

COMMUNITY CURRENCY MAGAZINE



*Students at New
York's School of
Visual Arts Have
Created Some
Amazing Local
Currency!*

MONEYART



Fine moneyart by
Stephen Barnwell

WWW.MONEYART.BIZ

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On The Cover

Pictured on the cover is Alphabet City local currency by Gene Lu. The talented students in Jason Santa Maria's Communicating Design Class have created all new local currency art for the NYC area. Images and text on these creations appears throughout this issue.

Thanks to the School of Visual Arts, 209 East 23 Street, New York, New York, 10010-3994

http://interactiondesign.sva.edu/blog/entry/students_design_neighborhood_currencies/

NEW LOCAL CURRENCY PROJECTS & OTHER EFFORTS

LEHIGH VALLEY, PENNSYLVANIA DISCUSSING CURRENCY

Exploring the use of Ithaca Hours as their local currency model there is now an effort is under way to create an alternative currency in the Lehigh Valley area.

Source: <http://articles.mcall.com/>

SANTA CRUZ CURRENCY

Perhaps...please see page 38.

WELCOME TO THE GREENSBORO CURRENCY PROJECT!

A new local currency been a topic of discussion since last summer and perhaps now with the slowing economy in North Carolina it is time for a complementary currency in the Greensboro, NC area. The group has a brand-spanking-new web site and a Facebook page. Believing as we do, that local currency, "... helps to build community which should be the foundation of a healthy economy" the Greensboro area could now be on the way to a more prosperous future.

<http://www.gsocurrencyproject.org/>

<http://zh-cn.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=133739806927&topic=12066>

KILKENNY TO LAUNCH LOCAL CURRENCY

Kilkenny, a small medieval city in south-eastern Ireland, is hosting a competition to decide on the design for its putative currency, "the Cat". Firm favourites to appear on the new notes will be former players and coaches of Kilkenny's hurling teams, also known as The Cats.

As an incentive to use the currency, Kilkenny Cats can be bought for 95c but will buy €1 worth of goods in the city's shops. This amounts to a 5% discount in local products. Brian Dillon of Future Proof Kilkenny, the community action group behind the plan, says an electronic version of the currency involving chip-and-pin cards is also being considered.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enterprise-jobs/local-currencies-making-comeback-global-recession/article-187639>

Maia Maia: An Emission Reduction Currency System

Here is a brief overview of Emissions Reduction Currency Systems and The Maia Maia Project from their web site. <http://www.maia.maia.org/>

THE MAIA MAIA PROJECT IS AN INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE TO CREATE LOCAL 'MONEY' BASED ON REDUCING OUR GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Emission Reduction Currency Systems (ERCS) are community driven schemes that create 'money' that is recognised in the local economy and is based on our reductions of greenhouse gas emissions. It is the aim of the Maia Maia Project to promote the uptake of these schemes in Western Australia and elsewhere.

In these schemes, effort taken as a community to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions is used to back a local currency called Booyas. Booya is a word used by the West Australian Nyungar people for rock trading tokens used historically as a form of currency. This local currency can be traded in the community in a way that attracts economic resources back to our schools and associated sustainability projects. Groups operating in different geographical regions may wish to select a different name for their money.

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

Money is simply a means by which people trade with one another. All that is required is that both parties involved agree to use something as a unit of exchange. There have historically been many kinds of money systems, often based on hard to acquire substances such as gold. National currencies today are based on highly complex and abstract formulas influenced by banks, markets, and governments. Local community currencies based on labour or barter are common in Australia and elsewhere. Airlines frequent flyer points are another example. Alternative money systems are often limited because money is not convertible between systems. Historically during economic hard times alternative money systems tend to proliferate because money from other sources is in short supply.

ARE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTIONS REALLY VALUABLE?

Greenhouse gas reductions and sequestration have unique and unprecedented qualities that make them the a perfect basis for money.

- They are a physical, measureable (easily in most instances) quantity that can serve as a basis for currency conversion.
- They have a recognised value in society. Whether they represent the slowing of global warming, averting ocean acidification, increasing energy efficiency and independence, or a more healthy and sustainable lifestyle - most people will agree that reducing greenhouse has emissions is the right thing to do. Any disagreement is over the degree not the fact. At minimum reducing emissions are likely to help households and businesses save on costs. Therefore reducing greenhouse gas emissions have a very real economic value, but one that is currently not socially recognised.
- Most importantly, greenhouse gas emission reductions effect everyone on the planet more or less equally. Reducing your greenhouse gas emissions can be recognised as an act of kindness towards every living creature on the planet. As such, doing so is an expression of good will. Good will is, we contend, the most important of all economic resources. Trust is ultimately what money is based on.

