

Thoughts from Stephen Collins'69 and Dr. Harvey Kaltsas '69
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Saving Fuel on the Road

1. 48% of Europeans drive diesels which get 30+ % better fuel economy than gasoline powered cars. Only 3% of Americans drive diesels. They can be easily equipped to run on bio-diesel or waste vegetable oil (WVO). Restaurants and domestic kitchens annually throw away 4.5 billion gallons of WVO, enough to power 15% of our nation's transportation fleet. We're literally throwing away billions of gallons of perfectly good motor fuel a year.
2. Drive a Prius, other hybrid, a Yaris, or some other such highly fuel efficient gas powered auto.
3. Besides 1 and/or 2, try the following suggestions:
 - a. unload your trunk and get everything out of your car that's not necessary to carry on a daily basis. Every added 100 lbs. decreases fuel efficiency by 1 to 2 %. On a yearly basis, a car getting 20 mpg for 10,000 miles of driving burns 500 gallons. A 1.5% decrease in fuel efficiency equals 7.5 gallons of wasted gas a year. Multiply that by the 242,023,485 cars registered in the USA in 2004 and you have savings of 1,822,676,137 gallons or 43,397,051 barrels of crude oil per year.
 - b. Lose 10 pounds. That'll save .75 gallons a year lugging your own personal extra weight around. Multiply that by the 200,000,000 overweight Americans and that equals 150 million gallons of gasoline saved on an annual basis.
4. Check your tire inflation on a monthly basis. Under inflated tires can drop fuel economy by 3%.
5. Turn off your engine when you'll be stopped for a minute or more. An idling car gets zero mpg. Toyota Hybrids do this automatically. Hondas do not.
6. Slow down. Every 5 miles per hour over 60 mph decreases fuel efficiency by 7%.
7. If you want the experience of jack rabbit starts and burning rubber off the line, rent and watch "American Graffiti" on DVD. Accelerating quickly can decrease fuel efficiency by 33%.
8. Plan ahead. When approaching a stop light or stop sign, take your foot off the gas pedal and roll to a stop. Don't rush to get there and then jam on the brakes. If every driver in America did this we'd save 180,288,462 barrels of oil a year, as much as the US uses in 9 days. Also plan and consolidate your trips with your car.
9. Turn off your air conditioner and defroster unless you absolutely need them. Turning off a/c will save you 10-20% of your gasoline. Even in L.A. and Florida, we find we can comfortably drive without a/c 90% of the time.

Saving Energy at Home

1. Insulate, insulate, insulate – especially windows and attics
2. Use compact fluorescents instead of incandescents
3. Wear sweaters or short sleeved shirts as appropriate
4. Install solar hot water heaters and photovoltaic devices
5. Turn off computers and unplug battery charging devices when not in use
6. Turn up thermostats in summer and down in winter
7. Buy Energy Star rated appliances

Interesting Websites to Visit: www.Greasecar.com; www.dieselsecret.com; www.powerfilmsolar.com; <http://www.oceanpowertechnologies.com>; <http://www.winsulator.com/> (NASA approved window treatments); www.bartlett.house.gov/EnergyUpdates/ or <http://www.energybulletin.net/primer.php> (U.S. Rep. Roscoe Bartlett on Peak Oil); <http://www.ratical.org/radiation/inetSeries/nwJWG.html> (Dr. John Gofman's perspectives on nuclear energy)

How's this for an idea?

Let's create an Amherst College Alumni/ae-wide project to save fuel, both at home and in the car. We can report our monthly electric and gasoline usage for the month of May, 2007 to a student run website, implement energy saving practices through the year, and then report what we've saved by May, 2008. We can also implement these savings ideas at work. Who wants to take this on?