



Green Guru

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Postcards from the Year 2030

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Like our ancestors a century ago, who were debating massive transitions - - from horse to horseless, from blocks of ice to Fridgidaire, from carrier pigeons to telephones - - we too are faced with similar monumental choices today. Imagine our children grown to adults, sending us postcards from the year 2030. What world will their images and words convey?

I foresee two likely possibilities based on the world we have created so far. One postcard depicts 2030 in Dickensian terms. World oil supply disrupted by rebellions and social unrest, as people who benefit little from their nation's resources attack oil pipelines to demand their share, while oil tankers and refineries have become frequent terrorist targets. Unrestrained demand in the U.S., China, and India has created shortages at gas stations as fuel prices double every twenty-four months.

Ford and GM reorganized under bankruptcy protection after decades of producing gas-guzzling vehicles that no one wanted, reduced to selling products made by Chinese companies and adorned with their once-proud American nameplates.

Pollution has grown beyond the ability of government regulators to moderate it, as petroleum fires and spills from aging infrastructure and increased dependence on coal-fired power plants foul air and water. Two million Americans died prematurely from completely preventable air pollution since 2000 and ten million more were hospitalized. The cost for health care tops the \$20 trillion mark, draining money from Social Security, which declared bankruptcy in 2015 and can only pay 30 cents on the dollar in promised benefits.

Of course, that need not be our fate. An alternative vision for 2030 is equally plausible - - American inventors and investors have led the world to vehicles powered by hydrogen, electricity, and biofuels. More than half of world electricity comes from the sun, wind, water, and things that grow. U.S. and foreign automakers are in solid fiscal health, selling high-tech vehicles using fuel cells and drive-by-wire technology, along with home hydrogen fueling appliances, making a growing number of consumers truly energy independent.

Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, no more wars were fought over oil, saving thousands of lives and billions of dollars. As a result, the U.S. economy is strong, the deficit erased, and the global fleet of oil tankers is systematically being converted to move scarce supplies of fresh water around the globe. Although these tankers still routinely leak, because it's only water, no one objects. The sky is blue again and the water is clean. The impacts of climate change rapidly diminishing.

So which postcard will our children send us from 2030? I'm betting on the one with a bright future, because the American entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well. Here's three quick examples. At age 84, Stan

Ovshinsky (ECD Ovonics) is still inventing and commercializing new thin-film solar panels and gee-whiz applications for hydrogen fuel cells in his Michigan factories. In Florida, Bob Moore (Intelligent Global Pooling Systems "iGPS") is manufacturing shipping pallets from endlessly-recyclable plastic instead of one-time use wood (did you know that almost half of our nation's hardwood is consumed to make pallets, most of which end up in landfills?), saving trees, landscapes, and energy in the process. In California, **Dave Konwinski (Onsite Power Systems, Inc.)** is turning agricultural and restaurant waste into energy, reducing pollution and turning a liability into an asset in the bargain.

These three visionaries and their products have many things in common that feed my optimism for the future, but two stand out - - they're creating U.S. jobs and exports. They're also creating the solutions to our climate change challenge, proving that what's good for the environment is very good for the economy.

Which postcard will we get from 2030? It depends only on the scope of our imaginations and entrepreneurial spirit.

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