

The Week That Was: 2012-09-08 (September 8, 2012)
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The Science and Environmental Policy Project

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Quote of the Week: *The sun shines and warms and lights us and we have no curiosity to know why this is so.* Ralph Waldo Emerson. [H/t Willie Soon & William Briggs]

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Number of the Week: The other 97 to 98%

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THIS WEEK:

By Ken Haapala, Executive Vice President, Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP)

SEPP April Fools Award Announcement:

During the month of April, the Science and Environmental Policy Project (SEPP) conducted a special international poll. Thousands were asked to nominate a government official or political leader, who, in the determination of a special SEPP panel is the most deserving. The criteria are as follows:

- The official has advanced, or proposes to advance, significant expansion of governmental power, regulation, or control over the public or significant sections of the general economy.
- The official does so by declaring such measures are necessary to protect public health, welfare, or the environment.
- The official declared that physical science supports such measures.
- The physical science supporting the measures is flimsy at best, and possibly non-existent.

SEPP received 12 nominees representing 5 different nations plus the State of California. There was no need for a meeting of the special SEPP panel because the Public Choice was overwhelming.

The distinguished recipient of the First Annual SEPP April Fools Award is none other the America's own EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson. In her honor SEPP had this special trophy prepared. Henceforth, this distinguished lump of coal will be known as the Lisa Jackson Trophy, or, simply, THE JACKSON.



Accompanied by Jeremy Snavelly, Fred Singer announces the SEPP April Fools award at the Annual Conference of the Doctors of Disaster Preparedness, Uniondale, NY, July 29, 2012

Video of the event: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrHakGuOhGI>



THE JACKSON

September 4, 1882: One hundred thirty years ago Thomas Edison threw the switch at the Pearl Street Power Station in Manhattan, thereby sending electricity from the coal-fired power plant, through electrical lines (a grid), to eagerly waiting customers, cumulating about three years of intense effort and invention by Edison and his employees. It was not funded or subsidized by the Federal government.

The results were so spectacular, that almost immediately many people in New York, and other cities, demanded that they too have clean, odorless electric light delivered at the flick of a switch. Further developments soon followed such as mass transit and labor saving devices such as washing machines stoves, refrigerators, etc., powered by electricity.

Coal-fired power plants have their problems, and need emission control devices to protect public health. However, the EPA, supported by others including environmental groups, are waging a fierce campaign to destroy the industry, often using unsubstantiated claims of public health and welfare. The leaders of these organizations fail to understand the miracle of electricity.

The Political Games Continue: Last week's TWTW contained a link to a post in *Science Insider* evaluating the scientific topics found in the Republican Party Platform. This week there is a link to a similar post for the scientific topics found in the Democratic Party Platform.

Perhaps even better, ScienceDebates.org asked 14 written questions of the two presidential candidates and produced the written responses side-by-side, which are linked for individual evaluation. Please see links under Let the Political Games Continue.

Climate Science and Ethics: Both Andrew Montford and Judith Curry favorably commented on an essay by Brent Ranalli Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal entitled "Climate Science, Character, and the 'Hard-Won' Consensus." Unfortunately, it is not freely available online. http://muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/kennedy_institute_of_ethics_journal/v022/22.2.ranalli.pdf

A quote cited by Montford is disturbing. "Montford (2010)—and on the other side, Oreskes and Conway (2010)—though clearly impassioned, impressed me as scrupulous in scholarship: diligent with source attributions, respectful of the reader, and careful to point out alternative interpretations before drawing conclusions." As readers of TWTW realize, TWTW considers none of the favorable attributes apply to the work of Oreskes and Conway and their book fails to substantiate the outrageous claims made against four distinguished scientists. Instead of presenting evidence, the book implies the evidence is in the footnotes.

A portion cited by Curry may well sum up the debate as she states; however, another portion is disturbing. Ranalli implies that those outside the Climate Establishment who demand data and computer codes are using these demands as a ploy. But that is exactly what is critical for the science. The Ranalli's assertion is strange because he recognizes the work of McIntyre in exposing the hockey-stick. McIntyre asked for the code and the data and was thwarted in obtaining it.

The issue continues. For example, in reporting temperatures, the NASA Goddard Institute of Space Studies (NASA-GISS) ignores space age technology. When challenged about the divergence between surface measurements and comprehensive satellite measure, the general response is the warming is hiding in the oceans. The greenhouse effect takes place in the atmosphere and then the warming vanishes into the oceans without leaving a trace?

Professionals outside the Climate Establishment, such as meteorologists Joe D'Aleo have shown that the historic surface data has been manipulated in ways to lower the temperature record of the 1930s, when very high temperatures were recorded. Based on the portions cited, the essay appears to be more an appeal to authority than an appeal to empirical science. Please see links under Seeking a Common Ground.

"Answer only matter if ask right question": Chemical Physicist Donald Rapp succinctly expressed the meaningfulness of the survey discussed last week that concludes 97 to 98% of climate scientists believe in human caused global warming with a quote from the character Miyogi in the movie. "Karate Kid." Rapp suggests the following (changes in red):

"The answer to Q1 is clearly "YES" but it should have been phrased:

Q 1A. "When compared with pre-1800s levels **in the depths of the Little Ice Age**, do you think that mean global temperatures have generally risen, fallen, or remained relatively constant **as we pulled out of the LIA?**"

Question 2 is muddled by what we mean by "significant". I would rather make it quantitative:

Q 2A. "Do you think human activity has contributed **more than 50% to** changing mean global temperatures in the 20th century?"