For more information please visit their web site or blog:

<http://themaiaimaiaproject.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.maiaimaia.org/>

Kiwah Community Currency

Helping to reach ambitious climate goals...

Kiwah is a new currency that is specially designed to stimulate our communities to lower our CO₂-emissions. Kiwah can be used by a wide variety of communities working on transition, climate and poverty projects. The Kiwah is a concrete instrument that helps us to build our communities to achieve different societal goals, and bring project income.

KIWAH

We offer you Kiwah:

Our times have many challenges that need urgent solutions. We have the challenge to reduce our CO₂ emissions with 80% in a short period of time. We have to develop a slim economy that is able to overcome poverty and feed a growing population. To accomplish this immense task, we need to go through an intensive transformation. Our gift will be part of the solution.

Kiwah is a new currency that is specially designed to stimulate our communities to lower our CO₂-emissions. Kiwah can be used by a wide variety of communities working on transition, climate and poverty projects. The Kiwah is a concrete instrument that helps us to build our communities to achieve different societal goals, and bring project income.

Kiwah is designed by Qoin and is launched on December 15th in a TV show at the Klimaforum during the COP 15 in Copenhagen. It will be further developed in close collaboration with the Climate Solutions Meshworks, YourClimate.tv, and many others. All communities over the world that focus on sustainable development are invited to use the Kiwah.





The American Open Currency Standard

OpenCurrency.com



More info:

Ready for Action: Kiwah is set up in close cooperation with the Climate Solutions Meshworks

<http://2020.gaiaspace.org/global/pg/groups/7159/kiwah-community-currency/>

and

YourClimate.tv.

<http://www.yourclimate.tv>

Do you want to set up your own Kiwah community, mail us at info@kiwah.org

What do we need to start?

Kiwah has been launched during the COP 15. To develop Kiwah we need your help.

We need:

- Enthusiastic people to help us develop;
- Communities that launch Kiwah;
- Of course we need money (oddly enough), to build the core-organization, our web presence, adapt the transaction software, develop the start package, get the communities going and solve some legal issues;
- But above all: we ask a gift from everybody owning renewable energy. We need sun, wind, water and biomass as backing; please donate some of the Kilowatt-hours you generate

For more info see: <http://www.qoin.com/en/>

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THE NEW MONEY



Students in Jason
Santa Maria's
Communicating
Design class were
assigned the task of
designing their own
local currency.

This currency is Alphabet City by Gene Lu

INSPIRED BY ITHACA HOURS AND BERKSHARES, STUDENTS PULLED A NEIGHBORHOOD OUT OF A HAT, AND WERE ASKED TO RESEARCH THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD TO DETERMINE WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD BE REPRESENTED ON ITS CURRENCY.

THESE ARE THEIR AMAZING DESIGNS.



Central Park by Angela Huang

THE NEW MFA IN INTERACTION DESIGN IS AN INVENTIVE TWO-YEAR PROGRAM THAT REQUIRES STUDENTS TO INTIMATELY UNDERSTAND HOW DESIGN CAN AFFECT HUMAN BEHAVIOR, AND TO THINK MORE HOLISTICALLY ABOUT THE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THEY'RE CREATING. THE PROGRAM EXPLORES THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF INTERACTION DESIGN IN SHAPING EVERYDAY LIFE, AND INTENDS TO INCREASE THE RELEVANCY OF DESIGN TO BUSINESS AND SOCIETY SO DESIGNERS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Financial District by Michael Katayama



”The Financial District is known for its day traders and office workers. But, I wanted to focus on the people who make the neighborhood their home. There is an increasing number of young couples buying their first homes and starting families. For the design, I took photos of the neighborhood and found some interesting patterns and landmarks. I tried to find a balance between commerce and family life by using a muted natural color palette and choice of type. The geometric patterns represent the energy of the neighborhood.” -Michael Katayama

