

Oil film sends viewers 'A Crude Awakening'

The showings of a dynamic documentary inform the campus audience of a threat to the American dream of driving

Emily Walters

Arts & Culture Editor

The percentage of our world's transportation that relies directly on oil is enormous: 98 percent.

What would happen then, if our oil reserves suddenly dried up? How would the Earth cope without the huge amount of cheap energy that humanity has come to rely upon so heavily?

A dramatic movie depicting the possible outcome was featured in the McLoughlin Auditorium on Tuesday, April 8, as part of the Sustainability Project events scheduled for this term. Entitled "A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash," the film highlights the foreseen catastrophe of humankind using up the oil on the planet in the near future.

In 2005, award-winning European journalists and filmmakers Basil Gelpke and Ray McCormack gathered interviews from more than two dozen experts in many different fields.

The result: a shocking film full of warning for a crisis that is very likely to happen within the next few decades.

The film clearly conveys the fact that most of the world has been

searched for oil, and scientists do not have much hope that even a few reserves of petroleum of any sizeable amount will be discovered.

It also outlines some additional side effects to oil depletion, which we have already begun to see.

The largest and deadliest of these is the ongoing war over the remaining oil.

Several years back, Saddam Hussein led Iraq in an invasion of Kuwait. The mission was about seizing a particularly large oil field.

Speaking of Iraq — although the United States government has continuously denied oil as a reason for the War on Iraq, it is interesting to learn that the planning maps identified the Middle Eastern country's oil resources.

Sound like politicians are being just a bit — to put it ironically — slimy?

"The better you do the job of exploiting oil and gas, the sooner it is gone," Colin Campell, an oil geologist, explains in the film.

The conflicts over oil in the recent past have focused on the Middle East's resources for good reason. The United States' oil is said to have peaked around 1970.

"Right now, really the only region of the world that hasn't peaked is the Middle East," said Matthew David Savinar.

Savinar is a California State Attorney and founder of the Web site lifeaftertheoilcrash.net.

Do not be fooled, though — oil reduction is not merely an issue of the United States' demand.

Another contributor to the Earth's

decline is the rapid industrialization of other countries, which are "hooked on trying to develop a society like us," Matt Simmons explains.

Simmons is an energy investment broker, and advises President George W. Bush.

No nations are increasing their oil demand more than China, where most of the population expects to be driving as often and owning as many cars as Americans within the next decade.

Fossil fuels like crude oil are, as suggested in the documentary, non-renewable means of energy that should be conserved and used less greedily.

"Some oil is cheap, fast, easy to produce, and some [is] not," Campell said.

Many solutions are shown, if somewhat quickly shot down.

Ethanol is surely one of the most unrealistic fixes; more oil is needed to produce it than it is worth.

Also, which is more valuable: food or transportation? Producing large amounts of ethanol requires a choice between the two.

I don't know about everybody else, but feeding the world seems just a wee bit more important than transport.

Perhaps the most promising possibility of those presented was solar panels.

The ratio of solar panels to energy produced seems like it would be worth it — after all, many more roofs and deserted lands could be used productively in that way.

The biggest message of the film is not easily lost: something must change.

Dr. Jules Boykoff discusses media coverage of green topics

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The media: it is all around us. Television, newspapers, radio — truly escape their influence?

Dr. Jules Boykoff, a political instructor at Pacific University, in Grove, recently spoke on campus at media's connection to how the public perceives scientists' view of global warming. The event was held Thursday, April 10, in the McLoughlin Auditorium.

Boykoff was the first of several to visit the college as part of the Sustainability Project, which is in its first year at Clackamas.

The focus of the lecture concerned scientists' fair coverage of climate change — not helping keep the population ignorant to humans' role in the problem.

"Maybe there are some issues where science is a problem," Boykoff said.

The Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) is comprised of the most respected climate-change science group reports are only reached through consensus, which Boykoff identified as the best way to handle the subject matter.

Boykoff reviewed for the audience key points of research that he and his Maxwell T. Boykoff, who works at the Environmental Change Institute in London, published in a November 2007 issue of the scholarly journal *Geoforum*. The article, titled "Climate change and journalism: A case-study of U.S. mass-media coverage,"

In the study, they took a random sample of 636 articles having to do with global warming. Out of these, they deemed 53 percent to be equal in their coverage of both sides.

The selection was further broken down into one-year chunks, and they saw that when the number of balanced articles decreased. The last percentage mentioned by Boykoff was only 3 percent, a notable drop.

Boykoff finds this promising, thinking that both journalists and the public could do better.

"Scientists need to be better about their research and results," he said.

He went on to suggest that they not merely write for scientific journals, but that articles written using language masses can understand. For example, global warming could be described as a "blanket wrapping around the planet and heating it," because that is easy for most people to picture.

The media could help, according to Boykoff, by stressing the economic impact as those are most likely to have a global warming dilemma. He also noted that if journalists always mentioned the education and background of the people they were talking to, the public would be more apt to accept the information.

One of the most interesting points Boykoff spoke about, in light of the presidential elections this year, is that all candidates support a reduction in emissions with the end goal being 2050. John McCain set the percentage at 60 percent, while Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton were aiming toward about 80 percent.

Expressing his excitement about the Sustainability Project is doing at Clackamas, Boykoff closed with four pieces of advice for those concerned about the issue:

1. Do your best to reduce carbon footprint.
2. Press the institutions and demand match actions to sentiments.
3. Continue educational process about global warming.
4. Absolutely demand that politicians take action with legislation to prevent global warming.



This is "the future of the automobile," according to the film, if crude oil reserves continue to be used up at the current alarming rate.

Courtesy of oilcrashmovie.com