



Drumbeat: August 1, 2011

Posted by [Leanan](#) on August 1, 2011 - 10:05am

[Commentary: Peak Oil Teachers](#)

Something truly remarkable is happening in a thousand places all over the world. It is happening in classrooms – university graduate classrooms and Montessori kindergartens, in formal learning sites at venerable institutions and in newer educational sites such as distance learning programs and in impromptu classrooms put together by churches, book clubs and after school programs. It is happening across disciplines – in classrooms teaching hard sciences, of course, but also in the arts, through the lens of history, in writing and business classes. Engineers and poets, philosophers and economists, undergrads and sixth graders – all of them are learning about Peak Oil.

It is hard to imagine how radical this change is – and how fast it is growing. When we began teaching these issues, around the turn of the last millennium, we knew few people who had even heard of Peak Oil or understood the mechanics of depletion. Now it would be a rare college that doesn't offer a course that addresses these issues at least in some measure, and they have begun to penetrate to younger and younger audiences. Older and continuing education audiences are also taking a variety of courses that address these issues – and demand to study them is growing.

[Iran kills, arrests people linked to gas pipeline blast](#)

(Reuters) - Iranian security forces killed three people on Monday and arrested four others they suspected of being behind a pipeline blast which halted gas exports to Turkey last week, Iran's student news agency ISNA reported.

Officials in Maku, a city in Iran's West Azerbaijan province, said the militants had crossed the border from Iraq to blow up the pipeline and that at least one was a Turkish citizen.

[Syrian tanks shell defiant city of Hama](#)

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian security forces shelled the city of Hama in the second day of a fierce assault aimed at crushing the anti-government protests against President Bashar Assad's regime.

[Brazil June Crude Oil Output Up 4.2% On Year At 2.137 Mbpd - ANP](#)

RIO DE JANEIRO -(Dow Jones)- Brazil crude oil production advanced year-on-year in June as several offshore platforms idled by maintenance shutdowns came back on stream, the country's oil regulator said Monday.

Brazil's oil fields produced 2.137 million barrels of crude per day in June, up 4.2% from June 2010, the National Petroleum Agency, or ANP said. Crude oil production was up 3.2% from 2.072 million barrels per day in May. Natural gas output climbed to 67.3 million cubic meters a day in June, up 6.9% from June 2010 and 0.9% from May, the ANP said.

[Pemex boosts heavy fuel oil after fire, 3rd worker dies](#)

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Pemex said it will boost production of heavy fuel oil at its Tula refinery in central Mexico after a fire damaged the facility's sole visbreaker and killed three workers.

An explosion ripped through Mexico's second-largest oil refinery on Saturday, causing a massive fire that killed two workers on the site. Tula produces 315,000 barrels per day.

[Chesapeake CEO: Utica Shale Acres Worth \\$15B-\\$20B](#)

Chesapeake Chief Executive Aubrey McClendon said Friday that the company believes its acreage above the Utica Shale formation in eastern Ohio, 1.25 million acres the company has quietly pieced together over the last year and a half, is worth \$15 billion to \$20 billion.

[The end of Big Oil?](#)

How the break-up of ConocoPhillips could lead to similar moves by oil conglomerates like BP and Exxon Mobil, forever changing the energy landscape.

[Jamaica's energy inertia](#)

Among the clearest manifestations of Government's failure to create an environment of economic opportunity and prosperity for our people is the continuing uneconomic pricing of energy. At up to US\$0.39 per kilowatt-hour, Jamaica has perhaps the highest electricity rates among our trading partners.

[No load shedding during Sehr, Iftar times](#)

PESHAWAR: The management of Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) has

decided that there will be no load shedding during Sehr and Iftar in Ramzan. The power company has urged for extending cooperation so that all over loaded 11 kv feeders consumers for the un-interrupted power supply during Sehr & Iftar.