“My local currency is for the Upper East Side, which is home to more museums than any other neighborhood in New York City. The currency’s name is the “Mula,” which is an acronym for, “Museums: our Local Asset.” The currency comes in denominations of five, ten and twenty Mula, and each museum would put its art on a set of the three denominations, yielding upwards of thirty different designs. The design of the Mula is based on the golden section, and the colors used are the three primary and three secondary colors. The three typefaces on the Mula were all created by Hofer Frere-Jones, a New York City firm. “ -Stephanie Aaron

Upper East Side by Stephanie Aaron



“This local currency is designed for midtown Manhattan. The back of the notes features the map of midtown Manhattan while the front has one famous building in that part of Midtown on it. By putting all notes together the whole map of Manhattan is shown. Each of the banknotes has its own color and is issued in \$100 (Empire State Building), \$50 (Grand Central Station), \$20 (New York Public Library), \$10 (Museum of Modern Art), \$5 (St. Patricks Cathedral).” -Kristin Gräfe

Midtown by Kristin Gräfe





Little Italy by Russ Maschmeyer

“Little Italy has shrunk over the past 50 years from a rich, wide area of Italian-American heritage and family life to a three block row of tourist-trap restaurants. So my goal in designing a local currency for the all-but-gone neighborhood was to establish a link between using the currency and reversing the trend of encroachment from the surrounding neighborhoods. To create that link I not only designed bills that reflect periods in Italian design and typography, but also turned the bills themselves into a real map of Little Italy, which grows in size as the denomination grows with it. When visitors spend the higher denominations within the community, its directly suggested that they’re acting to tangibly re-grow the boundaries of the neighborhood to the size suggested on the denomination. It’s an economic and cultural battle cry of sorts.” -Russ Maschmeyer



A Local Currency Pilgrimage to Wörgl

From Rob Hopkins

Co-Founder Transitions Network

<http://transitionculture.org/>

Well not quite, but en route to a gathering of Ashoka Fellows in Austria where I'll be for the next couple of days, I by chance found myself in the Austrian town of Wörgl, famed for its alternative currency experiment in the 1930s... The Wörgl was introduced to the town in 1932, at the height of the Depression, when a third of the town was without work. It is an amazing story.

The town's then Mayor, the wonderfully named Michael Unterguggenberger, was taken with the idea that the national currency promoted hoarding and disincentivised spending, and proposed instead what he called "Certified Compensation Bills" (not a name to trip off the tongue I grant you). The notes were issued by the Council, who agreed to accept them as currency. The idea of the Wörgl was that it was money that went off, it lost value over time, a process known as 'demurrage'. The notes needed to be stamped each month, or else they depreciated by a small amount, which incentivised its rapid turnover (a feature of the Stroud Pound). The back of the notes contained the following explanation;

"To all whom it may concern! Sluggishly circulating money has provoked an unprecedented trade depression and plunged millions into utter misery. Economically considered, the destruction of the world has started. It is time, through determined and intelligent action, to endeavour to arrest the downward plunge of the trade machine and thereby to save mankind from fratricidal wars, chaos, and dissolution. Human beings live by exchanging their services. Sluggish circulation has largely stopped this exchange and thrown millions of willing workers out of employment. We must therefore revive this exchange of services and by its means bring the unemployed back to the ranks of the producers. Such is the object of the labour certificate issued by the market town of Wörgl : it softens sufferings dread; it offers work and bread."

The scheme led to a time of extraordinary success for the local economy. Bridges were built, houses, a reservoir, new roads and other infrastructure. Six neighbouring villages followed suit, and before long, over 200 towns were also considering the scheme. A fascinating eye witness account of the scheme's success comes from Claude Bourdet, a master engineer from the Zürich Polytechnic who visited the town and described it thus;

I visited Wörgl in August 1933, exactly one year after the launch of the experiment. One has to acknowledge that the result borders on the miraculous. The roads, notorious for their dreadful state, match now the Italian Autostrade. The Mayor's office complex has been beautifully restored as a charming chalet with blossoming gladioli. A new concrete bridge carries the proud plaque: "Built with Free Money in the year 1933." Everywhere one sees new streetlights, as well as one street named after Silvio Gesell. The workers at the many building sites are all zealous supporters of the Free Money system.

