

L.A. STARKS



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Fall 2008 Newsletter—Author L. A. Starks

After six months of wild—and continuing—rides through the political, energy, and financial markets, there's no shortage of macroeconomic news.

Oil and Gasoline

In mid-July, oil prices reached their highest-ever level, almost \$150/bbl. A combination of factors contributed: a) limited supply was overmatched by strong demand, especially from China ahead of the Olympics, b) the dollar was weak, c) hot money chased yields in commodity markets that could no longer be found in financial markets or real estate, and d) we experienced the normal summer driving peak.

Gasoline prices followed crude's lead. Then in September, following two weeks of Gulf Coast refinery downtime due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, prices spiked or gasoline simply became unavailable. (Gasoline shortages and high prices match the [13 DAYS'](#) plot, although from sabotage rather than hurricanes.) The Southeast is still experiencing shortages; however, the Gulf Coast refineries finally have electricity—another key reference that readers of [13 DAYS](#) will recognize. The refineries are back online, Colonial Pipeline has increased its gasoline shipments, and we hope the shortage will soon be history.

Reasons behind the recent oil price fall to less than \$100/bbl are largely the opposite of those for its rise. Another damper on prices comes from the US and world's recessions and from the price-induced changes all of us have made

toward greater fuel conservation.

Daily upsets in the financial markets have been massive; it appears the fallout will take a long time to resolve, well past November's US presidential election. But I'll bet you've seen or read the news recently . . .

Author News

April-September, 2008.

[13 DAYS](#) continues to sell well. Last January I agreed to speak about oil price factors at the end of April. The occasion was a speech at the Dallas Public Library co-sponsored by the Hamon Oil and Gas Institute. Obviously, by the time April arrived, there was much to discuss. A link to slides from the discussion is at my website on the [State of Oil and Energy page](#).

With rocketing oil prices in the news, I did six interviews in May at radio stations from Bridgeport, CT to Colorado Springs, CO. In July I had a television interview with KTUL in Tulsa, and a stock signing at one of the city's Barnes & Noble stores. I appreciated the chance to give a couple more talks in August and do a book signing at the Denton, TX Barnes & Noble. On August 29th, I ended the month with a guest appearance on the [Dead Guy blog](#).

Looking Ahead

On Friday, October 17th, I'm honored to be the featured speaker at a lunch benefiting the Friends of the Arlington Public Library and co-sponsored by the Arlington edition of the Star-Telegram. If you're in the area and would like to attend, the lunch is at Cacharel Restaurant, 2221 E. Lamar, 9th floor of Brookhollow Tower II, starting at 11:30.

I have a new short story entered into a contest. Two other stories continue in publication at Amazon Shorts. For more background on [13 DAYS'](#) antagonist Robert Guillard, read "Robert and Thérèse Guillard: Choices." For a teaser from the second book, read "A Time for Eating Wild Onions."

And yes, I am at work on the second book. It will feature some of the same characters, and new ones, in locations likewise familiar and new. Stay tuned.



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