

UninternetingUs.

I am an old online community lemming from 1996 and a new member of several online green / sustainable communities: Greenwala.org, Transition United States, Dezumo.com, CoolTribe.com, and the Founder / Executive Producer of PlanetShifter.com. After messaging, membering and discussing the paths ahead with many of my colleagues, it is rapidly becoming clear that we must stop watching whale videos and get into the water.

Hit the real highway again. Or at least do a better job of combining the mind numbing array of edu-commercials, fancy dancy > about us' and the zillions of ways to "twittle and scream in icon" online. All of this earth-saving, green content is making me green dizzy.

Our daily mediated bread > PDF > PDF > PDF! Got the latest version, man?

You can't take air samples from MySpace,... right?

Maybe we're just workless, depressed and hiding in FaceBookWorld – the eScrapbook smile of a dying planet? But the deeply saddening thing is that we have headphones and cell phones stuck to our heads even at cafes, the old bastion of eye glancers, shared newspapers and new pals.

I think we should launch a "Down Wire Day" and see who freaks out. It's not like we haven't got historical events and social templates on hand to start a revolution. Anyone up for a compost heap or garage sale in the basement?!

- When was the last time you planted a tree in the ground while sitting at your computer?
- Last time you canvassed your neighborhood with your cell phone?
- How about: last time you said "I love you Mom" in person?

To point to a friend and fellow activist in Berkeley, LA Wood, and his web archives on <http://berkeleycitizen.org>, neighborhood work begins in the neighborhood. Video from the protests and environ-studies start in the wilds and face-to-face encounters in our Cities. Only then do we push upload.

Time to get down load.

"If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow."

The Landing Manifesto

03/03/09

I started PlanetShifter.com with developer Cheth Rowe and graphic artist Andrea Fuenzalida over six months ago because we need everybody's ideas and vision to re-build a healthier, sustainable and just world. We need to take risks. I want us to reach past our self-interest and fears to risk and share in new sustainable solutions.

Somebody just asked me if I would have started this project if I had known where the world economy would be on 03/03/09. I told her, "Yes!" We need to come together now!"

PlanetShifter.com is a virtual people resource collective and transparent by design: you are a member and you have works to share and critiques to share and a new product or service to nail. We will strive to be inclusive, to allow all members equal access to the site tools and the data base. As you know, unlike other art upload machines like DeviantArt.com and Sketchloader.com, PlanetShifter.com will never own your paintings or songs – just as to share them for a while!

When you bring an image to the group or discuss a point in a comment thread, you may be adding to the next big green thing. We are a free evaluation or test group for your idea. But if you start and stop at "log-in" we are hopeless lost without your ideas and active vision.

PlanetShifter.com is not designed or intended to be the photo-gossip mill at FaceBook.com or the late night groove pipe on MySpace.com. These places do play a small role in connecting us but do not foster the innovation and change that we need now. It is time to stop playing darts and begin re-tooling the scene.

PlanetShifter.com is an innovation space for a global reckoning. Please don't stop now. Know that we will return the effort you make as if our lives -- and the life of the planet -- depend on it.

Here are statements from new members:

- Creating and sustaining art, the written/spoken word, and music through a means of awareness of the living planet and beautifying the environment and changing lives/minds.
- Think before you trash it. Stop and think first. Pause. Let the action be for the greater good!
- Planting my garden, working to make this world a beautiful place, thru positive clean living, upfull music...
- I want a better world for my children.
- I strive to find ways to support renewable energy and save resources. Those two things are equally important. I grow my own food and buy as local as I find humanly possible.
- I care about the future of humanity, am worried about the way we mismanage the planet and each other, but am hopeful for tomorrow because even though I see all that is bad about us, I also meet and talk with people who get it and who are working and making a difference.

