

Asinus Muses

Sixty

We have a quorum
For Forum
To celebrate
Its sexagenate

In Perpetuity

IEA has just celebrated its 30th anniversary and OPEC is getting ready for its 45th. Asinus is reminded of that admirable adage, which says that 'If something can't go on for ever, it won't'. But, of course, it doesn't apply to institutions with secretariats.

Colour-coded

Asinus likes the idea of attaching colours to subsea pipelines. We already have Bluestream and Greenstream, and surely Blackstream (Black Sea to Aegean) is imminent. What a pity that the Interconnector wasn't coloured before it got named.

Derivative Illness

It's good to see that Nymex is opening an open outcry trading floor in Dublin but, to those who don't understand these things, the conflict between shouting and electronic trading is mysterious. Maybe the decision depends on whether you prefer a sore throat or radiation.

Dirty Money

HSBC says it will plant trees all over the world and thereby become a 'carbon-neutral' bank. Asinus had no idea that ATMs were so environmentally harmful when emitting banknotes.

Confusion

The latest news on the ITER front (the Nuclear fusion research programme

whose delay was noted in Forum 56) is that they are still, a year later, arguing as to whether it should be located in Japan or France. Is this an example of potential international fusion that may go nuclear?

Hot Work

Research at Cornell suggests that you type faster and more accurately if the room in which you work is heated to 25C rather than 20C. Asinus can't work out whether it is more politically, or environmentally, correct to save heat or increase efficiency.

Waste Disposal Units

The Composting Association suggests that, instead of doing it at the end of the garden, organic waste should be put on farmland where it will create a 'sink' and reduce CO₂ emissions. But has it consulted the farmers? They may be less than excited to find sacks of potato peel left on their fields.

Bottle Bank

The Industry Council for Packaging in the Environment (how many people does it employ in how many branches, Asinus wonders) says that a family will save more energy by swapping its SUV for an ordinary saloon car than by recycling all its bottles for 400 years. But for how many years is this family expected to keep its car on the road?

Heated Discussions

Over 5000 people went off to Buenos Aires for this year's climate change conference as a follow-up to Kyoto. Asinus wonders how much CO₂ they emitted getting there and keeping themselves cool, and how this can be expressed in conclusions per delegate tonne of global warming.

Wired Up

Asinus hasn't yet got round to installing a GPS system in his car, but now that he has learned about WiFi he is postponing it further. He understands that WiFi will enable cars to communicate electronically with each other by bouncing information from car to car so that they can automatically alter their direction or speed to escape traffic jams or accidents. Who is going to get the driving licence – the car or the driver?

Grid Unlocked

The latest estimate for connecting all that free and environmentally pure wind (once the turbines have been subsidised) into the UK grid has gone up to £1billion, says Ofgem. No doubt the cost will, like most millennial projects, continue to escalate, but at least the price of wind, if not its quantity, should remain constant.

MBA (hol)

Asinus welcomes the idea of an MBA in Humanistic Management, which is being set up by the Manipal University, India, and the Ayurvedic Company of Great Britain. He wonders which financial institution will be the first to award its executives a year-end holistic bonus, and what it will be worth.

The Economics Reality Show

Asinus has never been good at theoretical economics, but he was more than usually disoriented when, reading about real business cycle theory, he was told that a business cycle was the equilibrium outcome of rational decisions made by millions of perfectly informed individuals. Oh well, he was always aware that his circle of friends was limited.

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