I was in the stores: the Bills are being accepted everywhere alongside with the official money. Prices have not gone up. Some people maintained that the system being experimented in Wörgl prevents the formation of equity, acting as a hidden new way of exploiting the taxpayer. There seems to be a little error in that view. Never before one saw taxpayers not protesting at the top of their voices when parting with their money. In Wörgl no one was protesting. On the contrary, taxes are paid in advance; people are enthusiastic about the experiment and complain bitterly at the National Bank's opposing the issuing of new notes.

It is impossible to dub it only a "new form of tax" for the general improvement of Wörgl. One cannot but agree with the Mayor that the new money performs its function far better than the old one. I leave it to the experts to establish if there is inflation despite the 100% cover. Incidentally price increases, the first sign of inflation, do not occur. As far as saving is concerned one can say that the new money favors saving properly so-called rather than hoarding money. As money lost value by keeping it at home, one could avoid the depreciation by depositing in the savings bank.

Wörgl has become a kind of pilgrim shrine for macro-economists from a variety of countries. One can recognize them right away by their learned expressions when discussing the beautifully maintained streets of Wörgl while sitting at restaurant tables. Wörgl's population, proud of their fame, welcomes them warmly."

Then, after a few years, the Central Banks, appalled

by the scheme's success, took a court case which reasserted their right to be the only institution able to issue money. The notes became illegal, and within a short period of time, the town returned to the 30% unemployment rates it had seen just a few years previously. I would have liked to be able to have more of a nose around, as it was my experience of Wörgl was a rather fine piece of pizza for breakfast and then getting back on another train again, but I feel honoured to have set foot in this town which, for all too short a period of time, took control of its future and told a story that still inspires now, more than 70 years later.

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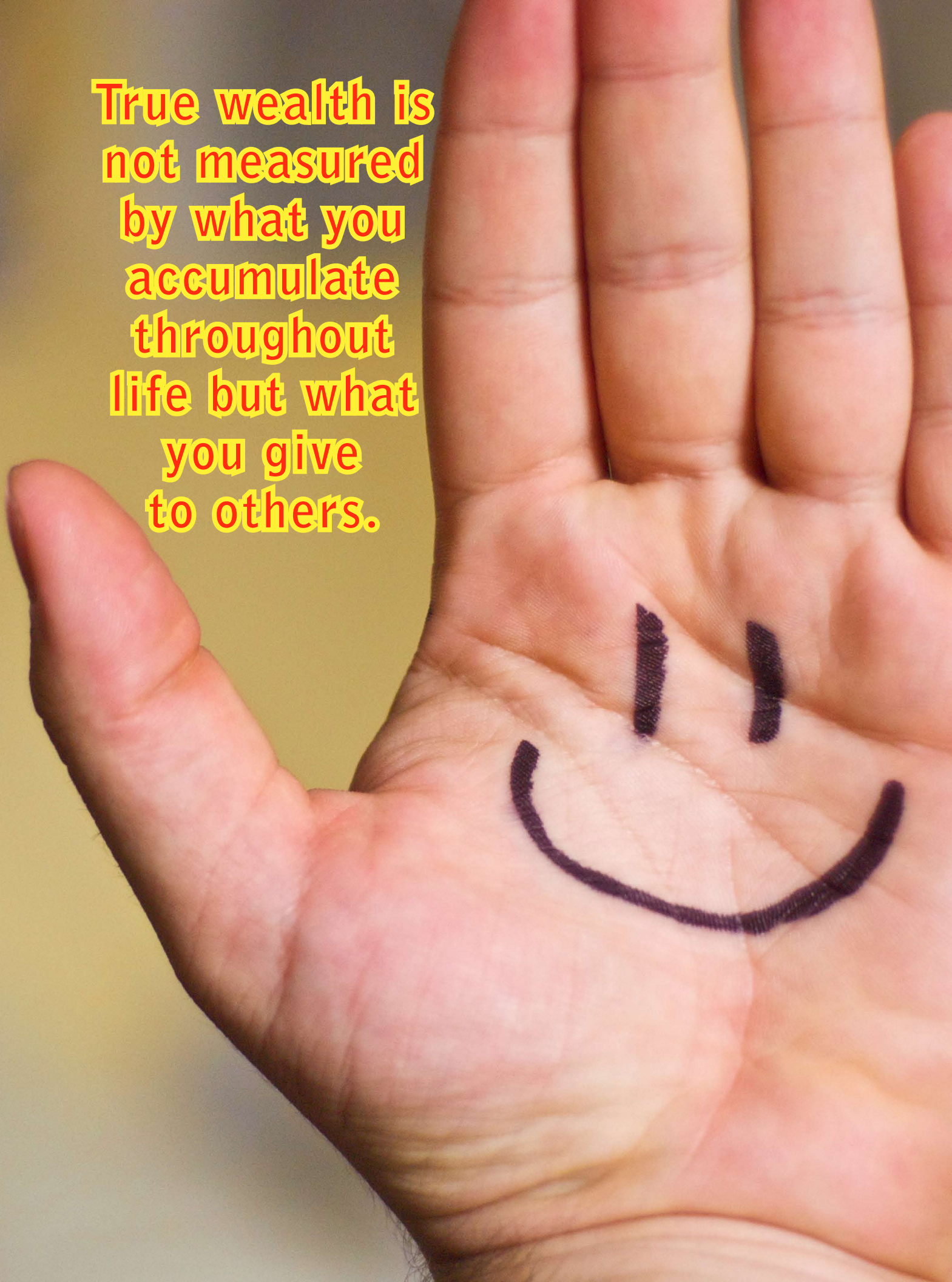
This article originally appeared on November 22, 2009 on Rob's Transition Culture Blog