But even this is really not an important question. The real question that the questioners rarely ask is:

Q 3: Do you think that climate modelers can accurately predict the climate effects of rising CO2 in the 21st century, the impacts of these effects on humanity, and the costs of proposed mitigation policies?

That is the question rarely if ever asked.

I suspect that the "consensus" would have more difficulty saying "Yes" to question 2A, and even more difficulty with question 3. "

Number of the Week: the other 97 to 98%. As discussed above, last week's TWTW commented on one possible source of the statement in the August 1 hearing by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee that 97 to 98% of scientists agree that humans are the cause of the recent global warming. In an unpublished working paper, Heartland's Joe Bast discussed a second study published by the Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). In this study, which was contributed to PNAS by Stephen Schneider, the authors compiled a list of 1,372 climate scientists based on authorship of assessment reports, such as those by the IPCC, and contributors to multi-signatory statements about anthropogenic (human cause) climate change (ACC), including the 2008 NIPCC report. They divided the 1,372 into two categories, those "convinced by the evidence (CE) and those unconvinced by the evidence (UE) of ACC." They then imposed a requirement that the scientist authored a minimum of 20 climate publications.

The authors conclude: "(i) 97–98% of the climate researchers most actively publishing in the field support the tenets of ACC outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and (ii) the relative climate expertise and scientific prominence of the researchers unconvinced of ACC are substantially below that of the convinced researchers."

The conclusions should not be a surprise because criticism of climate science comes mostly from those outside of the Climate Establishment. The IPCC assessment reports, as well as other government funded reports, are focused on attributing climate change to humanity, not understanding the natural causes of climate change. Further, since 1993 the US has spent roughly \$35 Billion on climate science. None of that money is set aside for supporting ACC skeptics. One might as well survey wind farm developers about the need for wind power.

The key words of this PNAS report include the label of “climate denier”, which sums up the meaningfulness of the report. Please see links under Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate, or be Vague?

Amplifications and Corrections: Australian economist Des Moore, former Deputy Secretary of the Federal Treasury, clarified as much as possible the ongoing changing of the carbon tax in Australia. “... the government is to continue the existing tax of \$23 a tonne, then rising incrementally, until 2015. But what they have abandoned is the announced floor price of \$15 a tonne after 2015 when the policy was to move to a trading system here. This floor was to provide the “certainty”, we were told, for our traders. This was, the government said, “essential” to the functioning of our trading system. Now however Australia will simply adopt whatever price comes out of the European trading system after the 2015.” Right now the government needs revenue and businesses will have to pay.

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ARTICLES:

For the numbered articles below please see this week’s TWTW at: www.sepp.org. The articles are at the end of the pdf.

1. The Shale Revolution: What Could Go Wrong?

By John Bussey, WSJ, Sep 6, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443589304577635783532976456.html?mod=WSJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

[SEPP Comment: The major issues are the decline rate of the wells is not fully known, lack of infrastructure, such as pipelines, lack of skilled manpower, and possible regulations. A graphic of major shale areas in North America is at the end of the article.]

2. Greens Against Green Energy, Big Solar gets the Big Oil treatment.

Editorial, WSJ, Sep 4, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443618604577621751892592534.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_AboveLEFTTop

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NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Is the Sun Rising?

Global-warming fanatics take note

Sunspots do impact climate

By Willie Soon and William Briggs, Washington Times, Sep 6, 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/sep/6/global-warming-fanatics-take-note/>

Climategate Continued

Another Example of Inappropriate Communications on a Climate Assessment

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Sep 5, 2012

<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/05/another-example-of-inappropriate-communications-on-a-climate-assessment/>

NOAA slips up?

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Sep 6, 2012
<http://www.bishop-hill.net/blog/2012/9/6/noaa-slips-up.html>

Game on – NOAA’s refusal of documents earns them a lawsuit

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Sep 6, 2012
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/06/game-on-noaas-refusal-of-documents-earns-them-a-lawsuit/>

Challenging the Orthodoxy

Is the Current Global Warming a Natural Cycle?

By W. Jackson Davis and Peter Taylor, WUWT, Sep 5, 2012
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/05/is-the-current-global-warming-a-natural-cycle/>

The Nature Climate Change reviewers concluded that the natural warming cycles we identified in the Vostok record could not possibly be real or significant, but instead represented irrelevant statistical “noise” in the temperature record.

[SEPP Comment: Václav Klaus, the president of the Czech Republic, stated that the blogs allow an expression of freedom giving scientists the ability to publish what the Climate Establishment desires to suppress. This entry is not an endorsement.]

The big bunnies of climate science

By John McLean, Quadrant, Sep 2, 2012
<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/09/the-big-bunnies-of-climate-science>
[SEPP Comment: A summary of the delusions and illusions of the Climate Establishment.]

