

# Dump pump? Reflect on BP

**L**ike Don Quixote tilting at windmills, a dedicated band of environmentally minded iconoclasts always has tilted at gasoline pumps.

Their cause will get a bit more attention today, "Dump the Pump Day," especially given the environmental catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico.

Locally, the County of Lackawanna Transit System will provide free rides in order to emphasize the fuel-saving attributes of mass transit, in accordance with a nationwide educational effort by the American Public Transportation Association.

But what greater teacher could there be than the BP oil well disaster in the Gulf of Mexico? Independent scientists have placed the amount of oil gushing from the well at between 35,000 and 60,000 barrels a day — between 1.5 million and 2.5 million gallons, based on the federal standard of 42 gallons per barrel.

As startling as those numbers are, they only hint at U.S. dependence on oil. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the United States consumes 19.5 million barrels of oil a day, 8.9 million barrels of which are in the form of gasoline. When all motor fuels are considered, more than 13.8 million barrels of oil, 71 percent of the daily total, are consumed for transportation.

The gulf oil disaster is not simply a call for regulation or corporate responsibility, but for national responsibility — for conservation. Dump the Pump Day is an occasion for Americans to see their reflections in the oily sheen on the gulf waters and consider a better way.

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