<http://transitionculture.org/2009/11/22/a-local-currency-pilgrimage-to-worgl/>

"Rob Hopkins is the co-founder of Transition Town Totnes and of the Transition Network. He has many years experience in education, teaching permaculture and natural building, and set up the first 2 year full-time permaculture course in the world, at Kinsale Further Education College in Ireland as well as co-ordinating the first eco-village development in Ireland to be granted planning permission.

He is author of 'Woodlands for West Cork!', 'Energy Descent Pathways' and most recently 'The Transition Handbook: from oil dependence to local resilience', which has been published in a number of other languages, and which was voted the 5th most popular book taken on holiday by MPs during the summer of 2008. He publishes www.transitionculture.org, recently voted 'the 4th best green blog in the UK'(!). He is the winner of the 2008 Schumacher Award, an Ashoka Fellow, is a Fellow of the Post Carbon Institute, a Trustee of the Soil Association, and was named by the Independent as one of the UK's top 100 environmentalists. He is the winner of the 2009 Observer Ethical Award for the Grassroots Campaigner category, and in December 2009 was voted the Energy Saving Trust/Guardian's 'Green Community Hero'. He lectures and writes widely on peak oil and Transition, and is researching a PhD on Transition and resilience at Plymouth University. He lives in Devon and is a keen gardener.

**True wealth is
not measured
by what you
accumulate
throughout
life but what
you give
to others.**





http
whol.ly

Visit Whol.ly
<http://whol.ly/home/>

Smiles are the local digital currency units for a new fascinating social networking platform named Whol.ly. This features of this platform are aimed at “local” community users and its benefits include: sustainable development, community development, healthy living, environmental conservation, social inclusion and more. The idea is simple, Whol.ly offers a social networking platform and the currency to close transactions. It works for anyone looking for things and anyone looking to share their goods or talents with local neighbors.

Here is more information from their web. I encourage you to discover how their process works and be a part of this new phenomenon.

Whol.ly is a social networking platform to connect, communicate and share with neighbors.

Whol.ly is a neighborhood stream where neighbors post updates and publish needs and offers for goods and services. Posts on the local stream are visible only up to 5km around the user’s location. Wholly’s purpose is to dramatically improve communication across neighborhoods while stimulating solidarity and creative activity. Our mission is to give our users the power to create wealth for themselves and prosperity for their community.

Local community life and concerns about collective well-being are being brought back to the forefront of our contemporary life. Whol.ly brings the power of local currencies and the best of social networking to empower local communities. Whol.ly rolls out a community currency, the “smiles”, that allows everyone to easily share information, skills and material possessions with their neighbors. Neighbors receive smiles when they share or help others. Smiles are a currency of cooperation. Giving a smile is like saying thank you for a good post or for a small help given. Smiles are also used as a unit of payment for goods and services in the community marketplace. The focus in Whol.ly is on generating activity, on encouraging the circulation of wealth rather than focusing on accumulating wealth. The more active you are in giving and receiving smiles, the more savings and purchasing power you generate.

Smiles bring neighbors together; they favor sharing over competition, conservation over consumption and community over anonymity. Whol.ly acts as an interface to create activity and reward solidarity. The company’s innovative approach is a unique combination of local social networking and community currency.

