In 1968, as my mom was driving me to U.C. Santa Barbara for college, I noticed there weren’t as many oil pumps alongside the highway. Most of the easy-to-get oil was gone, but I could see oil derricks just offshore, in the ocean. At that time, oil companies had to drill under about 14 feet of water to find oil.

In 2010, driving back from Los Angeles, I noticed there were hardly any oil pumps alongside the highway, and the ocean derricks were further offshore. Then I heard breaking news on the radio: a deep-water oil derrick had exploded and was gushing millions of gallons of oil each day into the Gulf of Mexico. The newscaster said the pipe sat an entire mile (5,280 feet) underwater, and it would take months to cap it!

Transition Palo Alto is exploring ways our community can respond to Peak Oil and Climate Change. We encourage you to check out our website. You may download and distribute copies of this “Peak Oil” coloring book from the Transition Palo Alto website: www.transitionpaloalto.org

Products Made From Petroleum*
A partial list of products with petroleum as an ingredient (this is only a small sample):

- nylon zippers
- ballet tights
- plastic hangers
- pantyhose
- permanent press clothing
- flip flops/thongs
- fake fur
- polyester clothing
- ball point pens
- ink
- computer diskettes
- copiers
- magic markers
- cameras
- earphones
- nylon zippers
- knitting needles
- tennis racquets
- computers
- golf balls
- copiers
- baby aspirin
- magic markers
- stuffed animals
- telephones
- band aids
- Vaseline
- rubber alcohol
- Pepto-Bismol
- hair coloring
- soap
- cough syrup
- hair spray
- lipstick
- denture adhesives
- trash bags
- egg cartons
- freezer bags
- candles
- wax paper
- nylon spatulas
- Teflon pans
- Formica
- linoleum
- garden hoses
- screens
- plunger
- floor wax
- plastic bags
- spray paint
- Anti-freeze
- balloons
- dog toys
- flea collars
- DVDs/CD-ROMs
- check book covers
- shopping bags
- video cassettes
- credit cards
- dice
- watch bands


by Annette Isaacson
illustrations by Mimi Heft
We use oil to make so many things—gasoline, computers, plastic, makeup, even clothing. We are close to hitting that Peak Oil limit—we must start now using less oil. But how? Here are a few easy ways you can help:

- Ride you bike to school, the library, stores, soccer games
- Bring water/juice in reusable containers
- Combine errands to use less fuel
- Use less plastic (It’s made from oil!!!)
- Shop at Farmers’ Markets (or even grow some of your own food!) to cut down on trucking fuel

What will you do? What other ways can you think of to use less oil?

In 1957, on a family road trip to Disneyland, I asked my mom what all those strange-looking machines were alongside the highway. She said, “They’re pumping oil. We get our gasoline from oil.”

Today, geologists say most of the easy-to-get oil has already been used up. This means the oil that remains is even harder to get—so now the oil companies have to use deep-ocean drills and mine tar sands. Extracting oil these ways is not only more and more expensive, but it’s also causing ecological destruction. We are reaching the peak of oil production. Peak Oil—when the total production of oil reaches its maximum and starts to decrease—could happen as early as this year, or maybe in the next few years—either way, it will happen.

Oil Discoveries Have Been Declining Since 1964

“How did the oil get in the ground?” I asked.

My dad said, “65 million years ago, back when the dinosaurs died out, dead plants and animals were covered by layers and layers of soil; all that weight compressed these once-living organisms, turning them into oil.”