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Letters

DenverPost.com

Dwindling supplies of energy in the 21st century

Re: "Energy in the 21st century," Dec. 4 Perspective article.

John D. "Jack" Edwards says, "The U.S. consumes 25 percent of the world's total oil production, and China will soon consume more per capita." China's 1.3 billion people consume about 5 million barrels of oil per day. The United States, population 295 million, burns about 20 million barrels a day. To overtake the U.S. on a per-capita basis, China would have to boost consumption nearly 18 times. That would bring China's daily oil consumption to 88 million barrels per day, more than the world's total current production of 83 million barrels per day. Assuming even a no-growth scenario in consumption by the rest of the world, global oil production could never keep up.

Further, it is important to note that Edwards' estimate of global oil supply peaking in 2030 to 2040 is on the extremely optimistic end of current projections. He fails to note that today's technology cannot viably extract oil from shale, or that proposed technologies would expend ridiculous amounts of energy in the process. He fails to note that best-case scenarios for tar-sands oil extraction limit total Canadian production to a few million barrels per day in the 2015 time frame. These are drops in the barrel.

Further, Edwards lists hydrogen fuel cells well ahead of solar and even wind in terms of economic viability for replacing fossil fuels. But hydrogen fuel cells only work if there is hydrogen, which must be "manufactured" using either fossil fuels, biofuels, wind, solar or other energy sources. Hydrogen is not an energy source, but a storage mechanism, and fuel cells are in effect engines - means of harnessing hydrogen to do useful physical work.

Todd Neff, *Denver*

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John D. "Jack" Edwards is right: All of us must "begin to prepare now" for a gap in global energy supplies. He argues for immediate work on a number of alternatives, but omits hydrogen-rich fuels from his list. He also fails to acknowledge the reality that oil recovered from Canada's tar sands or from shale deposits in Colorado and other Western states will be extremely expensive.

We need a new way to think about energy, now.

When U.S. oil production peaked in 1970, as predicted by one of Shell Oil's research geologists, M. King Hubbert, we were able to turn to the Middle East for new, easy-to-get, relatively low-priced supplies. Now, though, whether global oil production peaks sooner or later doesn't make much difference.

What is important as fossil fuels run out is that we develop what Edwards calls "renewable, less-polluting" alternatives. We are doing just that here in Golden, at the Renewable Hydrogen Foundation.

Our scientific research is finding clean, safe, hydrogen-rich fuels. They come from renewable, sustainable sources. Not only are we finding fuels, we also are developing the technology to make them available, and we are doing it with no government support or special tax breaks.

Hydrogen-rich alternative fuels are available today. They probably won't ever replace oil or other fossil fuels, but they won't need to. When they are widely available at competitive prices, furnaces and cars will run more efficiently, and the environment will be a lot cleaner.

Thomas B. Reed, *Chief Scientist, Renewable Hydrogen Foundation, Golden*

Not such glowing praise

Each year, I glance at listings of light displays such as those you published last week in the Colorado Sunday section. I love the lights and some years go to view the closer displays, yet this year the listing struck me as incongruous. As the U.N. Climate Change Conference takes place in Montreal to review and update the Kyoto Treaty, the United States (user of 25 percent of the world's energy) sits in the room as the 800-pound gorilla refusing to commit to either the treaty or future targets.

Last Sunday's Perspective section contained excellent articles on the need for alternative energy and the coming peak of world oil production ("Energy in the 21st century", Dec. 4). And yet the Colorado Sunday section praises light displays and asks for recommendations on additional well-lit sites to visit. It would be terrific if, alongside glowing praise for megawatt Christmas displays, you could recommend that consumers reduce energy use during the Christmas season by employing strings of smaller lights (or LED strings) and timers to make sure the lights aren't on all night. That would be a welcome addition to future glowing recommendations.

Laura Dravenstott, *Centennial*

The other Mass

Re: "Christmas and the 'holidays,'" Dec. 4 Open Forum.

Last Sunday's letter-writers all made cogent points, though none mentioned that Dec. 25 can also be celebrated by secular humanists and Christians, by mathematicians and scientists, and by anyone else wishing to express appreciation for the tremendous genius and life of Sir Isaac Newton.

Newton was born on Dec. 25, 1642, in Woolsthorpe, near Colsterworth, Lincolnshire, England (of this we can be far more certain than the singular mention of Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus, whose nativity certainly occurred in the spring rather than near the winter solstice). He undertook the majority of his labors on the calculus and many other topics. If there is a universal, divinely inspired language, it is mathematics.

