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Petroleum Geologists

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Environmental Sciences Seminar Series

Presents:

AAPG Visiting Geologist Lecture

WILL TECHNOLOGY SAVE OUR AFFLUENT SOCIETY?

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Center, University of Oklahoma;
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Date & Time: Tuesday, March 23, 2004, 5:00 PM

Location: Smittcamp Alumni House

(Reception at 5 PM, promptly followed by lecture at 5:20 PM)

All members of the professional, educational, and research communities are welcome. For additional information, please contact the Earth & Environmental Sciences Department office at (559) 278-3086 or vengieb@csufresno.edu

Parking restrictions will be relaxed in Lot V (at Shaw and Woodrow Avenues) between 4:30 and 7:00 PM for seminar participants. An online campus parking map is available at: <http://www.csufresno.edu/univrelations/map/>

Abstract

Technology, alone, can't solve all the problems. Technology can readily provide small cars that deliver 100 miles per gallon; technology can't make people prefer to own small cars delivering great mileage.

We have the option to respond to the demands for cleaner air, cleaner water, and cheaper energy simply by leaving our affluent society and transforming to a society that rejects computers, air conditioning, television, automobiles and airplanes. What we really seem to want is to retain the characteristics of the affluent society, while adding more of the environmental benefits of a primitive society.

Many of these societal contradictions are evident in our approach to energy. Is abundant cheap energy a demon, or a god-send? What will our energy future look like if we choose to provide our affluent society to less developed countries? One little known characteristic of the affluent society is a decline in the national birthrate. The US population would be shrinking, if not for immigration.

Our affluent society will probably move to an energy future that extrapolates the patterns of the past. I expect that we will continue to replace low hydrogen/carbon fuels with high hydrogen fuels, with continuously improving energy use efficiencies. Our current hydrocarbon energy supplies probably can provide time for a wise and orderly change-over.

We didn't leave the Stone Age because we ran out of stones; we won't leave our Hydrocarbon Age because we ran out of hydrocarbons; we will leave it because technology will give us a better energy source.

We will be moving towards a hydrogen-based economy, but transitioning to the hydrogen energy economy may yet require 50 years of technology.

Upcoming lectures for Spring, 2004

- Dr. Karen Casciotti of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, "*Combining Isotopic and Molecular Biology Tools to Study Nitrous Oxide Production*", Wednesday, April 14.
- Professor Stan Finney of CSU Long Beach, "*Species diversification during a mass extinction - graptolites during the Late Ordovician*", Tuesday, May 4. (***Paleontological Society Distinguished Lecture***)

For more information, please visit: <http://www.csufresno.edu/geology/EES-seminars.htm> or call the Earth & Environmental Sciences Department at (559) 278-3086.