

LNG & PEAK OIL

BY CHUCK McLAUGHLIN

If one were to attempt to define an "ideal" alternative to oil, among its characteristics would be ample supply, availability, renewability, and versatility. It would be clean, energy-dense, have a high energy return on energy invested, and have an existing infrastructure to exploit its use. How does natural gas measure up to these desired characteristics?

Given: It is cleaner burning, has limited availability, is versatile — internal combustion engines can be converted to run on it, it is used to generate electricity and to create nitrogen fertilizers. It is energy-dense, has a high energy return on energy invested and the infrastructure is in place. However, natural gas is not renewable and its availability beyond a decade is highly suspect, in that our present annual usage exceeds 13% of our proven reserves!

Why do you think it was necessary for our government to preempt local jurisdiction regarding proposed LNG port sites? It was necessary because there are only three LNG ports in the United States, our internal production of natural gas has declined considerably, Mexico has stopped exporting it to the U.S., and continued increases of imports from Canada are needed to feed our ever-increasing demand. Since pipelines conveying gas from Alaska or Canada have been deemed impractical, it must be transported by ship. And therein is a major problem! To be shipped, natural gas must be cooled to minus 260 degrees Fahrenheit and necessitating LNG tankers in which to convey it and LNG ports to off-load and store it — a situation posing extremely dangerous threats to the exposed population, environment and economy!

While the Middle East possesses in excess a third of the world's natural gas reserves, most of it has been contracted to supply the needs of Europe and the Far East and nearly all the fleet of LNG tankers is committed to supply Taiwan, Korea and Japan via long-term contracts. So the likelihood of supplies from the Middle East appears unrealistic in the near term.

In view of the fact that natural gas extraction in the Northern Hemisphere is on the decline and that proven reserves available to the U.S. will be exhausted possibly in a decade even if demand remains at present levels, is it a reasonable course of action for the U.S. to commit immense capital expenditures to expand an infrastructure that will soon be obsolete? Why foolishly promote natural gas as an intermediate fuel when safe and renewable alternatives are more promising and realistic?

Before an LNG port is sited somewhere on the Columbia River (at least four are under consideration), the local Port Commissioners and the citizenry should ponder the question of what will happen to the huge and costly facilities once natural gas availability is exhausted? Will it not be the case that the site will be abandoned to decay, the local economy disrupted, the environment blighted and any costs of "decommissioning" and cleanup will be borne by the citizens of Oregon?

To any person seriously studying the issues involved, the situation is clear. Peak Oil is upon us. Peak Natural Gas will soon follow and our political, financial, and business leaders, as well as the news media, haven't the guts or desire to level with the American people as to the serious structural and economic problems that are occurring because of our insatiable and unsustainable appetite for oil. The press for LNG is but a fig to conceal the naked reality of the imminent end of our 100+ year petroleum binge and the vision of the Port of Astoria Commissioners is too myopic to see it!

Chuck McLaughlin lives in Wheeler. He has been a contributor to the NCTE, and wrote this article for the Autumn 2005 issue of CAW (Community Action in Writing), which is published in Manzanita. Submissions of articles, art, poetry, photography or letters to CAW can be made to P.O. Box 582, Manzanita, Oregon 97130, or email to artmis@nehalemnet.net. CAW's website is www.nehalem.org.



GO DEMOCRACY

BY MONICA TAYLOR

Clint Curtis is a whistleblower. Clint Curtis is a life-long Republican from Florida. He is now a conservative Democrat(ic) person. He is a computer software programmer who worked for Yang Enterprises of Florida. I heard him speak in Portland, Oregon.

Clint told over 300 people that in 2000, Tom Feeny (R), the Speaker of the House of Florida, asked him to write a "vote flipping computer program." Tom Feeny prefaced his request by saying that it was feared the Democrats' people would scam the election with such a program and the Republicans wanted to be able to detect this.

A vote flipping program is an election computer software program that can manipulate the total vote count in an election. For example, in the real election Kerry gets 52%, Bush 48%, — flip at the very end of the day, suddenly the computer says Bush 52% and Kerry 48%. You have heard of Identity Theft. Well, this is big scale vote theft. This is voting fraud and high treason.