Interestingly, and inversely to Scripture's telling of man's fall from grace because of an apple taken

from the Tree of Knowledge, the story of Isaac's being inspired by an apple falling to the ground from an orchard tree - this time giving permission to eat from the tree of knowledge, giving mankind a new mental and spiritual energy in the direction of independence, away from tyranny and dogmatic authority, giving upward thrust to the scientific revolution in the new era of enlightenment - is a grand story worth retelling each year on his birthday. As the authors of "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" relate, "A deeply religious person, he was obsessed by the search for a divine unity and network of correspondences inherent in nature."

Thus do I refer to Dec. 25 as Newton's Mass.

Patrick Ivers, Laramie, Wyo.

Football teams provided inspiration to remember

Re: "Huskies, Grizzlies rule the days," Dec. 4 news story.

Inside your Sunday cover story rests another story worth telling in this season of charity and championships. When Douglas County High School seniors on this championship team were freshmen, the school proved itself a champion even then. In 2002, less than nine months after Sept. 11, the students and parents of Douglas County High School raised \$40,000 at the Huskie Hoedown at the Wiens Ranch in Sedalia. Those funds were the backing for Operation Enduring Friendship - a hosting of a New York City football team so deeply impacted by the events of Sept. 11.

On Aug. 24, 2002, the Herbert H. Lehman Lions and the Douglas County Huskies met on a Colorado football field. They played for something equal and perhaps greater than any state championship - patriotism, pride and brotherhood. The players from the Bronx rarely ventured out of that city, let alone across the Mississippi and into the great Rocky Mountains.

No doubt those involved in this past week's game will forever remember it, but the honor and memory that came from Operation Enduring Friendship will be equally inspiring - something worth remembering in this time of celebration and giving.

Ray Merenstein, Denver

Christian Peacemaker Teams kidnapped in Iraq

This letter is in regard to the four peace activists from Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) kidnapped in Iraq. Having recently returned from a year in the West Bank, I got to know members of the CPT and their work in Hebron.

The CPT members take great risks employing their principles of non-violence and pacifism. A motto of theirs is "getting in the way," and they go to great lengths to act as a buffer in conflict situations. Often they take this motto literally, placing themselves in the paths of bullets and stones. The CPT does not seek to convert anyone to the Christian faith. Indeed, its work in the West Bank was initiated by an invitation from the mayor of Hebron, a largely Muslim city, and I can say from personal experience that its many years in Hebron has established a warm relationship with the Muslims in Hebron and throughout the Palestinian community.

I reject the assertion of many pundits who seem to revel in the idea that "whiny" or "naive" peace activists have finally gotten their due. The four activists kidnapped knew far better than any of these pundits what risks they took in going to Iraq. They chose to go in spite of these risks.

Nate Wright, Fort Collins

War tribunals and the history of global law

Re: "From Nuremberg to Baghdad; Nazi trials set stage for global law," Dec. 4 Perspective article.

Thanks to The Post for prominently featuring Ved Nanda's piece regarding the 60th anniversary of the Nuremberg Tribunals. This issue deserves our attention, as it raises a question that all Americans, not just so-called "internationalists," must consider.

The United States founded the tribunal, and the United Nations, to ensure that the truths we hold to be self-evident - life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness - would be upheld on a global scale. We hoped with the whole world that we would "never again" have to pay the price of thousands of lives to uphold those truths. Yet, since we and the world have paid that price over and over again, we as a nation now find ourselves debating some of those truths with regard to unilateral war, torture, denial of due process, or restrictions upon the press.

To those who advocate such policies in self-defense, we ask, what is it that has changed? Is it global opinion at the U.N. that has lost track of these truths, or is it the U.S.? Either way, is it not "self-evident" that the U.S. needs to remain actively engaged with the U.N. if we are to convince the world that we still hold those truths?

Timothy R.W. Kubik, *President, UNA-USA Colorado Division, Denver*

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When I see the images of Saddam Hussein and company inside their "trial" boxes (sometimes the wooden enclosures are white, sometimes brown), I can't help thinking they look like they are playing in what looks like children's playpens or cribs.

Ved Nanda reminds us that "global law" is indeed in its infancy. This present "trial" symbolizes that concept for me. Patience, patience, patience and practice, practice, practice, and our children will have fewer of those "miles to go" that Professor Nanda speaks of.

Gloria Dogan, *Denver*

America and Christianity

Re: "A light in the forest," Dec. 4 John Andrews column.

John Andrews drags out the usual right-wing claptrap about godless Hollywood in his latest fantasy about America. He even wrongly attacks Gary Hart.

The left is not opposed to religion per se but to the twisted logic of the "Focus on the Family" brand too long in vogue. You know, the crowd that wants us to believe the world will be a better place if we just outlaw abortion, restrict the civil rights of gay people, and follow a blind president into another quagmire.

