



## DrumBeat: December 2, 2007

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 2, 2007 - 10:33am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [It's time to face peak oil](#)

Health care is Pittsburgh's economic anchor, employing thousands in hospitals, research units, clinics and related facilities. As goes the medical industry, so goes Pittsburgh.

Medical executives center their attention on "cost, quality and coverage" while considering rising energy prices, especially oil, a minor concern. This is a colossal misjudgment of medicine's dependence on fossil fuels and the fact that the "hydrocarbon era" is entering its final stages.

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### [KazMunaiGaz May Raise Stake in Kashagan to Equal Eni](#)

KazMunaiGaz National Co. said a proposal to raise its stake in the Kashagan venture was accepted by most of its partners, a step toward resolving disputes over developing the world's biggest oil discovery in three decades.

### [Housing Crisis? Try Mobile McMansions](#)



In fact, though, things are not really, really great in R.V. land. Sales are slipping. Winnebago announced during the show that its revenue was falling for the first time in six years. And the industry association released updated projections indicating that industrywide sales would probably decline 4.8 percent next year compared with 2007.

It's easy to see why sales are off. With an uncertain economy, tightening credit and gas prices through the roof, many would-be captains of land yachts are rethinking their dreams. Other issues also loom in a world increasingly worried about waste, sustainability and global warming. It might be getting harder to love a beast that gulps a gallon of fuel every seven miles.

### [Record gas prices on the way](#)

Canadian drivers should brace themselves for record gasoline prices this spring if crude oil stays in the \$90-a-barrel range, experts say.

"They could be getting into the \$1.30, \$1.40, maybe even the \$1.50 range per litre," said Jason Toews, one of the founders of GasBuddy.com, a website designed to help motorists find the best deals at the pump.

### [San Francisco Fleet Is All Biodiesel](#)

Claiming it now has the largest green fleet in the nation, the city of San Francisco this week completed a yearlong project to convert its entire array of diesel vehicles — from

ambulances to street sweepers — to biodiesel, a clean-burning and renewable fuel that holds promise for helping to reduce greenhouse gases.

### [Venezuela sees 2008 oil price near \\$100 per barrel](#)

Venezuela expects 2008 global oil prices will remain similar to the record prices seen this year, oil minister Rafael Ramirez said on Sunday.

"We expect that the (global) market will maintain the same prices that we have seen this year," Ramirez told reporters.

"Probably, if there is no geopolitical tension like what we have seen recently, prices should be around \$100 per barrel," he said. "We believe this shows there have been structural changes in the market."

### [Nonstop Theft and Bribery Are Staggering Iraq](#)

Jobless men pay \$500 bribes to join the police. Families build houses illegally on government land, carwashes steal water from public pipes, and nearly everything the government buys or sells can now be found on the black market.

Painkillers for cancer (from the Ministry of Health) cost \$80 for a few capsules; electricity meters (from the Ministry of Electricity) go for \$200 each, and even third-grade textbooks (stolen from the Ministry of Education) must be bought at bookstores for three times what schools once charged.

### [Weird science From the White House](#)

But do, please, pay attention to the ghosts this White House put into the machine. The loyal Bushies have found countless ways of silencing or undercutting researchers whose findings run counter to Bush-Cheney politics. They have manipulated data on food safety, weather, climate change, health, conservation and more.

### [Oil and gas production have Kansans pumped](#)

Surging crude prices — nearly \$100 a barrel on the world market — continue to build interest in modest-producing oil wells that canvass Kansas. Drilling for a nontraditional natural gas — coal bed methane — is booming in southeast Kansas.

### [Oregon geologist puts hope in mining methane gas](#)

In the wooded hills south of Coos Bay, Steve Pappajohn points to a rich black seam in a

cutaway hillside. Coal.

That and a capped well represent his hopes that hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of fuel--not coal, but methane gas--could be deep below, trapped by water in the coal beds.

### [Sri Lanka's Iranian financed refinery may take five years: official](#)

Sri Lanka's plans to double its refinery capacity, which were dealt a severe blow after politicians fixed fuel prices last August, would take off with Iranian help in 2008, officials said.

