

The Issues Explained:**The high price we pay for 'black gold'**

Gas prices have hit an all-time high at a national average of \$2.22 per gallon. However, the prices are not at the peak if adjusted for inflation. This only occurred in March of 1981, when the Iranian revolution caused prices to skyrocket. According to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, "the United States needs to expand the global trade in natural gas as a way to prevent future sharp price increases from harming its economy."

He warned that continued high gas prices would definitely affect the economy. The main problem lies in the natural gas supply because there is no global supply available to help cushion the price increases. Greenspan has suggested more access to world gas reserves as a way to eventually decrease the prices.

"I can't afford Rider now, let alone pay between \$2.20-\$3.20 for gas," said sophomore commuter Dominic Ciaramella.

Greenspan said back in April of 2004, that natural gas imports "comprised only 2 percent of the U.S. market in 2003 as a result of environmental and safety concerns limiting the number of U.S. ports with facilities able to process it." Global trade is developing, though, due to "notable cost reductions" and high natural gas prices projected by distant futures prices, making "imported gas a more attractive option." Worldwide imports of oil account for 57 percent of global oil consumption and merely 23 percent of natural gas consumption. Greenspan did state that oil prices have increased partly as a result of fears of supply disruption in the Middle East (Iraq).

Another factor contributing to the high prices is the caution of both speculators and traders who are worried about the possible sabotage of oil pipelines in Iraq and terrorist activities cropping up elsewhere in oil-producing countries. This has helped make the prices of oil per barrel go up to an all time high of \$58.28 per

barrel, \$28.28 more than the usual \$30 per barrel average price attached to the present level of supply.

The rising fuel prices have hurt parts of the U.S. economy, namely airlines, independent truckers and low-income families. Before the War in Iraq, the country was the second largest oil reserve in the world, but gas was cheaper in the United States. Now that we are in Iraq, one would believe we'd at least be able to get cheap oil. This apparently isn't the case.

The U.S. must begin to start making developments in technology in order to improve safety, liquefaction and supply of oil. Major U.S. import capabilities must also begin operating or else natural gas prices are going to remain high. These events are vital to gas prices coming down. Like Greenspan stated, we need to increase the supply of oil because it is the best defense against high prices. Increasing the supply either means taking a chunk of the millions of barrels the Bush administration has stored and make it available to gas companies. The other answer is to import more.

The White House has released information that approximately 700 million barrels of crude oil are being held in reserve for national security reasons which is driving up the price of gas. Accusations against both President Bush and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries continue to rise while thousands of barrels are transferred into the nation's strategic petroleum reserve each day. If President Bush prohibited speculative oil trading, he would be making it clear that he and the U.S. are against rising gas prices, but he still hasn't indicated he will take such a stance.



Nicholas Ballasy

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY ...**APRIL 9, 1865**

Robert E. Lee surrenders his Confederate Army to Ulysses S. Grant.

APRIL 11, 1947

Jackie Robinson plays his first major-league baseball game for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

APRIL 12, 1606

Great Britain adopts the Union Jack as its national flag.

APRIL 14, 1865

Actor John Wilkes Booth shoots President Abraham Lincoln at the Ford's Theatre. Lincoln dies the next day.

Journalistic Integrity:**The media's death fetish**

In the middle of this war on terror Americans have continually been under attack. The news media has steadily bombarded our lives with up-to-the-minute coverage of terror alert threat levels, school shootings and body counts that have kept many of us glued to our television sets, sadistically waiting to see the next horrific act of man.

If no news is good news, then the true nature of news must be bad. The fierce debate over the morality of feeding tubes waged over the deathbed of Terri Schiavo and the passing of Pope John Paul II have put the media's main interests into perspective. Like scavengers, news coverage circled around countdowns of dying human beings right up until the moment that they were pronounced dead. Even after death, the media continued to sink their teeth into the meat of their stories as autopsies were performed and Vatican City was flooded with well-wishers.

American television has a fetish with death. It programs viewers to forget about life until somebody has died. After living for 15 years in a vegetative state, Schiavo was catapulted into stardom when an attempt to remove her feeding tube was made. It was only then that anybody beyond either her family or friends cared about who this woman was. The relativity of her 41-year life became a by-product of our interest in her death, which I believe is fundamentally wrong.

The news channels have become the primary conveyance of a new wave of interactive obituaries. Complete with running clocks measuring how long an individual has left on Earth before they check out, these channels give legal, political and even humorous analyses of the possible outcomes of their eventual expiration.

Perhaps it's American culture's love of violence in movies that desensitizes us to what the news exposes. We celebrate action movies involving mobsters and soldiers. We look for kill scenes so much that when we see it on the news, it's just like watching another big-budget Hollywood production. If this is true, then in basic economic terms these news channels are merely supplying what we demand.

In his speech entitled "The American Dream," Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "We have allowed the means by which we live to outdistance the ends for which we live." With so much focus on death, we forget that in the now, we are still living, and the most important things are what we do in life, not the manner in which we will inevitably die. I wonder if there is anything good about life to report in the world, or if the news media is truly as dead as its top stories.



Randy Townsend

'WOMEN VS. WOMEN' FROM PAGE 8

Although I do have to admit that if I were to see my boyfriend looking at another woman, I would start criticizing her and then think "what does she have that I don't?" This is a habit that I feel has almost been automated into a woman's brain. A lot of my friends have noticed that when other women give them looks, it just makes them feel worse and they get angry at the women who are having facial spasms. I guess the more important question to ask is why do women do this?

We are all a part of the same species. No matter what form we're in, there is a guy out there for each of us. I know out of all the friends I have made during my lifetime, the best friends I have ever had are girls. I know when I have a rough time or need to rant and rave, my best friends are always there for me. I don't know if there is any fellow out there who would be willing to listen to you gush giddily at 2:00 a.m. over how the guy you have a crush on gave you eye contact at the bar.

Of course, ladies' loyalties to one another is an issue that, as a female, I take into consideration. Both television and movies frequently portray women being betrayed by their girl friends, whether it's them engaging in certain relations with a current or ex-boyfriend, or even crossing their trust line. While I've never expe-

rienced these types of situations, I know others who have. The competition between women has increased because of these situations. What ever happened to a sense of loyalty or the admiration of someone who looks nice? Instead of looking at a woman who's nicely dressed and giving her a nasty look, maybe someone should think about asking her where she got that certain piece of jewelry or the pair of shoes that look super-cute.

This is a tough world for women, and I understand how we all look at each other and do the mental comparisons to a woman we see with a hot boyfriend and think "Ew, I could so have him if I flaunted my butt and chest like her." I have come to realize that most women will always think there is going to be another woman out there who looks better in those tight pants or shirts, or has the better jewelry. I feel when it comes to fashion, make-up, those late night phone calls and all other kinds of "girl" issues, no one knows better than a woman herself. I suggest we start being nicer to one another and consider asking the woman we're jealous of where she got the look that compliments her so much. Instead of us fighting over which girl gets the guy, let's have the guys fight over which one of us they get.