

JIM'S CORNER

I had lunch recently with the owner of Alternative Fuel Technology, a neighbor and friend. He is developing carburetors for biofuels intended for the car and truck market. We talked about all the energy sources currently available like clean coal, petroleum, natural gas and nuclear. We agreed that they would all be part of the energy solution for the foreseeable future if only because of the enormous infrastructure already in place.

The "new" technologies like wind, solar, ethanol, electric, hydrogen and biomass (such as jatropha oil in Malaysia) are still too undefined to predict how the economics will work out. He lamented that the "great source of funding", the federal government, couldn't make up its political mind what to support. At one point it was flex-fuel, another time it was hydrogen and now it is ethanol and E-85. It appears that with each administration we have a different "best solution". Think about why that is.

We all would like to find a single silver bullet to solve our energy problem. The trouble is we have a difficult time even agreeing what the problem is. Is it the environmental hysteria over global warming? Is it the terrorist fed insecurity about Mideast oil? Is it paying \$3.00 or more per gallon for gas? It is very likely that there will be a multitude of solutions in the drive for alternative energy sources. Each one will cost more than we currently think is reasonable and will impact the environment in some way. It should concern all of us that the government, through subsidies and policy, will make a political decision for us rather than rely on the economics of the marketplace.

Jim Griffith, CDC

Quality... "Don't make the fatal mistake of assuming that quality is defined solely in terms of product attributes. Suppliers win and lose accounts every day because of invoicing, sampling, telephone demeanor, hours of operation, estimating and a host of other activities not directly related to the manufacture of the printed product."

- Dick Gorelick

Quote of the Month

"The only way of finding the limits of the possible is by going beyond them into the impossible."

- Arthur C. Clarke



Book Review

Just finished a 2003 book by Bill Bryson entitled A Short History of Nearly Everything. From interviews with astronomers, archaeologists, paleontologists, physicists, anthropologists and mathematicians he explores the evolution of scientific thought in 30 bite-size chapters. This is science (not humor) for those without a science degree but with a scientific curiosity.



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JULY 2007



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