

TGIF Taking Great Ideas Forward



Improving Northern Capital - Sustainable Development in the Northern Tier

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“The purpose of life is a life of purpose.”

-Robert Byrne-

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>
BCEDC Board Meeting	October 13th	9:30 AM – Noon	Washburn Library
Bioneers Conference 2008	Oct. 17-19	All Day	San Rafael, California
Wisconsin Biotechnology and Medical Device Association	Oct. 22 nd	All Day	Waukesha WI
SOLEC State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference	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
Rustic Roads Board Meeting	Nov. 10th	9:00 am - noon	Madison
Synergy 2008	Nov. 11 & 12	All Day	UW River Falls
Northland Bioneers Conference	Nov. 14 - 16	All Day	Twin Cities

The Need for Speed

Mercedes Benz has a new model with a 451 hp engine. Their advertising highlights, promotes and expresses the need for speed. Really! Find the demographic targets of their advertising and you will find the problem with American energy crisis, climate stability and environmental degradation. These are people who just don't get it; that don't understand the impact of their life style on air, water and soil. Or, maybe our financial stability as well as our climate stability.

Ralph Nader wrote “*Unsafe at Any Speed*” and parleyed the hype into at least two decades of narcissistic attention. He is rapidly approaching **Harold Stassen's** record for running for President; with about the same level of relevance. Looking back one has to wonder about unintended consequences of the book that trashed the Corvaire, a sporty, rear engine, fuel-efficient vehicle that broke tradition for American cars. He insisted on safety and in the process

magnified the importance of large, conventional vehicles for personal transportation. That Detroit executives and engineers responded with the SUV and, until recently, remained stuck with Hummer mentality, has devastated the US manufacturing sector. Economist **Sam Peltzman** argued that adding safety features increased accidents. Perhaps we would all be better off if someone had successfully made the case for personal responsibility and the multiple values adherent to just slowing down. Strange how you never hear about someone with a fully restored and spit polished Model A Ford or a 1961 Corvair Monza convertible involved in a fatal accident.

Nader may have contributed to America's lack of willingness to attend to the realities of systems thinking. The notion that you cannot do just one thing continues to hover just over our collective heads. We would, it seems, rather feel good about a clever sound bite like "analysis paralysis." It is as though the cleverness revealed some embedded universal truth. Taking time to think through details slows down our contemporary concepts of progress. Unfortunately Nader-like sound bites are still ceasing, sleazing and steering our broadcast media mediated political future.

Excess speed demands excess energy. My own experience is revealing. When I drive 55 mph I gain close to 1 mpg compared to my usual driving at about 60-62 mph. Slowing down, I can nudge my older Oldsmobile close to 28 mpg. A 75 mph trip to Minneapolis on I-35 drops mpg to around 25.

President **Gerald Ford** used executive orders to lower national speed limits to 55 mph following the 1974 Aramco fuel embargo. Public acceptance of lower speed limits was, to say it weakly, weak. State troopers had to drive their interceptors 80 mph to catch the few conspicuous and self-important speeders at 70 mph. Accident rates declined, which is one indicator that, in spite of the grumblings, there was significant compliance with the speed limits. But public opinion framed by lobbyists, knocked the pins from under good sense and now I can legally drive 65 & 70 mph on the interstate system and generally get away with 70 & 75 mph.

Speed is a factor in our demand for larger vehicles. Larger vehicles, admittedly, are safer. Why? Because if you are a hockey-mom with kids in a Corolla and are hit by Joe six-pack in a F-150, you lose! Some logic says hockey-moms should drive Hummers. Policy could help reverse this if fines for larger, more expensive vehicles were higher on a log scale. For example, for every 10 mph over speed limit, \$10,000 of cost increment and 1,000 pounds of weight increment over a base-line, license fees and fines would increase by a factor of 10. A fine could be enough to bankrupt a Hummer driver caught at 90-100 mph. Seems like justice to me. Just because you can afford a large luxury vehicle should not give a license to endanger others or pollute our shared air, water and soil. Even a Tesla driver could take a pretty good hit with this scheme.

How much speed and muscle do we really need? Mercedes Benz finds a niche ready to shell out for a perceived need for more speed. Now I have to pause and wonder how many in this niche are (or were) high flying executives at AIG that were moving at the speed of business.

LIGHTER SIDE:

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

NO SPEAKAH DE ENGLISH!

A bus stops and 2 men get on. They sit down and engage in an animated conversation.

The lady sitting next to them ignores them at first, but her attention is galvanized when she hears one of them say the following:

“Emma come first. Den I come. Den two asses come together. I come oncea-more! Two asses, they come together again. I come again and pee twice. Then I come one lasta time.”

The lady can't take this any more, “You foul-mouthed sex obsessed pig,” she retorted indignantly. “In this country we don't speak aloud in public places about our sex lives.”

“Hey, coola down lady,” said the man. “Whosa talkin' abouta sex? I'm a justa tellin' my frienda how to spell Mississippi.”

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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[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.