



T. Boone Pickens Media Coverage 10.10.09-10.12.09

Total of 19 Placements

- Print: 9
- Blog/Online: 10

Coverage Summary:

Excerpts from last week's *Bloomberg* article were included in the *New York Times*' Reading File on Sunday. The piece focuses on the National Clean Energy Summit, natural gas legislation and Reid's support for Pickens and the Pickens Plan. Several newspapers, including the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, *Calgary Herald* and *Honolulu Advertiser* picked up the *Bloomberg* piece as well.

The Pueblo Chieftain published the op-ed by Pickens and NAT GAS Act co-sponsor Betsy Markey. This is the third Colorado newspaper to publish the op-ed.

Forbes previewed Pickens' appearance as a guest on next week's Intelligent Investing. The piece includes a short bio and information on the Pickens Plan.

The *Watertown Daily Times* and the *Galveston County Daily News* ran letters to the editor from Army members discussing the need to replace imported oil with natural gas.

Highlighted Placements (Full Articles Below)

- **Reading File** – *New York Times* – 10/11/09
- **Pickens Power Persuades Dems** – *Pittsburgh Tribune Review* – 10/10/09
 - *Calgary Herald*
 - *Honolulu Advertiser*
- **Making Natural Gas America's Fuel** – *The Pueblo Chieftain* – 10/11/09
- **Next Week's Guest: T. Boone Pickens** – *Forbes* – 10/12/09
- **Enact Legislation to Develop Natural Gas Vehicles** – *Watertown Daily Times* – 10/9/09
- **Forget Foreign Oil And Go With Natural Gas** – *The Galveston County Daily News* – 10/12/09

Print Placements (Full Articles Below)

- **Clean Energy Surges on Profit Prospects, Plans for Stations** – *Orange County Business Journal* – 10/12/09
- **"Peak Oil" Theorists: World Running Out** – *Denver Post* – 10/11/09

Blog/Online Placements (Full Articles Below)

- **How Today's Leaders See Tomorrow's Challenges** – *CNBC* – 10/9/09
- **FOXBusiness.com's Week in Review: Oct. 5-9, 2009** – *Fox Business* – 10/9/09
- **The Week's 10 Best Videos On MarketWatch** – *MarketWatch* – 10/10/09
 - *Big News Network*
 - *Fox Business*
- **Nothing Gained** – *Portfolio.com* – 10/12/09
- **V-Vehicle Finds Investors, Asks DOE for Money** – *Cars.com Blog* – 10/9/09
- **Clark Vandeventer: U.S. Energy Solutions Would Generate More Jobs** – *Noozhawk* – 10/8/09
- **Blogs, Blogging and Bloggers** – *The City Wire* – 10/10/09

HIGHLIGHTED COVERAGE

Reading File – *New York Times* – 10/11/09

Compiled by THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Conservative Gravitas of Glenn Beck

Is conservatism brain-dead? Undergoing resuscitation is more like it, Steven F. Hayward, a conservative scholar, writes in *The Washington Post*, and Glenn Beck of the Fox News Channel may be doing some of the reviving:

[His] distinctiveness and his potential contribution to conservatism can be summed up with one name: R.J. Pestritto. Pestritto is a young political scientist at Hillsdale College in Michigan whom Beck has had on his TV show several times, once for the entire hour discussing Woodrow Wilson and progressivism. He is among a handful of young conservative scholars, several of whom Beck has also featured, engaged in serious academic work critiquing the intellectual pedigree of modern liberalism. Their writing is often dense and difficult, but Beck not only reads it, he assigns it to his staff. "Beck asks me questions about Hegel, based on what he's read in my books," Pestritto told me. Pestritto is the kind of guest Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity would never think of booking.

Okay, so Beck may lack Buckley's urbanity, and his show will never be confused with "Firing Line." But he's on to something with his interest in serious analysis of liberalism's patrimony. The Left is enraged with Beck's scandal-mongering over Van Jones and Acorn, but they have no idea that he poses a much bigger threat than that.

The Church of T. Boone Pickens

On Bloomberg.com, Kambiz Forooha covers a Las Vegas "clean energy summit" featuring an unlikely alliance of Al Gore environmentalists and T. Boone Pickens:

It's a far cry from the wildcatter turned corporate raider and backer of fellow Republican oilman George W. Bush, who downplayed global warming as U.S. president. Now Pickens has ingratiated himself not only with environmentalists but with the Democrats who derided him. The reason: his Pickens Plan, which embraces natural gas and wind power and which proponents say would cut oil imports and curb air pollution in the process.

"A year or so ago, I started taking missionary lessons from the group supporting T. Boone Pickens," Democrat Harry Reid told the 900-strong audience.

Reid, the U.S. Senate majority leader, had called Pickens his "mortal enemy" for funding Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. The group's attack ads helped sink the presidential bid of Massachusetts Senator John Kerry and hand Bush a second term from 2005 to 2009.

"I now belong to the Pickens church," Reid said. "He's been a good friend and a real visionary." ...

After spending \$60 million and taking a yearlong swing across America, Pickens has amassed enough support to persuade both Republicans and Democrats to propose legislation that gives incentives for natural gas vehicles and fueling stations.

Upside of Smoking Outside at Work

Lest we go too far in banning outdoor smoking, consider how it promotes cross-departmental camaraderie at work, suggests Michael Skapinker of *The Financial Times*:

Companies spend money on activities such as Outward Bound adventures and cookery classes, hoping to encourage bonding between different departments. Smokers already cross those boundaries. Look at any group congregating for a cigarette: you will see senior executives and security guards, marketing and I.T. support. Does smoking produce business benefits? "There's no doubt in my mind that it inspires cross-departmental collaboration," one commercial manager (and smoker) told me. "You get to know people who you otherwise wouldn't, and get a feel for what they do. If you've half a spark of creativity about you you'll doubtless stumble across an idea you hadn't thought of before. It also allows for the 'off the record' conversations between departments that grease the wheels of business. I'd be pretty lost without them."

Bring Back the 90-Minute Movie

On the Esquire blog the Daily Endorsement, Ryan D'Agostino laments the demise of the hour-and-a-half film. Fittingly, he does so in a post of three pithy paragraphs, which are, perhaps also fittingly, further condensed here:

Normally in life, getting more for your money is a good thing. But movies aren't Pringles, and 20 percent more free isn't necessarily what you want. Even 10 minutes of unnecessary screen time can cause a good, tight story to fray. "I Love You, Man" was funny at 104 minutes, but it would have been precisely as funny at 95. They could have cut out the entire China subplot from "The Dark Knight," easily 20 of that movie's 152 convoluted minutes, with no effect on your enjoyment or comprehension of the film. And was it me, or did the fifth hour of "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" start to drag?

You've probably never walked out of a movie and said, "It was about 20 minutes too short." ... The original Rambo is an economical 91 minutes. "Annie Hall" is 94. So is "The Road Warrior." And "Easy Rider," even with the long drug sequence. "Fast Times at Ridgemont High" needs only 92 minutes to convey the entire high school experience. Every frame matters. Some stories are better longer, of course. Even at three hours, "The Godfather" doesn't waste a millisecond. But lately too many directors are indulging themselves at the expense of your time.

