

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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“Genius is eternal patience.”

-Michelangelo-

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>
Inventors & Entrepreneur's Club	Jan. 8 th	6:00 pm	Cassablanca Coffee House – Ashland Hwy 2 & 63
B CEDC Board Meeting	Jan. 12 th	10:00 – noon	Washburn Library
Engineering Professional Development	Jan. 21 – 22	All Day	Madison
Lake Superior Binational Forum	Jan. 30-31	All Day	Superior, WI
Lake Superior Binational Forum Public Input Session	Jan 30th	1:00 – 5:00 PM	Barkers Island Inn Superior
Inventors & Entrepreneur's Club	Feb. 5 th	6:00 pm	Cassablanca Coffee House – Ashland Hwy 2 & 63
BCEDC Board Meeting	Feb. 9 th	10:00 – noon	Washburn Library
Great Lakes Days	Feb. 23 – 25	All Day	Washington DC
Superior Days	Feb. 24 – 25	All Day	Madison
Conservation Lobby Day	Feb. 25 th	All Day	Madison

Learning Locally

Coming off a week when we experienced –30 degree weather it is harder to make a convincing case for global warming. But it should be equally hard to ignore the weight of opinion among multiple science groups including the **International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**, the **American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)**, the **American Meteorological Society** and the **American Geophysical Union**. This last group is actively involved with the launching of a satellite, the **Orbiting Carbon Observatory (OCO)** that will provide location-specific data on CO₂ levels. With this data generator, better information will be achieved as to CO₂ sources and sinks. Human contribution to the global carbon cycle is about 1-2% , an amount considered sufficient to cause the contemporary rise in atmospheric CO₂ above

the critical 350 ppm threshold. The OCO satellite will be an important tool to minimize sources and maximize sinks for CO₂ .

The automobile industry is both a victim and a perpetrator of rising CO₂ levels. There seems little doubt that the immediate cause of the industry crisis is the long arm of the mortgage meltdown that has fostered consumer reluctance or inability to shell out for a new car. But compounding the reluctance is some confusion over the future for fossil fuels. Paying a premium for a hybrid gas-electric vehicle, a *Prius*, is a feel-good solution available to the well-heeled or at least better heeled. Meanwhile hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles or plug in electric vehicles seem to be a better answer. The industry produces these vehicles but costs are still prohibitive. A highly subsidized lease is \$600 or more per month. Purchase price is north of \$100,000. And, except in California, hydrogen fueling stations are essentially non-existent. The combined bright promise and dingy reality will keep many car-owners nursing along their gas-guzzlers, contributing to global warming and buying less gas. The auto industry predicament is probably not permanent, but there are severe changes needed in personal and commercial transportation.

Two champions of hydrogen vehicles that I know are **Wayne Stroessner** and **Bruce Freeman**. Freeman, who I met recently at the **Northland Bioneers Conference** in Minneapolis, has been promoting what he calls the **Big Buy Strategy** that may be a bridge to lower prices and fuel availability for hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. I like his idea and to move it forward, provided technical and financial help with his Web site. [Check it out!](#) Freeman is focused on Minnesota. Stroessner, a retired biology teacher who I have known from my work with the **Wisconsin Stewardship Network**, has been making his presence felt among activist groups including an interfaith group concerned with climate. Something akin to the Stewardship Network is needed to promote a hydrogen strategy in Wisconsin. Wayne is constantly looking for answers and recently pointed me in the direction of interesting research by **Glen Kertz** in development of algae as a source of biofuels. [Scribe Media](#) interviewed Kertz. The interview is loaded with insights about the potential for a bio-based economy. Kertz is a very refreshing thinker well grounded in the biological sciences.

Wisconsin **Senator Herb Kohl**, speaking in support of the bridge loan for the auto industry, cited 46,000 well-paying jobs in Wisconsin that are tied to the auto industry. But he was critical of the “car czar” proposed to dictate new directions for the industry, mandating, as a condition for the loan, a long-term restructuring plan. The big question may be; Who is to decide on the adequacy of the restructuring plan? A Car Czar is probably not the answer. I would, however, suggest that almost every GM worker in Janesville, Wisconsin will wish they had personally and collectively encouraged their employer to retool for making something smaller and more efficient than the Suburban, Chevy Tahoe and GMC Denali. Unfortunately, while unions like the UAW are well equipped to advocate for better wages and working conditions, they are poorly equipped to leverage their power for fundamental industrial and social change. The union movement will face a future loaded with learning opportunities for adaptation and survival.

Auto workers by the millions are not looking forward to a happy new year. We are all going to share their pain. We are going to enter an era of perfect storm that began to gather force decades ago as we grew comfortably dependent on fossil fuels but became obvious with 9/11, Katrina, Iraq, hyper-inflated home prices, irrational exuberance (mass stupidity?) in the financial sector and a powerful wake-up call about global warming from **Al Gore**.

Van Jones, founder and president of [Green For All](#), envisions reversal of global warming through a mobilization of millions, perhaps tens of millions, on a global scale – an effort he compares to the level of mobilization for World War II – and supported at social, cultural and political levels with active involvement of consumers, inventors, entrepreneurs, investors, voters, workers and marketers, marketers, marketers – the champions, mavens and salesmen that **Malcolm Gladwell** describes in his book *“The Turning Point.”* The big sell – the big so-what – is that stabilization of our global climate is essential for survival of human civilization in the form we know it and that reversing human causes of global warming is a global opportunity that reaches every element of the international economy.

Jones, in his book *“The Green Collar Economy,”* makes a case that faith organizations must embrace the idea of “creation care” and join with students, labor, environmental activists, exponents of social justice, and businesses both large and small in creating a Green New Deal. Government can't - won't - do it alone. The green economy is nothing, Jones believes, if it does not lift all people out of poverty while reversing the way human societies are polluting our planet. He articulates a vision that will unfold across this century only if we invent independence from fossil fuels. Those inventions will drive economic development if we are ready to begin an era of new learning opportunity.

Dorothy Lageroos, refocused **Northland College** professor, attorney and author, has joined with **Sally Goerner** and **Robert Dyck** to write *“The New Science of Sustainability.”* Foundations for change, they write, will require a wholly new framework for thinking about science, society and economics that integrates and embraces learning as a foundation for survival. This book will jar your thinking with uneasy theories of integral science and challenging concepts that cross the traditional disciplines that have guided historic and contemporary cultural development. I was particularly taken with their notions about education that resonate with my own thinking and writing (still cooking slowly) that I have called [Education Ecology](#) and [New World Learning](#). In their view, education must change and be based on sound neuroscience, as well as cooperative learning opportunities that are service centered and re-integrate with the life of human communities.

Human communities are local, politics are local, and learning is local. A local temperature of minus 30 may just be a cold day in the global “hello” of an ultimate authentic learning opportunity to come for an over crowded planet.

Seasons Greetings and Good Tidings for all TGIF Readers! Great ideas will take us forward, meeting challenges and creating opportunities.

LIGHTER SIDE:

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

Seasons Greetings

I wanna tell you what kind of luck I've got. If this year I cornered the mistletoe market, they'd postpone Christmas.

Christmas is the time when people put so many bulbs on the outside of their houses, you don't know if they're celebrating the birth of Jesus or General Electric.

Every Christmas pageant throughout the world has a scene showing Joseph leading Mary into Bethlehem on a donkey. Do you realize what would happen if the Republicans asked for equal time?

Question: What was so good about the neurotic doll the girl was given for Christmas? Answer: It was wound up already.

Take care and enjoy a great weekend! **Happy Holiday.**

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 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.