2012 Arctic Ice Melt Claims Distorted and Inaccurate. It’s the Wind Stupid

By Tim Ball, A Different Perspective, Sep 2, 2012
<http://drtimball.com/2012/2012-arctic-ice-melt-claims-distorted-and-inaccurate-its-the-wind-stupid/>

A Provocative New Study Reported By The BBC – Arctic Ice Melt ‘Like Adding 20 Years Of CO2 Emissions’

By Roger Pielke Sr, Climate Science, Sep 7, 2012
<http://pielkeclimatesci.wordpress.com/2012/09/07/a-provocative-new-study-reported-by-the-bbc-arctic-ice-melt-like-adding-20-years-of-co2-emissions/>

[SEPP Comment: As Pielke points out, if the paper is correct, then the final conclusions are contrary to the initial impressions and the climate is less sensitive to increased CO2 than the IPCC claims.]

Defending the Orthodoxy

UK wind power predictable enough to keep lights on, says think tank IPPR

Wind power in Britain is predictable enough that the grid can rely on it to help keep the lights on, despite spells of cold, calm weather, while it cuts carbon emissions significantly, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) said.

By Staff Writer, Telegraph, UK, Aug 30, 2012
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/9508765/UK-wind-power-predictable-enough-to-keep-lights-on-says-think-tank-IPPR.html>

[SEPP Comment: As long as the needed capacity to complement wind power is up-front and ready to go.]

Bringing UK averages into the 21st Century

The Met Office long-term UK climate averages have leapt forward a decade into the 21st Century to give the most up-to-date picture of our climate today, as well as an insight into how it has changed.

Press Release, Met Office, Aug 29, 2012

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/news/releases/archive/2012/1981-2010-averages>

Questioning the Orthodoxy

Voters Abandon Global Warming Fears

By Alan Caruba, Warning Signs, Sep 4, 2012

<http://factsnotfantasy.blogspot.com/2012/09/voters-abandon-global-warming-fears.html>

Questioning European Green

Stern exposed

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Sep 4, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/9/4/stern-exposed.html>

New Report: Government Cannot Rely On Stern Review To Justify Costly Climate Policies

By Staff Writer, GWPF, Sep 3, 2012 [H/t Anne Debeil]

<http://www.thegwpf.org/new-report-government-cannot-rely-on-stern-review-to-justify-costly-climate-policies/>

Britain can finally make the dash for gas with Paterson

By Benny Peiser, City AM, Sep 5, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.cityam.com/forum/britain-can-finally-make-the-dash-gas-paterson>

Expanding the Orthodoxy

Reports: Breakthroughs continue to elude Bangkok climate talks

Disagreements over future structure of negotiations result in scant progress at latest round of UN talks

By James Murray, Business Green, Sep 3, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2202384/reports-breakthroughs-continue-to-elude-bangkok-climate-talks>

[SEPP Comment: To get beyond Kyoto may not be easy, but the bureaucrats and greens will have some agreement that will continue the party at the public expense.]

Seeking a Common Ground

The Temperature Of 2012

By David Whitehouse, GWPF, Sep 5, 2012

<http://www.thegwpf.org/the-temperature-of-2012/>

[SEPP Comment: Discussing the surface data and that one year does not make a trend.]

Ranalli on scientific consensus

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Sep 1, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/9/1/ranalli-on-scientific-consensus.html>

The ‘hard won’ consensus

By Judith Curry, Climate Etc, Sep 3, 2012

<http://judithcurry.com/2012/09/03/the-hard-won-consensus/#more-9596>

[SEPP Comment: Amplification on the link above.]

Rational Climate Economics

Paper presented at the Erice conference “The Role of Science in the Third Millennium” – Erice, 20 August 2012: Session ‘Climate and Climate Economics’

Nigel Lawson, GWPF, Sep 5, 2012

<http://www.thegwpf.org/nigel-lawson-rational-climate-economics/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Exaggerate, or be Vague?

Expert credibility in climate change

By Anderegg, et al, Contributed by Stephen Schneider, PNAS, Apr 9, 2010

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2010/06/04/1003187107>

The 97% exaggeration that won’t go away

By Joe D’Aleo, ICECAP, Sep 4, 2012

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/in-the-news/the_97_exaggeration_that_wont_go_away1/

[SEPP Comment: A follow-up on comments in TWTW last week.]

NYT blames food crisis on “climate change,” hides plea to reduce government mandated burning of food for fuel

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Sep 6, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/06/nyt-blames-food-crisis-on-climate-change-hides-plea-to-reduce-government-mandated-burning-of-food-for-fuel/>

Communicating Better to the Public – Make things up.

Ryan Maue on Abraham’s false hurricane claims

By Ryan Maue, WeatherBell, Sep 4, 2012

http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog/voters_abandon_global_warming_fears/

The plot thickens

By Andrew Montford, Bishop Hill, Sep 3, 2012

<http://bishophill.squarespace.com/blog/2012/9/3/the-plot-thickens.html>

UWA's scourge of sceptics

By Michael Kile, Quadrant, Sep 3, 2012

<http://www.quadrant.org.au/blogs/doomed-planet/2012/09/uwa-s-scourge-of-sceptics>

Models v. Observations

Another failure of climate models – carbon soot warming actually far less than models predict

By Anthony Watts, WUWT, Sep 3, 2012

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2012/09/03/another-failure-of-climate-models-carbon-soot-warming-far-less/>

Changing Weather

UK Summers Back To Normal

By Paul Homewood, NALOPKT, Sep 5, 2012 [H/t GWPF]

<http://notalotofpeopleknowthat.wordpress.com/2012/09/05/uk-summers-back-to-normal/>

Don't Believe The Global Warmists, Major Hurricanes Are Less Frequent

By James Taylor, Forbes, Sep 5, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jamestaylor/2012/09/05/dont-believe-the-global-warmists-major-hurricanes-are-less-frequent/>

Glacial thinning has sharply accelerated at major South American icefields

By Staff Writers, Washington DC (SPX) Sep 07, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Glacial_thinning_has_sharply_accelerated_at_major_South_American_icefields_999.html

Changing Climate

Little Ice Age: Started In The Southern Hemisphere?