Pickens Power Persuades Dems – *Pittsburgh Tribune Review* – 10/10/09

By Bloomberg

Trim and tanned at 81, T. Boone Pickens leans forward in his swivel chair to better hear Al Gore exhort solar and wind power. It's a scorching August day at the National Clean Energy Summit in Las Vegas. Pickens, who has made and lost billions betting on energy in his boom-and-bust career, waits with Democratic Party bigwigs for his turn to speak. His topic: why the United States must wean itself from foreign oil.

It's a far cry from the wildcatter turned corporate raider and backer of fellow Republican oilman George W. Bush, who downplayed global warming as U.S. president. Now Pickens has ingratiated himself not only with environmentalists but with the Democrats who derided him. The reason: his Pickens Plan, which embraces natural gas and wind power and which proponents say would cut oil imports and curb air pollution in the process.

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Reid, the U.S. Senate majority leader, had called Pickens his "mortal enemy" for funding Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. The group's attack ads helped sink the presidential bid of Mass. Sen. John Kerry and hand Bush a second term from 2005 to 2009.

"I now belong to the Pickens church," Reid said. "He's been a good friend and a real visionary."

By dint of his plan, which Pickens has scaled back to focus on using natural gas to power the nation's 6.5 million diesel-burning heavy trucks, he has transformed himself into an unlikely environmental hero. Pickens says the nation can save 2.7 million barrels of oil a day, more than half of the 4.3 million barrels a day it imported from OPEC in June.

After spending \$60 million and taking a yearlong swing across America, Pickens has amassed enough support to persuade both Republicans and Democrats to propose legislation that gives incentives for natural gas vehicles and fueling stations.

An energy bill, with bipartisan backing, is likely to pass in some form, increasing U.S. interest in natural gas, says Scott Deatherage, a partner at Thompson & Knight LLP in Dallas, who advises corporations on environmental regulation.

People who see only Pickens's past need to get beyond that and look at his ideas, says Dan Weiss, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, a policy group founded by John Podesta, former President Bill Clinton's chief of staff.

"His plan is on the right track," Weiss says. "Pickens has gotten off oil, and his plan will reduce foreign oil consumption and clean the air."

Pickens warns that oil may reach \$150 a barrel in the next two years as economic activity rebounds to pre-recession levels. The petroleum industry will have trouble raising production fast enough to meet demand, he says. And even if it could, that would mean the United States would continue funding foreign governments by buying their output.

"Show me another country where they import 70 percent of their oil and over half comes from their enemy," Pickens says, counting Iran, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela among the foes. "This is the largest transfer of wealth in human history."

Pickens says natural gas can move America toward energy independence. He cites statistics from the nonprofit Potential Gas Committee, which indicate that the U.S.'s supply can last 100 years. Gas produces as much as 30 percent less carbon dioxide than oil when burned, according to the U.S. Energy Department.

"Natural gas is clean, it's cheap and it's ours," Pickens says.

Not everyone is convinced that Pickens has abandoned his old maneuvers. Critics say he wants to shore up his investments and is cloaking his strategy in the American flag.

For one thing, he holds a 33 percent stake valued at about \$275 million in Clean Energy Fuels Corp., a Seal Beach, California-based company he founded. The company, which runs 184 natural gas filling stations, would benefit from proposed federal legislation for which Pickens has lobbied.

Pickens also owns 5 percent of Exco Resources Inc., a Dallas-based natural gas explorer. And he's backing V Vehicle Co. with venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, where former U.S. Vice President Gore, who won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for his work on climate change, is a partner. San Diego-based V Vehicle plans to build environmentally friendly cars and may consider natural gas at some point.

"The Pickens Plan is nothing more than a call to rig the market toward the fuels that Pickens has invested in," says Jerry Taylor, a senior fellow at research group Cato Institute.

Pickens, who built his company, Mesa Inc., by buying small businesses and undervalued oil and gas properties, has never lacked for big plans. He says he has at least one more thing to accomplish. "I'm trying to fix the country," he says.

If the U.S. passes legislation that embraces natural gas, Pickens will have succeeded in one of his most ambitious feats yet: rallying Democrats and environmentalists behind the plan of a billionaire Texas oilman.

Making Natural Gas America's Fuel – *The Pueblo Chieftain* – 10/11/09

By Betsy Markey and T. Boone Pickens

Colorado is a leader in promoting the use of American natural gas as a transportation fuel. The Center for American Progress recently unveiled a report "Natural Gas: A Bridge Fuel for the 21st Century." The report noted that the recent discoveries of natural gas shale represented an "unprecedented opportunity to use gas as a bridge fuel to a 21st century energy economy that relies on efficiency, renewable sources, and low-carbon fossil fuels." Unlike most natural resources in America, natural gas reserves have actually grown as modern drilling technology has opened vast new shale deposits across the country for the economic and environmentally safe recovery of the natural gas they contain.

The latest study conducted by the Potential Gas Committee, in cooperation with the Colorado School of Mines, estimated that there are more than 2,000 trillion cubic feet of natural gas available for recovery in the continental United States.

With enough natural gas to last more than a century, we have more than enough to turn away from imported gasoline and diesel to power our cars and trucks and create an entirely new industry around America's rolling stock running on clean, domestic natural gas.

In spite of the recession, we are still importing about two-thirds of all the oil we use in America. In July, we imported 374 million barrels of oil at a cost of over \$24 billion. Seventy percent of that oil is used to fuel our 250 million cars and light trucks and millions of heavy duty trucks - including 18-wheelers.

There are more than 10 million vehicles in the world running on natural gas, so we already know that this technology works. Unfortunately, only about 130,000 of them are in the United States.

The place to start this conversion process is with heavy-duty trucks. The U.S. House and Senate are considering the NAT GAS Act, which will provide incentives for truckers - companies large and small - to replace their trucks burning imported diesel with vehicles running on American natural gas.

As a primary co-sponsor and an ardent supporter, we were in attendance at the introduction of the House version on April 1 and have since been joined by 87 additional bipartisan co-sponsors of this crucial legislation.

If we replace some of the diesel trucks on America's roads with those running on domestic natural gas, that would keep billions of dollars circulating through the U.S. economy instead of sending it to places like Saudi Arabia, Angola or Venezuela.

Colorado has made an excellent start in this process.

At Denver International Airport, almost every major airline is using natural gas vehicles, from baggage tugs to parking shuttles. Many cities and counties across Colorado are already operating compressed natural gas buses as well as garbage and recycling trucks, with more on the way.

Natural gas also burns far cleaner than either gasoline or diesel and produces virtually no particulate emissions. As Colorado searches for new ways to protect the air from its cities to its farms, the value of switching from imported oil to domestic natural gas becomes more and more clear.