WHAT ARE SMILES?

WHY ARE THEY GOOD FOR MY COMMUNITY?

Smiles bring neighbors together, they foster creative activity and solidarity. Smiles also favor sharing over competition, conservation over consumption and community over anonymity.

Many thousands of people around the world have discovered the power of community currencies: they use the currency of their labor or material possessions as so many assets to improve individual and community lives instead of waiting for scarce money to arrive and create jobs; they exchange service for service; they connect their assets to others' needs. It celebrates inter-dependence, keeps goods out of landfills and grows connections between people.

A community currency acts like a circulation system for the community's gifts and assets; it acts like an immune system to protect the community against shocks from outside. It provides an information system to record and value assets: personal skills, services and goods; it provides a reward system for those who share their assets; it gets assets flowing to solve personal and communal problems, meet urgent needs and achieve important goals. It acts as a medium of exchange more than a store of value because currency in motion is currency at work. Trust, reputation and friendship are deepened through every exchange.

HOW DOES IT PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY?

Sharing material goods with your community is an initiative that enables neighbors to have access to every commodity under the sun without it costing the earth. Members in each local community get to name the goods and services they are willing to lend or provide to others, which then means they have access to the goods of their fellow neighbors.

We, as a society, are evolving from an all-egocentric self-gratification vision of the world towards collective-thinking plus community betterment. Slowly, the arrogant short-term gain model is drifting towards a humbler WE, community-based long-term sustainability!

The smile economy a prelude to the gift economy!

HERE IS HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS:

1. When Peter gives a hand / creates value / provides a service / lends a tool for Sally that costs 20 smiles.
2. Sally gives Peter 20 smiles.
3. Sally balance becomes -20 smiles and Peter's +20 smiles.

Sally owes 20 smiles to any member of whol.ly, not to Sally personally.

Peter may ask anyone else in the network for services in return.

Owners of assets (information, time, abilities, goods) are rewarded with smiles when they share their assets with others or use their assets to help .

- > 1 smile represents a thank you for a good post or small help given.
- > 10 smiles reward one hour of basic service.
- > The value for goods and other value-added services are negotiated freely.

The currency simply acts as a central exchange that matches assets to needs. The focus in Whol.ly is on generating activity, on encouraging the circulation of wealth rather than on the accumulation of wealth (the balance).

ACTIVITY = SMILES RECEIVED + SMILES GIVEN
BALANCE = SMILES RECEIVED – SMILES GIVEN

The more active you are in giving and receiving smiles, the more smiles available (increased limit) you will get.

SMILES AVAILABLE = BALANCE + LIMIT

The default limit is ± 30 smiles which means that your balance cannot go above +30 or below -30. You will have to give smiles when your balance hits +30 or receive some when your balance reaches -30.

HOW DO YOU INCREASE YOUR LIMIT ?

By having a balanced account, a zero balance. A zero balance shows that you have a balanced relationship with your neighbors having given currency as much as you have received some. The focus is on having a large flow of currency, a large activity.

Your limit is reassessed every time your balance is zero.
Your limit is then equal to your past activity.

Balance = 0 \Rightarrow Limit = Activity

Whol.ly mission is to give you the power to create value and prosperity for you and your community. The more active you are in giving and receiving smiles, the more savings and extra purchasing power you generate.

(system is currently focused on Bangalore, India area. Bangalore is also known as the Silicon Valley of India)
###

HopeDance

Celebrating Transition & Positive Stories

Radical Solutions Inspiring Hope. Reporting on the outrageous, pioneering and inspiring activities of outstanding individuals and organizations who are creating a new world--regardless of their spiritual tradition or political agenda.

<http://www.hopedance.org/cms>

HopeDance at Transition CA: <http://transitioncalifornia.ning.com/group/hopedance>

Follow us at twitter: <http://twitter.com/hopedance>

2975 Vineyard Dr. • Templeton, CA 93465 • 805.369-0203



Greenwich Village
by Evinn Quinn



Meatpacking District
by Katie Koch

ITHACA HOURS ACCEPTED BY LOCAL TRANSIT SYSTEM

This event occurred back in August of 2009, but it did not get much press. I'm reprinting the notes from the board's approval below because I think this is a very important matter. As far as we know, this is the first time in the United States that a public transit system has accepted payment in a local non-government issue community currency.

