

Market works to ration fuel after hurricane hits

Little noticed amidst the cries about higher fuel prices is the fact that the free market worked well to regulate supply and prices as Mother Nature delivered shock after shock to the system.

First it was Hurricane Katrina, which shut down as much as 10 percent of the nation's refining capacity and much of the oil production in the Gulf of Mexico.

Then came Rita, spreading the damage west into Texas at a time when many of the Louisiana refineries were just coming back.

The two combined to push high gasoline prices to near-record levels. Pipelines serving the southeast were shut down, causing some shortages. Within days, though, everything was working well and the price headed back down.

The market really is a marvel. As Katrina hit, with rumors of shortages and higher prices, people rushed out to fill their tanks. The price shot up, discouraging hoarding, and people stopped buying.

Any dealer who thought he could get \$5 found out quickly that he was wrong. Any merchant who tried to hold prices down quickly ran out of gas.

Then the nation flexed its limbs and discovered that, though bruised and battered, it was whole. Prices started to decline.

Rita came with another blow, but people are used to the drill now. Prices have not jumped anywhere near Katrina levels.

Contrast this with the 1970s, when the gov-

ernment slapped price controls on fuel and suddenly, no one could buy gasoline. Drivers had to line up at stations that often ran out of gas. Supply was precious. The country was in a panic, and we wound up with the 55 mph speed limit.

Price controls are never a good solution. They're inflexible and bound to create shortages. Government rationing is inefficient and prone to corruption.

Despite cries about prices and profiteering, the fact is, the market works. It responds quickly and with great flexibility.

As oil gets more scarce and demand continues to rise, we can count on the market to ration the supply without intervention. There is no grand conspiracy to prosecute.

While the government has failed to push us toward alternative fuels, they're out there. When the price is right, industry will develop them — and we'll buy them.

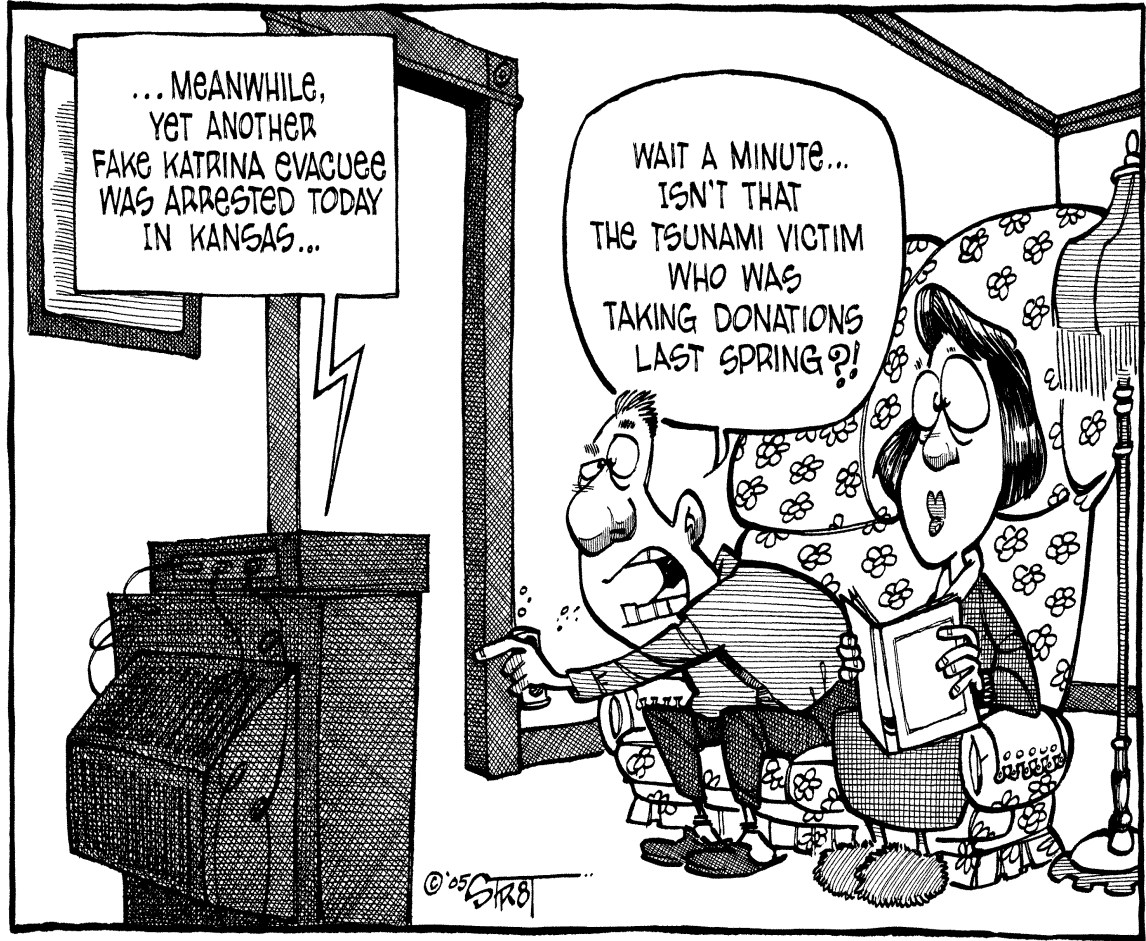
China and India are major drivers in the higher price of fuel. Their economies are awakening and demanding more oil.

