



**"If a man takes no thought about what is distant,
he will find sorrow near at hand."
Confucius**

February 2011

Next **SAGE Meeting**: February 3rd, 7 p.m., at the Fish & Game Hut.

SAGE AGM March 3, 2011

SACPA on [Drilling on the Blood Reserve](#), February 17th at noon (basement of Keg).

Greensense questionnaire results for February 1st by-election. See [greensense.ca](#).

Science losing ground to spin. [Yale project](#) research shows fewer Americans accept the science of climate change than in 2008.

[OWC Landowners Summit](#),

Holding the Reins

Thursday February 10th in Ft. MacLeod, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

DWC Integrated Watershed Management Plan

SAGE has been active on the Integrated Watershed Management Plan through representatives on the Oldman Watershed Council.

The group has met at a series of workshops to develop 33 risk statements with preliminary treatment options.

The goal is to respond to issues identified in the [State of the Watershed Report](#) and address the

'fair' condition as rated for the Oldman River.

A draft report is being developed which will be presented to residents of the watershed at a series of public open houses planned for late February and early March.

A final document titled "Strategic Watershed Assessment and Planning Priority" is expected to be released at the

OWC annual general meeting in June 2011.

Management actions might include protecting headwaters; more efficient use of water; improving the understanding of cumulative effects of human activity; understanding the relationship between groundwater and surface water in the region; and restoring water quality and ecosystem health in degraded river reaches.

Hydraulic Fracturing Oil & Gas Wells on Kainai Land

The Kainai band council through Kainai Resources Inc (KRI) has negotiated oil & gas rights with Bowood Energy and Murphy Oil to exploit almost 300 sections of the reserve.

According to the Friends of Kainaisksaahkoyi, there has

been no environmental study on potential impacts to air, soil and groundwater; no socio/economic study on impact to culture and community as they relate to site access damage and potential revenues; and no consultation or referendum

with band members on environmental costs.

A major concern is the potential damage caused by hydraulic fracturing (cracking the formation to accelerate oil and gas extraction). These cracks have been known to compromise

the barrier between gas and groundwater resulting in severe contamination and possible leaks to surface water and air.

We all share the watershed, the airshed, and the future together. Take voice.

Notice:

The Lethbridge and Region Home and Garden Show is scheduled for March 16-19, 2011.

SAGE is again partnering with the Urban Team of the Oldman Watershed Council and the City of Lethbridge to help with an information booth promoting environmental messages. The displays this year will be on prairie urban gardens and riparian health in the Oldman River valley.

If you are interested in volunteering for a 2-3 hour shift at the booth, please email sage-communications@sage-environment.org and we will be in touch to determine a time that works for you.

Big Rigs are Rolling

As noted in our September newsletter, there is a 'high & wide corridor' planned to transport equipment from off-shore manufacturers through Idaho, Montana and Alberta to the Tar Sands.

U.S. residents have been opposing the corridor for a number of safety and environmental reasons.

This month, Conoco-Phillips was given permission to move four mega-loads of equipment "29 feet wide, 26 feet high, 225 feet long

and weigh 300 tons" according to the corporation.

It remains unclear what the Alberta transportation route will be, the tax-supported changes in infrastructure required, or the Alberta job losses expected as this equipment is moved.

Bill 29 Parks

Though Bill 29, Alberta's Parks Act is on hold after first reading, there is still a concern that the Bill will be hastily re-introduced during the Spring sitting.

Minister Ady has yet to advance the promised public consultation to discuss the many concerns in the Bill, including the elimination of important park classifications, and the broad ministerial discretion that allows for recreational development, privatization of services, and the sale of our parks.

What is not apparent in Bill 29 is a commitment to what we really need ... **more** parks. [Contact](#) the Alberta Government to voice your concerns..

Some Interesting Events & Online Sources:

Cows & Fish Podcasts

<http://www.cowsandfish.org/photos/audio.aspx>

Coalbed Methane Act Bill 26

<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/>

Act on Bill 29 - Parks Act

<http://www.tpr.alberta.ca/parks/default.aspx>

Climate Prosperity (really!) Program

<http://www.climateprosperity.ca/>

Southern Alberta Group for the Environment (SAGE)

A Leading Voice for a Healthy and Environmentally Sustainable Community.

