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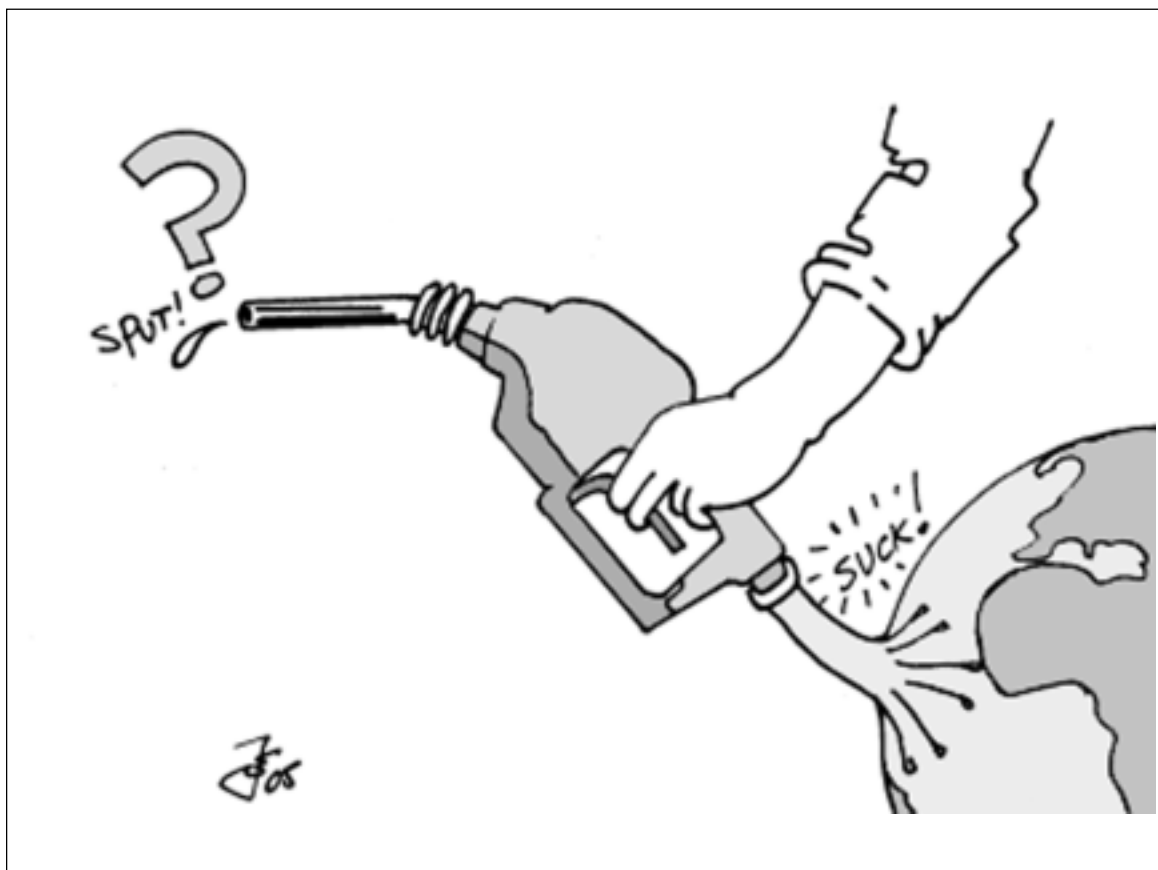
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## OPINION



# Some burning questions without answers

By **JEROME ENGELBERTS**  
*Opinion Editor*

In a world where oil will soon be a topic for history books, the American car industry seems to be fairly unable to come up with economical and fuel-efficient vehicles that are practical and affordable - concentrating instead on the "behemoth" category of SUV's that run on the gross national product of entire small Arab countries.

