



## Petrocollapse Round-Up: Dr. John Darnell

Posted by [Glenn](#) on October 6, 2005 - 9:56pm in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

Topic: [Policy/Politics](#)

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Dr. John Darnell PhD., [Roscoe Bartlett's](#) energy advisor, gave a 35 minute presentation on adaptation lessons from the Apollo 13 mission that we could apply to the problem of peak oil. Overall he struck me as being the most optimistic person that spoke at the conference and that's not saying much since in any other room, he would be considered an alarmist. His style was low-key and less dramatic than Kunstler, but no less effective at conveying the magnitude of the problem and the need to take immediate action to reduce demand.

His proposal is to reduce demand is a controlled annual 5% reduction (worldwide I assume) ahead of the geological decline rate to provide a hydrocarbon cushion for the future to help transition to a low energy economy and give time for alternatives to ramp up. He gave several examples of an energy self sufficient house, a 300 mpg car and other ways of reducing energy consumption.

More about the Apollo analogy and what he told us about Roscoe's meeting with President Bush below the fold.

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Dr. Darnell explained how Jim Lovell, the other two Apollo 13 astronauts and mission control adapted to new circumstances after a malfunction aborted their attempted Moon landing mission by:

1. Recognizing the problem and switching course - aiming to slingshot around the Moon to save fuel instead of attempting to land on it. That means we need to alter our energy consumption course and start understanding what type of course is feasible within the limits of our circumstance.
2. Once they had changed course the next step was surviving the trip. They faced an immediate shortage of electrical power and oxygen unless they severely cut back power use and got into the Lunar Expedition Module (LEM) which served as a temporary lifeboat during much of the journey home, until they prepared for maneuver to land on Earth.
3. Work Cooperatively both in the Apollo spaceship as well as mission control to figure out creative solutions to make it through the crisis and land safely on Earth. Only through close collaboration, experimentation and good communication did they find all the right answers to get home safely.

After the conference, a small group of folks including one of the volunteers (Mitch) and [Michael Kane](#) (another speaker) asked him about the awareness at the highest levels of government. As many of you know, Rep. Roscoe Bartlett met with President Bush on [June 29th](#). Basically Roscoe asked the President what his legacy will be given the war in Iraq is not going well, the deficit is high, Social Security reform is on the backburner of the Republican Congress and his popularity is getting lower. Rep. Bartlett basically proposed a crash program of preparing America for the implications of peak oil as soon as possible. While Dr. Darnell (you can call him John when he has a pint in his hand) says that the highest levels of government is aware of the peak oil problem, he

The Oil Drum: Local | Petrocollapse Round-Up: Dr. John Darrin <http://local.theoil Drum.com/story/2005/10/6/212529/488> says that they are afraid of creating a panic prematurely. He added that local government is probably not very aware of the problem being as imminent.

Personally, I think that's exactly why we need to get in front of our local community organizations and explain to them how we need to start preparing for the worst case scenario now.

One trick he recommended that you do when you write to a local paper: Include your local representative's name in the letter. That way their staff will have to read it and usually pass it on to the representative themselves.



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