

TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward



Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

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“The most significant characteristic of modern civilization is the sacrifice of the future for the present, and all the power of science has been prostituted to this purpose.”

-William James-

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>
Bioneers Conference 2008	Oct. 17-19	All Day	San Rafael, California
Webinar Education Series: Focusing on Sustainability	Oct. 21st	11:30am – 12:30pm	Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center
Wisconsin Biotechnology and Medical Device Association	Oct. 22 nd	All Day	Waukesha WI
SOLEC <i>State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference</i>	Oct. 22-23	All Day	Niagara Falls, ON
Inventors & Entrepreneurs Club	Nov. 6 th	5:30 – 8:00 PM	Cassablanca Coffee House Ashland (Hwy 2 & 63)
Lake Superior Binational Forum	Nov. 7 & 8	All Day Fri. , 8-12 Sat.	Thunder Bay, ON
BCEDC Board Meeting	Nov. 10th	10:00- noon	Cable (location TBD)
Rustic Roads Board Meeting	Nov. 10th	9:00 am - noon	Madison
Synergy 2008	Nov. 12 & 13	All Day	UW River Falls
Northland Bioneers Conference	Nov. 14 - 16	All Day	Twin Cities

International Trade

International trade on the scale we currently experience is, I suspect, non-sustainable. Even Joe six-pack is getting Bud-lite from a multinational. Joe the plumber may require international finance to buy a mainstreet business. Home mortgages are no longer a simple and close agreement with your friendly local banker.

The bubble – created by Wal-Mart & Target, Cargill & Archer Daniels Midland, along with a multitude of other high-flying corporations, both large and not-so-large, public and private, for

profit and not-for-profit – is about to burst. A global condition of too many people on a very small planet has exceeded the carrying capacity that is provided, ultimately, by the sun. Our hubris has been supported by fossil fuels, particularly oil. Sustaining the current scale of international food distribution without diesel fuel to power cargo ships is beyond daunting. Returning to steam and wind energy for international transportation and trade will hardly meet the scale demanded by the US and Europe. Our demands are increasingly joined by India and China.

Developed countries are still importing more and more but exports are suffering. International trade is unbalanced and in its greatest turmoil and challenge since the 1930s. Globalization reaches across virtually all international borders creating massive markets while breaking social structures. Laudable goals for social equity are overwhelmed by a planet with too many people and transnational corporations that play fast with small percentages to win (or lose) big on the margins. Now these small pieces are adding to a potential global economic tragedy.

Before the end of World War II, 44 allied governments across the globe gathered at **Bretton Woods**, NH, a toney resort, holding the 1944 **United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference**. The three week conference established the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development**(IBRD), the **General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs**(GATT) and the **International Monetary Fund**(IMF). A signal outcome was the concept of open markets and, in 1995, the **World Trade Organization**(WTO). Recovery from the devastation wrought by WWII, it was believed, would be supported by a flow of goods and services less encumbered by the trade practices of the past. Tariff practices between countries had a long and uneasy history manipulating, but mostly restricting, trade. The Bretton Woods agreements, with multiple “rounds” of refinement, held until 1971 when the US Dollar replaced gold as a standard for international monetary policy. Now the Dollar has become a shaky standard.

British Prime Minister, **Gordon Brown** recently called for a “new” Bretton Woods. Trade negotiations, the **Doha Round**, are stalled, painfully stagnated since 2001, mostly over agricultural subsidies. Financial domination in the past has been by Europeans and US with Japan exerting its influence since the 1960s. Now it is widely recognized that there is great need to have new representation in the creation of global financial architecture. In a new Breton Woods – Asians, particularly China, would insist on rule making along with Brazil and South Africa. They are all a lot stronger and richer than they were in 1944.

Until about two weeks ago the world press, and probably most government officials, characterized the financial crisis as a US problem. None across international boundaries now think they are in the intellectual drivers seat; shocked financial markets struggle to protect their interests while realizing they are locked in an international time of trauma.

The monstrous US national debt is beyond understanding. \$10 trillion is a gee whiz number beyond gee whiz; half of it accumulated since 2000. Whew! Over \$30,000 for each man, woman and child; \$120,000 for your average family of four. Putting that on top of other usual and customary debt will topple all but the 5% making in excess of \$250,000 each year. How will the next US President tell China and Saudi Arabia to quit calling during the supper hour?

Who is asking; “What will we leave for too many children?” Is this a time to relax and have a home brew? Probably not!

But one of those little-town, local breweries that Bud-lite bonked could be a welcome relief. It would also be nice to meet the local banker for a breakfast of locally produced ham and eggs; and a hot cup of Joe.

LIGHTER SIDE:

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

Gambling and Booze

A down and out fellow with tattered clothes and three days stubble of beard asks for \$2.00.

The gentleman solicited says, “Will you buy booze?” The tattered fellow says, “No.” The gentleman says, “Will you gamble it away?” The tattered fellow says, “No.” So the gentleman says, “Will you come home with me so my wife can see what happens to a man who doesn't drink or gamble?”

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.

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[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.