

Washington AC :

Profiting from the By-Products of the Democratic Process

The architects of our government understood well the democratic process and its seemingly detrimental by-products. What, after all, is the capital rotunda and dome but one huge thermal expansion chamber to accommodate the superheated gases emanating from the House and Senate Chambers. Without such a system the Capitol would doubtless have exploded generations ago. The President, on the other hand, must make major addresses outside in the Rose Garden because the White House lacks such a system. Evidently, the office of President was envisioned somewhat differently in those early days. Many Americans find Washington's wasted hot air objectionable and want to be rid of our current political practices.

What we need today though, is not to change our form of government (indeed we should appreciate it all the more), but merely update it to take advantage of modern technology and make it more responsive to the concerns of the public. Electric co-generation seems to me to be the ideal means to accomplish those ends.

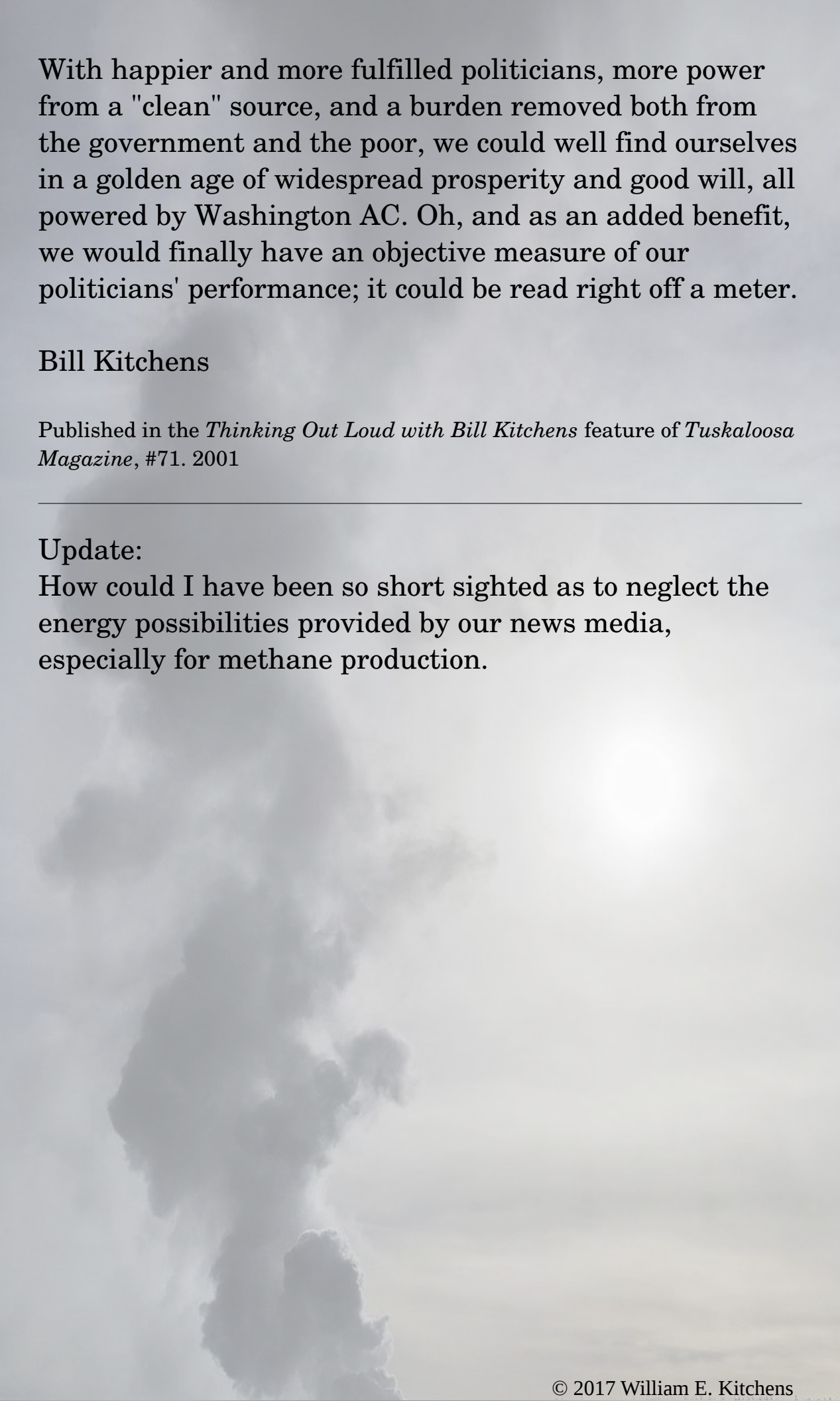
Batteries of high efficiency wind turbine generators could be installed at strategic locations in the Capitol, utilizing an energy source heretofore wasted, to generate immense quantities of “green” electricity. The Capitol could be tied into the regional power grid, and sessions scheduled to coincide with peak demand periods to maximize efficiency.

This undoubtedly will seem a radical and expensive plan to some people, but let us examine the potential benefits to be derived from electric co-generation from the Capitol - call it the *Washington AC Plan*, if you will.

This is an eminently "green" proposal, to help meet our insatiable demand for energy utilizing a by-product of an existing process; and that a relatively clean process (clean, that is, speaking of contributions of particulate matter to the atmosphere). It could also be self funding, quickly recapturing the costs incurred and, therefore, not incurring the wrath of budget cutters. Excess profits could be applied to the national debt, or to shore up social security.

Perhaps of equal importance are the political and social benefits to be derived from Washington AC. For instance: a portion of the power generated by congress could be dedicated for subsidies to low income housing projects. Under such a plan not only would the poor benefit materially, but members of Congress would benefit inestimably in self-esteem. Bear in mind how our Representatives and Senators suffer from frustration and disappointment. With much fanfare they continually pass legislation to solve our national problems and yet, as the legislation multiplies so, seemingly, do the problems.

Imagine now a Representative, or Senator, at the podium exhorting his colleagues in favor of tough anti-crime legislation like bans on rifles with bayonet sockets to stem the tide of drive-by bayoneting. His gaze rises to the ceiling and the wind turbines whirling furiously, churning out power for the needy, and he realizes that his efforts at last are bearing fruit, his rhetoric is actually helping the people of America!



With happier and more fulfilled politicians, more power from a "clean" source, and a burden removed both from the government and the poor, we could well find ourselves in a golden age of widespread prosperity and good will, all powered by Washington AC. Oh, and as an added benefit, we would finally have an objective measure of our politicians' performance; it could be read right off a meter.

Bill Kitchens

Published in the *Thinking Out Loud with Bill Kitchens* feature of *Tuskaloosa Magazine*, #71. 2001

Update:

How could I have been so short sighted as to neglect the energy possibilities provided by our news media, especially for methane production.