

LETTERS & OPINIONS

## I'm Getting Gas

By Leonard Chaidez

**I**would, just once, like to be the guy interviewed at the gas station by a TV station. You know, the people who come up with the lamest excuses why gas prices are so high. The ones who respond with, "I hear there was a dust storm in the

or "I need to get to the hospital to visit a sick relative."

Well, I guess I'll never get the chance to be interviewed because if I did they sure wouldn't run my two-cents worth.

You see, you need gas to accomplish many things in everyday life, much like another energy source, electricity. Gasoline, like electricity, should be viewed as a utility. A utility that is currently real-

### COLUMN LEFT

Middle East and it just drove prices sky high," or whatever reason the media gives so that your brain turns to mush whenever you think about an answer.

Then there are the people who, when asked if they should protest the prices, say, "I don't have a choice, I've got to have gas to get back and forth to work"

ly a monopoly. There are fewer and fewer oil companies, as one company buys out another to create a more "manageable" market. With only three or four companies left selling gasoline it only takes a couple of phone calls to set a price. Don't believe me? When was the last time you came to a corner to see gas prices radically differ-

ent from the ones across the street. For the most part, gas prices are essentially the same everywhere ... high.

In America, the republican ideal of a free marketplace where competition will drive prices down and benefit the consumer just doesn't seem to exist in this day and age of skyrocketing gas prices. Gas companies raise the price because they can. You can't really get a competitive price because no company offers a competitive price. Capitalism has changed. Some of us just haven't figured it out yet.

Do you know why electricity is regulated? Because it can't be marketed the same as other products. You see, we all need it and only a few companies produce it. Sound familiar? In Southern California, a major producer and distributor of electrici-

ty is the Southern California Edison Company. They really don't have to market their product because they have a built-in market. They don't compete for market share, they own it and they're doing well as a regulated energy producer. They should. They have a monopoly on electricity. For that, they must be regulated by the government (Public Utilities Commission). Why, you ask? Because if left unregulated, a company could just continue to raise prices, burdening the public for an essential energy source. Sound familiar? Don't you think that gas companies are much the same? There's no capitalistic marketplace when it comes to gas.

Well, do you think it'll go up to three dollars a gallon? With the system we have in place right now it could go to \$15 a gallon. It gives me gas just thinking about it.

## Text of Article

I'm Getting Gas  
Leonard Chaidez

At Large Member of E-Board, Hubert H. Humphrey Democratic Club

AND

Mayor of Hawaiian Gardens

I would, just once, like to be the guy interviewed at the gas station from a major TV station. You know, people come up with the lamest excuses why gas prices are so high. You know, the ones who respond with, “The gas prices keep on going up, I hear that there was a dust storm in the middle east and it just drove prices sky high” or whatever excuse the media gives so that your brain turns to mush when ever you think about an answer.

Then there are the people who, when asked if they should protest the prices, say “I don't have a choice, I've got to have gas to get back and forth to work” or “I need to get back and forth the hospital to visit my dying child”.

Well I guess I'll never get the chance to get interviewed because if I did they sure wouldn't run my two-cents worth.

You see, you need gas to accomplish many things in everyday life, much like another energy source, electricity. Gasoline, like electricity should be viewed as a utility. A utility that is currently really a monopoly. There are fewer and fewer oil companies, as one company buys out another to create a more “manageable” market. With only three or four companies left selling gasoline it only takes a couple of phone calls to set a price. Don't believe me? When was the last time you came to a corner to see gas prices radically different from the ones across the street. For the most part, gas prices are essentially the same everywhere ... high.

In America, the republican idea of a free marketplace where competition will drive prices down and benefit the consumer just doesn't seem to exist in this day and age of skyrocketing gas prices. Gas companies raise the price because they can. You can't really go to a competitive price because no company offers a competitive price. Capitalism has changed. Some of us haven't figured it out yet.

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