

Asinus Muses

Rocket Science

It's a great relief to Asinus that the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management has concluded that nuclear waste should not be fired into space.

Patrol Cars

With the price of gasoline rising fast in the United States it's obvious that you need to drive a vehicle that is itself so costly that the price of gas becomes irrelevant. What better than the new 30-foot stretch-Hummer which comfortably seats 16 people, is equipped with six flat screen TVs, two fish tanks and a bar? And it can do 7 miles to the gallon on a good stretch of road. It just shows how useful war can be for spin-off selling opportunities.

Sitting it out

Asinus doesn't know what to make of the news that a seat on NYMEX was sold recently for nearly \$2.5 million, but what is absolutely certain is that he has been priced out of that market and must look elsewhere for a resting place.

Greenmarket

Is 'green energy' the new dot.com world for investment analysts and the herd of hopeful get-rich enthusiasts. Quite possibly, it seems to Asinus, who discovers that there is now a Global Energy Innovation Index (GEIX) that deals specifically in renewable energy companies. Where there's an index there's going to be derivatives and hedging and, for sure, a lot of activity that will create plenty of profit, lots of loss and, who knows, some more green energy.

Battery Farms

Asinus finds himself unable to visualise what a factory of rechargeable batteries

would look like if it were constructed. He understands, more or less, that it could in theory be a mechanism for the storage of intermittent renewable energies, but where would you have to put how many of these factories if you could develop the batteries to put in them?

Shock Tactics

The IMF claimed the other day that the world faces a permanent oil shock – '...the shock we see is a permanent shock that is going to continue...' This is a startling new concept for Asinus, and he is temporarily at a loss to know how he is going to recognise the ordinary kind of oil shock to which he has become accustomed.

People Power

Chevron, now slimmed down from Chevron Texaco, advertises itself as 'Human Energy'. Meanwhile Royal Dutch Shell plc (as we now know it) is to create two Academies and appoint ten Chief Scientists. Let's hope that all this concentration on people will create lots of successful projects.

Per Soldier Consumption

Asinus learns that, on average, every US soldier in Iraq uses 9 gallons of fuel per day, excluding that consumed by aircraft and ships, but including that which is used to truck it all in from Kuwait, Turkey and Jordan – but on reflection he has little idea whether this is more or less than might be expected.

Weather Forecasts

The great thing about statistics is that they can always prove whatever you need them for. So, the report 'Wind Power in the UK' says that (a) wind power will be cheaper than fossil fuel power within 15 years (b) that there is

no need for dedicated fossil fuel power stations for when the wind fails to blow (c) that there is no limit to how much wind power can be added to the grid. Asinus, still enjoying residual breezes in his garden, awaits with confidence a report that proves the opposite.

High Rise Vegetables

Surely we must all applaud the efforts of Steven Peck, the executive director of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities. The idea is that if you can top out all the high rise buildings with gardens it will cool down the city and thus reduce energy consumption. It will also absorb storm water and mitigate the drainage problems of excess rainfall. You will need, however, a lot of flat roofs.

'...by way of Beachy Head'

Twelve US States have joined environmentalist groups in bringing a lawsuit against the Federal Government which aims to define carbon dioxide as a pollutant under the Clean Air Act, and thus force the Government, if not to sign up to Kyoto, at least to act on CO₂ emissions as it now does under that Act on, for instance, sulphur oxides and nitrogen oxides. If successful, it would be a novel, and peculiarly US, route to Kyoto.

Back to Canada

Years ago in Montreal CFCs were phased out from fridges and so on in the interests of the ozone layer. They were replaced by HFCs which, while harmless to the ozone layer, are now, it seems, adding more to greenhouse gases than are in theory going to be removed under the Kyoto Agreement. Maybe it would be easier for everyone if, when they return to Montreal in November, they could sign up to Montreal 2 instead of struggling with Kyoto 1

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