much of the Arctic. How much is climate change to blame? That remains a source of debate.





# Happy Holidays



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