

# 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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*“It's never to late – in fiction or in life – to revise.”*

-Nancy Thayer-

## MEETINGS and EVENTS:

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

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
<a href="#">Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference &amp; Workshops</a>	June 21 & 22	All Day	Telemark Lodge, Cable
<a href="#">Pie &amp; Politics</a>	June 28 <sup>th</sup>	Evening - See Note below!	Big Top Chautauqua
BCEDC Board Meeting	<b>July 9<sup>th</sup></b>	10 AM – noon	Washburn Library
<b>Lake Superior Day</b>	July 15 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Lake Superior Basin
BCEDC Board Meeting	August 13 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM – noon	TBA
Bayfield County <a href="#">Lakes Forum</a> Annual Meeting	<b>August 18<sup>th</sup></b>	9:00-11:00 AM	Iron River Community Center
<a href="#">Great Lakes Restoration Conference</a>	Sept 6-8	All Day	Chicago

## The Challenge of Change

Innovation is all about change. Invention is certainly one important dimension of innovation. New ideas, new products, new services meet, mesh and match both real and created needs. Years ago the laser was described as an invention searching for a use. Imagine a contemporary world without lasers. No CD, No DVD, No Barcodes, No (fill in examples like lasik eye surgery, or reattachment of a detached retina) in Medicine, No (fill in examples like smart bombs, or unmanned drone aircraft) in the Military, or No (precision cutting tools, or laser line levels) in Industry. The list of applications of laser technology is way beyond my ability to sketch quickly. There may be a few applications of laser technology that we could comfortably and personally

give up, but the managers of commerce and industry will unlikely become advocates for returning to the labor and time intensive methods, not to mention unsafe practices, of a decade ago.

Innovation can, of course, take pathways apart from invention of new products. Particularly in the service sector, innovation in management practices has been said to be more important in contributing to the bottom line than is the creation of new service products. Entrepreneurial skills loom large in consideration for business advances. An individual inventor may become an entrepreneur, but probably more often an entrepreneur finds an invention and combines management skills to propel change in markets. Outsourcing and offshoring are but conspicuous examples of internal entrepreneurship in multinational corporations where new paths to profit have emerged from incremental application of new management ideas.

**Dr. Ray Kurzweil** has been mentioned in TGIF before. This prolific inventor and former MIT Professor, who *Forbes* magazine described as the “ultimate thinking machine”, has formulated the [Law of Accelerating Returns](#), which expands Moore's Law (the notion that computing power doubles every 12-18 months while price remains constant), to describe how progress in all technology is advancing at an exponential rate. Predicting the future is a dicey proposition at best, but Kurzweil has done well with the companies he has started. His entrepreneurial skills are self attributed to making predictions based on the cycle of a current technology and searching out the likely successor; such as the typewriter being replaced by the word processor. Or, the replacement of the keyboard by voice recognition.

With some attempt at self-depreciating humor, but really an epigram admonishing the need to continue learning, one of my graduate school professors remarked that the half-life of a PhD Chemist was said to be 7 years. I can't begin to imagine what the half-life of a chemist is today. 15 years ago I used to regularly tell classes that, based on the number of publications in refereed journals, knowledge of genetics was doubling every 12-15 months. Today the rate is probably measured in weeks. Academic survival, and certainly survival in knowledge industries, often depends on specialization in scholarship.

Put another way, we recognize a pattern of Accelerating Change.

For some there may seem to be an inevitability about change. There may be some who lament the inevitability and lament the changes wrought by technology. A low comfort level may keep some from embracing technology. Others are able to carefully and selectively resist.

I have a couple of good friends who, though by no measure could be called Luddites, refuse a cell phone. In spite of pockets of terrible cellular services here in NW Wisconsin, I can't imagine not having a cell phone. The one I currently have, has features I have yet to discover and is so small I constantly dig in more than one pocket to find it. It is, unfortunately, still too big to wear, Dick Tracy style, on my wrist.

## Pie & Politics 2007

Keynote speaker is **Dr. John Ikerd** Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Economics **University of Missouri Columbia**, College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. Free and open to

the public, Pie and Politics begins at 6:00 PM with a new feature, a picnic featuring natural foods. The Keynote is scheduled for 7:30 PM.

Ikerd's book *Sustainable Capitalism: A Matter of Common Sense* recognizes that American and global society is in the midst of great transition. **Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.** writing about the book said; "For years, John Ikerd's writings and speeches have provided precious insights into the economics of this nation's food system, exploding the myth that factory farms are economically imperative. In this brilliant book, he makes a powerful case for a new capitalistic economy: one that is environmentally sound, socially just, and economically sustainable."

This promises to be a great program and I hope those TGIF Readers within driving distance of Chequamegon Bay will make the trip to **Big Top Chautauqua**, which is located between Washburn and Bayfield on Highway 13.

## **LIGHTER SIDE:**

from : iFILM (for those with a descent Internet connection speed)

[World's Clumsiest Reporter](#)

Take care and have a great weekend!

/BRUCE

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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, experience, education 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.*