By David Whitehead, GWPF, Sep 7, 2012

<http://www.thegwfpf.org/little-ice-age-started-in-the-southern-hemisphere/>

Human Impact Felt on Black Sea Long Before Industrial Era

By Staff Writers, Cape Cod MA (SPX), Sep 06, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Human_Impact_Felt_on_Black_Sea_Long_Before_Industrial_Era_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Not only evidence of human impact but also evidence of a general climate cooling.]

Historical Trends of African Glacier Dynamics

By Staff Writers, SPPI & CO2 Science, Sep 5, 2012

http://scienceandpublicpolicy.org/originals/historical_trends_of_african_glacier_dynamics.html

Changing Seas

Coastline erosion due to rise in sea level greater than previously thought

By Roy Meijer, Delft, Holland (SPX), Sep 06, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Coastline_erosion_due_to_rise_in_sea_level_greater_than_previously_thought_999.html

[SEPP Comment: More speculation on the consequences of speculated sea level rise.]

Changing Earth

Earthquake Hazards Map Study Finds Deadly Flaws, MU Researcher Suggests Improvements

By Staff Writers, Columbia MO (SPX), Sep 04, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Earthquake_Hazards_Map_Study_Finds_Deadly_Flaws_MU_Researcher_Suggests_Improvements_999.html

Agriculture Issues & Fear of Famine

Oxfam warns food prices to soar due to climate change

By Staff Writers, Paris (AFP), Sept 5, 2012

[http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Oxfam warns food prices to soar due to climate change 99.html](http://www.seeddaily.com/reports/Oxfam_warns_food_prices_to_soar_due_to_climate_change_99.html)

Review of Recent Scientific Articles by NIPCC

For a full list of articles see www.NIPCCreport.org

Heavy Precipitation Over the US: Has it Increased as Some have Predicted it Should?

Reference: Mahajan, S., North, G.R., Saravanan, R. and Genton, M.G. 2012. Statistical significance of trends in monthly heavy precipitation over the US. *Climate Dynamics* 38: 1375-1387.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/sep/4sep2012a1.html>

[SEPP Comment: Can't find it now, but it may happen.]

Occasionally-Slowed Organismal Development in Low-pH Seawater

Reference: Martin, S., Richier, S., Pedrotti, M.-L., Dupont, S., Castejon, C., Gerakis, Y., Kerros, M.-E., Oberhansli, F., Teyssie, J.-L., Jeffree, R. and Gattuso, J.-P. 2011. Early development and molecular plasticity in the Mediterranean sea urchin *Paracentrotus lividus* exposed to CO₂-driven acidification. *The Journal of Experimental Biology* 214: 1357-1368.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/sep/4sep2012a3.html>

Delayed Snowmelt Reduces Rocky Mountain Ground Squirrel Populations

Reference: Lane, J.E., Druuk, L.E.B., Charmantier, A., Murie, J.O. and Dobson, S. 2012. Delayed phenology and reduced fitness associated with climate change in a wild hibernator. *Nature* in press doi:10.1038/nature11335.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/sep/4sep2012a5.html>

Simulating the Present-Day Arctic Atmosphere

Reference: de Boer, G., Chapman, W., Kay, J.E., Medeiros, B., Shupe, M.D., Vavrus, S. and Walsh, J. 2012. A characterization of the present-day Arctic atmosphere in CCSM4. *Journal of Climate* 25: 2676-2695.

<http://www.nipccreport.org/articles/2012/sep/5sep2012a3.html>

The Political Games Continue

The Top American Science Questions: 2012

By Staff Writers and both presidential candidates, ScienceDebate, Sep 4, 2012 [H/t Lubos Motl]

<http://www.sciencedebate.org/debate12/>

[SEPP Comment: Side by side comparison of written comments by both presidential candidates on 14 science and energy questions.]

Democratic Party Platform Mostly Looks Back on Science

By David Malakoff and Meghna Sachdev, Science Insider, Sep 4, 2012

<http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2012/09/democratic-party-platform-mostly.html>

Romney: Humans contribute to climate change, more regulations not the answer

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Sep 4, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/247393-romney-elaborates-on-global-warming-views-in-questionnaire>

Obama, EPA actions make cap-and-trade more likely

By Zack Colman, The Hill, Sep 5, 2012

<http://thehill.com/blogs/e2-wire/e2-wire/247697-obama-epa-actions-make-cap-and-trade-more-likely>

[SEPP Comment: Gaming the Federal courts to advance legislation.]