We are proud to co-sponsor and support the NAT GAS Act and will continue to work with members of the House, Senate and the Obama administration to ensure that this critical bill becomes law.

U.S. Rep. Betsy Markey of Fort Collins represents Colorado 4th Congressional District, including the Eastern Plains. T. Boone Pickens, 81, was born in Holdenville, Okla., and rose from an oilfield roughneck to one of the world's largest producers of energy.

Next Week's Guest: T. Boone Pickens – Forbes – 10/12/09

By Alexandra Zendrian

T. Boone Pickens is the founder and chairman of BP Capital Management. His most recent book, *The First Billion is the Hardest*, was released last year.

In addition to oil and gas investments, Pickens, 81, is also the largest private holder of permitted groundwater rights in the U.S. through Mesa Water, Inc. Selling as much water as Mesa could pump would result in \$165 million worth of water to Dallas each year. He recently delayed construction of a massive wind farm after the credit markets seized up last year and natural gas prices fell.

Pickens is stumping for the global energy plan called the "Pickens Plan," which is aimed at reducing U.S. dependency on foreign oil. He focuses on statistics that show America is currently importing 70% of its oil, up from 24% in 1970. Pickens highlights wind energy as a solution and proposes using wind turbines to harness breezes in the wind corridor that runs from West Texas to Canada.

Pickens is rated No. 334 on the Forbes List of World Billionaires and No. 341 on the Forbes List of Richest Americans with a net worth of approximately \$2 billion, down from about \$3 billion a year ago. Pickens earned his bachelor's degree in geology from Oklahoma A&M, now known as Oklahoma State University, in 1951.

Enact Legislation to Develop Natural Gas Vehicles – Watertown Daily Times – 10/9/09

Since July 2008, members of the Pickens Plan army have been working to spread the word about the continuing dangers of our dependence on foreign oil. In August 2009 — even with oil at about half the price it was in 2008, we still spent over \$25 billion to import more than 60 percent of the oil we used in just one month. That is money which could have been supporting the American economy instead of the economies of places like Saudi Arabia, Angola and Venezuela.

Natural gas is an abundant resource which can replace a significant percentage of that imported oil. It is cleaner than either gasoline or diesel, it is cheaper than imported oil, and we have reserves projected to last more than 100 years.

There is a bill in Congress, the NAT GAS Act (New Alternative Transportation to Give Americans Solutions Act, R. 1835 and S. 1408), which will help jump-start the natural gas vehicle industry in the United States. It has nearly 90 bipartisan co-sponsors in the House making the NAT GAS Act one of the few substantive bills in Congress with the support of both parties.

I urge our representatives in Washington to move the NAT GAS Act onto the House and Senate floor for a vote this fall so it can quickly be signed into law by President Obama. Let's reduce our dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

Bernard L. Coffey, Alexandria Bay

Forget Foreign Oil And Go With Natural Gas – *The Galveston County Daily News* – 10/12/09

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Marc Church, League City

PRINT COVERAGE

Clean Energy Surges on Profit Prospects, Plans for Stations – *Orange County Business Journal* – 10/12/09

By Dan Beighley

Cheap natural gas, expansion and the prospect of profitability seem to be driving Seal Beach-based Clean Energy Fuels Corp. on Wall Street.

The company, 40% owned by Texas billionaire T. Boone Pickens, builds and runs natural gas fueling stations for fleets of taxis, buses and other vehicles.

Clean Energy's shares have nearly tripled since the start of the year—easily outpacing the 15% or so gain of the S&P 500 index. The company had a market value of \$825 million last week.

Low natural gas prices have brought more business for Clean Energy as some fleet operators make the switch from diesel fuel, the company's main rival.

Clean Energy could reach profitability this year, according to David Woodburn, an analyst for San Francisco-based ThinkEquity LLC, part of London's Panmure Gordon & Co.

For the second quarter, Clean Energy posted a loss of \$6.4 million, versus a loss of \$3.2 million a year earlier.

Analysts on average expect a third-quarter loss of \$2.4 million with some predicting a profit of \$1.2 million.

For the fourth quarter, analysts on average project a loss of \$1.2 million, but some are forecasting a profit of \$1.2 million.

Being profitable would allow Clean Energy to finance the building of stations on its own.

By the end of the year, Clean Energy plans to add about 20 stations for a total of 200. Forty are planned for 2010.

Up to now, the company has raised money from investors and grants to build stations, which cost \$1 million to \$3 million each.

Clean Energy typically makes its money back on stations within four years, according to Chief Executive Andrew Littlefair.

Revenue at Clean Energy has been in decline—falling 17% from a year earlier to \$28 million in the second quarter—as a result of lower natural gas prices.

"Peak Oil" Theorists: World Running Out – *Denver Post* – 10/11/09

By Michael Booth

The world is running out of oil faster than society suspects, and last year's \$4.11 gasoline spike was just a bitter hint of the future, according to a "peak oil" theory whose key proponents will gather in Denver this week.

Though peak-oil theorists prompt scorn from many in the petroleum industry, they've attracted an audience in some political and financial circles with their warnings to avert disaster by conserving, diversifying and exploring at an urgent pace.

"Up until now, technology has delivered dazzling results to America and the world economy, in delivering oil from all around the world despite increasingly challenging environments," said Dave Bowden, executive director of the Denver-based Association for the Study of Peak Oil & Gas-USA, or ASPO. "The harsh reality is, despite the best efforts of amazing technology, they're not finding as many of these big fields anymore."

Peak-oil theorists who group under the ASPO umbrella say world production of the vital liquid is at, or just a couple of years shy, of its absolute high point. Once oil companies begin to squeeze less and less from the ground each year — while demand skyrockets in developing China and India — spot shortages will blow up prices, shock economies and destabilize governments.

Proponents will trade proof and seek solutions beginning today at their international peak-oil conference, at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel. The group urges starting work on mitigation steps immediately:

- Mandate higher auto efficiency to cut oil use, with an achievable goal of doubling fuel economy within 10 years.
- Promote plug-in hybrid cars relying more on electricity than gasoline, through manufacturing incentives and investment in plug-in infrastructure. Also steer electric-power generation toward clean, renewable alternatives such as wind, solar and ocean-wave power.
- Review and potentially remove limitations on offshore oil drilling, in order to boost supply while conservation efforts gain hold.

"The U.S. has the ability and the technology to cope with this problem through thoughtful planning, meaningful conservation measures and forward planning," Bowden said. "Are we going to wake up to that, or are we going to follow the path of at least the last three to four decades, of only reacting to each price spike?"

Though the peak-oil movement has some individual supporters inside major oil companies and trade groups, the concept is pooh-poohed or ignored by most of Big Oil.

Those analysts tend to agree with the federal Energy Information Administration, that peak world oil production is not imminent but more likely 20 to 40 years away. They argue that an oil catastrophe will be kept at bay during those decades by the natural cycle of rising prices prompting conservation and alternative fuel sources.