### [More petrol woes for motorists](#)

A temporary fuel shortage is looming ahead of the petrol price hike on Wednesday, with suppliers warning some orders may be short or delivered late.

### [Companies squeezing power from sun, deserts in Southern California](#)

The plant runs on hot water, pumped from deep underground and flashed into steam to turn turbines. With 10 generators near the lakeshore, the facility produces enough electricity for 255,000 homes, and the company that owns it wants to expand. Other companies are drilling nearby, hoping to build their own geothermal plants.

### [Govt to reap \\$5.6b carbon trade windfall](#)

The government stands to reap up to \$5.6 billion in extra revenue from the introduction of an emissions trading system, official figures show. And power generating companies could pocket net windfall gains of another \$2b during 2010-2015.

### [The tipping point](#)

We don't know how fast the change would occur, nor the temperature that could change the biota of the planet.

Are we then at the tipping point, as Ban Ki Moon said? Yes. Despite the uncertainties, we've no choice but to accept that we are at the edge of disaster.

### [Limited Biofuel Feedstock Supply?](#)

The United States has embarked on an ambitious program to develop technology and

infrastructure to economically and sustainably produce ethanol from biomass. Corn stover, the above-ground material left in fields after corn grain harvest, has been identified as a primary feedstock. Stover and other crop biomass or residue is frequently referred to as "trash" or a waste, implying it has minimal value.

However, when returned to the land, this carbon-rich material helps control erosion, replenishes soil organic matter, and improves soil quality. Organic matter in the soil retains and recycles nutrients and improves soil structure, aeration, and water exchange characteristics. In addition, organic matter is the energy source for the soil ecosystem.

### [Africa Looks Toward Biofuels Amid Doubts Over Yields](#)

Jatropha, a shrub used for decades in Africa as a natural fence between crops, has been hyped in the media as a biofuel, but he says it is too early to tell.

"From what I have heard there was very little knowledge about jatropha in terms of the behavior of the plant, the plantation level and so on, how the pests respond, [and] if you grow it at scale," he explained. "So the people we talked to who were actually into jatropha gave us the impression that they were going down this road, they were seeing an opportunity, but they themselves were not quite sure of what the yields would be like."

### [OPEC would raise output if market needed - Algeria](#)

OPEC would increase output if there would otherwise not be enough oil to satisfy market demand, Algeria's Oil and Mining Minister Chakib Khelil said on Sunday.

"Stocks are high. If there is real demand and not enough supply, we will increase," Khelil told reporters when asked whether OPEC might decide to increase production when it meets at Abu Dhabi on Wednesday.

"It is possible. We will analyse the market and see if there is a real demand," he said, but added: "OPEC is not going to raise output unless there is a need in the market."

### [State legislator eases into debate](#)

State Rep. Terry Backer, D-Stratford, is passionate about two things - protecting Long Island Sound and weaning the state off its dependency on foreign oil.

Those two passions have made it difficult for Backer to wade into the ongoing debate over building a liquefied natural gas platform in the middle of Long Island Sound.

### [Oil decline pressing Vermonters now](#)

The United States responded to the 1973 oil crisis in many ways, including gasoline rationing, a 55 mph national speed limit and a year-round daylight-savings time. If oil production really has peaked and is entering a permanent decline, shortages like those of 1973 may be around the corner. How are we prepared to respond?

The short answer is that we aren't, either at the federal or the state level. The U.S. Government Accountability Office concluded in a report earlier this year, "... there is no coordinated federal strategy for reducing uncertainty about the ... timing (of peak oil) or mitigating its consequences."

### [Surfing the ultimate peak](#)

To the surfer's eye, the drop from Hubbert's peak on the graph may not look too gnarly, but the relatively sudden reversal from global oil production growth to contraction is likely to produce a potentially devastating economic crisis, with soaring oil prices followed by deep recession. For a surf industry based on hydrocarbons in general and petrochemicals in particular, peak oil could still come to feel like taking a beating at Mavericks.