Litigation Issues

NZ Justice shows courts are useless in a science debate

By Jo Nova, Her Blog, Sep 7, 2012

<http://joannenova.com.au/2012/09/nz-justice-shows-courts-are-useless-in-a-science-debate/#more-23765>

[SEPP Do not question the authority of government when issues of science are concerned!]

Cap-and-Trade and Carbon Taxes

Would a Carbon Dioxide Tax Be Efficient?

By Staff Writers, NCPA, Sep 5, 2012

http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=22328&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DPD

A Carbon Tax Would Harm U.S. Competitiveness and Low-Income Americans

By Staff Writers, NCPA, Aug 30, 2012

http://www.ncpa.org/sub/dpd/index.php?Article_ID=22311&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EnvPD

Subsidies and Mandates Forever

Obama Mileage Mandate Will Fuel Auto Disaster

Editorial, IBD, Aug 31, 2012

<http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/083112-624336-obama-imposes-electric-car-mandate.htm>

EPA and other Regulators on the March

Court Curbs On EPA Offer A Breath Of Fresh Air For Recovery

By Larry Bell, Forbes, Sep 4, 2012

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/larrybell/2012/09/04/court-curbs-on-epa-offer-a-breath-of-fresh-air-for-recovery/>

Energy Issues – Non-US

The Real Reason Behind Oil Price Rises - An Interview with James Hamilton

By James Stanfford, Oil Price.com, Aug 28, 2012

<http://oilprice.com/Interviews/The-Real-Reason-Behind-Oil-Price-Rises-An-Interview-with-James-Hamilton.html#>

Canada Finalizes GHG Rules for Coal-Fired Power Plants

By Sonal Patel, Power News, Sep 6, 2012

http://www.powermag.com/POWERnews/4942.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2516763&hq_l=4&hq_v=5e660500d0

[SEPP Comment: According to a 2011 government study, in 2010, 61% of the nation's electricity comes from hydroelectricity, 22% from thermal (coal, oil or natural gas), 15% nuclear, and 1% from wind and tide. <http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/clf-nsi/rnrgynfmtn/nrgyrprt/nrgyrvvw/cndnrgyrvvw2010/cndnrgyrvvw2010-eng.pdf>]

Dirty power stations to stay and pocket \$5.5bn

By Staff Writer, Power Engineering, Sep 5, 2012

<http://www.power-eng.com/news/2012/09/05/dirty-power-stations-to-stay-and-pocket-5-5bn.html>

Europe must wean IEA from dependence on US

By Matthew Hulbert, European Energy Review, Sep 6, 2012

http://www.europeanenergyreview.eu/site/pagina.php?email=ken@haapala.com&id_mailing=306&toegang=b2eb7349035754953b57a32e2841bda5&id=3841

“European countries should firmly resist any move made by the US and G7 to release strategic oil reserves in the current situation. Such blatant interference in the market, which would clearly be made only for political (US electoral) purposes, would hurt the credibility of the International Energy Agency (IEA) and make a mockery of the IEA's ambition to become a truly global (rather than 'Western') organisation by extending its reach to China and India. In view of the US' renewed striving for 'energy independence', Europe has a vital interest in making the IEA's global ambition work: the only way for Europe to reduce its dependence on Russia is to connect with China.”

Energy Issues -- US

Three Philosophical Questions About Energy (Interview)

By Alex Epstein, Master Resource, Sep 7, 2012

<http://www.masterresource.org/2012/09/3-philosophical-questions-energy/#more-21594>

[SEPP Comments: Thoughtful comments on energy security, energy independence, and other concepts.]

The Case for Natural Gas Exports

By Michael Levi, NYT, Aug 15, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/16/opinion/the-case-for-natural-gas-exports.html?_r=3

Obama Policies Making US More Dependent on Persian Gulf Oil

By Staff Writers, IER, Aug 28, 2012

<http://www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/2012/08/28/u-s-oil-imports-from-the-persian-gulf-and-saudi-arabia-grow-in-2012-and-administration-policies-may-be-to-blame/>

Washington's Control of Oil and Gas

Alaska pursuing unconventional shale oil development to fill its pipeline

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post, Aug 26, 2012

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/alaska-seeks-unconventional-shale-oil-development-to-fill-its-pipeline/2012/08/26/5ea879c6-ed51-11e1-b09d-07d971dee30a_story.html

[SEPP Comment: For years Washington has prohibited expansion of oil development on Federal land, so the state turns to another source to prevent the pipeline from shutting down from too low a volume.]

TransCanada unveils new proposed Keystone pipeline route

By Staff Writers, Reuters, National Post, Sep 5, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/09/05/transcanada-keystone/>

[SEPP Comment: Still needs Washington's approval.]

Nuclear Energy and Fears

Vogtle making good progress despite delay

By Staff Writers, WNN, Sep 3, 2012

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NN-Vogtle_making_good_progress_despite_delay-0309127.html

[SEPP Comment: On the new nuclear power plant being built in Georgia, USA. The assumptions in the comparative cost study between the nuclear plant and a combined cycle natural gas plant must be interesting.]

