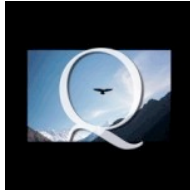


## Age Of Enlightenment, Foolishness, Green and Greed

By Richard Andrews



These aren't exactly the words of Charles Dickens author of A Tale of Two Cities, the exact quote is "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity; it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us; we were all going directly to Heaven, we were all going the other way."

I think these words fairly sum up the social and economic condition of our time. Technology and innovation have made available tools to free us from war, famine and pollution. And yet our political and economic decision making is in dire need of renewal. To anyone who has been paying a little attention our elected representatives are caught up in the caught up, as China and other nations lead in manufacturing and create more job opportunities than we. To simplify; the American two party political system acts like a dysfunctional, enabling and abusive married couple that are staying together for the "sake of the children." However, in this scenario we the citizens (children) are the ones who suffer.

Solynta, for example the Hayward based solar manufacturer came on the scene offering the promise of clean renewable technology. But even with government loans and private capital behind it the firm just closed its doors. Why? Competition? Mismanagement? Under capitalized, Politics? Or all of the above? Some in Congress are now calling for cuts in previous government commitments to growing the clean green energy sector. And as it turns out some of those officials happen to be tied to the oil industry...interesting. In any great cause or industry things are in a constant state of change. And while Wall Street wants certainty, that is something they themselves have not been able to provide. The solar industry is the fastest growing industry in the U. S. and has the potential to transform our economy just as the computer technology has done. Think about the tech space. Remember all the once great brands that are just a footnote in history. Companies like Wang, and DEC have gone the way of whale hunting for oil, which incidentally almost drove whales to the brink of extinction on planet earth. The great thing about the mainstreaming of the green or environmental movement is that offers each one of us an opportunity to impact change.

How deeply entrenched are we in fossil fuels? So deeply that floating oil rigs the size of three football fields navigate the waters off the Gulf of Mexico and drill miles undersea to poke holes in the ocean. What an amazing engineering and technological feat, despite its horrific consequences. So deeply tied to this stone age practice are we that a Canadian company now wants to build the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline from Canada thru the US down to Louisiana. This project is still moving forward despite the arrest of over 1200 people outside the White House protesting it. And yet as these words are being written the U.S. Department of Energy is sponsoring the Solar Decathlon, "an award-winning program that challenges collegiate teams to design, build, and operate solar-powered houses that are cost-effective, energy-efficient, and attractive. The winner of the competition is the team that best blends affordability, consumer appeal, and design excellence with optimal energy production and maximum efficiency." Who said the government can't create jobs?

The bankruptcy of solar maker Solynta is not welcome news... however, the failure of the company can provide the industry with some lessons learned. California still has before it SB 1, the Million Solar Roofs Law which has set a goal to have one million homes install solar photovoltaic systems by 2020. That would give Californians some serious swag, allowing homeowners to power up electric cars from the energy produced from solar rooftops! Goodbye gasoline and high utility bills. The multi faceted going green movement is touching more people because of its capacity to transform the world as we know it.

Today our worldwide population is close to 7 billion people and demand for energy will grow. If we choose to be we can be, the pioneers of this movement... an enlightened informed citizenry here to plant the seeds of a new green renaissance and inspire officials we elect to move this nation in a new direction.