

From the Founder

....Personal Thoughts

My 89 year old mother, Martha, died April 1st. She lived an incredible life. As a girl in grade school, she traveled in a horse-drawn covered wagon from her home in Nebraska to a new life in Denver, Colorado. When she was in her mid-eighties she flew three times to Eritrea, Africa, where she helped with the work at Seawater Farms Eritrea, our first commercial-scale integrated seawater farm. She rode camels, started a vegetable garden, and fell in love with the people of Eritrea.

During the last weeks of her life, we discussed her adventures in Africa many times. She was concerned with the drought in Eritrea and its toll on the people.

I committed to my mom that there will soon be seawater forests along the desert coasts of the world, including Africa. SeaForests will be places for her grandchildren and great grandchildren – the most recently born in the “great” category having visited her three weeks before her death – to play in. And the SeaForests will be designed and built to make sure the whole world is better because of our and others’ work to meet the challenge of global warming.



If you have not already done so, read the *Time* magazine issued April 3rd with the cover “[Be Worried. Be Very Worried.](#)” I tried to buy 100 copies of that *Time* so we could send it out if you asked, but they were sold out. That is a good sign. We have asked *Time* if we can put the whole articles up here. If you do not have *Time* in Europe, read James Lovelock’s new book *Revenge of Gaia*.

Wherever you are, look at [Lovelock’s](#) and the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development’s](#) comments on his book.

In November 1997, *Time* put out another special issue; Our Precious Planet. That one was not distributed in the United States. It was available in Canada, Europe, and Asia and is now available in its entirety by [clicking here](#). It was handed to me when I got off an airplane in New Delhi, India. I hope the “Be Worried” edition is equally well distributed.

Warnings that we were headed for trouble have been around for 30 years.

Now we have gone beyond warning to we are in trouble.

Global warming is real. It is as real as was predicted to be when in the late 1970s the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado started to discuss it. It is as real as it was in 1990, when *Ambio*, the Swedish environmental magazine, published an article by T.J. Goreau titled “[Balancing Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide.](#)” Particularly note the last few pages where we have highlighted things. Let me quote one here:

“This generation and the next have the final opportunity to reverse the planet’s degradation and save the remains of our natural heritage. It takes only a few years to degrade soil fertility, but generations to build it back. The task of restoring soil biomass and fertility is feasible if we dedicate the needed resources over several decades...Our descendants will not forgive us if we fail to grow our way out of crisis.”



And, it was real when I referenced Goreau in my 1993 *Ambio* article, "[Reversing the Flow](#)," and *Illume* magazine in Japan in 2004, "[Lessons from Africa](#)."

All this is why I write about my mother. She was always interested in future generations. If you come across the country in a covered wagon, and within your lifetime see that same country looking down from a 747, coming home from Africa, almost 90% of a century registers as so quick, and the changes so great!

Let me talk about the 24% of a century we have just lived and look ahead 24 years. In 1982, the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress presented a report, "[Increased Automobile Fuel Efficiency and Synthetic Fuels: Alternatives for Reducing Oil Imports](#)." I was on the Board of OTA at the time. The OTA team was looking forward and issuing warnings, but more important they were suggesting solutions.

The OTA report said if we were to get with it – government and industry together – by the year 2000 we would have cars with a fleet average of 51 miles per gallon in the United States, and we would not have problems because of dependence on foreign oil, etc.

I believe we would not have had the tragedy of September 11, 2001 if we had been wiser in adopting good advice for getting to 2000!

The OTA report was 24 years ago. Now look forward 24 years. Here is [Mobility 2030](#) by a group of the world's automakers assembled by the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development](#) (WBCSD). WBCSD published a book called *Walking the Talk*.

"So, sustainable development is partly about social justice...It will require types of partnership never before witnessed in human history."

On our home page is a story about a gift to The Seawater Foundation of a new Ford Escape Hybrid...a vehicle that is an important step in addressing how we deal with global warming and oil independence. It is the one I drove to visit my mother at her home. She enjoyed the Escape and understood why it is important.

Here is a [speech by Bill Ford](#), Chairman of the Ford Motor Company, delivered in 2000 at a business activity put together by the Greenpeace people. Bill Ford had it right six years ago, but the consumer's of his product were not asking for what would be better for the environment.

Bill Ford is a special guy. We met recently and he told the story of his great grandfather, Henry Ford, saying "If I had asked my customers what they wanted, they would have said 'a faster horse.'" That is what my mother's father (my grandfather) would have said as he brought his family to a new home...faster and stronger. Faster and stronger is really good for horses pulling a wagon. Today, quicker is still good, but it needs to be along with efficient energy use...a purposeful and correct desire!

In our next update here will be the story of biodiesel produced with seawater irrigation of one of our two principal salt-water crops, salicornia. It was mentioned in the 1993 *Ambio* article. You will be able to drive a vehicle that runs on a fuel produced on farms irrigated with seawater. And, unlike Henry Ford's customers...more like Henry Ford himself...you can design your future. Start asking now for vehicles that in the near future will change our world for the better as you appreciate and enjoy them more. That is what my mother asked for on all of our behalf...a better future.

Thanks, and enjoy the website. If you have thoughts, send me an email to chodges@seawaterfoundation.org.

Carl