"Historically, it's not sudden, sharp shifts; it's a long, slow decline," said Michael Lynch, a Massachusetts-based petroleum supply analyst whose views echo the mainstream advice of high-profile Cambridge Energy Research Associates and its chairman, Daniel Yergin.

When the world was running out of whale oil for lighting in the 1800s, economies moved to kerosene, Lynch said. If oil stocks do indeed become more scarce, an abundance of natural gas will become one of the transition fuels for developed nations.

Peak-oil questions will not be the primary worries for either society as a whole or the oil and gas industry in coming years, Lynch said.

"What will drive us is the overall economy" and whether more nations begin to impose carbon taxes to fight global warming in the next few years, he said.

One of the more visceral arguments of peak-oil supporters shows production already past the high in dozens of nations — the Lower 48 states of the U.S., for example, passed their peak in 1971, Egypt in 1993, etc. As each nation goes, so goes the world, peak-oil theorists claim, and oil companies won't be able to keep boosting annual output past about 2015 at the latest.

World reserves, meanwhile — the pool from which that annual production is drained — are being depleted by about 4 percent a year, ASPO says. That leaves the world margin of error far too small, and vulnerable to disruptions such as rebel attacks on Nigerian pipelines or disputes with Iran about nuclear weapons and oil supplies.

Skeptics agree on one thing: World politics are one key to the issue. But high prices tend to push politicians to supply more oil, eventually, Lynch said. Russia's oil production appeared on the decline until politicians there lowered taxes and encouraged drillers.

"Declines get reversed quite a bit," Lynch said. "Not overnight, but quite a bit."

While peak oil tends to focus on threats to the economy, it also can produce regional winners, said Wall Street oil analyst Steve Kopits. T. Boone Pickens and other major players have been talking up natural gas as a cleaner and more abundant replacement for gasoline in vehicles.

If those efforts gain traction, Kopits said, "Denver is going to be a big boomtown" because of huge pools of gas under the Rocky Mountains.

"Denver and Houston will do very well."

BLOG/ONLINE COVERAGE

How Today's Leaders See Tomorrow's Challenges – CNBC – 10/9/09

By Phil Stott

The World Business Forum that took place in Radio City Music Hall this week was definitely the place to be to pick up advice on leadership, and how you and your company can be best positioned for what's in store through the end of the current crisis we're in, and on into recovery.

The two-day event featured a wide array of leaders from the worlds of business, politics and academia: President Bill Clinton was the keynote speaker, and he was amply supported by a cast that included the likes of T. Boone Pickens, Nobel prize-winning economist Paul Krugman, management guru Gary Hamel, economist Jeffrey Sachs (who just happens to advise President Obama), and many more.

Despite the wide range of backgrounds and specialties of each of the speakers, several key themes emerged over the course of the two days that are likely to affect how business is conducted in the coming years. Of those, the top three—at least to this observer—were as follows:

1. The need for greater transparency
2. The need to realize our interconnectedness with the rest of the world—and not only on economic issues
3. Energy: sustainability and independence

Likely, none of those will come as a surprise to anyone who's spent any time reading about business recently, much less leading one, but as speaker Patrick Lencioni pointed out on day one of the event, there's no harm in over-communicating, especially where key challenges to our way of life are involved.

Transparency

Of the three issues listed above, it may seem odd that greater transparency is listed first, but there's good reason for that. Of all the leaders who addressed the need for transparency, none nailed the scope of the challenge quite as well as PricewaterhouseCoopers Chairman Dennis Nally. In his eyes, economic recovery is linked to the issue of trust: people, companies and governments all need to be able to trust each other. Without that, says Nally, everyone remains fearful, and normal economic activity and growth can't resume. His solution: greater transparency, especially in terms of adherence to financial reporting standards. Everything else—global recovery, the ability to invest in alternative energies, job growth—therefore springs from the issue of transparency.

Interconnectedness

The question of interconnectedness is another that was addressed by many speakers but nailed by one: President Bill Clinton. Outlining a scenario where unsold condos in Florida and the South of France had a knock-on effect that could be realized as far away as a manufacturing facility in Vietnam (no home sales meaning no income for discretionary spending on imported manufactured goods), he declared that "divorce is not an option" from the rest of the global economy. Thus, as we seek to recover and get stronger, it's important to realize that we're all in this together; the days where American prosperity led to prosperity around the world are fading. Now, American prosperity depends on relationships—and prosperity—in other countries.

The energy question

The one area where all participants were in agreement is that energy is going to be one of the main drivers of growth in coming years. The reasons are simple: oil is finite and becoming ever more expensive; carbon reduction is a necessary goal; national security depends on ending or greatly reducing reliance on foreign energy sources. Thus, alternative sources are the way forward. T. Boone Pickens

used his platform at the Forum to reaffirm his pledge that he will deliver an energy plan for America, focused on natural gas—"the only natural resource in America that will move an 18 wheeler."

All told, perhaps the most striking analysis of the challenges facing us—and the nature of the changes that may have to come—was offered by Jeffrey Sachs, who opined that "markets can't solve the problems." The reason? "These are problems that require markets and public policy working hand in hand." Drawing together all of the themes touched on so far, he commented that "we need a new approach to the planet"—one where "global cooperation lies at the center" of everything we do, and where we "put people first rather than the powerful interests."

Whether or not you agree with Sachs' take on the road to a solution, the challenges are pretty much there for all to see. While they represent a difficult road ahead, there are also sure to be opportunities in each of them. Staying nimble enough to benefit from those—and to negotiate the changes we're sure to see—is going to be the key to surviving in business in the coming years.

Phil Stott is a staff writer at Vault.com in New York. Originally from Scotland, he has also lived and worked in Japan, South Korea and Eastern Europe. He holds an MA in English Literature and Modern History, and a Masters in Research in Civil Engineering, both from the University of Dundee.

FOXBusiness.com's Week in Review: Oct. 5-9, 2009 – Fox Business – 10/9/09

By Erik Berte

Monday

Now that Ken Lewis announced he's heading out at Bank of America (BAC: 17.6, 0.061, 0.35%), attention is turning toward his replacement. The bank's board, in the meantime, needs to hurry in case he is forced to step down before the end of the year. A search committee is being put together consisting of five members of the bank's board, including the company chair, Walter Massey. After someone is finally picked, regulators will reportedly be asked to sign off on the selection.

Despite the struggles at BofA, optimism for other financials helped bring the bulls back on Wall Street Monday, after losing a good chunk of recent gains last week. The Dow jumped 112 points to 9600.

Tuesday

Trying to keep up with the success of Apple's (AAPL: 190.5601, 0.0901, 0.05%) popular iPhone, Microsoft (MSFT: 25.88, 0.29, 1.13%) put out a new version of its own smartphone software, Windows Mobile. Windows Mobile 6.5 was launched Tuesday, sending Microsoft's shares up nearly 2%. Microsoft plans to work with Samsung and Vodafone (VOD: 21.5897, 0.2597, 1.22%) to make over 30 new handhelds running the latest software.

World Business Forum went on at Radio City Music Hall in New York City with big names from T. Boone Pickens to Former President Clinton. See our slideshow for highlights from the event.

