

TGIF

Taking Great Ideas Forward

Improving Northern Capital - a Sustainable Economy 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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“Good advice is always certain to be ignored, but that's no reason not to give it.”

-Agatha Christie -

MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Links will provide additional information. Dates for new additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
Lake Superior Binational Forum	Jan. 26-27	All Day	Northland College, Ashland
Inventors & Entrepreneur's Club	Feb. 1 st	5:30 PM	Iron River Community Center
Living Green Conference	Feb. 3 rd	12:00-5:00 PM	Duluth – Coppertop Church
WEDA – Governor's Conference on Economic Development	Feb. 7,8,9	All Day	Madison
Global Warming Lecture Program**	Feb. 9 th	6:00-8:00 PM	Duluth Labor Temple, Wellstone Hall
Sustainable Forestry Conference	Feb. 27 th	All Day	Keshena WI
Staying Competitive in Today's Markets (Wood Products)	Feb. 28 th	All Day	Oshkosh WI
Superior Days	Feb. 27-28 th	All Day	Madison WI
Fusion 2007 CEI-CIO Symposium	Feb. 27-28 th	All Day	Fluno Center, Madison WI
Inventors & Entrepreneur's Club	Mar. 1 st	5:30 PM	Iron River Community Center
Renewable Energy Conference	Mar. 8 th & 9 th	All Day	Milwaukee
WIB Business Development Conference	May 3 & 4	All Day	Lakewoods Resort, Cable
Future of Farming Statewide	May 14 & 15	All Day	TBA

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
Conference			
2007 Entrepreneur's Conference	June. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee

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FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Joel L. Fleishman from **Duke University** has recently published, “**The Foundation: A Great American Secret. How Private Wealth is Changing the World**” Fleishman was interviewed on [C-SPAN2](#) by **Elizabeth Boris** who is herself the co-editor of a book dealing with philanthropy “**Non-profits and Government; Collaboration and Conflict.**”

Fleishman contended that foundations should be open about what they are doing, taking a page from the ideals of science where, in an ideal world, everything is public. What doesn't work, what hypotheses are falsified, is known and other scientists don't have to make the same mistake.

He described his conversation with **John Abley** who was setting up the **Argosy Foundation** with a focus on education and technology. Abley asked Fleishman, “Where can I go to find out what other foundations have done and how it has turned out?”

Fleishman told him the information doesn't exist. He wrote the book to provide some answers.

“Foundations” Fleishman, an attorney and Professor of Public Policy, said, “need to be more accountable; held to high standards.” Tax payers facilitated the formation of the foundations by relieving foundations under the IRS code from taxation. The collective assets of US foundations are over \$1 trillion. Not at all a trifling element of the economy to be dismissed from potential federal and state revenue streams.

Fleishman believes that foundations should take on for themselves the tasks of enforcing accountability by getting more information into the hands of the public. Government oversight, he contended, is not realistic for a variety of reasons. Public information, a philanthropic version of FOIA, he feels, should be done by hiring independent consultants to evaluate foundation activity fully and freely and then publish the results of the evaluations without restriction. He advocates a “Seal of Transparency” for foundations.

Foundations are constantly in the business of making judgments about quality of ideas. Problem definition is a critical basis for these judgments.

Is the problem defined in such a way that it is likely to be solved by the person or organization to be involved?

Such judgments are often highly technical. Every foundation needs expertise in it's subject matter area. Scientific and medical research and demonstration programs, to cite an obvious example, demand people with technical expertise. Social programs are usually a lot more complicated. Reductionism is elusive when dealing with mega, global problems like economic development, environmental values, education, poverty or inequality.

Small family foundations often lack such expertise. Family members serving on foundation boards may be challenged to assess proposals effectively before making awards. Most of the foundation world, according to Fleishman, is un-staffed. The lesson is clear for these small foundations; if they want to accomplish an objective they have to be strategic. This requires members of a family foundation to get together and agree on strategy. To what are they to give the foundation's money? For many family foundations, geography is a most frequent focus for their awards. The strategic criteria are fairly unambiguous. Our friends in California do nicely.

Take care and have 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

[Inland Sea Society](#), Director

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

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

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), Owner

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

The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, education, experience and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about Sustainable Economic Development and the Sustainability Revolution.