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Solar and Wind

A Comparison of Wind Power and Load Forecasting Error Distributions

By Hodge, et al, NREL, Jul 2012 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy12osti/54384.pdf>

Presented at 2012 World Renewable Energy Forum in Denver on May 13 – 17, 2012

More wind power needs better forecasting:

By Gerard Wynn, Reuters, Sep 3, 2012 [H/t Bishop Hill]

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/03/column-wynn-wind-forecasting-idUSL6E8K244120120903>

[SEPP Comment: In a one-week snapshot period wind power available to the major Texas grid operator ranged from 8000 to almost 0 MW, thus the power need to complement the wind is almost the entire wind capacity. Making matters worse, slight errors between the hourly forecast and delivery can increase costs significantly "This phase error creates an hourly forecast error of approximately 2,000 MW that must be compensated for in system operations." The complement generating source must be available to deliver 25% of the wind capacity on an hourly basis. See study at link immediately above.]

Alternative, Green ("Clean") Energy -- Other

Project Aims to Harness the Power of Waves

By Kirk Johnson, NYT, Sep 4, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/04/us/project-aims-to-harness-wave-energy-off-the-oregon-coast.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120904

Dangerous and Fool Hardy 2

By Donn Dears, Power for USA, Sep 4, 2012

<http://dddusmma.wordpress.com/2012/09/04/dangerous-and-fool-hardy-2/>

Carbon Schemes

Taxpayer -capture and storage

U.S. forcing Canada to keep playing the carbon-capture game

By Peter Foster, Financial Post, Sep 6, 2012

<http://opinion.financialpost.com/2012/09/06/peter-foster-taxpayer-%C2%ADcapture-and-storage/>

Shell to build carbon capture project for oil-sands emissions

By Eduard Gismatullin, National Post, Sep 5, 2012

<http://business.financialpost.com/2012/09/05/shell-to-build-carbon-capture-project-for-oil-sands-emissions/>

[SEPP Comment: See link immediately above.]

Environmental Industry

The Green War on the Poor

The Democratic party used to care about poor and working people.

By Robert Zubrin, Nation Review, Aug 30, 2012

<http://www.nationreview.com/articles/315369/green-war-poor-robert-zubrin>

[SEPP Comment: Part of a systematic campaign for carbon taxes.]

Major world interests at stake in Canada's vast Mackenzie River Basin

By Staff Writers, Vancouver, Canada (SPX), Sep 04, 2012

http://www.terraily.com/reports/Major_world_interests_at_stake_in_Canadas_vast_Mackenzie_River_Basin_999.html

Other Scientific News

China Focus: Timeline for China's space research revealed

By Xinhua writers Li Huizi and Nick Yates, Beijing (XNA), Sep 04, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/China_Focus_Timeline_for_Chinas_space_research_revealed_999.html

ENCODE project sheds light on human DNA and disease

New findings from the ENCODE project provide insight into how our DNA works and influence common diseases, perhaps renewing hopes for personalized medicine.

By Rosie Mestel and Eryn Brown, Los Angeles Times, Sep 5, 2012

<http://www.latimes.com/news/science/la-sci-dna-encode-20120906,0,7798745.story>

Mars's dramatic climate variations are driven by the Sun

By Staff Writers, Copenhagen, Denmark (SPX), Sep 07, 2012

http://www.marsdaily.com/reports/Mars_dramatic_climate_variations_are_driven_by_the_Sun_99.html

NASA's WISE Survey Uncovers Millions of Black Holes

By Staff Writers, Pasadena CA (JPL), Sep 04, 2012

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/NASAs_WISE_Survey_Uncovers_Millions_of_Black_Holes_999.html

Other News that May Be of Interest

Five Commandments of Decision Making Under Uncertainty

Roger Pielke Jr,
<http://rogerpielkejr.blogspot.com/>

Space-age food served up with seeds of success

By Xin Dingding and Jin Zhu, Beijing (XNA), Sep 04, 2012

http://www.space-travel.com/reports/Space_age_food_served_up_with_seeds_of_success_999.html

[SEPP Comment: Irradiation in space is better than gene splitting?]

Bits of Mystery DNA, Far From ‘Junk,’ Play Crucial Role

By Gina Kolata, NYT, Sep 5, 2012

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/06/science/far-from-junk-dna-dark-matter-proves-crucial-to-health.html?_r=1&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120906

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BELOW THE BOTTOM LINE:

Japan toilet maker showcases 'poop-powered' motorbike

By Staff Writers, Tokyo (AFP), Aug 30, 2012

http://www.biofueldaily.com/reports/Japan_toilet_maker_showcases_poop-powered_motorbike_999.html

Crime, Weather, and Climate Change

By Matthew Ranson, Abt Associates, Inc, Jul 17, 2012 [H/t Tom Nelson & Climate Depot]

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2111377

Harvard Kennedy School M-RCBG Associate Working Paper Series No. 8

Abstract: This paper estimates the impact of climate change on the prevalence of criminal activity in the United States. The analysis is based on a 50-year panel of monthly crime and weather data for 2,972 U.S. counties. I identify the effect of weather on monthly crime by using a semi-parametric bin estimator and controlling for county-by-month and county-by-year fixed effects. The results show that temperature has a strong positive effect on criminal behavior, with little evidence of lagged impacts. Between 2010 and 2099, climate change will cause an additional 30,000 murders, 200,000 cases of rape, 1.4 million aggravated assaults, 2.2 million simple assaults, 400,000 robberies, 3.2 million burglaries, 3.0 million cases of larceny, and 1.3 million cases of vehicle theft in the United States.

