

Perspective

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Seventy years of energy — from 1950 to 2020

Our population has exploded from 70 years ago, tripling from 2.6 billion souls in 1950 to 7.8 billion in 2020. During this same 70-year time frame, the world's energy consumption has increased eight-fold, primarily due to the population explosion and economic and technological developments.

No wonder the world seems stressed out.

Back in the 50s, one of my earliest memories as a young boy, while living at 402 N. Niles, was experiencing our home's heating and cooling systems.

The heating system consisted of a gas powered floor furnace that had a large metal grate covering it. There were no air ducts; only the heat that radiated up from this one furnace in our crawl space.

My bedroom was two rooms away and I always kept my door closed. The walls weren't insulated and the windows were single pane and leaky. In the winter, on a really cold night, I could see my breath in the air.

Sometimes, in the middle of the night, I'd slip into my shoes

and sneak into the living room and stand over this gas furnace. Stand on the metal grate. Once my shoe soles kind of melted while on the grate: they were softening, sticking to the grate, and generating this horrible burning smell that brought my mom rushing into the room in the middle of the night thinking the house was on fire.

Another technique Melinda and I used was to turn on all the kitchen stove gas burners and stand around it, warming our hands. But, first, you had to light the pilot light with matches we kept on the stove. We'd turn on the pilot gas knob and then try to stick the burning match in just the right place. Sometimes it took a little doing. When it took too long, there was always a loud "poof" followed by a flame flare that made us jump.

Our parents didn't want us to turn on the stove, said it could blow up, said we were wasting gas.

And we didn't have air conditioning—not central, not window units—to cool us. We had fans. And opening windows and doors back when

there was little fear of crime. Which worked fine most of the time except for the dog days of summer.

At its hottest, summer nights were oppressive—so sultry you sweated just lying in bed late at night, having trouble sleeping. On such suffocating summer nights when I couldn't sleep, I, often with Melinda, would sneak into the kitchen, open the door to the refrigerator, and just stand there, getting as close as we could, wanting to climb in. This lasted until Mom and Dad, awakened by the refrigerator light, yelled at us to quit wasting electricity.

We didn't know much of anything about electricity or gas. Except that these invisible substances were wonderful, keeping our food, and our skin, cold on those sticky tropical nights. And they warmed us when arctic winds were whistling through ill-fitted windows.

But our parents worried about energy's cost, and I wondered what the fuss was all about. Why should electricity and gas cost anything? Shouldn't something as wonderful

I'm just sayin'

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and necessary as the fuel to create heat and cool be free? The wind was free. The sun was free. Before fire, that's all our ancestors had for heating and cooling their caves or huts.

My parents never had central air conditioning—not in the house, not in their car—for another 40-plus years. Dad said air conditioning ruined you, made you soft. That once you got used to it, and then went out into the heat, your body got a shock. Said it sapped your work ethic. Better for the body to have the inside temperature match the outside temperature, he argued. Plus it saved money.

Mom and Dad and Melinda are long gone, freed from today's all-consuming worry about energy ...because it

seems all I read and hear about today is worry about energy, energy, energy.

For example, there's the "precious" supply of gas that Russia has in abundance and ships all over the world, even here. The world's dependence on Russian gas has been a deterrent to NATO moving more aggressively to curb Russia's military invasion of Ukraine—an event that could spiral out of control and Nuke the world back to the Stone age.

There's so-called "bad energy"—carbon-based fuels like coal, oil and gas, that has kept us alive for centuries, and fuel our modern economies—that is allegedly causing a climate disaster that threatens to plunge us back into the Stone Age.

And there's so-called "good energy"—non-carbon based energy sources such as windmills and solar panels—that scientists argue could save our planet from cataclysmic global warming effects. But its high cost, inefficiency, insufficiency and unreliability—plus increasing public resistance to its placement—could result in periods where we have no energy. Where we're back in the Stone Age.

And there's the "ambivalent energy" of the atom—nuclear energy—that is both good and bad. It's good because it's abundant, clean and green—not carbon based—and bad because it can blow up, leak or melt and kill you, it's radiation flinging us back into the Stone Age.

My dad would argue this all-consuming brooding about and agonizing over energy is a sign of us folks becoming soft over time and of modern society moving too fast, too far forward, to God only knows where.

Better, he would argue, to simply open the windows in the summer, and close them in the winter.

mike carroll

Some mistakes shouldn't be taken seriously

We all make mistakes, and I'm no different. I don't relish them but I don't normally lose sleep over them, either. I don't find any shame in being human.

Of course, when you make a mistake in print, it's there for everybody to see and it's there forever.

