

Dear Students, Colleagues, and Friends,

In this newsletter:

- A word from me on the water-energy nexus and how powerful we can each be in affecting it.
- A job announcement
- *Enjoy!*

Happy Dog Days to you and yours!

Most of you reading this reside in the Northern Hemisphere where Orion's dog, Sirius (for whom these days were named), greets us in the pre-dawn to usher in another sultry day filled with clothing damp after a half-block stroll. Air conditioning, I'll admit, is welcome at least on the hottest days. However; most days I find myself considering how I grew up – with an attic fan and window AC unit for Dad's office and my parent's bedroom. It was only used during the most searing of the dog days and always with an accompanying discussion about whether or not we really needed it.

My parents were born circa 1920 and lived through both the Great Depression and Dust Bowl days. Their pragmatism was born of economic and geopolitical strife, environmental catastrophe and surroundings where even educated and able-bodied men and women sometimes went to bed hungry. We had a drawer to recycle rags (which sadly to me, eventually included several dear pairs of blue jeans) and aluminum foil – not to a recycling center, but to reuse at home to save resources because it was the responsible thing to do. Make no mistake. We were not poor by any means. This was just how one lived in the late 50's and 60's – with a strict respect for calamity and how one must conserve today to protect one's future.

Every decade is an odd time to live because our species is so eccentric and always in motion. Our grandparents or great-grandparents were appalled at Elvis's thrusts and parries. Today, university educated women are looking up opportunities to become "sugar babies" as a means to augment income. The Cuyahoga River caught fire in the 60's. Today we're looking at a world's climate changed and continuing to change rapidly due to a combination of natural variations swinging ever wilder because of human actions interfacing with them. In the 50's, newspapers and black and white televisions brought us news at most, three times a day. Today, I reach for my phone and have global news instantly.

I was thinking about this as I came in out of the heat one afternoon last week, thanking Sirius for air conditioning, when I was greeted by a cheerful e-mail from a relative. It included a too long a list of "comedic" graphs, but this caught my attention:

Danish writer Mikael Wulff and cartoon artist Anders Morgenthaler,

"the creative duo known as Wumo," have created a brilliant series of graphs that illustrate some of the basic painful truths of everyday life in the Western world. Their graphs and diagrams are snarky and sarcastic but, for the most part, true. This, coupled with their simple and official-looking design, makes them a delight to look at.

I was not, as the caption asserted, "delighted". What I experienced was a thump in my gut. I kept the illustration to think about further. I **do** care about Greenland and Antarctica shrinking as their ice shelves and bergs sheer off into the ocean. Melting **is** made for ice cream – not countries and continents.

What they say we care about vs. what I actually care about is factually in error. In fact, *it's an error that is slowly growing*. The decades of the 70's and 80's where excess was in the driver's seat, are slowly giving rise to new generations – with new attitudes. What Mr. Wulff and Mr. Morgenthaler might have missed was the changing face of environmentalism.

“While environmentalists of years past were primarily aiming to bring clean air and clean water concerns into the national policymaking calculus, environmentalists today are far more worried about solving global problems like climate change by using local environmental solutions,” reports David Weinberger, Senior Fellow for Energy and Environment at the Roosevelt Institute/Campus Network. When he examined the viewpoints of the newest entrants into the workforce he observed, “. . . a fundamental belief in the potential of market-driven innovations for reducing natural resource consumption and encouraging the development of renewable energy sources. Young progressives have come to understand the power of the market in shaping consumer behavior.”

But don't yet breathe a sigh of relief. While beliefs may be turning toward innovations addressing over consumption of natural resources, millennials' every day “green habits” are lacking according to Lee Ann Head, Vice President of Research at the Shelton Group.

“As noted, their average number of green habits and purchases falls far behind the average for Americans overall: 11.4 vs. 12.6. And yes, the biggest gaps are in the home improvement categories. However, millennials are slackers when it comes to a lot of everyday activities that cost nothing.”

Uff! So where are we really?

- We must speak.
- We must act.
- We must encourage others to speak and act.