[SEPP Comment: Unreal!]

Renewable Energy Sources Could be the Key to Reaching Through to Iran

By Jen Alic, Washington DC (SPX), Sep 06, 2012

http://www.energy-daily.com/reports/Renewable_Energy_Sources_Could_be_the_Key_to_Reaching_Through_to_Iran_999.html

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ARTICLES:

1. The Shale Revolution: What Could Go Wrong?

By John Bussey, WSJ, Sep 6, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443589304577635783532976456.html?mod=W_SJ_Energy_leftHeadlines

[SEPP Comment: The major issues are the decline rate of the wells is not fully known, lack of infrastructure, such as pipelines, lack of skilled manpower, and possible regulations. A graphic of major shale areas in North America is at the end of the article.]

A funny thing happened on the way to Barack Obama and Mitt Romney's goal of greater U.S. energy independence: American industry got there first, on paper at least. Now the question is: What can go wrong?

Thanks to the hustle of innovative U.S. energy companies, the discovery of vast shale gas and oil fields, and stronger national conservation, some forecasts peg energy independence for North America at just a few years off. A Citigroup report calls the region "the new Middle East." Pimco says the trend is a "game changer." Bain & Co. declares it a "new paradigm."

The knock-on effect, some believe, could be historic: millions of new jobs and the "reindustrialization of America" as companies hitch new manufacturing to cheap energy. Shell and Dow Chemical among others, are already planning new chemical plants fueled by rocketing shale output. Driven by new fields such as the Bakken in North Dakota, U.S. oil production has hit levels not seen since 1998.

So why is John Hofmeister, the former chief of U.S. operations for Shell, sounding an alarm? "Unless something seriously changes in the next five years," he said in an interview, "we'll be standing in gas lines because there won't be enough oil to go around."

The reason is that there's still disagreement over the factors governing the growth of production from the new fields. Among those factors: the direction of global supply and demand, how price will help or hinder exploration, whether new regulation will impede development, and how long it will take to build the infrastructure needed to get more oil to market.

Mr. Hofmeister said he believes forecasts also understate the "decline" rate of shale fields. The hydrocarbons tend to flow robustly in the first months of drilling, then decline before plateauing at lower levels.

To sustain growth, companies will need to drill many wells at a rate "beyond the capacity of the industry as currently defined," he says. "Those who ballyhoo oil shale and say that this will take care of us—no, it won't."

What's more, Bakken oil currently trades at a discount to world market prices in part because of cramped infrastructure: The U.S. currently doesn't have enough pipelines to get the oil to refineries efficiently.

So, until more pipelines are built, buyers are jerry-rigging deliveries. Delta Airlines DAL +3.60% just bought a shuttered refinery in Trainer, Pa., to make its jet fuel. Ed Bastian, the airline's president, said Thursday he's considering buying oil from the Bakken and then shipping it to the plant by train.

In fact, infrastructure is short across the board, from skilled manpower to storage facilities to the broader supply chain that feeds the fields. "Production is going faster than the midstream or

downstream can accommodate it," says Frank Verrastro, a former executive at Tosco and Pennzoil who is now with CSIS, a think tank in Washington. By resorting to rail, "all we're doing is moving the bottleneck."

By some estimates, hydraulic fracturing, the innovative but controversial drilling method by which oil and gas are freed from shale or other formations, gets too expensive if oil prices drop below about \$50 a barrel. That may be another hurdle for the industry if the global economy slows sharply. Gas producers have already been hammered by plummeting prices from an oversupply of shale gas.

