



MARKET JITTERS: "OK — that should keep me till lunch, anyway."

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

JOLTIN' JOE

Is too much coffee killing you?

CONTRADICTIONARY INFORMATION about whether coffee is good for you is as exasperatingly opaque as contradictory information from stock touts, dodgy 10-Q reports and the fevered brain of Ben Bernanke. One day your Colombian supremo is giving you organ tumors and artery sludge; the next it's goosing your libido and ending the war in Iraq. What to believe?

Believe this: Tales of coffee's ill effects "are mostly urban myths," says Dr. Terry Graham, a caffeine researcher at Ontario's University of Guelph. "There's no evidence that caffeine or coffee is negatively associated with cancer or heart disease." Long-term consumption can even lower your risk of diabetes, Parkinson's and cirrhosis. (Make ours an *Irish* coffee, barkeep!)

Part of the confusion stems from semantics. "Everyone assumes 'coffee' and 'caffeine' are interchangeable, but coffee is only 2 percent caffeine," Graham says. Surprisingly, the other 98 percent is good for you, broadly speaking, even if your morning infusion comes from a cracked, grease-smudged java pot at the local mini-mart: It contains quinines, which improve liver metabolism; antibacterial and antiviral chlorogenic acids; and antioxidants, which help combat a lengthy list of maladies. (Americans, in fact, get 40 percent of their dietary antioxidants from coffee.)

Although too much go-juice can lead to anxiety, high blood pressure and insomnia, up to 400 milligrams of caffeine a day — about five eight-ounce cups — is fine. "[Even] with habitual coffee consumption," Graham says, "the positives outweigh the negatives." Besides, caffeine-withdrawal symptoms mimic those of the flu, and who needs that? So drink up — you'll be more alert, the Fed will start making sense again and your coffee-bull buddies down at the NYBOT will finally be able to afford that vacation home in Tahiti. And we hear they make a mean caffè latte down there.

Great Moments in Trading Idiocy (FOURTEENTH IN A SERIES)

SPECIAL MARCH MADNESS EDITION!

APRIL 1991: THREE HOOPS-CRAZED TRADERS AT SMITH BARNEY, EAGER TO LET FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES SHOW OFF THEIR TRADING PROWESS, PUT TOGETHER AN ELABORATE, MARKET-MIMICKING NCAA TOURNAMENT POOL. TRADERS' GAMBLING ON THE JOB? THE HORROR!

A LOW LEVEL CLERICAL WORKER AT PAINE WEBBER RUNS IN. IN A ROLLS MOMENT, HE MASSIVELY SHORTS #2 SEED DUKE. HEV. NO RISK, NO REWARD!

LOOK, EVERYONE KNOWS SMART KIDS SUCK AT SPORTS. SHORT 'EM STRAIGHT BACK TO NERDSVILLE!

RIGHT ON, BID. I'LL ALSO PUT YOU DOWN FOR FIVE Dimes ON WUBBAY STATE. THIS IS FINALLY THEIR YEAR!

DUKE STORMS THE TOURNAMENT, BEATING KANSAS FOR THE TITLE. PAINE WEBBER'S GAUNT IS OUT \$300,000. SMITH BARNEY THEN FIRES THE THREE TRADERS WHO RAN THE POOL FOR "CONDUCT INCONSISTENT WITH FIRM STANDARDS." WHAT, SEPARATING FOOLS FROM THEIR MONEY?

DAMN THOSE NERDS! I MAKE \$23,000 A YEAR. HOW AM I GOING TO PAY THIS OFF?

LESTEN, I KNOW A GUY WHO'LL GIVE US GREAT ODDS ON SOME THREE LEGGED NAG UP AT SARATOGA. I'LL SPOT YOU \$100,000. THEN WE TAKE THE WINNINGS AND LAUNCH A PUNEL YOU'LL BE MAKING \$23 GRAND A DAY BY 1993!

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TRADERTICKER

260 AMOUNT OF CAFFEINE, IN MILLIGRAMS, IN ONE STARBUCKS "GRANDE" 16-OUNCE CUP OF COFFEE

25 AMOUNT, IN BILLIONS OF DOLLARS, THE FBI ESTIMATES IS ILLEGALLY WAGERED ON THE MARCH MADNESS NCAA TOURNAMENT ANNUALLY