It's not correct to say that we'll run out of oil. There'll always be some, but as supply goes down, the price will go up.

As that happens, we'll find alternatives. Society isn't going to give up the things we love: electricity, communications, entertainment, industry. We need not fear for the future.

The market is there to save us.

— Steve Haynes



Milwaukee has Old World sheen

Milwaukee is a beautiful city. The river runs through the heart of it, with a lovely park and riverwalk along the sides.

The buildings are not the new, modern skyscrapers you see in most American cities. These buildings soar into the air with stonework, ironwork, grace and beauty. The city has taken the trouble to put lights on some of the more interesting buildings, and at night they gleam with an old-world patina.

Steve says that Milwaukee once was a backwater, blue collar town that was full of people with manufacturing jobs going about their business. There weren't the urban renewal types there to tear down those shabby old buildings and put up some nice, new steel-and-glass structures.

As a result, Milwaukee has marble and stone buildings with curlicues and fancy brickwork faded copper roofs. Even the new buildings blend in.

The beer industry is mostly gone, but the city's still got its working-class roots. The biggest thing downtown on Friday night are the fish fries. Every restaurant, from German to Asian, has a fish fry every Friday night with deep-fried cod or perch and tasty potato pancakes. In



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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a town that's heavily German and heavily Catholic, it's a tradition.

I gained five pounds in less than a week of eating bratwurst, sausages, red cabbage and slaw.

We were in Milwaukee for the annual National Newspaper Association convention. We saw friends from all over the country — people we see once or twice a year, if we're lucky.

While Steve was in a meeting, the girls, including me, took off to see the sights, which included the publishing company that puts out "Country Woman" and "Taste of Home" cookbooks and magazines.

They had some great sales on cookbooks and I love cookbooks, but I had to calculate the weight. It's one thing to take home a dozen books if you're driving. It's quite another when you're flying.

I settled on two cookbooks and a

magazine.

I also took along a cooler to bring back sausages. Milwaukee is known for its sausage and cheese, and I picked up some of each, along with some ice. All the food came through in perfect shape, but it's amazing how heavy a dozen sausages, a few pounds of cheese and a block of ice can get when you have to drag the cooler through the airport.

Enjoyed every minute of my visit to Milwaukee, but I was so happy to get home and sleep in my own bed.

The cats were happy to see us, too. Three out of four took up the corners of the bed, each during the other to move into its spot and no one giving an inch.

Tonight, they'll be more comfortable. They'll wander in and out. But last night, they wanted to make sure we didn't disappear again — at least not for a little while.

Weird to one is tasty to next

Every family has its little food peculiarities.

My family eats salt and pepper on cantaloupe; we like vinegar and raw onions with our beans and cornbread; and I love butter and grape jelly on saltine crackers.

My dad relished pickled pig's feet. Ate 'em right out of the jar.

My mother used to eat beef tongue on crackers. I'm afraid I couldn't handle that. But then, she liked Rocky Mountain oysters, too. I like the sauce, but think the "oysters" themselves are rather tasteless and would rather pass.

One of Jim's favorite snacks is a cold gravy sandwich. His other favorite is a big glass of milk with cornbread crumbled into it.

During a church potluck, we talked about mincemeat pie. Who would have ever thought a dessert pie could be made from meat? I guess it's kind of like jelly. If you add enough sugar, you can make a pie out of anything, for example, corn cob jelly.

Next we discussed fried green tomatoes. There's no middle ground with them; either you like them or you don't. I happen to be on the "do like" side. Plus, they're versatile. I'm on the look-out for green tomatoes because I have a recipe that uses ground green tomatoes, sugar and jello. It makes a jam that tastes just like strawberries.