[Weighing economic growth against nuclear risks makes no sense](#)

The insatiable capitalism in which money is of utmost significance has taken the entire world by storm, and nuclear power plants have become a major pillar of economic growth. China has announced that it will build 70 nuclear reactors by 2020 generating the equivalent of 1 million kilowatts of power each. The strain produced by such rapid economic expansion has no doubt been evidenced by the high-speed train accident that took place in eastern China on July 23.

Shutting down nuclear power plants does not signify a return to the Edo period. Scaling back our power consumption levels to those of five or 10 years ago will not force the country to collapse. If we take a moment to review our dependence on nuclear energy and can ascertain that what we really want is to reconstruct a safe society and a healthy economy, there's really no difference between abandoning nuclear energy altogether or scaling back the degree of our dependence.

[Save money by saving energy](#)

Investing in energy-efficient home technology is like buying a home gym: Though you may be tempted by the promise of a long-term payoff, it's easy to be turned off by the upfront cost. "That's really what the challenge is — to move customers to action," says Stephen Cowell, CEO of Conservation Services Group, a company that works with utilities and conservation groups to improve energy efficiency.

[Automakers use aerodynamics to gain fuel efficiencies](#)

The government's tougher new fuel-economy standards are going to force automakers to go to new lengths to increase gas mileage, especially when it comes to making cars more aerodynamic.

[100 MPG on gasoline: Could we really?](#)

Since I was a teenager, I frequently heard stories that some guy had invented a car that could get 100 miles per gallon (MPG), but that powerful interests (often GM, Chevron, etc.) had bought rights to the idea and sat on it. We suckers were left to shell out major bucks for gasoline, when a solution was in hand and under wraps.

Leaving aside the notion that such a design would bring unbelievable prosperity to its holder (i.e., no real incentive to sit on it), let's look at what physics says is possible.

[Kunstler: Weimar Meets Waterloo](#)

I happen to think we're at the end of this anomalous era because we've run through the material resource base. I know a lot of people eagerly await the nano-dawn of self-replicating bot Satori, where everything we need is literally conjured out of thin air. The Viziers would really love that because, at last, their models would work! Personally, I do not hold my breath waiting for Kurzweilian "Singularity." We'll be disappointed enough when Walmart fails to run on wind turbines.

So now we enter an economic *terra incognita* of the real post-industrial economy - not the Cinderella hoo-hah of digi-magic advertised in places like Wired Magazine, but more like a Foxfire world made by hand. We're out of cheap oil, cheap and good ores, ocean fish, good timber, and lots of other things. All the stuff we erected to live our lives in - the stupendous armature of highways, strip malls, suburban houses, skyscraper condos, sewer systems, electric grids - is beyond our power to repair now. We can only patch it, and that can only work for so long before things go dark. (Can you sharpen a saw blade?)

[Kurt Cobb: Can taxation speed our energy transition?](#)

Some time ago an economist with whom I had an extensive exchange suggested that the best way to incentivize an energy transition would be to tax what we don't want and let the market do the rest. It was really such an elegant approach and an impractical one, I thought.

The economist's view was that if we don't want people to burn carbon-based fuels, then we should just tax those fuels heavily. What he opposed was any direct subsidies to alternatives such as wind, solar, and biomass. This would only serve to distort the economy, he said, and it is too hard to figure out the quickest path to an energy transition from the vantage point of a central government.

[Nearly 1,000 cab drivers in China protest, urging government to hike fares amid fuel spike](#)

BEIJING — Nearly 1,000 cab drivers in eastern China blocked traffic and protested Monday over a lack of government intervention into rising fuel costs. It was the latest sign of discontent over the country's surging inflation.

The cab drivers in the tourist city of Hangzhou were urging the local government to raise cab fares, which have had a starting rate of 10 yuan (\$1.50) for eight years. The drivers noted that during that time gas, food and housing prices have skyrocketed.

[Crude Climbs After Obama Says Congressional Leaders Agree Debt-Limit Deal](#)

Oil advanced from a two-week low in New York after President Barack Obama said Congressional leaders approved a deal to raise America's debt ceiling, stoking

speculation the world's biggest crude user will avoid a default.

