

# 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.

Herbster, WI, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007 – Volume 3: Number 9 [Back Issues](#)

***“Vitality shows not only in the ability to persist, but in the ability to start over.”***

**-F. Scott Fitzgerald-**

## 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>
Great Lakes Day	Mar. 7 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Washington DC
Renewable Energy Conference	Mar. 8 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	Milwaukee
<a href="#">Bio Energy Conference</a>	March 9 <sup>th</sup>	All Day	WITC, Rice Lake
BCEDC Board Meeting	March 12 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM – noon	TBA
BCEDC Board Meeting	April 9 <sup>th</sup>	10 AM – noon	TBA
WIB <a href="#">Business Development Conference</a>	May 3 & 4	All Day	Lakewoods Resort, Cable
<a href="#">Future of Farming</a> Statewide Conference	May 14 & 15	All Day	Madison, Monona Terrace
<a href="#">2007 Entrepreneur's Conference</a>	June. 12-13	All day	Milwaukee
Northwest Wisconsin Lakes Conference & Workshops	<b>June 21 &amp; 22</b>	All Day	Telemark Lodge, Cable

## SNOW JOBS

I wonder how many kids got their first opportunity to earn some money from shoveling snow. Not many in Florida, Texas and Arizona but Wisconsin and Minnesota provide, at least occasional, opportunity.

My guess is that the number is not huge but I'm also guessing that every youngster that gives it a try learns important, both positive and negative, lessons from the experience. For those able to counter objections (“I always do it myself”) and challenge the competition (other kids, snow

blowers), confidence is of much more value than the few bucks pocketed. Too many doors closed by the kids' potential clients, may discourage new entrepreneurial ventures.

I hope that sometime this morning a couple of eager entrepreneurs knock on my door. They will get a dose of very positive feedback about responding quickly to developing opportunities. I started my snow blower in October, but it has been resting ever since.

The **Chicago Tribune** carried an [article](#) about a new Charter School provisioned and promoted by **Ron Clark**, teacher of the year and author of highly successful books about teaching. His book profits as well as donations he solicited, underwrite a school in Atlanta that will emphasize entrepreneurship for 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade student. Clark argues enthusiastically and confidently about the success of prospective students, while critics point out the mixed results and short survival of Charter Schools.

[National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education](#) supports and publishes an array of studies comparing public and private education. Their scope includes kindergarten through higher education and embraces home schooling, charter schools, for-profit schools, vouchers, tuition tax credits and school choice.

The politics of privatizing school funding has been bounding around in my brain for months with attempts to understand the underlying basis for the federal and foundation movements to emphasize accountability as measured by test scores. After watching, admittedly from a fog-filled distance, the way health/medical revenues have been redirected from patient care to corporate revenue, my cynical side wondered when the huge revenue stream in public education would be a target for corporate exploitation. Probably more significant is the whole private school sector and their parent patrons who resent paying both public school tax and private school tuition.

Solid research supporting the superior quality of private schools would certainly bolster the arguments for vouchers and other public funding schemes for private education. Indeed the view from 30,000 feet comparing public and private schools provides evidence that the private schools are superior. However, when test results are analyzed with provision for the socio-economic status of the students being tested, surprisingly public 4<sup>th</sup> graders fare better than their private school counterparts. ([Obtain a pdf of the full report](#), see also [Lubienski & Lubienski](#))

An article in the [NY Times](#) speculated that release of results may have been timed to avoid press coverage. Can you imagine that?

Naw?

Is it just too much to imagine we may get snow jobs about education research?

Take care and have a great, snowy weekend!

**/BRUCE**

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*In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:*

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

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

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), Owner

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[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), Work Group Member

*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.*