

Although we, as ordinary citizens, have no control over the price of oil, many of us keep an eye on this commodity. As quickly as the price jumps on the stock market ticker, you know you'll be seeing the gasoline prices go up at your neighborhood station. Most of us must drive and at today's gasoline prices, this necessity can take a big bite out of your wallet.

Even those of us who use public transportation, energy is still required to move that vehicle, and fares go up accordingly. The same goes for air transportation. Those jumbo jets burn thousands of gallons of fuel on many flights and that expense is passed on to you, the consumer.

The cost of food is rising dramatically, in large part due to transportation costs. This doesn't help your budget either. If gasoline prices continue to rise, many of us may find ourselves in a strapped condition. A recent news story reported the case of a woman who had to hock her diamond wedding ring so that her husband would have money to put gas in his car to get to work! This is a sad state of affairs indeed.

As frustrating as the situation is, you may find it hard to pin down who exactly should be blamed for these high gasoline prices. Politicians simply point to OPEC, saying they have no control over oil prices. Others blame some world leader with a nefarious scheme to deprive us of our rightful share because they don't like us.

Others blame Latin American countries who have nationalized their own country's oil resources, booting out the foreign capitalists and keeping the country's oil revenue for programs for their own people and infrastructure. If positions were reversed, it's easy to see we'd do the same thing!

In Brazil, sugar cane is grown for fuel with great success. This sugar cane fuel is used by about 70% of motorists and carries a modest price. Sugar cane is a renewable fuel source. Wonder why we're not doing this in the U.S.? Makes you want to write your Congressman, doesn't it?

Now here's the real puzzle. Your local gas station owner orders his gasoline in thousands of gallons, delivered and poured into his big underground tanks. He pays a certain price. Shouldn't his selling price remain stable until he purchases his next load? It seems so, but that's not the way it works. Some station owners change their prices at the pump twice daily! Hey, what's going on here? Seems the gas station owner is making those gasoline prices jump at his whim. Maybe he's the real culprit!