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The Sacred and the Troth (The Sacrifice is the Promise)

*I want to be your sledgehammer, Why don't you call my name
Oh let me be your sledgehammer, This will be my testimony
Show me round your fruit cage, cos I will be your honey bee
Open up your fruit cage, Where the fruit is as sweet as can be*

"Sledgehammer," Peter Gabriel

Certainly there are levels of sacrifice: missing the game and staying home with the kids. Short-term vs. long-term vs. forever.... Self-sacrifice? Saving that senior citizen in the cross walk from a reckless driver and getting walloped in the process. A third sacrifice requires a radical, long-term behavior change that germinates in your house and is fueled by compassion and courage for the Planet as a Living Force. In my gut, sacrifice and sacred and promise are intertwined. From Wikipedia, two paraphrased definitions:

Sacrifice (from a Middle English verb meaning "to make sacred", from Old French, from Latin sacrificium: sacr, "sacred" + facere, "to make") is commonly known as the practice of offering valuables in worship. And a promise (also called troth) is a psychological contract indicating a transaction between two persons whereby the first person undertakes in the future to render some service or gift to the second person or devotes something valuable now and here to his or her use. A promise may also refer to any kind of vow or guarantee.

Vow is such a paradoxical effort. Wedding vows are worth less and less these days, especially in the USA. Guarantees are a bunch of papers that come in the refrigerator box. Just try and return that failed gadget at Circuit City this year.

What is the Green Movement promising you these days?

- Selling pollution credits? Nice. Where does the pollution go when you "trade" the stuff?
- Long-term economic stability? Hedge.
- Toxic free food? But can you afford whole foods?
- Jobs for battered inner city youth?
- More ice up on top of the world?
- More scary movies from the end of the world studios? Saw 7.

Become a spiritual world. Make more promises! Join The Green Crusades?!

Think it's time to sacrifice our personal stakes on personal ownership for a better place for our children: share the land; re-use the plastic sour cream container; re-charge the re-chargeable batteries. A resolution for 2009, Joe? There is no sacrifice when to continue the status quo is world suicide. Are these organizations living up to their promises: Peace Corp., The United Nations; Doctors Without Borders?

Perhaps closer to home is a better place to jump start that "sacred troth magnet" in your closet:

- Donate your car and buy a used bike
- Buy 50% of your clothes from your local recycled clothing charity
- Join in a community food buying network
- Serve on your neighborhood council
- Organize a block party
- Enjoy one meal per week with a senior citizen near you
- Watch TV 90% less. Walk around the block 5 times.
- Grow a garden in your front yard. And on your roof.

The Green World will be built on your promises. Be the honey bee.

The Personal Energy Meter (PEG): Disruptive Green Technology at Hand

UK environmental and sustainability consultancy DIY Kyoto has a very cool new product called Wattson. A combination of energy meter and portable display, Wattson can provide real-time information about household energy consumption, displayed as both a text display of current power demand or accumulated "burn rate" of power in pounds sterling per year, and a "non-verbal" colored LED display indicating overall energy health of the house. DIY Kyoto -- which bills itself as providing products and services that "challenge & enable people to meet the Kyoto Protocol at a personal level" -- is explicit that the goal of Wattson is to make the invisible visible. <http://www.worldchanging.com/archives/004115.html>

PEG is better than Wattson. Far better. She will revolutionize what we mean by: Green; invasion of privacy; and survival of the planet. Take Wattson and miniaturize the concept as a wrist watch. A breakthrough technology creates its own applications, they say!

PEG is solar powered. Wattson feeds off the grid like a toaster.

The Personal Energy Meter is connected and data churned by blue tooth and/or wireless to all energy consuming appliances in your life. Taking the energy use rate of your refrig, while simultaneously allowing you to send data to turn down your office thermostat.

PEG works with the Green Energy Bank and Trust (GEBT), the server farm and mind-meld of the inventor (yours truly) and a crew of Green Niks in NorCal. GEBT connects to the subscriber's computer and graphically shows second-by-second energy usage, up to date appliance ratings and how you (gulp!) compare to your neighbor. PEG monitors your gasoline consumption, your solar roof array angle and the gunk in your gutters. Wattson can't do this stuff...

