



## NYC Energy Solutions: Thursday afternoon

Posted by [Yankee](#) on April 28, 2006 - 12:35pm in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

First, I just want to say thanks to our guest bloggers who will be keeping you updated on the [NYC Energy Solutions](#) conference going on this weekend. We hope to keep those of you who could not attend updated.

Unfortunately, due to my real world obligations, I was only able to attend the afternoon sessions of the meeting, but I'll take up where Baloghblog left off in the previous post.

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The first session I attended was on energy-efficient transportation, featuring [Aaron Naparstek](#), [Charlie Komanoff](#), [Paul Steely White](#), and [George Haikalis](#). All of them are involved in trying to make New York City more efficient for bikes and pedestrians, and less auto-oriented. As NYC residents know, we have a unique opportunity to drastically reduce the amount of car traffic in New York City, precisely because there are already so many other transit options available. The speakers presented several ideas for reducing car traffic in NYC, including congestion pricing, reducing the amount of garage space in the central business district, disallowing privileged on street (and sidewalk!) parking for police and diplomats, and making train-to-subway access less difficult. These speakers are also bicycle activists who are working hard to get more [buffered bike lanes](#) around the city so that biking is also a real commuting option.

Charlie Komanoff added a new angle to the panel by discussing the cost of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. He noted that in the past, efforts to reduce carbon emissions have been ineffective, since they ended up gaming the system (CAFE), being circuitous (renewable energy credits), or diluting the real goal (incentives for hybrids). Komanoff advocates a significant gas tax, to be phased in over a relatively long period, and which would include either a rebate of approximately \$1400/yr to taxpayers or a shift out of regressive taxes while the populace is still transitioning to a lifestyle with gasoline at \$6 or \$7 a gallon.

After the transportation session was a session on [permaculture](#). The first two speakers [Andrew Jones](#) and [Andrew Philips](#) mostly just described what permaculture is, and talked about their own backgrounds in getting interested in it. The last speaker, [Keith Morris](#) discussed some ways that New York City residents might start getting involved in permaculture, like advocating for green roofs, and agriculture in parks and empty lots. Another idea would be to publicize local agriculture by getting chefs and celebrities around the city to join a competition to see who could use the most local ingredients in an Iron Chef-style match.

The last talk I saw was by Matt Savinar. In fact, I don't need to give too much detail on that, since his notes for the talk are available [here on his blog](#). The AlphaMaleProphetofDoom addressed 5 questions that he's often asked by readers, including "Why are people in so much denial", "How should we deal with our depression", "What's the most important determinant in how PO will play out", "How should our communities prepare", and "Should I be writing my elected officials".

Again, you can read his blog post, but I took the highlights of his message to be:

1. The more money you have, the better off you'll be. Similarly, writing politicians is inefficient; instead, try to get the rich people to come over to your viewpoint.

2. People are hardwired for survival, and all of their actions should be interpreted in this vein. Thus, people will always prefer the short-term solution, since this maximizes their chances of survival.
3. In order not to stay constantly depressed, you need to divert your attention with other things. In his case, it's celebrity and sports scandals.
4. The best way to help the community is to create jobs for 16-25 year old males. You can read more about this on his blog.

Matt seemed particularly worried that especially young people (under 35) are not sufficiently concerned about PO. I got the feeling that this affects his personal relationships, because it means that he and his peers bring different assumptions to their relationships, and can't always discuss the same issues (e.g. what's the use in talking about social security benefits and long term investments for retirement if the market is going to collapse between now and then).



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