And Rush Limbaugh could soon be joining the ranks of sports team owners. Limbaugh put in a bid for the National Football League's St. Louis Rams, which is estimated by Forbes magazine to be worth \$929 million. He has teamed up with the owner of the St. Louis Blues as well as the former President of the New York Knicks and Madison Square Garden to purchase the team.

Wednesday

The Congressional Budget Office took a look at the current health bill going through the Senate Finance Committee and said it would cut the federal budget deficit by \$81 billion over the next decade. The CBO

gave the plan an \$829 price tag over that period and said it would expand insurance coverage to 91% of residents in the U.S. The Finance Committee needs to pass the overhaul bill and then leaders in the Senate will merge it with a bill from the Senate Health Committee before it goes out to the entire floor for a vote.

Madoff Madness Dept.: FOX Business learned Wednesday that Bernie Madoff's accountant, David Frierling, is negotiating a plea agreement with the government. Frierling pleaded not guilty to six counts related to Madoff's giant Ponzi scheme. He was only one of three people to be charged in this case and the only one to plead not guilty.

Thursday

Retail sales began stabilizing in September, as many posted better-than-expected same-store sales. Looking at declines in spending a year ago, this year things appeared to paint a brighter picture and many retailers raised their estimates for growth in the future. Vice President of PR for the National Retail Federation Scott Krugman said, "The decreases aren't as severe as they were a year ago, and we are starting to see stabilization."

Meanwhile, Gold prices hit all-time highs Thursday at \$1060 per troy ounce in midday trading. For most traders, the metal's surge has been tied to the falling value of the U.S. dollar. The index that tracks the dollar in comparison to other major currencies has fallen 13.7% from lows in early March. During the same time, Gold has gained 11.1%.

Friday

Citigroup (C: 4.7725, 0.1525, 3.3%) worked out a deal to sell its commodity trading unit Phibro on Friday to Occidental Petroleum (OXY: 80.46, 0.94, 1.18%). The move could lessen scrutiny on the bank's executive pay practices, which have been under pressure since the bank took federal bailout money. Occidental said it will make an investment of \$250 million in unit, which trades in gas and oil. The actual price tag, however, was not disclosed.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said he sees tighter policies as the economy heals, warning that the Fed can't continue propping up the economy forever without risking a surge in inflation. Interest rates have been cut to near 0% for a while and billions of dollars have been injected into the financial system in hopes of averting an economic meltdown.

The Week's 10 Best Videos On MarketWatch – *MarketWatch* – 10/10/09

In case you missed them, here are the top 10 videos that appeared on MarketWatch for the week of Oct. 5-Oct. 9:

Gold hits record high

Gold rallied to a new high Tuesday on concerns about the weakness of the U.S. dollar. Brian Hicks, portfolio manager with U.S. Global Investors, says he's raising his target on the metal. Stacey Delo reports. Watch Video Report.

NASA finds huge ring of ice orbiting Saturn

NASA's Spitzer space telescope has detected a huge, diffuse ring orbiting Saturn that's much larger than the rings of ice and dust already known to surround the planet. The ring is so faint it can only be seen with infrared imaging instruments. Watch Video Report.

Investors brace for earnings season

Michael Cuggino of the Permanent Portfolio Funds says the coming parade of quarterly earnings reports will go a long way toward determining whether a solid economic turnaround is taking shape. Interview by Stacey Delo. Watch Video Report.

Pickens on weaning the U.S. from foreign oil

At the World Business Forum in New York, T. Boone Pickens, chairman of BP Capital Management, updates WSJ's Paul Glader on his project to reduce the nation's reliance on foreign oil. He also discusses the dollar's sustaining power as the world's reserve currency. Watch Video Report.

Ayn Rand philosophy falls short

Mean Street columnist Evan Newmark tells Deputy Markets Editor Dennis Berman subscribing to Ayn Rand's philosophy of rugged individualism may not be the best for business -- at least not at Goldman Sachs. Watch Video Report.

Good tidings for silver

The other precious metal surges higher as gold sets new high, Steve Sears reports. Watch Video Report.

What kind of investor are you?

Greg Davies, who heads the behavioral-finance unit at Barclays Wealth, has identified several types of financial personalities based on risk-handling and decision-making abilities. Jonathan Burton is put to the test. Watch Video Report.

How to invest in real estate mutual funds

Paul Curbo, portfolio manager for Invesco Aim, explains how investing in real estate mutual funds differs from entering the real estate market. He talks with Karen Damato. Watch Video Report.

Counting on commodities

In the belief that global demand for raw materials will accelerate, Marshall Berol, co-manager of Encompass Fund, has committed much of the portfolio to energy stocks. He talks about investments he's made in uranium, rare-earth minerals and coal. Jonathan Burton reports. Watch Video Report.

What are the most promising emerging markets?

At the World Business Forum, Antoine Van Agtmael says that long term investors should look to China and India for opportunities. Watch Video Report.

Nothing Gained – *Portfolio.com* – 10/12/09

By Matt Haber

Nonprofit news sites say they're serving the public good. So why are some traditional media folks threatening to crush them?

Eighteen months ago, the Texas-based venture capitalist John Thornton approached Evan Smith of Texas Monthly with an idea for a news organization dedicated to their home state that would combine a largely philanthropic business model with public interest journalism. Smith, who'd helped his magazine win a number of National Magazine Awards (including two for General Excellence), had known Thornton,

a general partner at Austin Ventures, for decades, ever since both men moved to Texas around the same time. The big time magazine editor listened to his friend's pitch—that journalism is a public good like clean water and clean air and should therefore be protected from the whims of the marketplace—and thought, "How quaint. How charming. How wonderfully idealistic."

Smith offered some advice to his pal, and after a few months of helping him search for someone to put this venture together, he left his professional home of sixteen years and became the CEO and editor-in-chief of the Texas Tribune, that quaint, charming, wonderfully idealistic project. With a combination of grants from organizations like the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and donations from average citizens (and some not-so-average one like T. Boone Pickens), the Texas Tribune will launch in November.

"When we started off on this thing, we were out on the edge of the plank," Smith told Portfolio.com. "And now, the plank has become the lifeboat. What you're going to see now is a lot of momentum behind this. You're going to see a lot of people jumping in this space," he said of nonprofit journalism.

"The more the better, honestly."

Smith's not kidding. Two weeks ago, another nonprofit news group calling itself the Bay Area News Project announced its formation. Funded with \$5 million in seed money from private equity investor F. Warren Hellman, the News Project will combine the editorial talents of San Francisco's KQED-FM radio station and Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism and intends to be up and running in early 2010. (In the meantime, they need to come up with a proper name.) A week before that, another group calling itself Voice of Orange County, officially presented itself to the world with Norberto Santana, Jr., a longtime investigative reporter for The Orange County Register, as its co-founder, editor, and lead reporter.

Santana, who'd left the Register this past June after five years, said Voice of OC was "born from a community-wide frustration with the L.A. Times and OC Register being in financial doldrums for over a year." Voice of OC, which will publish in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, will launch by the end of the year.