You have to wear PEG 24/7. You set all of the appliances on your computer and enjoy a web site that "bings and blares " green data analysis screens back at you.

You can talk to PEG: "Turn up the TV, Honey." Done.

GEBT also connects you to a new online barter system (OBS) so you can get other stuff with PEG Credits when you have been a smart energy saver.

It's a watch, a timer, a temperature gauge, a micro-computer; the fashion statement for our times.

Orwellian or Green-Well-Land?

Think PEG.

Localization, Rooftop Gardens and Cross Walks

"About five hundred years in the future, the polar ice caps have melted due to unexplained events, though human action is hinted... The Earth's surface is almost entirely water. The surviving humans have forgotten the past and believe in a modified creation myth in which God created the world as a ball covered with water, but that there is also dry land somewhere out there." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterworld>

One day in the near future you awake to find that the TV doesn't work. And the refrig is warm to the touch. No power. Your iPod is an iDUD. Your neighbors in all of their bedtime glory are complaining down by the street corner, wondering if there is enough gas in the car to bitch it to City Hall. How long will your cell phone go without recharging? Didn't you catch 20-20 last week? The oil is gone.

Go to your roofs, people!

Vision a wind mill gyrating and a garden filled with green on your roof. Some solar panels? Yup. It's not too late depending on whom you listen to, to take the power back from the power profiteers. Localize we say! Localize? This is the mantra of a San Francisco Bay Area group called Bay Localize:

"We are working to build a cooperative, inclusive movement toward regional self-reliance. To help prepare our region for the coming end of cheap oil — and the progressive decline in long-distance imports that will follow — we are developing flexible tools and models that area groups and municipal governments can implement in their own locales to bring the production of food, energy, and essential goods and services closer to home."
<http://www.baylocalize.org/about>

Corrupt and compromised bankers, stock marketeers and mortgage scammers waive their invisible hand to support individual profit taking over the community good. But is Green the new socialism? Is localization the end of capitalism? Kinda. Maybe. Who cares? Let's just call it sustainability.

Can we learn from the past?

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal attempted to give relief to the poor, reform of the financial system, and recovery of the economy during the Great Depression. Fast forward: Is the Bush administration proposing a New Deal? Or a raw deal for the average U.S. citizen? Go talk with your neighbors!

And from the Moon Speech by John F. Kennedy (1962):

"Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it, and the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there. And, therefore, as we set sail we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked."

Localism is a Big Idea Coming Home to Roost

Sacrifice is the norm - volunteering is a way of life (not a quick hit of self-fulfillment).

Wean off of your father's materialism – experiences replace the junk in our garages and closets.

You can live an enlightened life in a localized economy – and you save money and the planet doing it.

Think of the moon or the stars or your zero sum mutual funds but think locally now, like the crosswalk down across the street, cluttered with your phoneless neighbors. Think of world without absolute protection in that little life and death space. Then magnify.

The American Dream: Corrupt File

*And the men who hold high places, Must be the ones to start
To mould a new reality, Closer to the heart*

*The blacksmith and the artist, Reflect it in their art
Forge their creativity, Closer to the heart*

*Philosophers and ploughmen, Each must know his part
To sow a new mentality, Closer to the heart*

*You can be the captain, I will draw the chart
Sailing into destiny, Closer to the heart*

"Closer to the Heart" -RUSH, A Farewell to Kings

The American Dream is fracturing and defragmenting: corporate consolidations, privatization and capricious war making are creating a new rich class and killing citizen soldiers daily. 50% of marriages in America end in divorce. Congress is a ship of fools. Our bridges are falling down.

Yet oil companies are making insane profits while American's lotto scratch and black jack their savings into nightmares, victims of reservations and the greed that backs them.