Tom Feeny, in addition to being Florida Speaker of the House, was also the general counsel, registered lobbyist and corporate attorney for Yang Enterprises, Inc., for whom Clint Curtis worked.

So Clint Curtis wrote the program that night, and wrote the method of detecting a vote flipping program. He turned both into Yang Enterprises. Then, after he delivered the goods, the president of the company said she didn't understand, this program was not to protect against voting fraud — it was to control the vote in south Florida.

Clint feared there was a misuse of his 24-line program. He first reported up the line to Florida's Attorney General, the FBI and CIA with sworn statements. Later he was interviewed by Ray Lemme, the Inspector General for the Florida Department of Transportation. Ray Lemme investigated to the top levels of government and he reported to Curtis that the whole story would be out in two weeks.

Ray Lemme was found dead a few days later on July 1, 2003, in Georgia, where he mysteriously "committed suicide." The photographs of the scene do not match the police report. Georgia is a neighboring state where suicides are not autopsied. In Florida, all suicides have to be autopsied, Curtis explained.

Obviously, this computer election software is a touchy subject to some. And this is not just about Florida, or about the Republican Party, for many Republicans ultimately believe in democracy, as you will see.

Clint Curtis made sworn testimony on a lie detector test, which is public record, per Brad Friedman, his interviewer, an investigative reporter. This presentation was video-taped and is available (503-325-0029).

Clint Curtis shared his 24-line code for flipping an election. I have also written two simple equations in two unknowns, which can be programmed into a computer and linked to time and date, and could scam an election. This shows how easy it is to tamper with corporately owned, secret election software (DREs) without a paper ballot. And it reveals the hidden dangers of the corporatization of the American election system.

This is not just about Florida: 22-30% of the votes in the last national election were counted on these stupid machines. Clint Curtis fears for our constitutional democracy. Each of us should well fear for our democracy and for all the freedoms of daily life that we treasure, which a true democracy with accurate and honest elections protects.

Citizens have been empowered by our constitutional democracy. It is the citizens' right to vote and to protect and "police" our election system to ensure fair elections. It is not the right or duty of government, corporation, military or Supreme Court to interfere with the American electoral process. Even the people in New Guinea and the rest of the world know that our recent national elections have been scammed.

Paper ballots with a chain of custody are required to have a secret vote with an accurate public count. Recount and audit then have validity to check against tampering. Techno-wizardry without a paper ballot has no validity.

The American people — Democrats, Republicans, etc. — are strong, intelligent, intuitive and courageous. In the past they revolted against British rule because of "taxation without representation." They believed then as we do now that true democratic election is the only way to control a runaway government.

The federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) dangles \$9 billion in front of states to entice them to purchase these touch screen election software systems without a paper ballot. Some companies with corporatized software include Diebold, Sequoia, Triad, VoteHere.


The good news is that HAVA does not require states to purchase this equipment. Oregon refuses to order them in spite of the enticing money.

Oregon's vote by mail system, though it has some weaknesses that are being remedied, is basically quite sound. Also, Tennessee has recently indicted numerous top government officials for fraud connected to election computer systems, and some of its citizens are trying to expel the ballotless DREs from their state. With backing, lawyer Paul Lehto is suing Sequoia in Washington for rotten software. John Washburn, a software expert, is taking election software companies to task for not complying with legal requirements. Citizens are obviously concerned about what is happening to the election process.

The states of America must not spend \$9 billion of taxpayer money to scam our own elections. We must reject the election computer software systems that do not produce paper ballots, verified by each voter, and deposited in secure ballot boxes with a chain of custody. Corporatization of the American election system is lethal to democracy. Are we on the brink of a coup?

Monica Taylor is a registered nurse and lives in Astoria. Investigative reporter Brad Friedman can be reached at his blog site, www.bradblog.com. If anyone wishes to start their own blog, just Google www.blogging.com and they will walk you through it.

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