

earthfamilyalpha

With the advent of advanced global communication, new forms of social contract can be created which transcend the geographic state. These new cybercoops or cyberstates will bring humankind to higher levels of cooperation and understanding.

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monday, august 22, 2005

Will you join us?



I got my September issue of Wired this week, but I didn't take a look at it until last night. It's the one with Jon Stewart with a remote control unit in his mouth. Somehow, I don't think he is happy with that cover, but that's another story.

As I took off the wrapper and thumbed through, I was immediately caught by a two page ad on the back side of the contents page, which is pretty pricey ad real estate. The lead says:

It took us 125 years to use the first trillion barrels of oil.

We'll use the next trillion in 30.

So should you care?

I swear I said those same almost exact words 2 weeks ago in a presentation to the Sierra Club.

Then, on the next page, there is a letter. In it, it says, *How do we meet the energy needs of the developing world and those of industrialized nations? What role will renewables and alternative energies play? What is the best way to protect our environment? How do we accelerate our conservation efforts?*

And then the letter closes with:

We call upon scientists and educators, politicians and policy-makers, environmentalist, leaders of industry and each one of you to be a part of reshaping the next era of energy.

The letter is signed by Dave.

Who to heck is Dave?

Is Dave with Environmental Defense, or Greenpeace, or Public Citizen?

No, Dave is the Grand Fufu of [these guys](#).

Now, when these guys jump on the [peak oil bandwagon](#), you know several things. You know that someone in strategic planning must have had lunch with someone in finance and they saw a real opportunity here to be public spirited. You know that [Peak Oil](#), as Ram Das used to say, is probably going to [be here now](#). You also know that any pretense to be in the Middle East to free people from brutal dictators is soon going to begin to ring a little hollow for those of you who didn't know this to begin with. The MBAs in that group are going to take it a step further and come to this conclusion:

My God, what are we doing worrying about Democracy when we are running short of the strategic supplies we need to keep our economic Leviathan forever growing?

Later in the morning, after thinking about some really dumb dialogues on PBS this week about oil prices, and wondering just how long the [Peak Oil story](#) will stay out of the mainstream news, I found [this](#) in the New York Times Magazine and practically [every other peak oil site](#).

The Breaking Point

By PETER MAASS

[New York Times Magazine](#)

Published: August 21, 2005

"The largest oil terminal in the world, Ras Tanura, is located on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia, along the Persian Gulf. From Ras Tanura's control tower, you can see the classic totems of oil's dominion -- supertankers coming and going, row upon row of storage tanks and miles and miles of pipes. Ras Tanura, which I visited in June, is the funnel through which nearly 10 percent of the world's daily supply of petroleum flows. Standing in the control tower, you are surrounded by more than 50 million barrels of oil, yet not a drop can be seen.

Down later in the story the author says,

Concerns are being voiced by some oil experts that Saudi Arabia and other producers may, in the near future, be unable to meet rising world demand. The producers are not running out of oil, not yet, but their decades-old reservoirs are not as full and geologically spry as they used to be, and they may be incapable of producing, on a daily basis, the increasing volumes of oil that the world requires. "[One thing is clear](#)," warns Chevron, the second-largest American oil company, in a series of new advertisements, "[the era of easy oil is over](#)."

In the past several years, the gap between demand and supply, once considerable, has steadily narrowed, and today is almost negligible. The consequences of an actual shortfall of supply would be [immense](#). If consumption begins to exceed production by even a small amount, the [price of a barrel of oil could soar to triple-digit levels](#).

This, in turn, could bring on a global recession, a result of exorbitant prices for transport fuels and for products that rely on petrochemicals -- which is to say, almost every product on the market. The impact on the American way of life would be profound: [cars cannot be propelled by roof-borne windmills](#).

The suburban and exurban lifestyles, hinged to two-car families and constant trips to work, school and Wal-Mart, [might become unaffordable or, if gas rationing is imposed, impossible](#). Carpools would be the least imposing of many inconveniences; the cost of home heating would soar -- assuming, of course, that climate-controlled habitats do not become just a fond memory."