[High jet fuel costs put pressure on airline ticket prices](#)

As the Ramadan lull approaches, airlines are also dealing with another worry: sky-high jet fuel prices that have sent costs up to near-record levels this year.

The price of a barrel of jet fuel has risen more than 50 per cent from a year ago to US\$132 (Dh484). And airline executives say fuel prices could remain at sustained high levels, making air travel more expensive.

[Gazprom Neft seals Cuba deal](#)

Gazprom Neft, the oil arm of Russian giant Gazprom, said today it has signed a product-sharing contract on four blocks in the Gulf of Mexico off Cuba with Malaysian state-owned player Petronas and Cubapetroleo (Cupet), the Cuban national oil company.

[China's move on oil sands is about more than money](#)

This is a test. Chinese oil company Sinopec's move to buy a piece of Alberta oil sands producer Syncrude is the latest move in Beijing's step-by-step gauging of the investment waters in Canada.

China is watching to see if the deal sets off alarm bells in Canada, particularly in Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative caucus.

[Occidental five freed after kidnapping](#)

Five contractors for US-based Occidental Petroleum who were kidnapped Friday in northeastern Colombia have been freed and are now safe, an army official has announced.

[China an increasingly important economic](#)

Abu Dhabi will double its oil exports to China over the next two years as it expands its energy relationship with the world's second-largest economy.

[Iraq sends barrels for payment](#)

Occidental Petroleum and South Korea's Kogas have received their first cargo of crude oil as payment for helping to develop Iraq's Zubair oilfield, according to shipping sources.

[BP says Forties crude pipeline shut for 5 days](#)

(Reuters) - British oil major BP said on Monday the Forties Pipeline System is shut this week to remove an undetonated mine from World War Two.

"The Forties Pipeline System has started a 5-day planned shut down to enable the safe removal and disposal of ordnance lying next to the pipeline," a BP spokesman said.

[Russian reserve fund shrinks 1.6 percent in July](#)

(Reuters) - MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia's oil wealth Reserve Fund shrank 1.6 percent in July, Finance Ministry data showed on Monday, due to the mostly negative revaluation of currencies that make up the fund.

[Canada flexes military muscles in race for Arctic resources](#)

With international efforts to secure territorial rights around the North Pole heating up as the ice in the Arctic continues to melt, Canada is flexing its muscles to defend its sovereignty in the region.

Faced with increasingly aggressive measures by competing nations, all eager to exploit the thawing Arctic's immense potential for new transit routes and previously inaccessible natural resources, Canada is launching Operation Nanook, a summer military exercise off Baffin Island.

[Libyan Rebel Forces Gain Heavy Artillery, Vehicles in Battle for Misrata](#)

Libyan rebel forces in the besieged city of Misrata said they broke through enemy lines to capture tanks, heavy guns and rocket launchers, gaining an arsenal that may help reverse their fortunes in the five-month siege.

The rebels captured 155 millimeter guns, as well as truck-mounted rocket launchers and three armored carriers following clashes late yesterday and today, said Abdullah Maiteed, a member of the rebel Arise Brigade.

[Iran cbank: Turkey not part of India oil payments-Mehr](#)

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran will recover billions of dollars' worth of debt for oil exports to India without the help of Turkey, its central bank chief said on Monday, while another official said Turkey was one of several possible intermediaries to unblocking the funds.

"Turkey does not have any role in transferring Iran's money from India," the semi-

official Mehr news agency Mehr quoted Mahmoud Bahmani as saying. "Iran itself will receive its debt arrears."

[U.S. Auto Sales Stall, Casting Doubt on Rebound](#)

U.S. auto sales have stalled, casting doubt on a rebound this year as persistent unemployment and tighter lending deter buyers.

