

# 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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**“The good news is that humans are gifted by the potential for self-awareness and intelligent choice, and knowing our circumstance is an invitation to change.”**

**-William Rees-**

## 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="#">Green Communities Conference</a>	May 20 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	UW-River Falls
<a href="#">Manufacturing Advantage 2008</a>	May 21	All Day	UW-Stout
<a href="#">Inventors &amp; Entrepreneurs Club</a>	<b>June 5<sup>th</sup></b>	5:30 PM	<b>Coffee Shop US 2 &amp; 63</b>
<a href="#">Introduction to Biodiesel Fuel</a>	<b>June 3-5</b>	All Day	Madison Area Technical College
<a href="#">Green By Design Conference</a>	June 12-13	All Day	Washington DC area
<a href="#">Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility</a> Field Days	June 12-13	All Day	Red Cliff / Bayfield
<a href="#">Invention &amp; Idea Show</a>	<b>June 13 &amp; 14</b>	All Day	Redwood Falls MN
<a href="#">Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference</a>	June 19 & 20	All Day	Cable, Telemark
<a href="#">Inventors &amp; Entrepreneurs Club</a>	<b>July 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	5:30 PM	<b>Coffee Shop US 2 &amp; 63</b>
<a href="#">Lake Superior Day</a>	<b>July 20<sup>th</sup></b>	All Day	<b>Everywhere in the Lake Superior Basin</b>

## Duane Lahti Retires

Some people are towers of strength in a community. **Duane Lahti** certainly leaves a distinguished career but just as certainly Duane's deep roots in **Oulu** will continue pressing the South Shore community for a better future. As a Wisconsin DNR waterways and wetlands specialist in the Lake Superior counties, Duane's work safeguarded the public trust of waters in the state. He once commented to me that the removal of the defunct hydropower dam on the Iron River, nearly consumed two decades of his career. But now the river flows free. Habitat that once supported trout will once again stand some chance of recovery. **Nancy Larson**, UWEX

Lake Superior Basin Educator, commented that Duane's work set precedents that will continue to guide Lake Superior water programs into the future. Never hesitant to speak out on important issues, Duane possesses a wealth of knowledge about waters of the Lake Superior basin that will be missed. His example of courageous leadership will continue to challenge and inspire future stewards of the Lake Superior basin.

## Making the Impossible Possible

Visiting the **University of Wisconsin Research Park** in Madison on Monday morning provided six honors students from Ashland and Mellen High Schools with a glimpse of the power of possibilities that ideas can generate. Dreams that seem impossible emerge as new reality. Wisconsin ranks high, perhaps first, among public universities in commitment to research and transfer of technology. Introducing these students to the University Research Park, **Mark Bugher** the UWRP Director, explained how the **Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation** (WARF) has fostered research by enabling faculty to take their ideas – concepts, theories, skills – from the lab bench and classroom to achieve the rewards of commerce. The trip highlighted **Mirus Bio Corporation**, a UWRP success story. The company slogan is “It All Begins at the Bench.”

Two Ashland High graduates, Dr. **Jim Hagstrom** (1977) and **Mary Kay Bates** (1982) were gracious hosts. Hagstrom followed graduation from UW-Eau Claire with a PhD from the Mayo Medical School in Cell Biology pursuing the discipline of a narrow specialty in karyotype (chromosome) analysis. That specialty has led him to a research career with literally dozens of publications and now leadership as founder and Vice President of Mirus Bio. Bates, a research specialist, will reluctantly leave Madison and Mirus this fall to follow her husband to a faculty position at the University of Minnesota in Duluth. Their loss is our gain! The homing instinct could be our great future asset.

Mirus is breaking new ground in the development of nanotechnology. From beginnings that involved simply sharing research tools with fellow scientists, Mirus (which means miracle) has expanded with an impressive array of “first to” developments. With a workforce of 54, including very talented PhD-level biologists, chemists, and pharmacologists, each with their own unique specializations, the company team is able to link big ideas about the future of medicine with focused biochemistry – combining small pieces of protein and nucleic acid to generate exciting products that will contribute to changing the future of medicine. Mirus has found a way to introduce potentially therapeutic materials into liver cells – and only liver cells. In their laboratories, “at the bench,” NanoBots are moving from speculative pipe dream to potentially awesome reality. In a crowded competitive field, Mirus will contribute to a future of highly individualized medicine able to target therapy to the any part of the full array of the 200 cells that make up the unique symphony of cells in the living human body. Where a few cells are out of tune, NanoBots hold promise for a tightly controlled repair.

The trip was made possible through contributions of the **Ashland School District** and the **Oredocker Foundation**. **Anni Schneider**, physics instructor at Ashland High School and advisor to the National Honor Society, and Dr. **Fred Tidstrom**, brought the trip together. Anni and I first met when **Kent Tenny** recruited her help with the late, and potentially great, computer

recycling project, **LongRun**. In 12 hours of driving time conversation, Anni's love for students and delightful commitment to education was almost constantly in evidence. Following her passion for downhill skiing, Anni allows her adventurous and competitive roots to emerge as she interacts with her students both on the hill as coach and in the lab as teacher.

Dr. Fred's objective for the trip was, in addition to generating a marvelous experience for these students, to establish a connection between NW Wisconsin and the University. Fred almost never hesitates to remind people in Madison, including University administrators and our legislators, that for 150 years the University has repeated a slogan, drawn from its land-grant roots, that *The limits of the university are the borders of the state*. Both Bugher and Hagstrom expressed their interest in seeing the research from Madison UW and UWRP extended to economic developments in NW Wisconsin.

Our challenge is to continue visits with at least annual treks to Madison. But, I firmly believe, it is equally, perhaps more, important that we pioneer the uses of digital technology to communicate both ways. People in the northland should waste no time and spare no effort in making and expanding our connections with Madison. We are at the far corner of the State and frequent travel is unrealistic. We shouldn't expect Madison to reach out to us. We must reach out to Madison. Digital technology is a tool to extend our reach. We should look at our assets and discover and articulate the benefits of bringing Madison discoveries to NW Wisconsin. Our tools and our resources are limited and we must recognize those limits, but we must not accept those limits as destiny. Hard work combined with creative imagination and persistence can make a difference.

Dr. Fred comments about leadership from years of experience leading change; making some marvelous things happen in Ashland. This retired Dentist's involvement in building the Memorial Medical Center (and perhaps more importantly building a robust community of general practitioners and medical specialists), a modern High School and a branch campus of Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College is a powerful example that one individual can rally a community. He reminds anyone close enough to listen that leadership begins with defining what's possible for a group to do, figuring out a way to do it, then doing it. That he says and really believes, can make the impossible possible.

## **LIGHTER SIDE:**

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

### **Ever wonder ...**

Why the sun lightens our hair but darkens our skin?

Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavor, and dishwashing liquid made with real lemons?

Why is the man who invests all your money called a broker?

If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?

Take care and enjoy a great weekend!

/BRUCE

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*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.*