



Photo by Martha Stanton
Amory Lovins

Lovins advocates soft technology

Each person can do more with less energy, said Amory Lovins, solar energy's expert.

Lovins spoke Sunday afternoon in 180 PLC about the United States' energy future. He described the inadequacies of the current U.S. energy policy, and described soft technology alternatives which he said are cleaner, more reliable, cheaper and already proven.

Currently, Lovins said the U.S. government is subsidizing hard technologies such as nuclear power plant construction and coal-fired power plants more than they are subsidizing soft technologies

such as solar power development. He advocates the abandonment of subsidy programs in favor of a state where the true cost of technologies could be compared.

"I think we ought to desubsidize the whole business, both hard and soft, and let them compete on their own merits." If that were done, the soft technologies would rise to the surface as the most cost-effective, Lovins claimed.

Even with the unbalanced subsidy program soft technologies are flexing their muscles. One reason is that soft technologies, despite costly initial investments, "cost a lot less than other replacements

for oil and gas," he said. The cheapest efficiency improvements a person can make include heat-recovery systems, better motors and more efficient home appliances.

Government, too, can play a role in energy conservation by utilizing current sources more efficiently, Lovins said. Before making energy policy they should determine the most appropriate means to the end product. He said policy makers should decide "what the different tasks we need energy for are, and what is (the) least expensive means to achieve each task."

This closer scrutiny of where the energy supply is going has resulted in forecasters substantially reducing their predictions for U.S. primary energy demand in the year 2000. A policy of using energy-saving materials could further reduce needs, Lovins said.

Lovins challenged the audience to personally convert to renewable energy sources, or at least to conserve energy within their living space. "The energy problem is made up of hundreds of billions of little pieces. What you do is what really matters."



mike lee

cheshire fortnightly

1. An Open Letter

Sorry, Bill. I tried.

I thought the University, like the United States, was undergoing a "crisis of confidence." I thought we needed heroes, leaders. If we couldn't find them in student government, I reasoned, maybe we could go a step higher.

However, nobody liked Paul Olum. So I picked you instead.

I put some hard-earned bucks into fancy graphics for the poster and expensive paper for the

membership cards. And the staples. Lord, did I go through staples.

I tried, Bill. But I failed.

I still have piles of membership cards littering my room. Only five or six people entered the contest — most of them friends of mine.

Even my mom hesitated putting up a poster in her office.

It's not your fault, Bill. Surely, after getting 377 suckers to vote for me last spring, this should have been a piece of cake.

Manipulation of the masses is tougher than I thought.

2. Contest Results

If you saw white smoke rising from Oregon Hall last Wednesday, it was because my mother and I had reached a decision on the contest winners. The balloting was tough — Mom, faceless bureaucrat that she is, was on the phone half the time, screwing up some poor student.

Finally, we came up with four winners. The two runners-up

will receive "Bully for Billy" posters, autographed by William Boyd:

I like William Boyd because he only comes out of his office to leave town, attend a Senate meeting, or go home.

Paul Narits

... because no one else around here seems to. I have always liked underdogs; I even picked Oregon State to beat Stanford.

John Sowell

The judges differed on who

should receive the grand prize, and so there was no choice but to give away two. The Mom's Award goes to Nancy Howard, who wrote:

... because he is the President of one of the finest institutions in the nation — Tingle dorm! (Obviously he has class.)

That's the type of thing my mother would pick. "It goes along with the spirit of the contest," she told me indignantly.

Obviously, Mom didn't understand the contest. The winning entry, submitted by Jon English, captured the essence of the contest:

I like William Boyd because Mike Lee is an extremely intelligent and handsome man and his mother is beautiful beyond comparison.

Besides the autographed posters, Jon and Nancy will receive authentic "Bully for Billy" T-shirts.

There were other good entries, but with today's tiny paper, I don't have the room to print them. However, I would like to thank the entrants who don't know me — both of them.

3. Postscript

Even though the William Boyd Appreciation Society flopped, I hear through the grapevine that a new campaign is gearing up to help another beleaguered campus administrator. I wish the organizers luck, but I doubt they will be able to carry off what appears to be impossible.

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