

NHT AGM Talk

Slide 1

Welcome everybody, firstly, we wish to pay our respects and recognition to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, and we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we are standing on here today.

We are both from GeCo - Geeveston community centre

Slide 2

I am Michael Higgins of Geeveston Community Centre, I am a little nervous and you will notice that I may stutter... Tasmania has been my home for 40 years, arriving in the mid 1970's from Northern England I was greeted by a snow capped Mt Wellington/Kunanyi, and the distinctly Australian attitude of 'a fair go for all'. I am grateful for all the opportunities that Tasmania has afforded me. Relatively new to the community sector, my previous work background has been in hospitality and small business.

I am Chris Devenish of Geeveston Community Centre, like Michael, am relatively new to the community sector. Having previously worked as a mechanical engineer and builder I moved to Tasmania with my family in 2013 after living in Western Australia, New Zealand, the USA, France and the United Kingdom.

We have worked together for a couple of years, Michael as the coordinator of Geeveston community centre and myself as secretary then president of the management committee and now as a staff member.

Thanks to NHT and the Zeehan and Rosebery Houses for bringing us all together here in Strahan on the beautiful and wild west coast. Strahan has seen its fair share of turmoil over the years from the convict settlements and displacement of the indigenous people in the 1820's to the Franklin Dam debate of the early 1980's. If it wasn't for the determination of the early environment movement Strahan would be a very different place today.

We'd also like to point out that the community sector, while growing, still represents a small section of the population and those that work at the coalface, work within the communities that are suffering the most are a drop in the ocean and anyone working there, regardless of their motivations needs a big pat on the back.

Slide 3 - video of landing at LAX

We are here to engage with the now, the future and our communities and families, our presentation today will share some of the stories about our recent journey to the west coast of the US, what we experienced and how it can be connected back to Tasmania. The main goal of the trip was to look at regional communities that had experienced a downturn in primary resource extractive industries and how they were or were not rebuilding their economies and communities. Our trip ended back in Pasadena where we attended a skeptics society conference titled - In the Year 2525: Big Science, Big History, and the Far Future of Humanity before finally heading home.

As a bit of background, and where we are coming from - We see a massive need for local community and economic development. A lot of the issues that plague Geeveston revolve around the lack of work. The previous reliance on a single large industry to drive the economy does little to build community resilience. Large industries by their very nature rely on large markets and changes in those global markets have significant and immediate effects. We have seen this in the Huon with horticulture and forestry and see it here with the mine closures. Global markets are beyond our control and we need to look to other ways to build resilient communities. The common theme is to

involve a broader mix of smaller scale enterprises, to focus more on the local markets and to build upon what you already have.

6 key elements that embrace this concept are

Slide 4,5,6,7,8,9

Slide 10

It has been a difficult task working out how best to present we flip-flopped between presenting the journey in a linear fashion to focussing on a couple of key areas and finally decided that the only way to make sense of our journey and any findings was to showcase a few of the towns we visited, look at the nature of society in general along the west coast and to say a bit about the conference in Pasadena..

Arriving in Los Angeles our first thoughts were to get the hell out of here. so we headed north, to begin our 2700 miles and 10 day road trip to Seattle. the first place we settled for a couple of days was Dunsmuir, it just so happened to be the memorial holiday long weekend, Dunsmuir's claim to fame is "Home to the best water on Earth" as it's filtered through the lava layers of Mt Shasta

Slide 11

Talk to slide 11

Slide 12

Dunsmuir

Dunsmuir is similar in a lot of ways to Geeveston. It is a small rural community located in a very scenic part of the world, it has relatively high unemployment of around 14%, low income per capita of \$21,000 usd and 23% of the population at poverty level.

Although the latest figures from our mate Bernie Sanders paint a much grimmer picture. young people between the ages of 17 and 20, if they happen to be white, the unemployment rate is 33 percent," he said. "If they are Hispanic, the unemployment rate is 36 percent. If they are African-American, the real unemployment rate for young people is 51 percent.

