

Petrocollapse Conference: Oct. 5, 2005 NYC

Contributed by Jan Lundberg and Jenna Orkin
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The first Petrocollapse Conference will be held on October 5, 2005 in New York City, at the Community Church of New York Unitarian Universalist.

Speakers include James Howard Kunstler, John Darnell, Ph.D., David Pimentel, Ph.D., Michael Ruppert, Albert Bates, David Room, Pincas Jawetz, Jason Meggs, Jenna Orkin, and Jan Lundberg.

Besides covering peak oil and what to expect from "petrocollapse," there will be panels such as the role of government and what people can do to improve their ability to cope with an expected crash in petroleum supply.

Although the public has recently started to hear about peak oil in mainstream news media, the complete story is still suppressed, and misunderstanding abounds even among students of peak oil. The New York Petrocollapse conference will, among other things, clarify the role of the market in determining how severe will be the effect of shortage stemming from geological depletion.

Upon price jumps and petroleum supply tightness that may trigger upheaval followed by deprivation, people will be looking for answers and relief. A restructuring of social relations in a "new" local economics system appears inevitable, so will we choose to create a sustainable culture? As oil prices generally rise and crude oil supplies and refined products strain to keep up with demand, the public remains in the dark about the vast array of consequences of the looming crisis known as Peak Oil. Dishonest reporting by OPEC countries and even major oil companies have contributed to the illusion that there is sufficient time before we 'run out of oil' to transition to a "solution," whether it be coal, nuclear, cold fusion, hydrogen, other renewables or some combination of these energy options. In fact, some dozen significant oil producing countries are past their peak in extraction and it is possible that world Peak has already arrived. (This cannot be conclusively determined until after the fact.) The sudden effects of shortage are likely to hit the global economy within the next three years, possibly even as early as this winter.

The public is also not fully aware of the extent to which oil pervades our lives not simply as fuel for transportation and freight but also in the form of pesticides, fertilizers and plastics. A decline in oil supplies will affect our ability to grow enough food for the current global population of six and a half billion people. Malnutrition and resulting illness can be expected to spread far beyond the 3.7 billion who are currently affected into the developed world.

Our economy also depends on indefinite growth that will not be sustainable once Peak Oil hits. Its arrival is likely to have a paralyzing affect on key sectors of the economy which will in turn spread both nationally and globally.

At The Petrocollapse Conference we will ask:

* What are we facing now as the economy prepares to hit the wall known as resource limits? Will growth suddenly implode?

* What will be the effects of Peak Oil (a geological phenomenon) and petrocollapse (an economic and social phenomenon) on food supply and other services we depend on?

* What humane, ethical means are available to reduce the population (over the course of several generations) to a sustainable number?

* What other mitigation strategies are possible? Is there a "Plan B" to ease a transition to sustainable living in a world without plentiful energy and materials made eith petroleum?

The idea for a conference in New York titled Petrocollapse is the brainchild of Andrew McKillop, editor of the recent book The Final Energy Crisis. His idea was to have key peak oil experts present their knowledge to the public in New York City. Our speakers are tremendous authorities offering a wide range of expertise. The audience is encouraged to be participants at the conference, and we all hope to come away well informed, better connected and hopeful of positive action for these interesting times.

James Howard Kunstler, author of The Long Emergency, and Jan Lundberg, former oil industry analyst now of culturechange.org, were two of McKillop's suggestions. McKillop is based in France and India and has prepared special studies for the event.

Jenna Orkin, conference moderator, spent much of the spring and early summer of 2005 "lobbying" members of the U.S. Congress to consider peak oil and to read reports by Michael Ruppert of From The Wilderness, by Jan Lundberg, and especially the speeches on peak oil by Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (Republican of Maryland) that he made in the U.S. House of Representatives. It was Ms. Orkin's experience with this "lobbying" and outreach to news media that helped prompt her to join the effort to make this conference a reality.

Dealing with upcoming petrocollapse is an urgent cause, and our conference-planning is not able to benefit from months of preparation. Your participation and contribution, in whatever form, would be appreciated.

The time for the conference is between 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Culture Change is sponsoring the conference, and a co-sponsor is Continuing Education & Public Programs, The Graduate Center, CUNY (City University of New York).

The price for attending the conference is \$100 for full participation. Secure online payment can be made via PayPal available at <http://www.culturechange.org/funding.htm> (The PayPal buttons on petrocollapse.org are temporarily less than fully operational, until September 20.)

Discounts or full scholarships are available for students, low income persons, and volunteers to help the conference.

The Unitarian church is at 40 E. 35th Street, New York. Call Culture Change at 1-215-243-3144 for more information. To register and pay for the conference (secure online payment via PayPal) and see speakers' bios, visit the Petrocollapse Conference website:
<http://www.petrocollapse.org>
To learn more about peak oil and petrocollapse, see articles and their links in this website (go to home page and News section).