"The key to this kind of nonprofit is to have a mission that's understood by the community," Santana told Portfolio.com. "Every morning I wake up, I make another new connection. I've got people coming out of the woodwork to try to help."

One of those people is Andrew Donohue, the editor of Voice of San Diego, a five-year-old nonprofit site. (Donohue offered some guidance to Santana, but the two organizations are unrelated despite similar names.) When Voice of San Diego was started in 2004 by retired venture capitalist Buzz Woolley and Neil Morgan, a local newspaper legend who'd been fired from the San Diego Union-Tribune (the San Diego Union won a Pulitzer under his stewardship in 1987), the idea of a nonprofit news organization (much less one that would publish almost entirely online) "was a really foreign idea," Donohue said.

"I can't stress enough how silly an idea people thought this was when we started," he continued. "This is a movement now."

As with most movements, nonprofits have their detractors. A few days after the Bay Area News Project was announced, the San Francisco Chronicle's Metro editor Audrey Cooper told her staff they'd "smash whomever is naive enough to poke their noses in our market," according to an email leaked to the Web site SF Appeal. Evan Smith tells of one unnamed editor of a major Texas paper who said of the nascent news organization, "We're gonna crush the Texas Tribune."

Slate's press critic, Jack Shafer, offered a tough-minded critique of nonprofits in late September, writing, "In the current arrangement, we're substituting one flawed business model for another. For-profit newspapers lose money accidentally. Nonprofit news operations lose money deliberately. No matter how good the nonprofit operation is, it always ends up sustaining itself with handouts, and handouts come with conditions." (John Thornton of the Texas Tribune responded the next day on the Huffington Post.)

"To some degree it's wishful thinking on their part that we'd just go away," Smith says of traditional news organizations' attacks. "They just refuse to acknowledge that we're doing something potentially worthwhile. We see ourselves not as the disease, but a cure."

One thing that may be upsetting traditional news organizations is the whiff of revolution in the language of the nonprofits, an echo of the old chestnut that "the workers control the means of production" implied by much of the rhetoric surrounding nonprofit sites.

Voice of OC's Santana says part of his and his colleagues' interest in nonprofits comes from "the reporter looking around and saying, 'Remind me again what this centralized corporation is doing for me?'"

"The nonprofits are kind of saying, 'Hey guys, we waited for you.'"

Criticism of each other's models notwithstanding, most nonprofits are willing to partner with their corporate comrades. Many of the newer organizations are following the model set forth by ProPublica which has worked closely with for-profit news organizations like the New York Times on producing stories like this summer's lengthy (not to mention costly) New York Times Magazine report on what happened at one New Orleans hospital during Hurricane Katrina. The story ran in the Times and on ProPublica's Web site simultaneously.

"There's literally not a major publication or other publisher in the country that does the kind of work we do that hasn't expressed enthusiasm for publishing it," ProPublica's General Manager Richard Tofel said. (When a reporter referred to the sixteen-month-old site as "an elder-statesman in the field on nonprofit reporting," Tofel didn't miss a beat: "Elder-statesman at not even two—yikes!")

Despite the change in business model and the heavy emphasis on online distribution, the nonprofits are in many ways a throwback to an older (somewhat overly mythologized) time in newspapers when reporters were aggressive, entrepreneurial, and animated by a sense of public service. Voice of Orange County's newsroom may be in a building full of artists' lofts, but to hear Santana describe it, it might as well be full of old time reporters in fedoras with "PRESS" cards tucked in the bands. "It's a return to the energy of the old fashioned newspapers," he says, pointing towards what he describes as "the aggressiveness and the working class perspective."

After years of working in the relative comfort (at least until this most recent downturn) of corporate-owned media, does Santana have any fears about starting his own newsroom—especially one entirely reliant on donations and grants to stay afloat?

"The only fear I had was to do nothing," he said.

Matt Haber is the media blogger for Portfolio.com.

V-Vehicle Finds Investors, Asks DOE for Money – Cars.com Blog – 10/9/09

V-Vehicle, the start-up firm with backing from both Silicon Valley and T. Boone Pickens, took another step toward building its enigmatic "fuel-efficient car for the U.S. market" by applying for \$250 million in Department of Energy loans through the Advanced Technology Vehicle Manufacturing program. V-Vehicle has been tight-lipped about just what kind of car it plans to build, but it has said it intends to start operations in a shuttered GM plant in Monroe, La. It has already raised over \$100 million from

investors, and if it raises \$350 million, VVC will be eligible for \$80 million worth of incentives from state and local governments.

VVC has stated that it hopes to hire “a limited workforce of fewer than 100 people for the start-up operations in the fall of 2010,” and that it eventually plans to employ 1,400 people at an average salary of \$40,000 per year. It has an e-mail application for people who are interested in knowing more.

Interestingly, VVC has still not said what this “fuel-efficient vehicle” will look like or what kind of fuel it will use, although speculation has swirled that it will actually have a gas-only engine.

Hopefully, the DOE will at least get to find out. VVC expects the agency to rule on the loan request by next month.

Clark Vandeventer: U.S. Energy Solutions Would Generate More Jobs – Noozhawk – 10/8/09

By Clark Vandeventer

Unemployment is at 9.8 percent nationwide. Santa Barbara County has lost 3,700 jobs in the past year and 6,700 jobs dating back to August 2007. Those numbers don't include those who have taken drastic reductions in pay, or the construction industry, where many are working minimal hours. In times such as these, we need leaders who will focus on three things: jobs, jobs and jobs.

Everything ought to be on the table. Yet we see the opposite happening in our community. Santa Barbara Councilman Das Williams, also a candidate for Assembly, has made discouraging jobs and economic growth on the South Central Coast a full-time job.

Maybe I find myself picking on Williams more than others because he's a friend on Facebook so I see his status updates, but whether he's campaigning against leases for offshore drilling or for tax hikes on business, he seems to have a special zeal for discouraging job growth. In reality, Williams is no different than Rep. Lois Capps, D-Santa Barbara, or much of the political establishment. French President Nicolas Sarkozy had to step in to tell President Barack Obama that while platitudes are nice, there is a real world called reality. Someone needs to say something similar to Williams, who like so many politicians seems to be incapable of aligning policy positions with the realities of our time.

Later this month, the Santa Barbara Technology and Industry Association will host an Economic Summit on the topic of the green economy. The Vandeventer Group, along with Noozhawk, is a co-sponsor of the discussion about how we can create public policy that will lead to economic growth on the South Central Coast and nationwide.

My friends on the right wouldn't be the first you would expect to take a look at green stimulus to encourage economic growth, but in times such as these, practicality supersedes ideology. It's time for my friends on the left to break the stranglehold of radical environmental special-interest groups and consider how tapping into our immense capacity to produce energy by Americans for Americans not only could unleash a massive economic sleeping giant, but it could be a net gain for the environment.

