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*** SEASON'S GREETINGS ***

Many items have accumulated for this Christmas issue, as the government's response to SAGE was awaited, but this has again been postponed (item 9 below). May all our readers enjoy a hearty festive season nevertheless.

1. Following news264, a farmer illustrates the anomaly between grantor and bystander properties with an interesting example. NG pays compensation for loss of value of properties at varying rates up to quite distant properties. In this example compensation was paid for a farm cottage in the middle of a line of houses while those either side got nothing. The amounts were small but not insignificant and the neighbours suffered as much disruption as did the occupants of the farm cottage.

2. Following the Lerchl-Rudiger controversy (news258.7, 260.6, 264.3), Science Magazine has conceded its error in saying Rudiger's disputed findings were the only ones of DNA breaks from cell-phone EMF. A team from China had previously found such DNA breaks. In addition, there have been peer-reviewed findings from at least seven countries of "DNA damage", rather than "DNA breaks". You have to subscribe to see the Science articles; a summary can be seen at <http://www.microwavenews.com/>

3. In connection with the above, Professor Denis Henshaw writes:
"Yes, the word "breakage" is a misnomer because it is not necessarily the site where the DNA was "hit" or "attacked" (by chemicals, radiation or whatever), rather the so-called breaks represent points of failure of the DNA replication template. This is very different to a direct "break" in the normal English usage of the term."
For more see APPENDIX A.

4. Joanne Evans writes from Emporia, Kansas, where a very large substation is very close to her home and seems to be causing many ill effects. She asks: If you can help, please contact us. You can read a part of our story here: http://www.cjonline.com/stories/112308/kan_358953589.shtml
Revolt will be happy to pass on any genuine offers of help or advice.

5. Concerns about long-term mobile phone exposures are being addressed (in part, it focuses on cancer) by the 13-country Internet project. Results from 8 studies have been published, but the others are delayed and the combined results are still awaited and are now some four years overdue. In a letter of 3 December 2008 the Bio-Initiative group has called for the remaining studies to be published without further delay, so that independent researchers can assess them in combination. Prolonged

delays of this sort naturally, and rightly, breed suspicion of political and industrial interference. For more see

<http://www.microwavenews.com>

6. In any case I am currently working with a colleague in California to analyse combined results from the Interphone studies published so far. Strangely and strikingly, there is a very strong “protective” association between short term mobile phone use and brain tumours – users get fewer tumours. But there are biases in the research which suggest these “protective” associations may be spurious artefacts. Any positive associations between long-term use and increased risk of brain tumours may be masked by the same biases, so they do not appear very strong. I am examining the comparison of long-term and short-term exposure, which may sidestep some of the study biases, which may show stronger long-term risk more clearly, though there are inconsistencies between studies and it’s not all plain sailing.

7. My papers on EMF controversies for the proceedings of two conferences held in London in September this year (Radiation Research Trust and Institute of Physics) are available on request for private use.

8. Krzysztof Kuklinski from Poland reports that the regional parliament of Salzburg, Austria, decided unanimously 17 December on the new law to bury high voltage lines (up to 400 metres from villages and 200 metres from houses, etc.).

http://www.salzburg.com/nwas/index.php?article=DText/rn0-p_ve4sl6hr8d0*6btex&img=&text=&mode=§ion=&channel=ticker&sort

9. The government response to the SAGE report of April 2007 had been promised before the end of 2008. Statements have been postponed at least twice earlier this year. The latest promised statement was to have been yesterday 17 December. Now I am informed, and only unofficially informed, that it has been postponed yet again and will not be given until later in 2009. Humph! Meanwhile, after a Main Group meeting in October, the SAGE process was to be revived as SAGE Phase II. Confidence in the process can only be harmed by the delay.

10. New research results from China (Yang et al, Leukaemia and Lymphoma, on-line 1 Dec 08) not only tend to confirm and strengthen the link between powerline magnetic fields and childhood cancer, but they identify a clear mechanistic connection for genetically susceptible children. This was a small study, but the precise identification of specific gene-environment interactions and specific polymorphisms of specific genes greatly strengthens the importance of the findings. The gene-environment interactions are associated with fields as low as 0.1 microtesla and up to 100 metres from powerlines. See also

<http://www.microwavenews.com/XRCC1.html>

http://www.powerwatch.org.uk/news/20081216_cancer_mechanism.asp

11. The above specific mechanism should not be taken to be the unique definitive explanation for the association of childhood leukaemia with powerlines. It is however a demonstration of the likelihood of potential mechanisms through such effects. Yet there may be many more such mechanisms and many more diseases implicated. Just today we hear of a similar story for BSE-CJD:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7788627.stm>

It appears a new genetic association has just been found for human CJD, in addition to the established one which led to 164 UK deaths so far. The new genetic susceptibility is rather more common, but the effects longer-term, so it is estimated that between 50 and 350 deaths in the UK may follow. Compare that with mobile phone exposure, where only long-term tumours on the same side of the head after 10 years' mobile phone use have so far been found. But, unlike BSE in British meat in the 1980s, mobile phone use is still growing rapidly. Projected deaths may therefore be much larger than those for CJD, though I stress that it is still very uncertain.

12. And finally ... I'm due to give the 2nd Welbury & Rountons Christmas Lecture on New Year's Day, on "Energy and Power". It won't be about powerlines, rather more about human power inspired by Chris Hoy in this Olympic year, with maybe a touch on dark energy (see news from NASA Chandra Observatory today). Anyone is welcome but it's just a village hall affair.

APPENDIX A Comments from Professor Denis Henshaw on DNA breaks

Yes, the word "breakage" is a misnomer because it is not necessarily the site where the DNA was "hit" or "attacked" (by chemicals, radiation or whatever), rather the so-called breaks represent points of failure of the DNA replication template.

This is very different to a direct "break" in the normal English usage of the term.

The best examples here are (i) genomic instability, where DNA damage in the form of apparent breaks or discontinuities in chromosome structure, appear spontaneously many cell divisions after the initial cell was exposed and (ii) the bystander effect, where unexposed cells sitting in the vicinity of those cells that were exposed develop DNA damage. A key method of observing the bystander effect is first to expose a set of cells in its culture medium and then transfer the culture medium to a new dish and introduce entirely new set of unexposed cells into that dish. DNA damage is then seen in these unexposed cells.

The bystander effect is an established phenomenon in modern radiobiology. To date, the effect has been seen with ionising radiation, chemicals and heavy metals. It is understood that the bystander effect is mediated by toxins released from the exposed cells into the culture medium. The precise nature on these toxins has not been established but is known to involve reactive oxygen or nitrogen species.