[Tepco Says Highest Radiation Yet Is Detected at Fukushima Dai-Ichi](#)

Tokyo Electric Power Co. said it detected the highest radiation to date, more than 10 sieverts per hour, within the grounds of its crippled Fukushima Dai- Ichi nuclear power plant.

[Japan July nuclear plant usage falls to 33.9 percent](#)

(Reuters) - Japan's nuclear power plant utilization rate fell to an average 33.9 percent in July, the lowest in at least 32 years, Reuters calculations from trade ministry data showed on Monday, as public worries over safety kept reactors offline after they had completed routine maintenance.

[Q+A: What's going on at Japan's crippled nuclear power plant?](#)

(Reuters) - Tokyo Electric Power (Tepco), the owner of the quake and tsunami-hit Fukushima Daiichi plant, said on Monday it had successfully begun to cool one of two spent fuel pools that were still considered unstable.

That brings it another step closer to its aim of bringing the plant's reactors to a state of cold shutdown and stabilizing the spent fuel pools by January.

[Japan Expands Cattle-Shipments Ban as Radiation Contaminates Beef](#)

Japan banned cattle shipments from Iwate prefecture, the nation's fifth-largest grower, as the contaminated-beef crisis widened with radiation threatening the country's food supply.

[Doubting Assurances, Japanese Find Radioactivity on Their Own](#)

IWAKI, Japan — Kiyoko Okoshi had a simple goal when she spent about \$625 for a dosimeter: she missed her daughter and grandsons and wanted them to come home.

Local officials kept telling her that their remote village was safe, even though it was less than 20 miles from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. But her daughter remained dubious, especially since no one from the government had taken radiation readings near their home.

So starting in April, Mrs. Okoshi began using her dosimeter to check nearby forest roads and rice paddies. What she found was startling. Near one sewage ditch, the meter beeped wildly, and the screen read 67 microsieverts per hour, a potentially harmful level. Mrs. Okoshi and a cousin who lives nearby worked up the courage to confront elected officials, who did not respond, confirming their worry that the government was not doing its job.

[China Sets Solar Power Price to Boost Industry Profits, Investment](#)

China, the world's biggest polluter, set a price for electricity supplied by photovoltaic projects approved under non-competitive tenders to boost industry profitability and investment.

[Sugar's Use in Ethanol, Power Could Create Jobs in Southern Africa](#)

Southern African countries could create 1.8 million jobs if they adopted similar regulations to Brazil governing the production of ethanol and electricity from sugar, the Chief Executive Officer of Tongaat-Hulett Group Ltd. said.

[Why do corporation die so soon and cities don't? Corporations are Machines and Cities are Networks](#)

Wind farms that do well have an ROI of about 8% they are a utility – like owning a bond. But the Oil business has embedded costs that are linked to the returns on OIL that are much higher than wind. So if Shell did a lot more of these mega wind projects, the ROI of Shell would be reduced and Shell would have an earnings problem. The more wind farms they installed, the more their earnings would drop but their costs could not. They were trapped!

This dooms Shell and all mature companies. We saw that is Big Steel when smaller local mini mills ate into the lower ROI parts of the business until there was nothing left? We see this now with media.

[Coming Together to Pray, and Also to Find Reduced-Rate Energy Deals](#)

WASHINGTON — Like manna from heaven, thousands of dollars in new revenue is raining on a group of congregations here from the unlikeliest of sources: the utility bill.

The windfall arose after 11 churches and a nonprofit youth group got together to solicit reduced-rate bids for electricity — most of it from renewable energy sources — from

local suppliers. In the first year of its contract, which ends in May, the group expects combined savings of nearly \$100,000.

[The profit potential in controlling emissions](#)

Greenhouse gas reduction targets often meet a cool reception from oil and gas companies. But in the long term, the benefits can be widespread.

[Bangladesh and the Netherlands to share flood research](#)

[DHAKA] Flood-prone Bangladesh and the Netherlands are planning to exchange research findings and share experience on managing floods, which are projected to worsen because of climate change.



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