Dunsmuir is situated just off the I 5, the main interstate on the west coast which runs north - south for 2223 km from Mexico to Canada with over 20,000 vehicles passing by every day

Dunsmuir's previous fortunes centred around gold mining. By the early 1900s, Dunsmuir was the largest town in Siskiyou County, and for a long time had been the largest California city north of Sacramento, more recently a railway hub was the lifeblood of the town, which has now closed and as a major employer the town's fortunes changed again.

When Michael and I arrived there, it was close to 6 in the evening, and knowing that there was a local council meeting scheduled we headed for the town hall to check it out. The first thing we noticed was the Mayor, Big Dave the mayor (**Slide 13**) and a bunch of young councillors. The meeting highlighted some major differences between our HVC and the city of Dunsmuir.

The public could ask questions at any point in the meeting and were able to comment on agenda items prior to them being discussed by the councillors. This contrasted with our local council where we have a short public question time, after which we all have to remain silent.

The local councils also have the ability to set local taxes, usage, sales, etc. which are discussed and decided upon at the meetings and voted on during the regular elections and administered by a state board of equalization.

I don't think we could get something like this happening in Tas, and not even sure if it's a good thing but it does give local communities a chance to gather funding for things they deem worthwhile and in Dunsmuir they were looking to create a new tax to help fund maintenance on their town water supply infrastructure and on the local library building.

Dunsmuir currently has lots of good restaurants, a craft brewery and cafes, a lot of young people, young entrepreneurs, a restored cinema but one of the main reasons that it is beginning to prosper again is that 2 multi millionaires moved to town, bought up a lot of the town's buildings and are renovating them and making them available for community or business use for very reasonable rental. This has encouraged a lot of activity and attracted numerous start up businesses with one of the outcomes being that Dunsmuir is now known not only for it's water but also for it's can do attitude, fine restaurants and heritage architecture.

The key here is business, community and local government all working together to build community resilience. We encountered a strong sense of civic pride and mutual respect, a sense of optimism and lots of things going on.

(Slide 14 - 15)

Dunsmuir is home to a community resource centre which provides outreach to 18 communities across the country, offering services similar to what many neighbourhood houses provide.

Close by at Mt Shasta we visited 3 NFP organizations that had thrift shops, this was a common theme. with funds going 1, meals on Wheels, 2, Animal and rescue Shelter, 3, Animal Neutering program.

At Mt Shasta we also visited a medical marijuana dispensary which we will talk more about a bit later.

Close to Mt Shasta and Castle Crags, with lots of outdoor activities, hiking trails and snow fields and very expensive mountain holiday homes, Mt Shasta is at the headwaters of the Sacramento River which provides much of California's water and they are currently weighing up the merits of a massive spring water bottling plant being established.

Dunsmuir is also a stop off town on the Pacific Crest Trail, a 4265km hiking trail from Mexico to Canada which Chris walked in 2006.

In 2006, it wasn't looking particularly prosperous, every second building had a for sale sign up and a lot of the shops were boarded up and very quiet.

My wife and I actually thought it was lovely as we wandered the streets, but certainly not bustling with activity, a picturesque retirement spot..

Slide 16 - 17

We attended the Dogwood daze memorial day celebrations, with lots going on, a street parade, market, pie day and a billy cart derby.

So lots of saluting, a good proportion of folks sang along with the national anthem although it was interesting to see quite a few younger people not taking part.

Slide 18

In summing up Dunsmuir, making the most of what you have, the local environment, supporting people that have vision and are motivated to do something for the community. Encouraging people to come and live, invest etc.

Towns that were doing well had natural attractions close by, many towns invested in industrial or TECH hubs, amended zoning and provided incentives as a way to encourage start ups or relocation of businesses.

A Strong theme of selling the benefits of living and working in their communities and offering generous incentives to move there.

Kulin example, At the recent power to the people conference we attended a workshop where the gm of Kulin council in the wheatbelt of WA spoke about the councils purchase of land that it subdivided, and sold to new residents with a substantial incentive or rebate when they built.. Interestingly They benefited from a \$3 million legacy from a local when they died...

Close by at Weaverville something which attracted our attention was their little free library - GeCo thanks to Huon Aq has a project of establishing 5 libraries in townships in the Huon - the aim of the worldwide project is,

Slide 19

To promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide and to build a sense of community as we share skills, creativity and wisdom across generations. There are over 30,000 Little Free Library book exchanges around the world, bringing curbside literacy home and sharing over 1 million books annually.