Traditionally, Americans have sought to realize the American Dream of success, fame and wealth through thrift and hard work. Historian and writer James Truslow Adams coined the phrase "American Dream" in his 1931 book The Epic of America;

"The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement... It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position."

American Musical Chairs begins. Only there are many less available chairs in the circle and most are reserved!

A new reality for Americans and the planet at-large is coming down the pike: food scarcity, resource squabbles, dry water wells, hot gas for sale from your local mafia. The time is coming: a gated, segregated and prohibitive society where a few very mega-rich individuals own the rights to oil, agriculture goods and what is left of the banks as we know them.

Mad Max, Water World, Viva Las Vegas: Apocalypse Now. Ready?

How do we turn this dark dive around?

[The New American Dream – Seven Green Goals](#)

Localization: Growing food and supporting jobs in the local economy first.

Sustainable Profit: Profit making that creates Enrons and the housing crisis need to go. Sustainable profit factors in the actual costs of industry and agriculture, cradle to grave.

Conservation / Recycling First: The land-ill mentality must go. Products must be designed for 100% recycling.

Pedestrian-Scale Neighborhoods and Cities: Unweaving and reconnecting ourselves to our neighborhoods with a high priority on integrated mass transit, walkable shopping opportunities and park space.

Universal Health Care: It's overtime to pull the "profit-only priority plug" out of staying well.

A Peace Corps. Experience for All Undergraduates: A semester abroad working with the world.

Ending War: War is the knife in the back of our pussing American Dream. We must end our hatred, economic-fueled killing in the name of "God and Country."

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The Green Revolution is Being Televised

Dialing-in the Triple Bottom Line Network

Think of sustainability as an old fashioned antennae-driven TV network with many different channels and shows. "Green TV" interconnects and educates us on the Triple Bottom Line - we need to account for the environmental and social impacts of a service or product in addition to its financial performance.

Have you spoken with anyone lately who is connecting safety with the green movement? Many sustainability principles mirror and connect safety and green and include prevention or risk reduction and emergency preparedness. Home and commercial safety / emergency plans are examples of sustainability. Green building is increasingly more common now after natural disasters.

Some long-running Green TV shows include "The Environmental Policy Hour," "Your Environmental Health and Safety," "Stewardship is Fun!" and "Safety in Numbers." What are these programs teaching us? These shows are translating everyday ideas from the old world to a new green world - extending available resources to do more things. Shifting the complex to the simple: like your neighbor's new black plastic compost bin or that new natural lemon-based soap at the coop.

So check out some of the old favorites on Green TV:

The Environment Policy Hour looks at many themes that cross disciplines and government mandates, including subjects like: Protection of the biosphere, sustainable use of natural resources, reduction and safe disposal of waste, efficient use of energy, risk reduction, marketing of safe products and services, and damage compensation. Grab the popcorn.

Safety in Numbers is a game show that starts at 6:30 PM weeknights that educates and empowers citizens. The show actively engages citizens with informative and interactive training on self-reliance and neighborhood organizing skills. In addition to teaching the basic emergency preparedness and response curriculum, Safety in Numbers reaches out to the special needs of the elderly or disabled; residents of apartments, condominiums and co-housing complexes and public or private sector employees.

Stewardship is Fun!

On Saturday mornings in most TV markets, this show challenges the viewer with environmental education: watch to learn how to use products safely; to minimize waste through reuse and recycling; and how to participate in public policy. Sponsored by the EcoCenter.

Your Environmental Health and Safety deals with how humans build and interact with their environment. What's on? Protecting the health and safety of all workers; creating safe workplaces; encouraging employees to report hazards and provide information and safeguards for all workers.

