

# TGIF

## Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not reflect positions of organizations with which he is affiliated.

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*“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.”*

-Aristotle-

### MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for new additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
BCEDC Board Meeting	April 9 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM – noon	Washburn Library
<a href="#">Herbster Smelt Fry</a>	April 14 <sup>th</sup>	3:00-7L00 PM	Historic Gymnasium Herbster, Wisconsin~
Say It Out Loud!	<b>April 21<sup>st</sup></b>	7:30 PM	Washburn – Stage North
Earth Day	April 22 <sup>nd</sup>	All Day	Everywhere
<a href="#">Wisconsin Lakes Convention</a>	April 26-28	All Day	Green Bay
UW Founders Day Dinner	April 30 <sup>th</sup>	5:30 PM	Elks Club - Ashland
WIB <a href="#">Business Development Conference</a>	May 3 & 4	All Day	Lakewoods Resort, Cable
BCEDC Board Meeting	May 14 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM - noon	TBA
<a href="#">Future of Farming</a> Statewide Conference	May 14 & 15	All Day	Madison, Monona Terrace
<a href="#">Chequamegon Bay Birding &amp; Nature Festival</a>	<b>May 18-20</b>	All Day	Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center-Ashland
<a href="#">2007 Entrepreneur's Conference</a>	June. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee
<a href="#">Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference &amp; Workshops</a>	June 21 & 22	All Day	Telemark Lodge, Cable

## INNOVATION & EDUCATION

You may want to check out a thought provoking show on CNBC “[The Business of Innovation](#).” The show is on Sunday evenings. **Maria Bartiromo**, award-winning journalist and **Roger Shank**, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Computer Science, Psychology and Education at Northwestern University, host the show. The format brings together three or four practicing innovators from business; most are current or former CEOs. **Meg Whitman** of **eBay** was one recent participant..

Shank, who has held faculty positions at Stanford and Yale, has written several books on distance learning one of which emphasizes the role of simulation in designing effective instruction. He makes the point that authentic experience often reaches well beyond the scope and capacity that traditional school settings are able to provide. Video media, he argues, enables the expansion of experience in safe, efficient and meaningful ways.

During 30+ years designing and implementing laboratory experiences in the Biological Sciences for freshman and sophomore college students, I struggled to provide authenticity. Authentic experience in the life sciences is often compromised by the rigor and reality of dealing with living materials; cells and organisms, and the molecules that make them live. Beginning in the 60's at Mankato State College (now **Minnesota State University – Mankato**) and continuing at **Normandale College**, I and my faculty colleagues, managed an instructional enterprise that simulated the settings of authentic research laboratories. We encouraged our students to observe living organisms, raise questions, formulate hypotheses, and, using contemporary tools and techniques to design and carry out experiments, collect data for analysis. Our belief was that we learn science by doing science.

Shank's writing captured my imagination by suggesting that interactive video holds promise for bringing the real stories of scientists and their day-to-day struggles with scientific challenges to science classes. And perhaps equally important, to vicariously transport learners to the laboratories of active scientists. I've thought frequently, and occasionally deeply, about turning the concept into a business venture. Technology seems to be catching up with the idea. [YouTube](#) and particularly its technological foundations lubricate, and may someday liberate, the opportunity.

We have a long way to go and opportunity for innovative approaches to solve the challenges in education is virtually unlimited. Educational products and services continue to pour forth. Hype is fore and aft of launch. Not surprising because the creators of these products and services have dedicated major chunks of their personal and professional lives, not to mention chunks of personal, private and public fortunes, attempting to make a difference for learners. Of course they believe strongly in what they create. And, of course, they want to make some money.

**Education Week** carried an [interesting article](#) about a study of software products intended to support reading and mathematics teaching. The report, based on a study commissioned by the **US Department of Education**, found no achievement difference among students who used the software and those who were taught with other methods. Anyone surprised by these results has not spent much time with reports of education research.

Creation of these products involved several big names among education-focused businesses: [PLATO Learning Inc.](#), [Carnegie Learning Inc.](#), [Houghton Mifflin Co.](#), [Scholastic Inc.](#), [iLearn](#), [Leapfrog Schoolhouse](#), [Autoskill International Inc.](#), [Pearson PLC](#), and [Headsprout Inc.](#) The report will not be comfortably welcomed by these innovators. I'm sure their CEOs have

Spin Doctors burning midnight oil by the barrel. They should because the report apparently paints everyone with the same brush. Subtle successes are lost amid generalizations. But this is all part of a greater process of learning about learning. Their efforts and the evaluation of their products will add something subtle to the vision of future challenge and opportunity.

Shank's company [Socratic Arts](#) highlights the wisdom of **Aristotle**.

## POETIC ENTERPRISE

**Say It Out Loud** is an outgrowth of National Poetry Month. **Brandon Boys**, Executive Director of the **Alliance For Sustainability**, sent along a clever and attractive notice about the April 21<sup>st</sup> event at **StageNorth** in Washburn (325 Washington Ave) at 7:30 pm. The theme is reading poetry and the featured readers are event participants. **YOU** can be a star of the stage. Bring your favorite poem. Reading poetry in public is not for the faint of heart and Brandon's announcement promises that "courage is FREE at the door."

Former Poet Laureate **Robert Pinsky**, author of six books of poetry and teacher of creative writing at **Boston University**, emphasized the role of the reader as a maker of meaning for poetry. This "Say It Out Loud" event promises you both opportunity and audience to express your thoughts and feelings through poetry; poetry you create or poetry you love.

The Bard in you should call StageNorth for information at 715-373-1194

Take care and have a great weekend!

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*In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:*

[Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) Director

[Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) Director

[Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) *US Delegation Co-Chair*

[Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) *Co-owner*

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), *Owner*

[Chequamegon Institute, Inc.](#) *Initial Registered Agent*

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) *Work Group Member*

[Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) *Member*

*The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, education, experience and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.*