Weaverville is home to a Saw mill that operates 24 hours, the town's largest employer with 130 people, the hospital is a large employer and is the county seat so Govt jobs also, Govt jobs are sought after as offer benefits and pay above minimum wage.

We visited Some of the local organisations that work in the community sector including the human response network.

With 7 million funding this year, lowest has been 3 million, mixed funding stream, all levels of Govt, Federal, State and local, also private, with programs targeted to federal funded programs.

Many similarities with tasmania, organisations tackle the same problems as here but the extent of those problems varies and as a result of a less equitable welfare system, a lower minimum wage and a much larger population, the workload of the community support network is daunting.

Oakridge

We headed North after Dunsmuir, into Oregon, passing through **Madras** in Jefferson County is an agricultural town that once was the spearmint capital of the world, now growing alfalfa, potatoes, and carrot seed, the town hosts an agricultural research centre., while at the local brew pub we chatted to a local farmer who grew alfalfa for cattle feed, he talked a lot about the changing snow patterns being a huge concern as the town's water is from aquifers that get filled from the snow melt and that they had just 1 more year of good water and unless they had good snows next winter that they would be in trouble. We heard similar stories throughout CA and Oregon and can expect

water shortages to be an ongoing concern for the west coast as the climate changes and rainfall becomes less reliable.

A couple of days later we came to **Oakridge**. Oakridge is entirely within the Willamette national forest, which is the largest national forest in Oregon at over 1.6 million acres. The economic vitality of Oakridge and nearby Westfir has been closely linked to the timber industry. Once touted as “The Heart of the Timber Empire”, increases in automation, a competitive global market, the inability of the Forest Service to guarantee a steady supply of timber and a campaign to save the habitat of the threatened spotted owl forced the closure of many mills.

The population of Oakridge peaked at 4,085 in 1977 but declined by nearly 25% during the following decade. In 1979 a mill in Westfir was destroyed by fire and never reconstructed. The Pope and Talbot Company liquidated its timber inventory and abandoned the Oakridge mill in the mid 1980's.

During the past twenty years the populations of Westfir and Oakridge have increased slightly to around 4000. However, the ratio of jobs to population remains low.

With no major employers the town's economy continued to suffer and in 2006 about 700 residents in Oakridge and the surrounding area, visited a charity food pantry each month to pick up boxes of groceries worth \$100 apiece. Two-thirds of public school students qualified for free or reduced-price lunches, meaning their families are near or below the poverty line. About 260 of the town's 1,200 housing units are single-width trailers.

(Burnie similarities, with high unemployment and we see a similar story throughout tasmania....)

But the reason we went there, what drew us to Oakridge was the changes it is undergoing. Driven by some of the local businesses, and a responsive council and chamber of commerce, is now known as the mountain bike capital of the northwest. Utilising both the existing network of forestry tracks as well as new singletrack trails it currently has over 500km of mountain bike tracks.

One of the reasons that they have managed to do what they have is because they were successful in achieving grant funding, a report published by The Oakridge-Westfir Community Trails Committee and the local Chamber of Commerce highlights some interesting points about the value of trails and recreation infrastructure and facilities.

- 1.) Communities that provide visitors with essential services like food, lodging, gas, bike shops, and other tourism services and amenities.
 - 2.) A variety of established outdoor attractions and recreation opportunities that draw visitors to the area.
 - 3.) Accessible trail systems that offer diverse riding opportunities.
-

(Paraphrase)

In a survey sponsored by the National Association of Home Builders recent home buyers 55 years and older were asked to identify amenities that would seriously influence their decision to purchase a home. According to study results, walking and jogging trails are the most desirable amenity, with roughly half of active adults and older seniors (52%) saying the presence of trails would seriously influence the home-buying decision. This number increases substantially with annual incomes greater than \$75,000 (65%). Outdoor spaces (especially parks) were second on the list at 51%, followed by public transportation at 46%

Other key points their research raised include:

A positive impact on property values and ability to sell - According to study results, walking and jogging trails are the most desirable amenity, with roughly half of active adults and older seniors (52%) saying the presence of trails would seriously influence the home-buying decision. This number increases substantially with annual incomes greater than \$75,000 (65%).

