

TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

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“As the people of the world are becoming increasingly connected, the nature, use, ownership, and purpose of knowledge are changing in profound ways.”

-Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach-

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>
Earth Day	April 22	All Day	Everywhere!
Earth Day Spoken Word	April 22	7:00 PM	Ashland - Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center
Sustainable Business Conference	April 24-25	All Day	Ashland
Insight and Innovation for Technology Leaders	April 25	All Day	Chicago
Living Green Expo	May 3-4	All Day	St.Paul – Minnesota State Fair Grounds
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
Green Communities Conference	May 20th	All Day	UW-River Falls
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

OWNERSHIP OF KNOWLEDGE

“She possesses the knowledge to make this work.”

She could be an engineer, a manager, an architect, a planner, designer, writer, editor, or a teacher. Rocket scientists, brain surgeons or ecologists that deal with the really complicated stuff. Doctor, dentist, lawyer, preacher, butcher, baker, candlestick maker. Knowledge workers? Sure. Don't forget the skilled trades. Every carpenter, plumber, electrician possesses a body of knowledge to “make this work.”

Dan Racette, former Chair of the Price County Board, told a story that nicely makes the point. His daughter's friend, a physician, was complaining that she had to pay a plumber \$400 to remove an object, a light bulb, lodged in her toilet. (The result of an experiment by her young son – this kid has a great future.) When asked; “Could you do it?” she replied, “No.” Dan's point to her was pay the money and be grateful someone had the knowledge to solve your problem.

Knowledge can be possessed, but is it ever really owned?

Patents, copyrights, tradenames and trademarks are the stock in trade for attorneys who specialize in intellectual property rights law. Protection of these intellectual properties is a foundation for economic development and that is unlikely to change anytime soon. But never say never.

Ownership of knowledge and sharing of that knowledge is changing dramatically.

It never ceases to amaze me how the articles in *Wikipedia* seem to constantly emerge from a vast array of unrecognized authors. The value of this body of knowledge is way beyond measure. Incredibly, nobody owns it! Most of the articles, now numbering over 2 million in the English edition, are, for the most part, well written and information that is in error is (usually) quickly corrected. The Wikipedia community has its differences but Wikipedia authors with intellectual capital to convey or share, discuss issues behind the scenes and resolve differences before posting edits.

The Wikipedia editor that does not follow the rules is quickly and somewhat unmercifully reprimanded by the community. Try to insert a plug for a commercial product, mention a professional service, convey a result of original research or promote a point of view, and the insertion is quickly held up for review or removal by the community of editors that have taken an interest in the topic of the article. They are notified via eMail of any change in an article and, often within minutes, nefarious or rule-breaking edits are removed.

The massively distributed collaboration that has made Wikipedia possible is changing our concepts of how knowledge is shared. Teachers are one category of knowledge worker that is feeling the impact. **Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach** is President of **21st Century Learning**, a company committed to professional development of the teachers in our schools. Nussbaum-Beach understands that a passionate student is a learning student. Emotions are critically important to learning. Neuroscientists are opening up understanding about the importance of emotional centers in our brains that enable both short and long term memory. But this is probably only the tip of the brain-research iceberg. There is so much more to understand about the way our brains

are wired to process our sensations and to make meaning. Clearly the processes for making meaning of our environment is complex and highly individualized.

Technology and textbooks can deliver information and tests, only sometimes, provide a decent measurement as to whether the information has been delivered and retained. Teachers as information sources may or may not be necessary in the educational process. Teachers as guides to the “right” learning experiences may be indispensable.

That there is an ecology of information was articulated by **Thomas Davenport** more than a decade ago. He emphasized that technology is not enough. There are economic, political and cultural constraints that influence how and whether information flows through channels within an organization in ways that make a difference. Davenport didn't anticipate the Wiki phenomenon. Companies across a broad swath are adopting this powerful tool for collaboration; breaking the barriers of economics, politics and culture. Engineers in isolated cubicles may take care of the technical details but a collaborative team connected across time and space can exercise imagination. It is imagination that adds value.

Schools, by and large, have yet to develop as institutions that value imagination. Teachers that foster imagination can and should add that important value to our schools. But we should not forget that learning outside of schools is also pretty important. Packaging and selling non-school learning, the constructed knowledge gained from highly individualized experience, is unlikely to be stamped with a certification.

Flushing a lightbulb takes imagination.

LIGHTER SIDE:

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

Victor Frederick Weisskopf, a WWII era physicist who worked on the Manhattan project, commented about the physicist **Wolfgang Pauli**; “It was absolutely marvelous working for Pauli. You could ask him anything. There was no worry that he would think a particular question was stupid, since he thought all questions were stupid.

Pauli, as a student after attending a lecture by **Albert Einstein**, once remarked, “What Einstein said wasn't all that stupid.”

After his death, Pauli was granted an audience with God. Pauli asked God why the fine structure constant has the value $1/137.036\dots$. God nodded, went to a blackboard, and began scribbling equations at a furious pace. Pauli watched Him at first with great satisfaction, but soon began shaking his head violently: “*Das ist ganz falsch!*” (utterly false)

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 support and project management. Bruce brings his background in biological sciences, education, small business and media technology to generate and implement ideas contributing solutions to mission critical challenges.

In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:

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

[Bayfield CountyLakes Forum](#), Board Secretary

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

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

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), Owner

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

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

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

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

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.