how ongoing creative achievements are silently absorbed. They generate new and more energy uses that do not noticeably affect net reduction in total energy demand. I was part of a Mobil Corp team that created new catalytic technologies for generating fuels and other products while using 20–30% less petroleum. That work has become a silent dent in the statistics of rising energy demand.

As to policy and governments, the most important current need is education of all citizens and policymakers (which, in a democracy, should be synonymous). That education must include the most basic ingredients of the physical sciences and arithmetic and their relevance to society's functioning and survival.

Reference

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Ben Franklin in His Own Words

think it might be more difficult than is supposed in King Wiemann's letter (PHYSICS TODAY, May 2004, page 18) and Neal Lane's article (October 2003, page 41) to decide how a historical figure like Benjamin Franklin might act if present today. One cannot say what the distinguished dead would have said. Even what they have said does not always form a consistent whole, nor is it necessarily all wise or even admirable.

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king Wiemann (PHYSICS TODAY, May 2004, page 18) objects to the view of Neal Lane (October 2003, page 41) that Ben Franklin would encourage scientists to become social activists. Instead, Wiemann asserts that Franklin, as a "self-made man," would "argue that individuals are responsible for their own lives and accomplishments, unaided—and unfettered—by government." Here are a couple of pertinent statements by Franklin himself. In 1783, Franklin wrote in a letter to Robert Morris, US finance minister:

All the property that is necessary to a man for the conservation of the individual and the propagation of the species is his natural right, which none can justly deprive him of: But all property superfluous to such purposes is the property of the public, who by their laws have created it, and who may therefore by other laws dispose of it, whenever the welfare of the public shall demand such disposition. He that does not like civil society on these terms, let him retire and live among savages.

In his will in 1790, explaining why he established a trust to encourage public service, Franklin wrote, "I wish to be useful even after my death, if possible, in forming and advancing other young men that may be serviceable to their country.

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Correction

August 2004, page 31—The caption for the bottom left picture has the names reversed. Juan Guillermo Diaz Ochoa, a Colombian student at the University of Mainz in Germany, is on the right and Kamran-ul-Hasan of Pakistan's Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology is on the left.