Attracting business - The importance of "quality of life" is increasingly cited as a major factor in corporate and business location decisions.

Proximity to trails and reduction of crime rate

The obvious Health, Fitness and recreation Benefits

Social Benefits - Trail projects help build partnerships among private companies, landowners neighboring municipalities, local government, and advocacy groups.

Educational Benefits

Trails present a unique opportunity for education. People of all ages can learn more about nature, culture or history along trails. Of particular importance, trails provide firsthand experiences that educate citizens about the importance of the natural environment and respect for nature. This education can be accomplished using comprehensive trail guides, signage, public outreach, and informative classes to encourage awareness of the natural, cultural, and historical attributes of the trail.

Slide 21 video of Oakridge - Except from the movie Pedal Driven, another excerpt here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0ar1vC2Ck8>

Slide 22

Oakridge Is a perfect example of what happens when you rely upon a single industry. It has taken 25 years since the end of the timber empires to get to this point and the key factors are having motivated community leaders and access to funding. Oakridge has recently been accredited gold status from the international mountain bike association.

Penguin in North West Tasmania and Derby in the North East are investing in bike track infrastructure.

We see Geeveston as a perfect place to follow the Oakridge model with 100's of km of underutilised forestry roads and tracks,

Timberline

Slide 23

We are looking at a hypothetical here.. a few caveats, assume that someone in authority has vision. The sort of vision that franklin d roosevelt had in 1935 when in the midst of the great depression he and his good mate harry hopkins, already working with the New Deal scheme, devised the **Works Progress Administration**. The WPA. The largest of the new deal programs, the WPA put 8 million people to work on public works projects from 1935 - 1943. The numbers are truly mind boggling they built 9500 schools, 20,000 miles of water mains, 10700 tennis courts, etc. This created a legacy that is still around today. A lot of the 40,000 new buildings are still in use. They were designed and built to last.

Some projects are particularly significant and involved not only architects and labourers , but artists and craftspeople.

Timberline lodge is one outstanding example.

There are similarities between the wpa and Australia's work for the dole program and, as we said, if the government had vision and was willing to fund major infrastructure projects we could achieve similar things today for australia.

A 30 min video of the Timberline story is available to watch if anyone is interested..

Saul Eslake suggests Australia should embark on a \$50b(which is 3 to 3.5% of GDP) infrastructure program, borrowing money while interest rates are low, a \$50b spend would not affect the country's AAA credit rating - \$50b equates to a mere \$2272 per head of population.

These numbers are in the same ballpark as the WPA. In 1935 6.7% of the GDP was allocated and over the life of the project an average of around 3% GDP was spent per year.

Using that \$50bn figure and Relating it back to Tasmania per capita... this equates to just over \$1bn for Tasmania, or \$31,000,000 for the Huon Valley. Imagine what we could do with that.

How about a timberline lodge in the Huon,

Now a short video of Timberline - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k24CNHcs4jA>
Slide 25

Warm Springs Indian Reservation

On the way to Timberline Lodge we visited Warm Springs Indian reservation - home to a bunch of social enterprises, a casino funded by Govt, with profits once paid for going back to community. One guy about 50 said one day his daughter might see some benefit. Also run a timber yard and logging operation and composite mill and a hydro scheme - <http://www.warmsprings.com/>
Home of the Warm Springs, Wasco, and Paiute tribes, the Warm Springs Reservation is inhabited by nearly 4,000 tribal members, most of whom live in or around the town of Warm Springs. Within the community, the Tribal government provides a variety of services, including education, public safety, utilities, health, resource management, business development and recreation. Many services not offered by the Tribal government are provided by locally-owned private businesses. The tribal economy is based primarily on natural resources, including hydropower, forest products and ranching. Tourism and recreation also make important contributions. Under the Corporate Charter, the Tribes have established a number of enterprises that contribute to the economy of the Reservation. Each are owned by the Tribes, but operate independently of the Tribal government. Because the Confederated Tribes is registered as a membership corporation, all tribal members benefit from the economic success of tribal enterprises.

Seattle Portland and progressive societies...