The vast majority of Americans want clean, cheap energy, and we want it produced by Americans for Americans. Incidentally, the one place on Earth Americans can obtain the cleanest, cheapest energy is right here at home.

While not a stand-alone answer, the first thing we must do is increase the number of offshore oil leases. Currently, only 15 percent of the available leases for drilling have been issued by the federal government. Opening up even part of the available leases could provide a steady flow of both oil and natural gas to the U.S. market and put Americans to work.

What is more is that this would be a net gain for the environment. Exploration and extraction of oil and natural gas off the outer continental shelf of the United States can be done in ways that keeps infrastructure out of sight — protecting our natural beauty — and environmentally friendly. Oil rigs are incredible statements of modern technology, often costing as much as \$3 billion before a single drop of oil is pumped. When we drill here at home, they are highly regulated by U.S. environmental standards. It is a testament to both the technology and the rigs and the strict environmental standards that during the horrific days of Hurricane Katrina, not a single drop of oil spilled into the gulf.

On top of that, what can be environmentally friendly about import oil from every corner of the world to meet our energy needs? Or even worse, because of our lack of refineries, requiring that oil be shipped from the source, then to a refinery (often India or Mexico) and then finally being shipped to the United States? Our dependence on foreign oil not only means that jobs go elsewhere, but every 24 hours, about \$2 billion of U.S. wealth is transferred to foreign powers. It happens not only when we fill up at the pump with gasoline, but when we pay our electric bill or plug in our electric cars.

T. Boone Pickens became a household name when gas prices peaked and he was suddenly running commercials talking about the largest transfer of wealth in human history: about \$50 million a day to Russia, \$150 million a day to Venezuela and \$190 million a day to Saudi Arabia. We simply must decrease our dependence on foreign powers for energy.

However, in addition to decreasing the dependence on foreign powers for energy, we must decrease our dependence on oil. Oil is not the answer of the 21st century. We should tap into the power of oil available to us now, and doing so immediately will create jobs and reduce the cost of energy for millions of Americans, which will increase net disposable income. Remember, when Congress enacts public policy that increases the cost of goods and services, it is effectively a tax.

Oil is not the answer of the 21st century not only because of depleting supply — which is debatable — but because this dirty form of energy will not allow us to give our children and grandchildren the clean and beautiful world they deserve. So, what is the answer? Everything. By investing in these technologies today — through tough but reasonable oversight of existing energy options, permanent tax credits and even prize winnings awarded to private industry by the federal government — we can unleash a sleeping economic giant that will lead to jobs today and a cleaner environment tomorrow.

But we can't simply say no more drilling for oil. If we could switch over the entire U.S. auto fleet to electric tomorrow, we wouldn't be able to power the cars. The energy must come from somewhere. Solar, wind, hydrogen, clean coal, oil shale, biofuels and nuclear power should all be part of our energy future — and these are just the known sources of energy. I have no idea what sorts of energy solutions could possibly be developed should the government offer incentives for the development of clean energy produced by Americans for Americans.

First, we can't continue to cripple ourselves by taking every option off the table. One incident 30 years ago on Three Mile Island has virtually shut down the nuclear power industry in America. There, when problems arose at a nuclear power facility, about 2 million people were exposed to radiation equivalent to about one-sixth of a full set of chest X-rays. In the 30 years since Three Mile Island, Japan has built 40 nuclear power plants, and the French have built 56. If the United States produced as much nuclear power as France, there would be 2.2 billion fewer tons of carbon emissions. Nuclear gives us more power with less emissions.

But the same is true of oil shale and clean coal, and the United States has as much of both of these as Saudi Arabia has oil. The technology is there to do these things very cleanly — very much in line with a 21st-century standard of environmental responsibility. Yet in 2007, 81 percent of all leases issued for energy exploration and extraction in the Rockies were challenged in court.

Taking those and other options off the table means three things: Americans lose jobs, pay more for energy and transfer that wealth to foreign powers — often nations that hate us. It's bad for the environment because energy we don't produce in the United States to our standards is produced and

imported from elsewhere by standards far below our own. China, which is building one coal plant a week, is blanketed in thick smog. On some days, as much as 25 percent of the air pollutants over Los Angeles originated in China. By passing the buck on energy solutions, we aren't being a friend of the environment.

However, passing the buck on energy solutions seems to be par for the course. Currently, alternative energies are not as cheap as energy sources the industrial world has come to depend on. Conventional thinking in Washington, then, is to tax all current forms of energy to make them as expensive as alternative forms. It is a tax increase on all Americans, some of whom could see utility rates triple if the cap-and-trade bill passes.

You don't encourage one of your children to do better by holding back the other. Instead, you create an environment that fosters success for the one less developed. Developing technologies could benefit through tax incentives. The viability of solar power will become real not when fossil fuels are taxed and regulated, but when the government creates tax credits to encourage growth in the industry. Despite the fact that there have been some tax incentives in place for years, only about 1 percent of our energy in the United States comes from the sun. We clearly need to do more to provide incentives for additional solar energy. It doesn't have to be limited to the federal level. Local governments, particularly those in the Southwest and in places that enjoy year-round sunshine, could act on a local level to encourage increased solar power through tax incentives.

Yet, perhaps the greatest potential lies in imagination and innovation of Americans. The government can tap into it by sponsoring energy contests. Don't ask the Department of Energy to develop clean, renewable energy. That's not what it does. But the Department of Energy can create policies that could lead to tremendous breakthroughs. Set the perimeters — whatever they are — and let the contest begin.

We want clean, renewable energy that meets specific standards, and offer whatever it takes — \$1 billion tax free — to whoever can meet the goal. Can you imagine the private funding that would suddenly pour in to the most advanced, cutting-edge innovators in the field of clean, renewable energy? We would have clean, renewable energy, and taxpayers would be paying only for a finished product, not funding research with an ambivalent end.

When you consider the options in oil, clean coal, oil shale, nuclear, wind, biofuels and solar (I didn't even mention hydrogen, hydro power or natural gas), you begin to realize that the U.S. energy options are tremendous. Millions of jobs are just waiting to be created. Congress only needs to act.

You hear less grumbling today about gas prices than you hear about health care, but our energy reality is no different today than it was a year ago or two years ago — or 10 years ago, for that matter. The time to act is now. We can free America from the grips of foreign powers and put Americans to work. While doing so, we'll create sustainable economic growth and a cleaner world.

We don't need to choose between the environment or prosperity. We can have both.

— Clark Vandeventer is a social entrepreneur and is the founder and chairman of The Vandeventer Group. He's committed to developing practical ideas that make government work and make government work for us. Follow him on Facebook and Twitter.

Blogs, Blogging and Bloggers – *The City Wire* – 10/10/09

By Monte Smith

I posted my first blog on 21 August 08'. I posted it on my profile page that just several days before I had struggled to establish within the T. Boone Pickens online social network. Boone's website had been established as a meeting place for those who wanted to push the "Pickens Plan" and I was one of those people. Still am.

