

Optimism, invention, science and fiddles

"The Wright brothers flew right through the smoke screen of impossibility." – Charles Kettering

As January sunshine ushers in longer days, the prospect of the New Year brings optimism! And more than any other thing, optimism depends on openness.

In his article "Solutions Thinking and Climate Change," Optimist Daily Editor-in-Chief Jurriaan Kamp addresses the challenge of facing the urgent reports about climate change: "We need open minds. Disaster news tends to make people afraid about the future. Fear closes minds. One thing we know is that humanity is the greatest problem-solving machine



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the ever existed and we have the responsibility to keep dreaming the impossible dream because the people who came before us were the ones who changed our lives."

Invention depends on openness, openness to see a problem from a new angle, openness that invites us to think across boundaries, openness to

opportunity. Inventors look past what they think they know and refuse to cling to fixed perceptions and ideas.

Rufus Porter (1792-1884) was an American dance master, artist, inventor and founder of Scientific American magazine. When he was not perfecting a scientific method to paint his murals more efficiently or teaching his craft to other artists, he was inventing all sorts of things – turbine water wheels, windmills, rotary engines. He built a camera obscura, a washing machine, a fire-alarm, a rope-making machine, railway signals, a distance measuring appliance, a

WHITNEY | PAGE A5



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Carleen Hutchins poses for a photograph at her home in Wolfeboro in 1997.