Visit us at: <http://sage-environment.org/>

If you are interesting in getting involved, contact us at:

info@sage-environment.org



The Long Descent (2008) — Greer (Book Review)

[New Society Publishers](#) has an unrivalled catalogue of books on community, justice and sustainability issues that challenge status quo ideologies and provide practical approaches to changing the world one person at a time.

One offering is *The Long Descent* which is presented as 'A User's Guide to the End of the Industrial Age,' focusing mainly on the impacts of the diminishing availability of fossil fuels in the near future. The author provides a clear explanation of Hubbert's Peak for oil and gas, and expands the discussion to include the terms of the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth*: "unlimited growth on a finite planet is a recipe for disaster. As population increases and economic growth unfolds, the world has to provide ever greater supplies of food, water, energy, and raw materials for industry. The Earth, though, only has so much oil, so much coal, so much topsoil, and so on through the sprawling list of resources used by industrial society, and it can only absorb so much pollution before the natural systems that support the global economy begin to break down" (p.4).

Greer provides a reasonable historical perspective of the decline and fall of past civilizations based on Tainter's thesis that civilizations become more complex as

they grow, and begin to collapse when the energy required to sustain this complexity exceeds their ability to provide it. This energy could be as simple as food for early civilizations, and as complex as a one-time inheritance of fossil fuels for our current civilization.

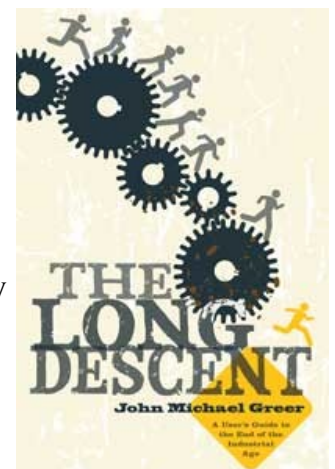
Greer suggests that these energy crises will likely cause a slow and steady contraction in the economy punctuated by periods of stability at lower energy demands. He predicts that if it took 250 years to reach the zenith of complexity and energy use, it will take another 250 to return to a lifestyle typical of periods before the industrial revolution.

Greer argues against a sudden collapse into apocalyptic chaos, though he does elaborate on the 'four horsemen' of catabolic collapse: declining energy availability; economic contraction; collapsing public health; and political turmoil. His advice for facing catabolic collapse is to reduce your dependence on energy use; choosing a 'viable' profession for a deindustrialized society; take charge of your own health; and advance community networking. Greer assigns no role for effective government leadership.

The advice is generally to wean ourselves from our consumption

habits. The difficulty of this book becomes evident when he tries to defend that a reasonable civilization can be created from the detritus of industrial capitalism. One suggestion is (re)learning how to use a slide rule as computers no longer function. Greer suggests a few other remnants from the rag-and-bone shop of 'technological triage' that will take place over the next decades of energy decline, including walking and growing a garden.

The author writes in a conversational style and tries to find a middle way between techno-optimistic progress and catastrophe. It is not completely clear, however, how the human population will be winnowed from 7 billion to levels typical before the industrial revolution; nor how degraded water and agricultural systems can sustain even this population as the full impacts of climate change become manifest. On the other hand, very few authors even attempt to imagine how we might collectively act to make an energy transition that avoids more ghastly possibilities.



Moving Towards Sustainability -

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution mankind has emitted some 500 billion tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere, and we are adding 190 billion tonnes every 20 years (Nature, April 30, 2009). The global living population of humans will soon reach 7 billion, all eager to consume.