Our road trip continued, on to Portland and then Seattle. Both socially progressive, perhaps not as much so as San Francisco according to research regarding how responsive governments are to the people's needs..

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/08/08/chart-of-the-week-the-most-liberal-and-conservative-big-cities/#more-262185>.

These societies are more tolerant, look at the rate of gay marriage, minimum wage, marijuana, these more progressive societies respond quicker and more effectively to the wants of the community. Instead of trying to stifle change, to tell people what they need to do, they allow people to do whatever you want as long as it fits in with a basic asset of moral guidelines. Guidelines that are not established by referencing a 2000 year old book but that relate more to the **The Golden Rule** which essentially states that: One should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself. It's a concept that no religion misses entirely and can be "found in some form in almost every ethical tradition"

Slide 26

with Chris driving and Michael chilling we visited a few recreational marijuana stores to find out a bit more about what we'd been hearing throughout the trip. That marijuana has become a big part of regional economy. From Garberville, the centre of marijuana growing in Humboldt county, which itself is the centre of California's Marijuana industry to Seattle. Everywhere we went and everywhere we looked there were medicinal and recreational dispensaries. Everyone was chilled. The statistics around marijuana were mind blowing. With Washington state reporting a decrease in violent crime, no increase in youth marijuana use, or traffic fatalities and of course a massive drop in marijuana arrests.

The state is saving millions of dollars in law enforcement. With the taxes levied on the sale of marijuana Washington has gained over \$83,000,000 in income since recreational use was legalised in July 2014. Oregon estimates that it will generate up to \$40,000,000 in taxes in it's first year after legalising recreational marijuana from July 1st 2015. with 40 percent of the tax revenue collected going to schools; 35 percent to state and local police; and 25 percent to drug treatment, prevention and mental health programs.

We even heard that Washington State was building a new power station to cope with increased electricity demand as the majority of marijuana is grown under lights.

In Colorado alone, more than 16,000 jobs have been created within the cannabis industry. And, as the Marijuana Policy Project points out, this number does not include the boost seen in collateral sectors such as real estate, law, accounting, and tourism.

Colorado has a population of 5.4m and \$. was collected in tax revenue in - In Tasmania this would equate to 1200 jobs and \$5m in tax revenue

Slide 27

Marijuana is not just available in it's raw form but as oil to be smoked in vaporisers, drinks, confectionary, bars, cakes, cookies and gummie bears. Hopefully you've all had the chance to try some. The red ones are particularly effective.

Slide 28

I was surprised at the quantities people are using. While 10 mg is enough to blow away the mind of Michael or myself, some medicinal users that we met are eating or smoking many times this amount daily. Perhaps 200mg or more.

We met Sally and her husband Doug in Garberville, Sally's story is an uplifting one of her battle with cancer and subsequent medicinal marijuana use. Sally had been using for a number of years, was happy and healthy and no longer required the usual cancer treatment drugs. Growing up a mormon Sally was initially challenged by her religion's disapproval of using marijuana. Her husband and family are supportive, Doug is a medical doctor in a busy emergency hospital.

This story was repeated whenever we discussed medicinal marijuana use and we found very little opposition to the new laws. Local councils and chambers of commerce that we spoke to were almost universally supportive

CSPC

Over a late dinner in a brew pub on our first night in Seattle we got chatting to one of the staff about our trip and what work we do in the community, **Slide 29** she introduced us to the Centre for Sex Positive Culture, a NFP community organization with a 16,000 plus member base.. I will read some key points off their website a little later

We actually went to an event at the centre the next night - very interesting, the first part of the evening was a general get to know the other people, we had conversations with a number of people of why they were there and what they were looking for. We left soon into the second part of the evening unfortunately we were not allowed to take any pictures - if we had of done you would see a broad cross section of the community represented at their events.

Some key community benefits we saw from that centre include increased awareness of sexual health, increased self esteem and a commitment to honesty, openness and respect

The guy who drove us home worked in the community sector and told us a lovely story of a young woman who overcame body and self esteem issues with the help of the centre

What we did learn is that amongst the younger people polygamy rather than monogamy is a growing trend.