While the text below is kind of boring, please stop and think about what you are reading...this was a landmark event. This offers strong proof that local currencies have real value in the communities where they circulate. This even creates a precedent for other future communities. Perhaps next year we may see a partial payment for real estate tax or business licensing? After reading this, please open your email, twitter or text messaging and discuss this event with friends or associates.

TCAT, Inc (Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit, Inc.) is a not-for-profit corporation that provides public transportation for Tompkins County New York and portions of Tioga and Schuyler Counties.

TOMPKINS CONSOLIDATED AREA TRANSIT, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, August 27, 2009 4:00 PM TCAT Conference Room
737 Willow Avenue, Ithaca, NY

Action Items from Staff

Consider approval of Resolution {2009-09} Approval of Use of Ithaca Hours. – F. Proto presented Resolution {2009-09}.

RESOLUTION 2009-09

USE OF ITHACA HOURS

WHEREAS, Ithaca Hours, Inc. has asked the TCAT Board to consider acceptance of Ithaca Hours from TCAT passengers as partial payment for TCAT bus rides, and

WHEREAS, the mission of Ithaca Hours, Inc. is to support the local economy by keeping money in the community, and

WHEREAS, TCAT's acceptance of Ithaca Hours is likely to promote increased ridership among Ithaca Hours members and users, and

WHEREAS, the TCAT Board wishes to begin TCAT's participation in Ithaca Hours on a limited basis, with the TCAT Board periodically reviewing TCAT's participation to determine if it should expand the opportunities for passengers to use Ithaca Hours,

NOW, THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED, that the TCAT Board authorizes TCAT to become a member of Ithaca Hours, Inc., and to accept up to one-half (1/2) of an Ithaca Hour (1/2 Ithaca Hour = \$5.00) as partial payment for a monthly bus pass, with the balance of the pass cost paid in U.S. currency.

Adopted by the TCAT Board of Directors on this the 27th day of August, 2009.

The resolution to approve the Use of Ithaca Hours was moved by K. Luz Herrera; and seconded by H. Dullea. Discussion followed. The motion passed unanimously.



**Morningside Heights
by Clint Beharry**



**SoHo
by Richie Lau**

A CRITIQUE OF ALTERNATIVE MONEY THEORIES

A Critique of Alternative Money Theories

A talk delivered by **Amelie Lanier** at the Anarchist Congress in Berlin April 11, 2009.

Silvio Gesell was one of the few theorists of anarchism who dealt with economic issues. He was a kind of model for Keynes, who explicitly referred to him. Today, in view of the financial crisis, many people reflect back on him. This is reason enough to offer a critical assessment of him.

First of all, however, I will talk about what money is.

1. EXCHANGE

The market is where commodities are exchanged. Whoever wants to buy something in the market — whether its a small, local one or the big world market or e-Bay — must simultaneously give something else for it. He also must have something that he can exchange. If he has nothing, he can also get nothing. He cannot satisfy what needs he always has.

At the same time, we have a system of property which excludes most people from any opportunity to produce something. Most people have no land on which they could grow anything. They do not have a workshop in which they could put something together. They do not even have a house or a hut in the woods where they could live. In order to access food, housing or consumer goods commercially, they must give something for it — nowadays it is money. However, it would not be any better if all kinds of exchange objects were admitted or asked for on the market because they also do not have them. Most

people are simply excluded from any possibility of creating something useful.

There are many explanations for why there is starvation in the world. They are all wrong. Among other things, because they ignore this basic equation: in order to get something, you have to give something. They mention logistical and distribution problems, nature and its quirks, human greed and corrupt officials, or an unjust world order in which one side overeats and the other thus does not even get the bare minimum. If such reasons are accepted and acknowledged, exchange and the principle of ownership are politely left out: they can not be the reason. Often just a better exchange policy, a “fairer” access to this very global market is recommended for the food problems of humanity.

You no longer have to look at the the Third World, the countries of the periphery, to find hunger. There are, as you can see from the media, in the centers of our world order, even here in Berlin, lots of people who have difficulties feeding themselves properly. For example, schoolchildren who have nothing to eat at home and are supplied with food in school and by food banks. And these social conditions are not ignored, everyone knows them. But one can also bring up such truly outrageous conditions unperturbed because everyone who reads about this or sees it on television is convinced that exchange and ownership are necessary, and that nobody would produce if they were not then afterwards satisfied with an equivalent. The media can be sure that nobody starts to doubt our economic and social system, but only calls for initiatives to make this condition manageable.