It's not the stuff of neuro-surgery is it? And yet, in our multi-tasking, 24-hour news, nearly-always-networking, keeping-up-with- the-Kardashians (Yes I'd say they've replaced “the Jones's”.) we sometimes “forget” to do these simplest of things. And yet, the additive effect of simply changing our household practices can make an enormous difference. Consider these accurate, if not slightly cheeky examples:

- Based on food and beverage industry numbers, 72.8% of adults drink coffee. I'm a coffee drinker. In fact, my husband and I generally make

two pots in the morning. There's usually some left over but . . . what's a little coffee? I'll tell you. Once upon a time there were approximately 451,087 people in Nashville/Davidson County which is where/when I started thinking about this. Since there are over 318 million people in the U.S., it doesn't really matter if we're talking about Nashville or Hoboken. The point is - if half waste 2 cups per week (in the bottom of the pot), and so make 2 cups less daily instead, we save 1,466,032 gallons per year – just in that one city.

- By 2007, the Nashville area was up to 619,626 or so. (Again, please frame this with the bigger picture in mind.) If, in whatever population base we live in, we turn off the water when we brush our teeth . . . and let's just say teeth were brushed only once a day just to be conservative (even though that sounds gross to me), we could save 678,490,470 gallons of water per year – in just our city.
- Eat smaller hamburgers. I'm not saying we should stop eating meat, although many of you have for wonderful reasons. I simply find it turns people off if you start trying to mess with their meals, so let's just think about it this way . . . a ¼ pounder, by many estimates, requires about 100 gallons of water just to raise the cow. If ¾ of Nashvillians eat smaller burgers once a week we could save about 1,208,269,400 gallons a year.

Using low-flow toilets in an area with the same population (or simply placing a filled up gallon of water in the tank, which I like better than bricks) saves over 1.6 billion gallons of water. When I originally put the presentation together from where this came, I added in reducing outdoor watering and washing laundry only when the load is full. The results of all of this – *and the power we have when we work collectively to make change* – is about 4,411,839,252 gallons per year. If you're like me, billions and trillions get a little fuzzy to picture so let me put it to you this way. That's roughly 6,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Annually.

Oh, and the savings to us as consumers . . . over \$11 million. Annually.

Savings like these are yet another reason I still can't figure out why states haven't all developed state water conservation and efficiency policies. But they'll fight implementation of the Clean Water Rule. Go figure.

So, what does all this have to do with air conditioning and people caring about their ice cream melting more than Greenland or Antarctica?

Those of you who have had me as a professor know the importance of solving problems in an integrative fashion. You don't get from here to there by just working on one sustainable

practice alone. It's all about systems. And, in point of fact, it does take approximately 56 billion kilowatts to collect, treat and distribute our water annually. Conversely, the U.S. Geological Survey in 2005 reported about 200 million gallons of water being used *daily* to supply our nation's electricity. So, there's the water-energy nexus for this story.

The bigger message is that people are changing their attitudes over time and doing more in their businesses to be sustainable, but are still ignoring small practices which can add up to big savings. According to the Department of Energy, CO₂ from our air conditioning adds up to 100 million tons annually. If we save water, we save energy. If we save energy, we save water – and we cut down that CO₂.

Let's speak. Let's act. Let's encourage others to speak and act. Let's prove Mr. Wulff and Mr. Morgenthaler wrong. Let's care more about our continents than our ice cream cones.

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And if you're job hunting . . .

The National Wildlife Federation Education Outreach position in Austin is posted. The position will focus on outreach to communities within Texas and other states represented by the NWF South Central office. Focus for this position will revolve around recruitment and implementation of the International Eco-Schools program. The person in this position will report to the Senior Manager of Education, NWF South Central Region. Please see the link below and share with your networks. <https://nwf.applicantpro.com/jobs/254686.html>

<https://www.nwf.org/Eco-Schools-USA/About-Eco-Schools-USA.aspx> - Through school-based action teams of students, administrators, educators and community volunteers, NWF's Eco-Schools USA combines effective "green" management of the school grounds, the facilities and the curriculum; truly providing students with a unique, research and application based learning experience.

Here's to you and our big Earth too,

Margo

Margo Farnsworth
Screendoor Consulting
<http://screendoorconsulting.com/>
[615.478.4889](tel:6154784889)

Give good people good information and they'll do good things.

(If you've just received this single newsletter, it may be because I thought you'd be interested in this particular subject. You may or may not get others. If you want on my list regularly, e-mail me. If you want off my list, e-mail me. Thanks!)