

THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

Let's get real

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We have been driving cars that have gotten larger each year for the past three decades.

After the decline of the "muscle car," we had a few months in between, but then our egos got in the way; the price of gasoline was affordable, and once again we engaged in a winner-take-all attitude, until SUVs, large vans and trucks became a primary source of transportation for most of America.

Now I can't claim to have completely clean hands on this one, but we all have fallen prey to a laissez-faire attitude towards the rest of the world. Years ago, we knew that while we were purchasing gasoline for about \$1 per gallon, our counterparts in Europe were paying 500 percent more than we were. We did nothing.

No, actually, I should correct that. We did do something. We decided that we had more status, which proportionally increased with the amount of additional gasoline we burned in our family vehicles. Despite the fact that this is the greatest country on earth, we are still subject to the foibles and frailties of the character flaws within the individuals who comprise the masses.

In the past, we have seen gasoline jump from \$1.28 per gallon, when this administration first took office, to the current push, which most experts estimate will level somewhere between \$4 to \$6 per gallon. Alfred E. Newman would have been proud. In fact, his "What, me worry?" attitude seems to have pervaded almost every facet of our lives. Even some of the smarter people in this country still believe that, even though it's happening to them, if it's not hap-

pening to us, it just doesn't matter.

Now that gasoline prices, heating oil prices and the resultant increase in food have driven the cost of living off the charts, millions of Americans have finally started to drive less miles. Many have found smaller vehicles, and even began car pooling, as if we are all civilized friends. Still, we sat back and did nothing until it was completely unavoidable.

So, here is the point to an otherwise seemingly pointless column: We need to continue conserving and, where possible, absolutely avoid fossil fuel consumption. We have to take our heads out of the sand and continue with alternate transportation, light rail, hybrids and hydrogen.

We need natural gas and electric power. We need wind power. We need to harness natural and renewable energy available from the old traditional hydro power, and also utilize the newer discoveries that will generate enormous alternative methods of hydro power production.

We need American jobs that can't be outsourced. We need to regain our status, productivity and common sense.

While we are at it, why don't we make a concerted effort to get back to buying American products.



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