### [The limits of 21st-century revolutions](#)

An oil-rich country bent on humbling the United States is an instructive place from which to view the world, so here are eight rules of modern political life as seen from President Hugo Chávez's Venezuela...

### [HNN Podcast: The Golden Compass & The Geography of Nowhere](#)

Summary: In this month's audio podcast Humanist Network News interviews author Philip Pullman about the religious protest of *The Golden Compass*, a new film based on his fantasy novel. Also, suburban sprawl critic James Howard Kunstler speaks to HNN about how and why Americans need to re-think the spaces they inhabit.

### [Africa urged to avoid morning-after oil hangover](#)

Oil-rich countries in Africa must resist the temptation to splurge their revenue from black gold if they want to avoid a hangover when supplies run dry, experts said at a conference in South Africa.

### [Oil's well despite threat of \\$100 a barrel price tag](#)

SHOULD we be worried about high oil prices? Two of the worst world recessions in the past 35 years, those of 1973 and 1979, were the result of a sharp leap in the price of oil.

### [Pakistan: Gap between local oil production and demand surging](#)

The production gap of local refineries is being widened to bridge the thriving demand of petroleum products, surging imports of these products and import bill of the country.

### [Shanghai in free fall as oil giant plummets](#)

The newly floated oil giant PetroChina has lost a third of a trillion dollars in nominal value in just three weeks, plummeting to a fresh low yesterday as angst gripped the Shanghai stock market.

### [Oil Scrooge boosts costs for shipping](#)

The same oil price increases that have sent gasoline over \$3 a gallon again and heating oil to record highs will make it more expensive this year to mail those dried fruitcakes, loud ties and other holiday gifts.

The 40 percent increase in crude oil prices since August has led to higher fuel surcharges by the major package delivery companies, who said the costs of jet fuel for their planes and diesel fuel for trucks have soared.

### [Green jobs are the wave of the future](#)

We stand at the cusp of a new clean energy economy. Climate change and peak oil are twin crises that will have tragic and disorienting consequences as they play out. However, solving these crises creates an enormous opportunity, and thousands of jobs will be generated in coming years as our economic and political systems adjust to the new realities.

### [Iran's use of oil weapon cuts two ways](#)

Oil remains near historic heights. And jittery markets jump at any sign that supplies could grow tighter, spiking at every hint of new tensions over Tehran's nuclear defiance.

But recent increases pale compared with the once-unthinkable levels that could be reached — experts speak of up to \$200 a barrel — if Washington and Tehran move toward open conflict.

### [Won't Support Output Increase - Libya Oil Head](#)

"Libya will not support an increase," head of Libyan oil policy and chief executive of Libya's National Oil Co. Shokri Ghanem told Dow Jones Newswires in an exclusive interview in Qatar's capital Doha.

The oil price is "deteriorating despite the fact that there is a cut in supply in Canada and the winter is starting," Ghanem said.

### [China, Japan pledge economic cooperation](#)

China and Japan amicably wrapped up their first high-level trade and economic talks on Sunday by pledging greater overall cooperation — but left the touchy issue of gas exploration in the East China Sea unresolved.

### [Iran starts transporting largest oil platform in Persian Gulf](#)

The offshore transportation of processing platform of Salman oilfield, the largest oil topside in the Persian Gulf, started on Sadra Island, southern Iran.

The Khouf Production Platform (KPP) processing topside, the main one of Salman oil and gas field, and a linking bridge are transferred to Bushehr, southern Iran.

### [Employee missing after fire breaks out at Twin Cities refinery](#)

An employee was missing after a fire broke out in a fuel oil tank at the Marathon Petroleum Co. refinery in this Twin Cities suburb on Saturday morning, company officials said.

### [Bali talks to seek global climate deal in 2009](#)

Delegates from about 190 nations gathered in Bali on Sunday to try to build on a "fragile understanding" that the fight against global warming needs to be expanded to all countries with a deal in 2009.



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