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# Star in a Bottle

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We solar advocates have failed to inform the public and its widely read magazine the *New Yorker* of our success and the promise of solar energy. How else could the long article about far-fetched improbable attempts to harness fusion energy appear? The March 3, 2014 article "Star in a Bottle" explains how success with their ITER would save the planet from catastrophe.

Don't they know we solar people already did that! How can they be unaware of our latest triumph, mass produced inexpensive photovoltaic panels at less than \$.70/watt? We can share the sun we have, we don't need new ones as the *New Yorker* recommended owned by the power companies. Were readers hand-lifting water all day from a canal, they would appreciate what we have done, for a small 100 watt photovoltaic panel and pump would replace this duty. Unfortunately our public is not grateful like the tired peasant. They don't even notice electric lights left on all day at the bank and medical center. They don't notice how few use clotheslines or that the new shopping center has no skylights and few windows. Familiar uses of the sun are disregarded as leaders blinded by money legislate expensive subsidies for solar power plants and wind generators. Research and "modern" dreams probably will not succeed with the *New Yorker's* fusion power but they certainly have caused us to forget traditional uses of the sun. Fifty years ago the same *New Yorker* would have published Lewis Mumford's explanation and warning about all of this.

Ignorance has delayed an inevitable change in financial hierarchies. Modern life has depended on fossil fuels, engines, power plants, immense transmission lines and equipment to use fuel and power. Subsidies, tax credits and other legislation have been used in a wasteful but so far enduring attempt to thwart fundamental change in energy use. The delight at the prospect, however remote, of "Star in a Bottle" fusion reveals the *New Yorker's* hunger to maintain the hierarchies of our fossil fuel society. The present contortions of solar energy to have them impersonate fossil fuels has not worked. For our society, pursuing fusion power is insane. Why has this project gone so far as to anticipate deceiving us citizens with a

special new currency, the ITER unit of account many multibillionaires could already pay for this. It is a tip off that the Fusioners compare their ITER fusion "Star in a Bottle" project to the Egyptian pyramids. Building those useless gravestones required one hundred thousand men working for 20 years. We don't need more such wasteful monuments to authority.

We have had great successes in our solar efforts but these new and old ways do not please the status quo. Our elite unreasonably demands that solar energy further enrich the wealthy. Must our economy collapse and be rebuilt? Perhaps, but how painful and how unnecessary.

Society would be upset, yet rejuvenated and enriched, by our abandoning expensive awkward utilities, even those with smart grids. We should go off grid with household pv systems and traditional solar.

A few huge companies would be replaced by numerous competing small companies. No utility commission would agonize, as they guarantee profits for power companies. Conservation would be as natural and beneficial to an off grid public as it is destructive to the profits of today's vast energy companies. If we suffer from a gap between the few rich and the many poor, going off grid could alleviate this, while "Stars in a Bottle" fusion reactors would exaggerate it. Our failure to reveal the promise of inexpensive solar water heaters, day lighting, passive heating and cooling, extensive use of photovoltaics for intermittent pumping, cooling and refrigeration, is because this is a threat to the status quo. By means of creating a false tax supported solar industry we have made fools of ourselves in impersonating fossil fuels while scorning nature and good design.

Danny Kennedy, in his book *Rooftop Revolution: How Solar Power Can Save Our Economy-and Our Planet-from Dirty Energy*, correctly says about inexpensive photovoltaic panels "Better than fire, better than the wheel." This is the mass produced, silent, smokeless, motionless, odorless, self-cooling, virtually ageless, aluminum framed, glass faced, silicon crystal panel. We should hang one in every art museum of the world. Art and science are one. Man is born to be free, to succeed, for even when temporarily enslaved, he is often set to work on tasks which will later set him free.