Gas rationing?

Two car families unaffordable?

Oil at triple digit levels?

[Jumping Jehosephat Johnnie Juniper](#).

I thought this [Peak Oil stuff](#) was conspiracy theory?

What can we possibly do?

Well, there is a [local utility in Texas](#), Austin to be exact, that is actually doing something about it. The leaders of Austin understand that there **is a way to deal with this problem**. And, they understand that the above article has at least one big mistatement in it, or at least one **big misleading statement**.

"cars cannot be propelled by roof-borne windmills. "

No, but [plug-in hybrid](#) cars and other electric transportation appliances can be propelled by highly efficient [Wind Turbines](#) and other renewables from the high resource areas of Texas.

And today, the [City of Austin](#) is initiating it's efforts to get car manufacturers to make plug in hybrids with the kick-off of a [petition drive](#) and campaign. If you are from that part of the world, you are [invited](#) to join them.

[Plug in Hybrids](#) will provide its owners the ability to choose between gasoline at 3 or 4 or 5 dollars a gallon or **electric fuel** from wind and other resources at 60 cents per electric gallon of gas.

[Plug in Hybrids](#) can help clean the air.

[Plug in Hybrids](#) can help with local economic development.

[Plug in Hybrids](#) can help create a [unified transportation system](#).

[Plug in Hybrids](#) and other advanced transportation appliances could some day even provide [energy back](#) to the electric grid when it is most needed, thus reducing the amount of peaking power plants that must be built.

As Wired is fond of saying,

SUVs?

Tired.

Plug in Hybrids?

Wired.

Like the high-tech version of the bumper sticker says,

"Keep Austin Wired."

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posted by oZ @ [12:12 AM](#)



10 Comments: **Anonymous said...**

As always your prose is delightful and your content informative.

-NR

10:25 PM

 **head lem said...**

Reality sucks. I'm going to the movies.

10:48 PM

 **OZ said...**

this is a movie.

11:06 PM

 **Anonymous said...**

Yikes. When the big boys start talking, it is here now. Though scary, it is exciting to see the Mukitymucks take peak oil seriously - regardless of the motivation.

Is the balance tipping? Thanks for constant stream of info presented with humor and grace.

6:59 AM

 **Dorothy said...**

It is very interesting to see that more and more people are becoming conscious of this problem. Some people wants to stay in a denial state but others are taking actions. I saw over 4 hybrid cars this weekend.

8:19 AM

 **Anonymous said...**

What about biodiesel? Austin also has biodiesel available check out the site

<http://www.austinbiofuels.com/>

It's easy just buy a diesel engine - I love my Golf - we don't have to wait for the "industry" to make then - \$3 a gallon not so bad.

Grow your own fuel.

10:18 AM

 **Anonymous said...**

plug in hybrids can run on any fuel, including bio diesel.

10:44 AM

 **head lem said...**

I think too many here are missing the BIG PICTURE: How is Mr. Farmer going to grow food for you when he can't afford fertilizer and tractor fuel? How is Mr. Trucker going to cart the food & other goodies to your house when he (and you indirectly) cannot afford to pay for the fuel for his still-amortizing big rig?

And before you think, "I'm going self-sufficient," where are you going to buy the sterile scalpels to do your at-home self-serve appendectomy when your tummy starts hurtin?

We either hang together, or hang apart. It was true then. It's true now.

P.S. The Madison Avenue company that brings you the WillYou JoinUS line may be the same one that brought you the Marlboro Man (was it Young & Rubi-con ? not sure here.) They are here to serve you. The markets always provide.

12:13 PM

 **Anonymous said...**

I was at the press conference today. The auditorium was full, and the campaign kick off was a super success. We had a Mayor, Councilmembers, a County Commissioner, a Congressman, Chamber of Commerce leaders, and Citizens agreeing to move this plug in agenda forward.

This is a positive way to move towards peace and away from Middle Eastern oil supply dominance.

2:49 PM

 **OZ said...**

All of this sounds very encouraging. I understand from people involved that a plug in America is just around the corner.

3:14 PM

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