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“You can't hold a man down without staying down with him.”

-Booker T. Washington-

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>
Bioenergy Forum	April 8 th	9:00-3:00	Ashland – AmericInn Conference Center
Herbster Smelt Fry	April 12 th	3:00 – 7:00*	Herbster's Historic Gymnasium
BCEDC Board Meeting	April 14 th	10:00 – noon	Washburn Library
Biofuels Conference	April 16 & 17	All Day	UW – Stevens Point
Sustainable Business Conference	April 24-25	All Day	Ashland
Business Development Conference	May 7 & 8	All Day	Cable, Lakewoods
Digital Healthcare Conference	May 7 & 8	All Day	Madison
BCEDC Annual Meeting	May 12 th	10:00 – noon	TBA
Manufacturing Advantage 2008	May 21	All Day	UW-Stout
Green By Design Conference	June 12-13	All Day	Washington DC area
Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility Field Days	June 12–13	All Day	Red Cliff / Bayfield
Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference	June 19 & 20	All Day	Cable, Telemark

* Get to the Smelt Fry early! *The Herbster Community Club has been known to run out of Smelt before quitting time.*

Social Media Pluck

You've gotta have pluck – gutsiness, fearlessness! Social media is about starting a conversation. [Pluck](#) is also a business that makes a business of social media in marketing.

I have frequently admired acquaintances who are fearless in social situations, wading in without hesitation, making introductions, introducing themselves and making others feel connected and at ease. Some are masters of small talk. Some can quickly, comfortably and thoughtfully elevate small talk to real relevance – good discussion, meaningful dialog, great conversation.

Marketing mavens are pressing hard to adopt the power of social media to building brand identity and loyalty. Fostering feedback conversations through Blogs and Wikis has become an important tool in the marketing kit. Pluck Corporation streamlines the uses of these tools and their customers hope productive and profitable interactions with customers and stakeholders will emerge– good discussion, meaningful dialog, great conversation.

Maybe.

There is a magic in great conversation that is hard to capture and nurture. Sprinkling the conversation with questions seems to deliver the nutrients for growing good conversations. Unfortunately, and all too often, participants find the questions an irritation; blocking the flow of their biases. Time to tune out or trigger an argument. Questioning skills also need attention. The wrong inflection or body language can turn perception of a question on a dime from sincerity to hostility. The question isn't worth a dime. It may be worse than a waste of two cents worth.

An online blogger, **Lee** (with no last name and a label “not verified”), caught my attention with the phrase “the big ideas and vision for solving a problem,” suggesting that technology choice is not a critical conversation driver. Perhaps authenticity and enthusiasm are the real stuff of sales, of marketing, and of conversations.

Readers of TGIF will not be particularly surprised when I bring up the Open Source technology that makes social media Social Media. **Lee LeFever** writing in [CommonCraft](#) drew some digital nods by commenting that among lessons learned regarding the building of online communities, starting with technology is hardly a key to success. Goals, he suggests, in digital life set some things apart, marking the marketing mission's critical path. Technology, then, becomes a vehicle carrying productive conversations. The me-too mavens at Microsoft have popped a product for the digital social scene – SharePoint – that integrates with MS Office products and replaces the html editor, FrontPage. The feature-set of SharePoint is impressive and for big corporations with big bucks seeking the power of Internet-based social networking, SharePoint may socialize a companies workforce, enabling collaboration. Microsoft vendors hawk the possibilities with breathless recitation of features and benefits.

However, underneath it all is wiki and blog technology enabled through MS proprietary software. Fortunately the Open Source community got there first and the proliferation of tools resembles an explosion. The choices are nearly overwhelming. Most are free or at least freely available. Technology can be tricky and options to pay for support are proliferating with a seemingly endless array of marketing models.

Educators are embracing social media and some potentially good stuff should happen if technology follows best practices rather than drives new practices. A refreshing [article](#) by **Danielle M. Mbadu** in **Teacher Magazine** almost dripped with her enthusiasm for parent-

teacher conferences because the conferences represented, to her, an opportunity to share the love – the caring and commitment – she held for teaching and for her students. The parent-teacher conferences she describes were real, live, face-to-face meetings. The technophile in me wants to discover and deliver digital tools like wikis that can make collaboration meaningful across miles and among multitudes. But sitting underneath collaborative conversation is something that digital conversations find hard to capture. Body language, eye-to-eye, social setting and circumstance come to mind. A firm handshake and an occasional hug make a difference that is surely not digital.

Maybe pluck is really about being comfortable.

LIGHTER SIDE:

As with most jokes the original author is unknown. Whoever you are; “Thanks!” Names, when added, are intended to tease the innocent.

Cheese Farm

A group of Americans from **Ashland** was traveling by tour bus through Holland. As they stopped at a cheese farm, a young guide led them through a process of cheese making, explaining that goats' milk was used. She showed the group a lively hillside where many goats were grazing.

These, she explained, were the older goats put out to pasture when they no longer produced. She then asked, "What do you do in America with your old goats?"

A spry gentleman, either **Clyde Eilo** or **Fred Tidstrom** I'm told, answered, "They send us on bus tours."

Take care and enjoy a great weekend!

/BRUCE

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Bruce Lindgren is Principal of [B.Lindgren CONSULTING](#). The consulting practice serves small business, local government, school districts and non-profits providing support for research, grant development, technical writing, marketing

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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 Co-Chair*

[Bayfield CountyLakes Forum](#), *Board Secretary*

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

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

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

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) *Acting President & CEO*

[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 role of education in Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.