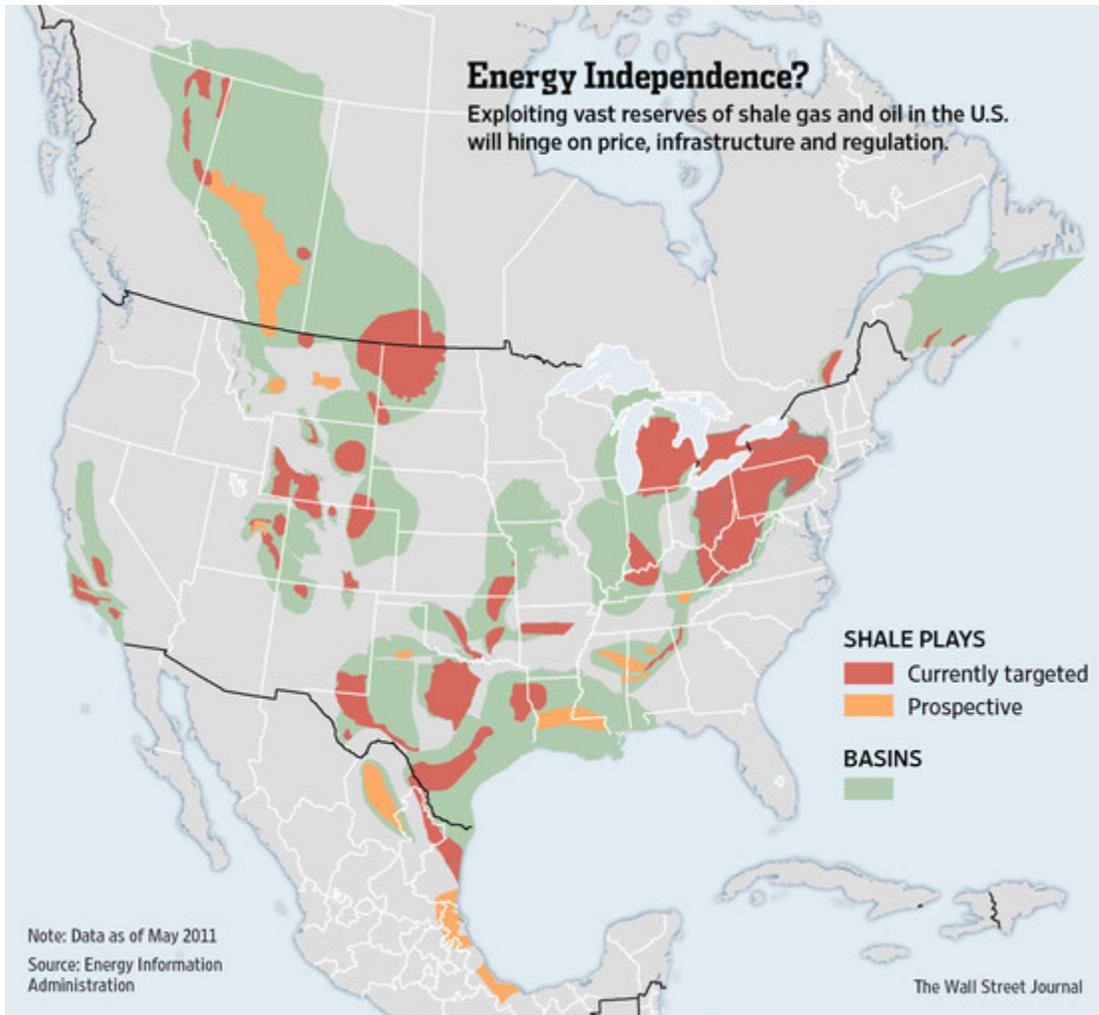
And regulation is another puzzle. States and communities are split over whether to allow so-called fracking in their backyard. Citizens groups have raised concerns about the safety of the procedure, about pollution controls around well sites, and about the dangers posed by drilling through water tables and aquifers. The EPA has already issued some standards for the drilling and continues to examine issues such as the discharge of waste water. It's unclear whether any new rules would affect the speed of exploration. Environmental groups support greater federal oversight of the myriad fracking operations across the country.

But operators, such as Exxon and Devon Energy, like state control. John Richels, the CEO of Devon, which now gets some 50% of its production from shale, says states understand the local geology better than the federal government. "We're spending a lot more time on satisfying regulatory issues," he says. "The potential impediment [to expanded production] is the growth in that additional regulatory layer" from more federal oversight.

Either way, Washington must also marry the new hydrocarbon bonanza with its emission and renewable-energy goals. Public policy, concludes the Citigroup report, may determine whether growth from the new fields stays healthy or fizzles.

"Investors and the industry can live with regulations if they are clear and prospective, if you can price that into your investment decision," says Howard Newman, CEO of Pine Brook, a private-equity firm and early investor in shale exploration. "What will set us back is if the environment remains uncertain and any regulatory scheme becomes retroactive."

It's true that greater energy independence may be just over the horizon. But this won't be a sprint. Get ready for the long-distance hurdles.



2. Greens Against Green Energy, Big Solar gets the Big Oil treatment.

Editorial, WSJ, Sep 4, 2012

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443618604577621751892592534.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_AboveLEFTTop

A couple of weeks ago we wondered if green lobbying groups would object to new Department of Interior rules to streamline environmental approval for solar energy projects on hundreds of thousands of acres of federal land. ("The Solar-Painted Desert," Aug. 13, 2012.) Well, here we go. Three environmental groups—Western Lands Project, Basin and Range Watch, and Solar Done Right—have filed a formal complaint of the kind that often presages a lawsuit.

The letter of protest to the Bureau of Land Management alleges that the agency "failed to analyze numerous impacts of solar energy plant development within several Solar Energy Zones" and that allowing "industrial-scale solar generation" could result in the "virtual privatization of public lands."

But here's the real shocker: The letter complains that "no scientific evidence has been presented to support the claim that these projects reduce greenhouse emissions." And "the opposite may be true. Recent work at the Center for Conservation Biology University of California, Riverside, suggests that soil disturbance from large-scale solar development may disrupt Pleistocene-era caliche deposits that release carbon to the atmosphere when exposed to the elements, thus 'negat[ing] the solar development C [carbon] gains.'"

So solar energy, like corn ethanol, really doesn't reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Now they tell us.

And there's more, says the letter: The environmental impact from these solar panels "are long-term (decades to centuries)" and they threaten the habitat of "endangered species, including the desert tortoise, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, flat-tailed horned lizard, golden eagle and desert bighorn."

Who knows if these objections have any factual basis. They're similar to the exaggerated complaints that greens have used for decades to kill or delay natural gas drilling, coal mining, road building, and the construction of dams for hydropower. But it's certainly news that some greens are even turning against green energy. Welcome to the club, Big Solar.

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