In Washington State 50% of all marriages will be impacted by a cheating spouse being unfaithful and 30% of marriages end in divorce because of the affair. In Australia Extramarital Affairs/Infidelities are common. Most estimates indicate that around 60% of men and 45% of women are willing to report that an affair has occurred sometime in their marriage and the research suggests that 70% of all marriages experience an affair.

The young woman in the image is the barmaid we met, has 2 young children, a loving partner and currently studying for her second degree..

The [Foundation for Sex Positive Culture](#) promotes the many ways sex is beneficial through education, outreach, the arts, advocacy, and research programs that serve the public. It provides social and support group meetings, averages more than 16 workshops per month and offers extensive informational resources and research opportunities. Its [Pacific Northwest Library for Sex Positive Culture](#) has a broad collection of over 10,000 pieces – many rare and unusual – and is one of the largest of its kind.

Some of the workshops and activities include the more serious like, survivors of sexual assault, building of self esteem etc to bondage electro and all sorts of other play.

The core tenets of the Center were to be a non-profit, since the goals of the Center are not primarily financial; to be a community center, because there is more to the culture than just play; and to focus on sex positive culture at large, to have a further reaching impact. They remain the the same today.

As proponents of sex positive culture, the Center believes that the appropriate uses of sex extend beyond reproduction. They include creating personal pleasure, bonding intimate relationships, promoting spiritual growth, and enhancing emotional and physical health. In a sex positive world, In

a sex positive world, everyone has the freedom and resources to pursue a fulfilling and empowering sex life.

Slide 30

before we talk about the conference and play a little video clip we'll hand out your homework.. which you can see up on screen...if you could give this a bit of thought and come up with 3 things in each section then drop the forms in the evaluation boxes dotted around the venue..

Video 2525 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yesyhQkYrQM>

Big Picture in the year 2525....

The conference we went to in Pasadena, was in the Beckman Auditorium at caltech which is a private research university and home of the tv show 'the big bang theory' and with a long history of being at the forefront of technological innovation.

First up was Donald Prothero.. Slide 33

Prothero used the analogy of rivets popping out of an airplane wing to species dying off. The problem isn't catastrophic right away, but when enough rivets pop out, the wing falls off. In other words, when enough species die off, ecosystems collapse.

As well, he said we're headed for a global increase in temperature of four degrees Celsius by the end of the century and that holding down the increase to just two degrees would be an enormous challenge. He described the problem of increasing tropical disease with the spread of insects accompanying warming climate. He said sea level has risen eight inches since 1900 and showed maps projecting how much of coastal areas around the world will be underwater if the melting of glaciers and ice caps continue unabated.

Prothero then moved on to the problem of finite mineral resources. For example, he noted that rare earth elements are available mainly from China. He presented Hubbert's famous bell-shaped curve illustrating production rates of natural resources over time and said that we are already at the end of the oil age since it has become more and more difficult to maintain oil supplies to meet energy demands. He concluded his talk by emphasizing the need for green energy supplies and by pointing out how overpopulation contributes to the catastrophic problems he described.

Ian Morriss (slide 34) spoke next - A Professor of Classics and Professor of History at Stanford University and a Fellow of the Stanford Archaeology Center spoke about his new book *Foragers, Farmers, and Fossil Fuels: How Human Values Evolve*, which focuses on how the source of energy a society relies on influences its cultural evolution that, in turn, impacts upon human values such as what is viewed as just and fair.

This is probably a good point to talk about the Breakthrough Institute that we visited in San Francisco

slide 35

Breakthrough's mission is to accelerate the transition to a future where all the world's inhabitants can enjoy secure, free, prosperous, and fulfilling lives on an ecologically vibrant planet.

The Breakthrough Institute is a pioneering research institute dedicated to changing how people think about energy and the environment. Breakthrough's mission is to accelerate the transition to a

future where all the world's inhabitants can enjoy secure, free, prosperous, and fulfilling lives on an ecologically vibrant planet.

Breakthrough's unique approach is rooted in a positive, optimistic paradigm called ecomodernism

They have produced the ecomodernist manifesto, a 32 page document that outlines their ideas, authored by 18 people from around the world including Barry Brook - a professor of Environmental Sustainability at UTAS.

