

# 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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**“For last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning.”**

-T.S. Eliot-

## 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="#">Inventors &amp; Entrepreneur's Club</a>	Jan. 8 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 pm	Cassablanca Coffee House – Ashland Hwy 2 & 63
<b>B CEDC Board Meeting</b>	Jan. 12 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 – noon	Washburn Library
<a href="#">Engineering Professional Development</a>	Jan. 21 – 22	All Day	Madison
Lake Superior Binational Forum	Jan. 30-31	All Day	Superior, WI
<b>Lake Superior Binational Forum Public Input Session</b>	<b>Jan 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>1:00 – 5:00 PM</b>	<b>Barkers Island Inn Superior</b>
<a href="#">Inventors &amp; Entrepreneur's Club</a>	Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 pm	Cassablanca Coffee House – Ashland Hwy 2 & 63
<b>BCEDC Board Meeting</b>	Feb. 9 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 – noon	Washburn Library
<a href="#">Great Lakes Days</a>	Feb. 23 – 25	All Day	Washington DC
<a href="#">Superior Days</a>	Feb. 24 – 25	All Day	Madison
<a href="#">Conservation Lobby Day</a>	Feb. 25 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Madison
<a href="#">Business Development Conference</a>	<b>May 2009</b>	Two Days	Cable, Lakewoods Resort and Conference Center

## TRANSITIONS, TRANSFORMATIONS, and FUTURES

Year-end reviews have filled broadcast and print media lately. Almost every year-end review begins or ends (sometimes both) with a comment about how 2008 was a remarkable year. Remarkably good or remarkably not good depending on the point of view. Certainly the hugely historic election of **Barak Obama** has been greeted with mixed enthusiasm; after all he received

“only” 53% of the vote nationally. I will certainly await the inaugural address of the new President. His campaign theme and promise of change was exciting. My hope is that he will address the nation with convincing arguments that our challenges are filled with opportunity.

Cabinet appointments point in positive directions although many had wished for a flood of new faces. The Obama cabinet reflects an interesting balance of experience and expertise. The appointments of Drs **Steven Chu** and **Jane Lubchenko** to the Energy Department and NOAA posts respectively, foreshadow a renewed emphasis on science as a base for policy decisions. Neither Chu nor Lubchenko will pussy foot around the realities required for dealing with earth's climate.

Changes needed are comprehensive and global. The United States will hardly ever, perhaps never again, stand alone as a change agent in a global political environment. The preemptive Iraq war certainly changed almost everything. But global systems are in immediate need of revamping and some suggest that a total replacement may be in order. I'm doubtful that a system can be replaced. Every system, it seems, is part of a flow across history. Even with outright revolution, legacy features of a preceding system will remain. Our political system has been sensibly stable for over 200 years since our revolution got rid of monarchy. Yet imperial Presidents seem to wax and wane. Perhaps as President, Obama will dispel a few ideas and displace a few players of the oligarchy that has grown up inside and around our political systems. I'm not looking for bombastic, chockablock changes.

Biological systems are adaptive across lifespans and across generations. Ecosystems undergo gradual change sometimes punctuated by rapid successional change when large systems are disrupted with huge stressors like fire or flood. Climate stability reduces one source of stress on organisms and enables stable adaptation. Our country and our earth are challenged by multiple stressors and successional change across multiple systems will certainly follow.

Every day seems to bring new news about systems that need attention – or replacement. Bad news about our economic system gets plenty of attention. Less news-making but high ranking would be to start with preservation of biodiversity across global ecosystems, but quickly get on to systems for energy generation and distribution, as well as our health care system. Education, transportation, and agriculture are high on my attention list for systems that demand rethinking.

System change requires leverage. Leverage points are often not obvious, but can be found. Pressure for change may be needed and may be created. There are still a few hold-outs about the realities of looming change in the climate. Being wrong about climate change could still leverage opportunities to preserve biodiversity and combat poverty. Being right about climate change and doing nothing will be a global systemic disaster. Redistributing wealth to alleviate poverty does not necessarily mean that the wealthy (whatever that means) will have less. It could simply mean that growth of wealth will be uneven in different ways. New green jobs and even whole green industries will redistribute wealth to many who have missed out on the benefits of a free and market-based economy. The blatant redistribution of our U.S. wealth to petrodictators has to stop. We should all hope **Hillary Clinton** as Secretary of State will effectively support global initiatives to deal with climate stability, energy, poverty and information equity.

The transition in Washington will mean little if transformation across multiple social, environmental and economic systems is absent from our future.

## LIGHTER SIDE:

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

### King Solomon Trial

Two women came before wise King Solomon, dragging between them a young man.

"This young man agreed to marry my daughter," said one.

"No! He agreed to marry MY daughter," said the other.

And so they began arguing until the King called for silence.

"Bring me my biggest sword," said Solomon, "and I shall hew the young man in half. Each of you shall receive a half."

"Sounds good to me," said the first lady.

But the other woman said, "Oh Sire, do not spill innocent blood. Let the other woman's daughter marry him."

The wise king did not hesitate a moment. "The man must marry the first woman's daughter," he proclaimed.

"But she was willing to hew him in two!" exclaimed the king's court.

"Indeed," said wise King Solomon. "That shows she is the TRUE mother-in-law."

Take care and enjoy a great weekend!

*Bruce*

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*In addition Bruce maintains many affiliations including: [Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) Director, [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.*