In my view, the fledging sustainability movement via Green TV, the web and sustainable organizations needs to expand and connect with more traditional businesses - more trickle-up from our mom and pop roots. Interconnection between business sectors, products and principles is important because being green needs a wider impact that channel what we know at this time in history. We must practice and forge a deeper and more meaningful set of green channels in our living room lives. Indeed, the proliferation of climate assessment dot coms and toxic waste movies are limited in their impact; back at home, green safety could help make being sustainable a re-run.

Isn't first aid one of the oldest examples of sustainability? Stay tuned.

Speaking Out at the Dinner Table

*Sometimes, I can't help but feeling that I'm
Living a life of illusion
And oh, why can't we let it be
And see through the hole in this wall of confusion
I just can't help but feeling I'm living a life of illusion*

*Pow, right between the eyes
Oh how nature loves her little surprises
Wow, it all seems so logical now
It's just one of her better disguises
And it comes with no warning, nature loves her little surprises
Continual crisis...*

*Hey, don't you know it's a waste of your day
Caught up in endless solutions
That have no meaning
Just another hunch, based upon jumping conclusions
Caught up in endless solutions
Backed up against a wall of confusion...*

A Life of Illusion - Joe Walsh

Intro

How do you view your current (materially-based) status system in contrast to the list of "status" values now emerging from the new green movement?

Traditional Value Status

A trophy wife or husband

A large, expensive house and a vacation home

A high-paying and exclusive job on Wall Street

Expensive luxury cars -- SUVs

An expensive Swiss watch such as a Rolex

Country club membership

Frequent luxury vacations

A degree from a prestigious university

Expensive jewelry and tech gadgets

Green Value Status

Non-contact, spiritual exercise like yoga

Cutting down on energy use

Buying and wearing used clothes

Hybrid cars

Solar panels on the roof

Recycling everything possible

Biking as a primary way to get around

Eating organic foods & composting dinner scraps

Gardening to provide food for the table

What is considered a status symbol will differ between countries and states, based on the states of their economic and technological development, and common status symbols will change over time. Status symbols also indicate the cultural values of a society. For example, in a commercial society, having money or wealth and things that can be bought by wealth, such as cars, houses, or fine clothing, are considered status symbols. In a society that values honor or bravery, a battle scar would be more of a status symbol.

Consider where the notion of status comes from. Max Weber considered status groups. He defined status groups as communities that are based on ideas of proper lifestyles and the honor given to people by others. These value groups only existed because of people elevated and prioritized prestige and dishonor. Also, people in these swarms were only supposed to associate with people of like status, and all other people were seen as inferior. It could be generalized that western status values through the 1960's, and up to 2008, are often defined by the monied class; in the minority, a hierarchical clique. Madison Avenue, perhaps?

In comparison, today green / sustainable communities are seen as value sets built on equalitarian and environmental priorities through collaborative processes and tools to promote a healthy earth and long-term living. "Greenies" tend to focus on environmental sustainability (including localized economic development and natural agriculture practices). Sustainable communities value the triple bottom line incorporating economic, environmental and spiritual practices.

What happens when the two status systems conflict?

Violence. Demonstrations. Uproar at the pumps. Family spats. New political parties. A national fight over a few barrels of oil in the coastal shelf and the Arctic Wildlife Refuge. The battle has already begun. There are many examples: look at the WTO riots in Seattle; People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals paint throwing events and the current anti-war demonstrations. The sustainable values camp is fighting to reverse years of privatized, corporate energy, food and social policies and provide alternatives to the status quo.

The shift away from big banks and oil to solar panels is one-part rejection and one part community fire; self-sacrifice as a bridge to the common good. There is another American/Global revolution underway. Who is in the watch tower?

Conclusion

The sustainability revolution is about re-distributing resources in a global shift to enlightened sharing. Greens are not for restricting individual choice or the end of capitalism, just a bottom-up, holistic evolution away from things to sharing and love and an ecology of accountability. Green status is not what we own as individuals but what we can share and nurture together.

The erupting value schism is an action-morality play. One group wears it; the other group lives it.