This weekend I was reading a book on cars that Detroit (then the undisputed car manufacturing capital) conceptualized, but never actually put into production. Some of these were oddball designs that never got off the ground, but some

could have been the start of a trend that would have helped mankind stave off the current race for oil and the ultimate depletion of that resource. Get this: in 1946, the aeronautics company Beechcraft designed the Plainsman, a full size sedan (a 1946 full size sedan, made out of Sherman Tank type steel, and probably upholstered with two tons of dead cow) that could reach a speed of 160MPH and had a gas mileage of 30 miles per gallon. That's right, folks: a gas mileage better than the vast majority of American made sedans in 2005, with a much larger vehicle weight.

Also, there was the Charles Townabout electric car, designed in 1959 (nickname: "Voltswagen")

that essentially had technical specs no worse than most current fully electric vehicles in terms of travel radius and recharge cycle.

Other electric cars were prototyped at the same time, such as the Pioneer (made by the Nick-L-Silver company of Santa Ana, CA); it came in sedan, wagon, and roadster versions. Dodge was working on a hybrid electric/combustion car.

All of these vehicles were designed as family cars with economy price tags.

In other words, there apparently was some sort of consciousness about this non-renewable resource known as "oil." Oil, of course, doesn't just get us from point A to

point B. It also provides us with all kinds of stuff that we'd miss if we didn't have it. Plastics, for example. Imagine a world without plastics. Rubber. Imagine (ha! You thought I was going to say THAT, hmm?) Tyvek, which is used in home insulation. Kevlar, which keeps our boys in green from getting shot up in the vital organs. Of course, there's all those microelectronics that we carry around.

Realizing that there are people who will gladly yell "alarmist" any time anyone tries to say anything critical of a world that relies desperately on oil as an energy source, and a material resource as well, I tend to look at both sides of the argument, but I

still come to the conclusion that if we don't want to drive cars on our own Methane, (more onion soup, anyone?) come up with a new material for micro-electronics, (...and here's that new concrete Ipad) or send law enforcement personnel out there without adequate protection, (chain mail is making a comeback) we should become a LOT more aware.

If, like me, you have some questions as to what exactly we will be using to heat the senior citizen's home where we'll spend our "golden years," I recommend reading: *The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World* by Paul Roberts, ISBN 0618239774, published by Houghton Mifflin.

# Opinions - everyone's got at least one, right?

By **JEROME ENGELBERTS**  
*Opinion Editor*

Not too long ago I received a playful ribbing in one of Ohlone's parking lots by one of the professors who teaches at this college (I won't mention your name here, Dr. Kirschner) about not only being opinionated, but piling it on by hav-

ing *two* opinion articles published on the second page of that issue of the Monitor. I (once again, playfully) responded that that sounded dangerously like an opinion to me, and he should write about it and submit the article so we could run it. Well, in the parlance of his home town (New York) ....nothin' doin'.

Herein lies the problem: I'm

starting to suspect I'm actually the only person with an opinion who is willing to submit it to print by way of slaving over a hot keyboard. People don't even seem to have an opinion about my opinion, from the lack of letters to the editor. In my opinion that's pretty remarkable; I've covered a few moderately controversial topics by now, and I must

have rubbed *somebody* the wrong way.

You can easily see where this is going: I have an opinion about people not having an opinion about my opinion, not to mention the fact that I have an opinion about being the only one writing for my opinion page. I'm sure YOU do, too. If you're nodding to yourself, either

in agreement or disgust (exasperation is ok, too) you have your work cut out for you. Submit this work to: Jerome-e@comcast.net and you, too, can have your opinion in print. And then I'll let you know what I think about it in the next issue. (assumes lotus position and chants mantra: "must fill paper this week... must fill paper this week...")

## CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

# Which work of art has influenced your life?



**MEGHAN MOORE**  
English

"'Constancy' by Something Corporate"



**LIZ HUNTER**  
Undeclared

"Bob Dylan's 'A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall'"



**EMANUEL SILVA**  
History

"Monty Python and the Holy Grail"



**LENNY TAGUCHI**  
Undeclared

"Half Life Two"



**FELICITY MOORIS**  
Dance

"The Nutcracker"