

It Doesn't Take a Rocket Scientist

Judy Meiksin
for DBS

During the Federal Budget cuts, David's job
is to educate congressional greenhorns
on the value of materials research,
a category no one's heard of, but David must turn
into the phrase-of-the-day.

It Doesn't Take a Materials

*Scientist to know active-matrix screens are clearer
than dual-scan he paints across a billboard
en route to the Capitol. It Doesn't Take a Materials Scientist*
to know, as he hobnobs with senators,
that winter will crack these tennis courts,
that lightweight aluminum will speed up this golf cart.

He faces a nightmare of reps who want to cut out NOAA*
because they get the weather report from CNN. It takes a lobbyist
to show up with a TV camera,
a publicist to plug babies in the crowd, and a sharp wit to recognize
when "environmentalism" is the name-of-the-game.

He takes on the job of executive director of Rogue
Institute for Ecology & Economy, oversees the negotiation table
between the great horned owl and a logging town, where it doesn't take a materials
scientist to maintain forestry as a renewable resource,
where engineered wood can be turned into airplanes and PT boats before the forest
is depleted as it was in medieval England, leading to
stone buildings with thatched roofs
and tourists who say *Isn't that quaint?*

*NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the source of weather,
climate, and ecosystem information.

JUDY MEIKSIN is managing editor of MRS Bulletin, a monthly publication of the Materials Research Society, who notes that "science' has been making its way into my poetry for the past 10 years." She earned her BA at Carnegie Mellon University and her MFA in writing at the University of Pittsburgh. Her poetry has been published in numerous literary journals, including 5 AM and the minnesota review. Meiksin is also a playwright; her most recent production was Jonathan, at the Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company.