Note:,the Pickens Plan website was the first such network that I had ever joined. Now, though, the last time I took count, I belong to 13 online social networks (two I started myself). These are social networks that have been created so as to establish a location in cyberspace where those interested in a specific subject can meet, discuss, share and expand their knowledge about the subject. And one of the many components that these networks have in common is that they all provide a venue for membership blogging.

As the word "blog" began to increase in its use to the point where I would hear the word, or some form of it, several times in any given day, I started to become aware of a non-comprehension attached to the concept. In other words, I didn't actually know or understand what the hell a blog or blogger was. I recall looking the word up but whatever definition it was that I read it didn't clear the mental fog that had gathered around this word blog. Finally though, the fog broke while reading a forum discussion on the Pickens site when someone suggested to another that they should start blogging. Another person then asked the question, "What is a blog?" The answer that was posted by someone active in this discussion was simply this (not verbatim): Blog is a word that was formed by combining parts from two words - web + log = blog. A blog is simply a log, as in a log (entry) made in a journal, but in this case the log is posted onto the web for others to read and, usually, comment upon.

Reading such a simple explanation for what had become a lingering cloud of confusion for me was an Ah! Ha! moment. I understood journals, logs and "the web" and now, at last, I understood blogs! Not understanding something or partially understanding something blocks or impedes action. However, when something is understood one can act on it. I guess you could say that the degree of non-action is proportional to the degree of non-comprehension. While the degree of action is proportional to the degree of comprehension. In any event, once I understood what a blog was, I went into action and posted my very first blog a few hours later and have been blogging ever since.

Blogs, bloggers and blogging is one of those subjects that is sliced up in many different ways. It is a comprehensive subject with enormous ramifications. And, if you are interested in viewing the broad scope and many of the various categories of blogs and bloggers, I suggest you look at Wikipedia. As is the usual with Wikipedia, there is a wealth of information on the subject assembled there.

Writing a blog, for me, is my primary and most effective tool to get in thorough communication with me. In order for me to compose a blog, I have to really examine what "I" am considering about whatever it is I am considering. Discovering what "I" is considering is often times an arduous process because "I" am not alone in the universe of my mind. Indeed, there are thousands (I'm being conservative here) of opinions, views, conclusions, etc. of others sharing the same mental space as "I". And what makes separating out what "I" considers from what "others" have considered and what complicates the process is that some of these "others" have, at one time or another, exerted a lot of influence on "I" - some consensual some forced. In other words, they have impinged upon "I" in varying degrees. These "others" include various family members, friends, teachers, bosses, mentors, authority figures, movie characters, songs, books and so on and so forth. So, you see, it is not always so easy to extract "I" out from that densely populated congregation of viewpoints and shadow personalities.

Another reason why blogging is so effective for me is that it also helps me to organize my thoughts. The process of writing forces me to convert my broad conceptual thinking down into words, sentences and paragraphs onto a surface where another person can hopefully read, duplicate and understand what I have written. Agreement, though, from another is not a necessary requirement.

Okay, writing a blog is one thing but posting the blog once written onto a public venue where others can not only read it but can make comments on it too, is quite a different thing. Definitely, posting a blog online is a matter of moving another rung up on the ladder. Obviously, there is a element of danger involved. Because, as we all know, you never know what people are liable to do (this is also why we have such things as police). In every other venue where I blog I have a security option that allows me to set up who can view my blog. I can also set it up so that I have to approve comments before they will be shown on my blog. Here on The City Wire bloggers do not have those security options. However, that does not

matter to me as I always set my blogs so that anyone can view them and comment what they will (even if they are going to throw rocks at me).

Of course, I never can guess what the response/reaction by those reading a blog of mine (if people do read it) will be. But that being said, I do hope, ideally, that my blogs will prompt thoughtful feedback. Whether the feedback received is pro or con does not matter, but what does matter is that the feedback will hopefully serve to broaden my understanding as well as the understanding of those interacting with it, of the subject as well as expose inaccuracies of my, or others, perception of the subject.

Bloggging on The City Wire is different from the other onine venues where I blog. Bloggging on TCW is raw and unprotected. And I have to tell you that when I posted my first blog on TCW I physically cringed. I cringed because I had been reading the articles, blogs and, especially the comments for a while and what I saw was more of a clod fight rather than an exchange of intelligent and thoughtful opinions and information. Not at all like what I had been observing and experiencing within my other online networks. Now, please don't misunderstand what I have just stated as being a slight on TCW because it's not at all. TCW is an online structure that enables the exchange of information. How "We" the users of TCW choose to utilize this platform is entirely up to us.

I know that someone can post a comment on TCW without being a member but cannot post a blog unless they are a member. Now I don't have any idea how many members there are but I am continually surprised at the minuscule number of members that blog. I am also surprised that we aren't seeing blogs from UAFS faculty or students or from the members of YEL (Young Emerging Leaders). And I find it pathetic that I can post a blog on Sunday and still be seeing my mug down in that lower right hand corner for days before another blog moves me out. We should be seeing such an input of blogs that one is lucky if their blog can last 30 min on the front page. But, having said this, I also understand that people may not feel the space is safe enough to blog. But, then again, why would anyone feel safe when easily the lion's share of postings are coming from behind the cover of the anonymous hedge and so often words are used more like they were sledge hammers than tools to achieve understanding. This, though, is not TCW's problem. No, this is a condition that has become embeded deep within the roots of Fort Smith and TCW, being a structure for communication, serves, though no fault of its own, as a conduit for this "under city" condition to rise to the surface and reveal itself.

Fort Smith has a social veneer that makes it seem mild, even friendly. However, beneath that very thin veneer there are currents of meanness hard at work. And, from what I've observed, the meanness is not so much directed to outsiders as it is directed internally. There is sort of a tribalness to Fort Smith and the tribes are constantly warring. And this internal warring generates a field of turbulent energy that, while people are unable to put their finger on it, do perceive it on some level and it makes them feel uneasy and uncomfortable. Like when I was a kid and one of my friends had a family that was constantly fighting amongst themselves and none of my friend's friends, including me, ever wanted to be even near my friend's house. We did not feel safe there.

Personally, I believe that TCW needs to become more secure and safe for its users. One way that I see this could be accomplished would be making it a requirement that a person must be a member in order to comment. Also, I would suggest to TCW that they eliminate anonymous and require members to use an alias if, for whatever the reason, they do not want to be who they really are. Finally, and this may not seem like its about security but it is, I suggest that TCW engages in active promotion to any and every group they can find in this area (that includes towns and communities in GFS) and encourages those groups to utilize TCW to educate, enlighten and bring to understanding the citizens of FS and GFS as to who they are and what they're doing. Taking these steps can help but if TCW is going to become a safe platform for people to open up and make their voices heard, that task is essentially up to those of us who are currently using it.

In closing, I would like to say that I think that TCW is the most viable vehicle there is available to us right now for reconnecting the residents of the city and region, searching out some common ground and galvanizing the overall city into constructive action that will result in prosperity for one and all. Yeah, I know what you're thinking, but why not?

