Mars Rover

March 13, 2004

The six wheeled, solar powered Mars Beerover huddled among a large crowd of funny people and contraptions on a warm Saturday morning in downtown Houston. This was a training mission to test the speed and accuracy of the BARC urban brewery explorers. In the lead was a tall Chicagoanian setting the pace and carrying the sensitive alcohol sensor. At the back was another even taller Chicagoanian with much to say about the style of the first Chicagoanian. His job was to keep the main vehicle suspension member from getting too tight while providing a continuous flow of hot air. The left and right front places were filled ably by a blonde Scandinavian and a brunette dirt bike rider. Their Axel was somewhat slinky but not taught. In the middle on the left came a tall Michiganian, whose chief role was to puff and curse every few steps. This new to the sport flight attendant was balanced by a would be rock and roll star, who had recently impregnated the pit crew chief. Bringing up the rear was a chubby pair of retarded botchy ball cheaters. I say retarded, because one of this pair, who was of a sufficient age, had failed to learn how to tie his shoe laces. I suspect that the near death experience of being left behind to make the necessary repairs followed by an unseemly sprint to catch up contributed Skinnerian reminders of the importance of double knots. Speaking of knotty incompetence, it must be noted that with only seconds to go before the beginning of the mission, the taller of the two Chicagoanians ably demonstrated his ignorance of a reef knot which would have led to a disaster of Martian proportions, had not the senior advisor, who had been a boy scout for a day some 50 years earlier explained the difference between a granny and a square.

As mentioned earlier, the Mars Beerover was solar powered. Again the construction of the solar panels demonstrated great foresight. The silver panels could be mounted on all sides of the heads of the team members and could double up as sails, when the harsh winds came from behind. Their elastic connectors allowed for a rhythmic bounce in synchrony with the asynchronous gait of the long and short slinky connected beer seekers. A styling trick aimed at deceiving impostors was to disguise extra power panels as wheels, which everybody knows were invented after feet and will never surpass the flexibility of these appendages. Even H G Wells noted that aliens employed feet rather than wheels in his earth conquering machines, but GM and Ford failed to learn from this important lesson or perhaps did not employ sufficiently sharp lawyers to break the foot patent. Just imagine solar powered feet negotiating potholes on the nation’s highways. Perhaps their time has come. But I digress, as usual.

The journey to the vicinity of the beer was mostly uneventful apart from the continuous hot air from the rear and the curses from the left center. One point of note however was a distraction afforded by a bunch of bunnies with their beslippered and bepeejayed stud. These bouncy bunnies were fast but not fast enough to catch the rover, perhaps because of the beslippered and bepeejayed burden or simply because of the excellent sewing and flexible construction of the beer seeking engineering design team. At this juncture it must be mentioned that a team of NABA (Not Another Beer Attempt) scientists, clad in white coats and sporting fancy emblems failed miserably in their attempts to compete with the engineering ingenuity of the Mars Beerover team. It was a joy to behold. The slinkies did their job of allowing flexibility and continuously storing and releasing energy where it was most needed. They also provided an amoeba like capture capability. “Beer seekers coming through, get out of the way or you will be entangled, Gotcha!” There were however some challenges along the way, notably at the pit stops. Water in was less of a problem than water out, given the distributed nature of the go faster juice supplies and the unfortunate design of the recycling containers. Imagine eight loosely connected vehicle components crowded into a two by two by six portajohn. Not a pretty thought.

The end of the journey loomed large in the form of Martian skyscrapers. Out of our way; we sense that beer is close. Over the mat, disengage the components to facilitate more efficient search. Foot up, chips off and into the circle of tents. Forget the bananas and the breakfast burritos and chocolate chip cookies. Eureka, I’ve found the beer tent shouted our leader, and it’s high quality stuff, not that over-advertised anemic stuff you generally get on these missions. I did a PR said two components, I nearly died said another. We won, we won chorused the group. May the force be with us. We will be awarded a noble prize. Don’t forget the celebration party. My guess is that many can’t remember the celebration party.