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Subject: science

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Jeffrey: thanks for another amazing dinner. I hope to see you sometime when we can actually string two sentences together.

I'm also sick to sending money to institutions to see them fail to follow through in an efficient manner (although so far the Molecular Engineering program at UC seems to be brilliantly executed: Zimmer and his team, including the new Provost who is a good friend and was head of Argonne are exceptional....for now). Have any ideas for setting up something that could be truly effective long-term? One of my problems (among many) is that I'm ok at setting things up, but terrible at follow-up and administration. For example, Clean Energy Trust seems to be doing great, and we have two younger directors who have taken the lead, but I just have no patience for administrative details, and I know long term I inevitably rely on others to maintain the vision and provide direction and oversight.

Let me know if you have any thoughts about this.....

In addition to the ones you know such as Tesla and Solar City which are now public, and SpaceX, Deep Mind and Uber, where non-insider investments are not being sought as far as I know, here are some of the companies that we have invested in recently, all of which will be raising at least some additional capital before IPO or sale (god willing), although I cannot speak to whatever the valuations will be at the time. My cousin Tom really doesn't like venture and wants to control his investments. I don't mind others controlling, as long as we are following really smart people into deals, especially when we can invest not through expensive funds but as co-investors: that has been working for us so far.....
www.ploom.com this vaporizer company is owned 15% by us, 25% by Japan Tobacco International. Really interesting technology, huge rising market. They will be raising another, hopefully final round soon.

www.proterra.com the only viable electric bus company (for now): it's compelling, but dealing with governments is.....well, you know.....Maybe looking for a couple million more in this round, within the next month, and there may well be another although I hope it's at an increased valuation

www.aquion.com an amazing battery technology: low energy density, low cost, recyclable, non-toxic, non-volatile. But an area that everyone is trying to break open. We are betting that this company is a survivor. Another round coming early 2015.

More to come: personally, I love this shit: bet on technologies that HAVE to change the world. It feels good, especially when they actually make money!

What we really need to get a better handle on are long managers and hedge funds: I have little interest in this, but we need to get better performance: my son in law will be overseeing our efforts in this area (I hope), although his inclination is to index everything and look for alpha in directs. I have to believe that some people can earn their fees in the market.....you think?

Talk soon, thanks again. nick