Mistakes can be funny, though, so when I commit a major goof, I tend to write about it. What good is a funny blunder if you can't share it with everyone?

But with print, there's at least a chance to correct mistakes. Reporters working live in broadcast have it rough because they have to be able to say out loud what they're writing in their heads.

Sometimes, they have to

Ramblin' Man

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read aloud what someone else wrote without the luxury of reading through it to themselves first. Words get mispronounced and errors in the copy get read. The best you can hope for is to not get sued.

I was watching some old news bloopers last week and came across some doozies. Re-

porting on a natural disaster, a reporter said 14 people were injured and three died, some seriously. Another reported that a man fell 40 feet off a building and broke several legs.

Headlines can be tricky. You have a small space to convey the message, which can send mixed signals like these well-

known examples:

- Include Your Children When Baking Cookies
- Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Experts Say
- Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
- Iraqi Head Seeks Arms
- Prostitutes Appeal to Pope
- British Left Waffles on Falkland Islands
- Teacher Strikes Idle Kids
- Clinton Wins Budget; More Lies Ahead
- Miners Refuse to Work After Death
- Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant
- Stolen Painting Found by Tree
- War Dims Hope for Peace
- If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last a While
- Couple Slain; Police Suspect

Homicide

- Kids Make Nutritious Snacks
- Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half
- Typhoon Rips through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead
- Emails are a good source of unintentional mistakes, too — usually when the message is sent to the wrong person. There are lots of examples where people hit "reply all" when only one person was the intended recipient.

I think the worst email blunder I've made was when someone applied for a job in the office where I was working and I wrote a detailed note to my boss explaining why we should not hire this person. Except instead of sending it to my boss — you guessed it — I sent

it to the applicant.

Police reports can be fun. My favorite is the guy who reported his wife missing. When asked about the last time he saw her, he said about 18 months ago. When police told him that he should prepare for the worst-case scenario, he went to the thrift store and retrieved all her clothes.

Mistakes are a part of life. They can be bad and hurtful but for the most part, we oughta just take them in stride. If we can't laugh at ourselves once in a while, well, that's just another mistake.

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Lawmakers must create legal balance between owners, renters of storage units

By retired Army Col. Paul Kantwill

During and since my time as an active-duty officer in the Army, I have devoted much time and energy to protecting military service members from financial predators. Last year I focused on the passage of the Predatory Lending Prevention Act (PLPA), and the nationwide repeal of a Comptroller of the Currency rule that protected payday lenders using evasive schemes to get around state-imposed usury rate caps. While those efforts were successful, there is more to do.

Recently, I took notice of a bill in the Illinois Legislature, HB 4627, which would allow the owners of self-storage locker facilities to avoid altogether the required public notice of the auction of renters' items when his or her belongings have been confiscated. Those auctions often take place without the knowledge of the renter, who might be overseas defending our country or assisting fellow citizens falling victim to natural disasters. Illinois law requires owners to notify renters of an auction only by sending notice to the renter's "last known address."

A deeper look into Illinois' Self Storage Facility Act reveals

a law that is astonishingly lopsided in favor of locker owners to the detriment of renters. It is a law in need of reform.

Whether the renter is active-duty military, our neighbors in the military Reserve or National Guard called to duty, a victim of eviction, or a victim of a house fire, every effort must be made to locate the renter before selling what could be their worldly belongings. Public notice in newspapers and their attendant websites helps.

California law requires owners to allow renters to submit the name and address of a second individual to whom all notices must be sent. In addition, California law also allows renters to formally object to an auction after which the owner must get a court's blessing before proceeding. Illinois law should do the same.

Locker rent increases and late fees should be examined. How many rent increases should a renter endure after their belongings are in storage? Active-duty military or reservists and Guardsmen called to duty might find it impossible to competitively shop or even receive notice once deployed. The current law should be viewed from the perspective of the transient and the

vulnerable, not from only the point of view of owners.

I am all too familiar with real-life cases in which deployed service members have lost literally everything when storage facility owners sell off their possessions. I am sure that, given these difficult times, many other Illinoisans have suffered or will suffer the

same.

There are several other changes in Illinois law that could help protect the renters of storage lockers. Many of those changes have been proposed by my colleagues, including the Woodstock Institute, Chicago Urban League, Housing Action Illinois, and Legal Action Chicago.

Those changes include several provisions that would benefit renters and help provide a balance between the rights of renters and owners. I urge legislators to not only reject HB 4627 but to reform Illinois' Self Storage Facility Act as soon as possible.

Retired Army Col. Paul Kantwill serves as founding

executive director of the Rule of Law Institute at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. He previously led the office of Servicemember Affairs at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. He had a 25-year career as an active-duty officer in the U.S. Army and served in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf.