Then someone mentioned blood pudding. Let alone the fact that the scriptures say we shouldn't eat it (Gen. 9: 4), who in their right mind



Out Back

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would? I had a friend who always made pudding from the blood of a goose and the thought of it just about made me ill. It's in the same category as scrambled eggs and brains.

Last night after Bible study, the conversation turned to things our mothers canned. One recalled tomato preserves, another bread and butter pickles. Before electricity reached our farm, I know Mom canned meat. My friend Charla cans meat and it's a real delicacy. She shared a pint with us and Jim claimed it, eating it right from the jar.

Jim's mother canned deer meat. I have added noodles and passed it off as "beef and noodles" at potluck dinners.

The flip side of the weird things we eat are the wonderful things some people won't eat. I have a friend who won't touch pumpkin pie or blueberries. Same friend won't eat fried zucchini. But, guess what? She doesn't go overboard on snacks and candy, and still is slim and trim.

My mother made me try a bite of everything. Consequently, I like everything. I blame that for the

weight problem I've had all my life. You know mothers get blamed for everything.

My youngest daughter was a "picky" eater. She would go for days and hardly eat a thing. Drove my mother crazy. But, she would eat when she was hungry and she doesn't have a weight problem, either.

The old question, "Do you eat to live, or live to eat?" is the fine line between loving anything that crosses your plate and turning your nose up at most everything.

From the Bible

Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

Jonah 2: 1, 2

Summer on Oct. 2? That's rare



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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If there'd been a few lightning bugs, it could have passed for a summer night.

Cicadas sang, not as many as a month ago, but a few hardy survivors.

The elevator glowed in the twilight as the sun went down.

The sky was clear, and the stars began to twinkle.

After dark, people came out dressed in shorts and T-shirts to walk their dogs and their husbands.

At Ampride, drivers scraped summer-weight bugs from their windshields. The afternoon sun baked them on but good.

Even after the sun was down, it was hot.

Sure, it was Oct. 2. But you could have mistaken it for summer.

At 10 p.m., the display at The Gateway read 81 degrees. Air conditioners hummed at many houses. Electric meters went round and round. Though it was closer to the start of pheasant season than the start of fishing season, you couldn't tell it by the weather.

The day was short, the sun setting well before the lawn was done. But you couldn't start when it was 95 in the sun, could you?

Cool weather should be here by the time you read this. Maybe it will be raining.

But it was summer for a couple of

days in October.

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It hasn't rained in weeks. Maybe the wheat has enough moisture to get up and stay green, but my yard doesn't.

Still, it's nice to be able to water when you have time, not when the city says it's OK.

You don't want to skip watering if you want the lawn to stay green. Even a week without water is enough to brown most grass this fall. And it's been six ?? since it rained.

I've noticed, though, that with shorter days, it takes less water to keep things growing even in the summer-like heat we've been having. The grass just doesn't need quite as much moisture.

Some people are starting new lawns. Others are fertilizing their old grass, hoping to see some fall growth. There's plenty of water running down the street as new sprinkler systems wait for adjustment.

There's not slackening in the yard

work, that's for sure.

☆☆☆☆

Maybe the city's new well will bring some more water. We sure need some.

There have been so many dry holes and so many disappointments in the last five years, though, that you hate to hold out too much hope.

The only good thing is we should be headed back toward a wet weather cycle. Maybe the city wells will start to fill up again.

That's not too likely unless they find another good well, though. You can only draw so much water from two or three holes.

Some day, the city will have to have at least one more good well, and probably a water treatment plant to remove the arsenic and uranium, no matter how small the traces.

That's thanks to the good ol' federal government.

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Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos, any pictures of people lined up or of people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engage-

ment pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear instructions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

Laser proofs of photos which have run in The Herald are available, first come, first served. Special-order laser prints of photos will be available at \$3 each.

We can take passport photos if you provide a roll of color film. ASA 200, 12 exposure works fine. The charge is \$8.50 per person.

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the address and phone number of the author.

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We do not publish anonymous letters. We sign our opinions and expect readers to do likewise.

We do not publish form letters or letters about topics which do not pertain to our area. Thank-yous from this area should be submitted to the Want Ad desk.

Letters will not be censored, but will be read and edited for form and style, clarity, length and legality. We will not publish attacks on private individuals or businesses which do not pertain to a public issue.