

Energy Crisis Is A Crisis In Leadership

As my upper G.I. track musically reminisced a lunchtime cucumber salad, I was reminded of the burning similarity between fossil fuel and politicians; an intimate association with natural gas. Recklessly tapping the former causes "flares" of earth eructation. Intelligently drilling the latter frequently yields hot air. Both, when impure, stink.

Congress has adjourned to home with five full weeks of paid vacation. Five almost matches their well deserved single digit popularity. Last week, in a display akin to Jimmy Stewart's immortal portrayal of newly appointed naive Senator Smith in the 1939 classic "Mr. Smith Goes To Washington", outraged disenfranchised republicans remained until the lights were out. They were demanding an up or down vote on off shore drilling. Some cried for the president to recall Congress.

Enough! How about leadership. That is what we disillusioned minions thought we sent them to our house to do. Lead a national fact-filled debate on the scope of man's contribution and ability to curtail climate change (if any). Publically and honestly examine the consequences of the draconian measures being proffered by media darling messianic saviors who are undeserving of unquestioning adoration, let alone golden statues and prizes. Lead a rational national discourse on sources of renewable and non renewable energy in terms all can grasp.

Our dependence on foreign oil is a top tier national security issue. In the infamous science fiction cult film, "Dune", the most precious substance in a feuding galaxy was *spice mélange*. It imparted longevity and vitality, allowed travel over vast distances and was addictive. Seems like political hot air and hydrocarbons have a lot in common.

Aren't we tired of politicians posturing as sage scholars. They spew obscene, pseudo scientific rhetoric and recklessly lob Molotov cocktails of mendacity panicking the public; all in pursuit of political power.

Also, Uber-smart, Ivey league calculating cortexes doing the "I and I alone shall deliver mankind from his inequities, walk-on-water waltz" are to be feared, not adored. Of course, national leaders must be highly educated and plenty smart. However, politicians or policies fashioned and framed as ushering from God's loins or lips usually have bad outcomes.

In this and the next column, we will take a look at some long term solutions out of this mess. I assure you, it is not done by playing follow the Messiah.

For example, oil companies are not public enemy number anything. Profit *margin*, not profit is what counts and theirs is modest. Half of earnings go to shareholders. Most of that is pension funds and taxes on those profits are over 35%. Speculators are not the primary cause of high prices, supply and demand is at play. Finally, distribution of wealth schemes might pathetically buy votes, but not victory over what really ails us.

This gorgeous globe of ours is far more complex and unyielding of its secrets. Its vicissitudes are not deciphered in the ramblings of some Nostradamus wannabee weatherman spending his "cap and trade" credits to rent an Al Gore Greenland beach front cabaña, in search of a golden, global warming tan. Climate changes are one of the things the earth does. Has man had an impact, probably. Both are not the point. You cannot control the former. Thinking that drastic approaches to the latter will quell the real beast in the bedroom is simply silly. Massive sudden reduction of manmade CO2 to below 1980 levels means shutting down economies dependent on hydrocarbon-based energy and unnecessary skyrocketing costs and depredation.

Let's support head drilling. Let's drill into our leader's heads to lead. They must stop mimicking a poodle tap dancing on the linoleum doing political tricks, alternatively begging and then barking promises, while feigning toughness to win our affections and the ultimate treat, our vote. Tap that notion rather than our strategic petroleum reserves. Let's have some intelligent public discourse.

Dr. Kevin Ryan is a retired colonel, physician, musician and author who lives in Fairfield. Reach him at ryan_k@comcast.net.