

Re: Crash for Armidillo

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.space.policy/2004-08/1247.html>

From: Greg Kuperberg (greg_at_conifold.math.ucdavis.edu)

Date: 08/13/04

Date: Fri, 13 Aug 2004 03:55:12 +0000 (UTC)

In article <8XTSc.19145\$9Y6.17354@newsread1.news.pas.earthlink.net>, Rand Simberg <newsgroups@transterrestrial.com> wrote:
> *They're not a serious Ansari X-Prize contender--they're moving forward*
> *at this point because (I assume, John will correct me if I'm mistaken)*
> *it's fun, and on the off chance that they can ultimately make a business*
> *of it.*

That's reasonable enough, although I would say that the "off chance" is more like an "off off chance".

> *We know you hate the notion of people going into space, Greg,...*

There is a difference between antipathy and skepticism. I don't think that X-Prize projects are remotely practical, except sometimes as big stunts. The best ones might fall somewhere between Evel Knievel and the Daedelus project. But I also don't bear any grudge against these projects. If Burt Rutan gets killed by his braggadocio, then that would be very sad, but it would be his business. If he succeeds and wins the X-Prize, more power to him.

The only kind of manned spaceflight that really annoys me is the kind pursued by the government, often pushing aside useful space activities and useful science, and wasting a lot of money to boot. The only wrinkle with the X-Prize is that some politicians and some contractors have exploited wild X-Prize-type claims to further prop up the failed astronaut program.

> *...but you really need to learn to keep up.*

Okay, if Armadillo has no near-term plans to launch any people, then my apologies for disparaging them.

--

```
  /\  Greg Kuperberg (UC Davis)
 /  \
 \  / Visit the Math ArXiv Front at http://front.math.ucdavis.edu/
  \/  * All the math that's fit to e-print *
```