While I am not a religious person, I align myself with those who support fairness in the marketplace, a helping hand to those who can't care for themselves, and sanity when it comes to invading other countries on false information.

Gary Hart is correct: The real damage to American politics comes from the "theocracy of the religious right." Andrews seems oblivious to the intolerance of those who have, for far too long, held hostage to what is humanizing and just in all religious tradition. Thoughtful, moral people, be they Christian, Jew, Muslim or agnostic, simply know better.

Bill J. Fyfe, Denver

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John Andrews and his friends go to great lengths to insist that America was formulated as a result of the Christian religion. America was founded on the basis of ethics, an ancient Greek philosophy that models humanitarian and civilized behavior without the dogma and prejudice of religion.

It is the Christian religion that is based on ethics, not the other way around, as the study and application of ethics predated Christianity by thousands of years.

Evangelical Christianity picks and chooses its ethics. There are aspects of evangelical Christianity that I believe are unethical because of some of the attitudes they espouse toward homosexuals, women and charitable behavior.

One does not have to have the fear of the wrath of a supreme being, or believe in the redemptive power of someone who lived 2,000 years ago in order to be a civilized and moral person.

I take issue with people like Andrews who try to justify repressive religion by suggesting it is the one and only model for human behavior.

Christianity may have some good points, but I prefer ethics, because it does not discriminate, which is the manner in which our constitution was meant to be upheld.

Lynn Highland, Morrison

U.S. auto industry woes

Re: "An innovative plan to save America," Dec. 4 David Ignatius column.

A better headline for David Ignatius' column would have been, "A socialist plan to save America." Five times Ignatius mentioned the word "government" as the solution to the domestic auto industry's problems.

I don't recall the government offering rebates, subsidies, etc., to Alexander Graham Bell or Henry Ford. Apparently he has forgotten that the American economic system is one of capitalism and free enterprise. Toyota is building efficient plants here in America (and hiring American workers), while the domestic manufacturers are closing them. If Toyota sees opportunity here, the American manufacturers must meet them head on, but only without government "help" or intervention.

John Matherly, *Westminster*

Grammatical issues

Re: "Time has come for you and I to turn the Paige," Dec. 4 Woody Paige column.

What a shame, and disservice to Woody Paige, that for his goodbye column in The Denver Post, some bozo headlined the column with a glaring grammatical error. The decline of the English language, both spoken and written, is lamentable enough without Colorado's major newspaper putting such incorrect usage in bold headlines as an example (incorrect) for readers who don't know better.

I know Woody knows the difference between the use of "I" and "me."

Maria Lewis Minick, *Edwards*

Holiday repression

Not so long ago, it was the non-Christians who were shouting about their rights being violated by store clerks wishing them a Merry Christmas, exactly as the Christians are now screaming about being wished Happy Holidays. "Help, help, I'm being repressed!" Here's an idea: All of you who are offended by either greeting, get over yourselves. This time of year is incredibly stressful as it is; why get wrought up over stuff that, in the long run, doesn't matter? Why add to your stress, and that of those around you?

Coinneach Fitzpatrick, *Denver*

TO THE POINT: Short takes from readers

The voters passed Referendum C earlier this year after heavy lobbying, which included concerns that higher education needed increased funding. Is a \$1.8 million buyout of the University of Colorado's football coach what the voters had in mind? I doubt it.

Scott Bryan, *Fort Morgan*

If only there were more in Congress like Tom Tancredo who would take a position representing the interests of the citizens of this country rather than their own self-interest. Too many in Congress play up to the liberal media in the hopes of gaining favor at election time.

Mike Lash, *Parker*

The only problem with illegal immigration is that it's illegal. We'd be a lot better off allowing cheap labor to come to us than forcing our factories to leave in order to be able to compete.

John R. Pack, *Parker*

The more Focus on the Family fusses about Sen. Ken Salazar, the more I like him.

Thomas B. Johnson, *Aurora*

Howard Dean and Sen. John Kerry, because of their outrageous comments and venomous speeches, have done more to convert people to the Republican Party than anyone in the GOP, including Karl Rove.

Lloyd Hunley, *Grand Junction*

Congressman Duke Cunningham admitted taking \$2.4 million in bribes. It's kind of ironic: The only time you can really be sure that a politician is telling the truth is when he's admitting that he's a crook.

Paul Menger, *Franktown*

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TO REACH OPINION EDITORS

Phone: 303-820-1331

Fax: 303-820-1502

E-mail: openforum@denverpost.com (only straight text, not attachments)

Mail: The Open Forum, The Denver Post, 1560 Broadway, Denver, 80202 or PO Box 1709, Denver, 80201

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