On June 17, 2009 I reached the age of 70 years and having lived 25550 days. Each day I consumed worldly resources. I thought it would be of interest to estimate my lifetime footprint in terms of consumption of goods, food, clothing, transportation and housing. I also estimated my physiological contributions to my living space. Relevant highlights of my life follow:

I was born in Oppeln (now Poland) and the family lived in a small community in occupied Poland. In 1945 we escaped to West Germany where we moved between three small towns over a period of 7 years. In 1952 we immigrated to Corner Brook, Newfoundland where I lived for four years before leaving my family home to complete High School in Halifax. The next five years were spent in Guelph attending the Ontario Veterinary College, and for four of these summers I returned for employment to Corner Brook. My first professional employment

A Tale of Consumption

in 1962 was in Ottawa before conducting post graduate studies in London, England from 1964 to 1969. In 1969 we returned to Ottawa for an eight months work period before moving to Lethbridge, Alberta where I still reside. Son Bengt was born in 1972 and daughter Monique in 1975.

During my first five years the family lived in a large spacious home. For the following forty five years I lived in bungalows built in the 1950s, and both were about 1200 sq.ft. with finished basements and standard furnishings. Afterward, I have lived in apartments or bed sitters.

I am physically active, 1.86 m tall and weigh some 100 kg. I was never overweight. I never smoked, and drank alcoholic beverages moderately. I consider myself a minimalist by Western lifestyle standards. The following are estimates of my personal lifetime consumption in metric:

Housing:

2100 Gigajoules to heat my share of housing (one may argue that had I not shared the accommodation with mostly three other family members, then I would still have heated the entire home, but more conservatively).

(Special Feature)

70,000 kWh to power my share of housing. (Same corollary as above).

3000 m³ treated and pumped municipal water.

Transportation:

Bought 8 cars, all four cylinder motors

Drove 1,000, 000 km (2.6 times to the Moon) using 70,000 litres of gasoline which produced 175,000 Kg of CO₂

Spent 500 hours in commercial piston and jet air travel.

Household needs:

Used 2500 toilet paper roles

Bought 1300 newspapers & 400 books.

250 toothpaste tubes (130 ml each)

400 squash balls

1050 shaving blades

Bought five electric lawn mowers, five televisions, three bicycles, two computers, and dish washer for 10 years.

Non alcoholic drinks:

Daily I drink copious amounts of black tea, two cups of coffee and tap water (lately Britta filtered). I never drink pop or bottled water.

(Continued)

Moving Towards Sustainability -

Roasted coffee beans: 130 kg

Dried tea leaves: 120 Kg

Tobacco: Never smoked

Alcoholic drinks:

1500 bottles of wine & 7500 bottles of beer

Clothing items:

150 pairs of shoes of any kind, 250 pairs of pants, 700 items of top wear, 2 suits, 50 jackets and coats.

Food items:

1520 dozens of eggs (at 5 eggs per week), 2500 pounds of butter (at 3/4 of a pound per week).

Dairy (milk, cream): 9000 litres (at 2.5 litres per week).

Cheese: 3600 pounds (at 1 pound per week)

Entire chicken: 1300 (at 1/3 per week)

Sausages (all types): 4500 pounds (at 1.25 pounds per week)

Meat (beef, pork, lamb): 3650 pounds (at 1 pound per week)

Fish: 1000 pounds (at 0.25 pounds per week)

Beans: 400 pounds (at 50 grams per week)

Bread and baking: 6400 pounds (at 3 slices per day)

A Tale of Consumption

Vegetables: 12,800 pounds (at 0.5 pounds per day of potatoes, vegetables and salad).

Garden production:

In the last 30 years I produced 1/5 of my vegetable needs in my garden.

Household waste:

2,500 kg of waste for the land fill. (in the last 25 years organic waste was composted and incorporated into the vegetable garden and glass, metals, paper and cardboard were recycled)

Physiological intake and output:

Inhaled 2,208,000,000 litres of air. Exhaled some 40,000 kg of CO2 (580 kg annually).

Faeces: 6.5 tonnes

Urine: 35,500 litres

We are now 7 billion consuming more or less than the above.

(Special Feature)

Really, Klaus? ... 400 squash balls?!

SAGE actions might include a local event showing the amount of a resource (like trees) an average person consumes in a lifetime - such an event might occur during environment week or the Whoop-up Parade.

If you are interested in the topic of personal consumption that Klaus has so clearly expressed, you might be interested in the video *Human Footprint* from [National Geographic](#).

This is a submission for SAGE's Moving Towards Sustainability initiative. A more detailed account will be made available in a comprehensive report in 2011.