Well worth a read if you are interested..

Back to the conference...

Next up was, Jared Diamond, (slide 36) Professor of Geography at UCLA, shared insights related to his field experiences in New Guinea. He began by discussing how people judge and misjudge dangers (an issue I emphasize as a consumer health specialist and healthy skepticism advocate). He noted that while hazards of the natural environment, violence, and infectious disease are greater problems in New Guinea than in the U.S., chronic disease hazards are greater here. Also, Americans have more remedies for hazards (such as orthopedic care to set broken bones). However, Americans tend to obsess about or overrate the wrong risks, such as terrorism, plane crashes, and nuclear accidents. Hazards tend to be perceived as more risky when they're unfamiliar and seen as beyond our control.

Next up was social psychologist Carol Tavis, (slide 37) who suggested that in 500 years, there would be a female Pope, but no God, and a white guy would be invited to speak on gender.

Tavis noted that 25 years ago efforts to predict the future of how gender would be talked about didn't predict gay marriage, the transgender movement, the concept of metrosexuals, a black president, and Sarah Palin, along with female leaders in Ireland, Turkey, Germany Nevertheless, Tavis offered a few extrapolations of current trends:

- Technology transformation of human nature (e.g., artificial intelligence, and DNA alteration).
- Gender could be chosen at different times in one's life
- We may be able to change racial characteristics including skin color.

Tavis noted that despite the recent shift in thinking about homosexuality from preference to orientation, no clear biological component of homosexuality has been established. She talked about people having a variety of sexual thoughts and behaviors with indistinct categories of gender. She noted that identity is learned and one's sense of identity is strongest when most under attack. She speculated about a future of many sexual possibilities with a shift back to thinking about sexual preferences rather than orientations.

John Mcwhorter (slide 38) spoke next about the future of language. He predicted that there will be fewer languages in 2525 since globalization kills them and Languages survive only if people learn them in the cradle. He said that after age 13, it is all but impossible to learn a language perfectly. He predicted that one in three humans will speak English, because "it got there first,"

He predicted that languages will get easier, and since speech—not writing—is what language is about, language will be more oral. The title of his talk sums up his message: "World's Languages in 2525: Fewer, Easier, Oraller."

Following this (slide 39) was a discussion between Michael Shermer the head of the skeptics society and Richard Dawkins. We might have fallen asleep for a while at this point... But the discussion revolved around evolution and morality

Next up Esther Dyson (slide 40) talked about how she is investing in and nurturing start-ups, with a recent focus on health care, human capital and aerospace. she is fascinated by new business models, new technologies and new markets. From October 2008 to March of 2009, she lived in Star City outside Moscow, Russia, training as a backup cosmonaut. Apart from this brief sabbatical, she is an active board member for a variety of startups.

Her latest project is the way to Wellville. **slide 41**

How do you get to Wellville? There are many roads and help from visionaries who've made great strides creating places where people enjoy healthier lives. Yet the Way to Wellville remains mostly unexplored.

That's why HICcup is sponsoring The Way to Wellville, a national challenge among five communities over five years to make significant, visible and lasting improvement in five measures of health and economic vitality. In the end, we'll map new paths for entire communities to make changes that result in healthier people and places.

Communities were required to submit a completed application in May 2014 to be considered for The Way to Wellville challenge. After reviewing 42 applications from 26 states, HICcup selected the [Wellville Five communities](#) in August 2014.

HICcup is a nonprofit founded by angel investor Esther Dyson to encourage a rethinking of how we produce health. 'Working together in Wellville, we will show the world how collective investment and action can return healthy dividends for communities – and their investors'.

Burlington slide 42

To close - we would have loved to have gone to Burlington in Vermont but it's on the other side of the country. They have made great strides in broad scale community and economic development. Utilising the six elements we mentioned earlier Burlington has been transformed and is now --- read off slide.

Closing comments, questions, a bit of discussion around the establishment of a Community and Economic Development Organisation similar to the one formed in Burlington in 1983

Bernie Sanders, the former mayor of Burlington is now running for president and could quite probably have the most impact on localised community development if he gets elected. We would like to close with a short video of our current hero...

Close with Bernie video -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtBVuye4fZQ>