So I attach great importance to the fact that exchange is a form of exclusion because today, in view of the fact that money has fallen somewhat into disrepute, many critics of our social system see the solution to all these problems in a return to a type of barter economy, or to a means of exchange which is not money, but some other useful object.

I will also point out that before colonialism there were many societies and economic forms which knew nothing of exchange, and where the people were somehow well fed and clothed. Many of the indigenous movements in Latin America today, for example, have set a goal of getting back the land that has been robbed from them over the centuries and managing it communally. And they are brutally massacred by the respective governments — also in Venezuela, for example — because their desire signifies a fundamental criticism of property and exchange, and thus puts in question the foundation of the states in which they live.

However, the defenders of our social order never tire of pointing out that exchange is a good thing and it is best of all done with money. This is how they want to create propaganda for money. They point out with all kinds of examples that it is terribly impractical if people go to the market with potatoes and want to exchange them for shoes. And if someone wants to be sure to exchange without fail, this is indeed really impractical. Will someone want potatoes who also has shoes to give for them?

2. THE UNIVERSAL EQUIVALENT: MONEY

Therefore, so say the devotees of exchange, it is a fine thing that a universal means of exchange exists, one that all wish to have. Marx called it the universal equivalent to express that there is and must be a means of exchange that everyone accepts and everyone wants to have.

What does this mean for exchange? It means that everyone who wants to exchange wants to have this universal means of payment, so that they get it for what they want to get on the market. So they offer something and hope that there is a buyer. And then they want to obtain for their commodity what the other sellers recognize as an equal value. Everyone who goes to the market accepts and wants this

universal equivalent because with it they are sure that they themselves, when they use it in this country, can also use it to buy.

Do not forget: everyone only goes to the market with his commodity because he wants to get rid of his stuff first, and secondly wants to get something that he himself does not have and is unable to produce himself. No matter whether it is food he wants to eat or raw materials he needs for the production of his commodities. Everyone wants this universally accepted medium of exchange.

Earlier, in societies with simpler exchange structures, in the Middle Ages in Europe, this universal equivalent was a precious metal: gold or silver, and copper as coin. And there was the one who empowered this universal equivalent: the state power. Gold and silver mining, even if they were pursued privately, were put under state control, and the right to mint coins was a state monopoly.

If someone has control over this universal means of exchange, he has a power of control over society: this authority can determine the conditions of exchange and force them on others. This authority has the ability to determine what something is worth and what it is not. Therefore, the feudal rulers — kings, emperors, princes — secured the monopoly on the extraction of precious metals and the right to mint coins.

All those who go to the market to get rid of something want to get for it this universal means of exchange, money. And so of course they accept that their commodity is measured in this value, this coin. That means that they recognize a universal measure of value, which their product, their commodity, must be subordinate to, because that's the only way to get a universally recognized value. And their product, their commodity can be converted into cash only if it can obtain this value, if it actually has value, thus is sold. Insofar as one day a "measure of value" (also an expression of Marx for one of the functions of money) is established and everyone strives to receive it in their hands, metallic money then has its shortcomings: its availability is limited, its production is complicated and expensive, and it wears out in use, in changing hands. The time is ripe for its replacement by more suitable substances.

3. STATE PAPER MONEY

The states, the sovereigns, as guarantors of the universal equivalent, eventually decided to produce this themselves, and to use their pure power to do this. This was a protracted process.

Paper notes as money substitutes led the way. Merchants put down bills of exchange and banks printed banknotes. These private value-substitute slips had their validity as representatives of commodities or coins. They were reliable in reference to commodities to be sold or through promises of coins. The state learned from this, and from the demand for its own coin money, that this was replaceable: through the state's promises of payment, which it guaranteed, thanks to its power. The state paper money, which itself has no value — or as much as other paper products, napkins, toilet paper — gets its special value as a universal equivalent from the fact that the state guarantees its value and says: this note is 50, that one 100 marks or today euros; the two notes are of course the same in their substance. The difference in their value comes only from the outside, from the state, which prints a different value on it.

Today, the value of commodities, thus all wealth, is measured only in state paper money. It also does not go any differently. The circulation of money as precious metals is unfeasible. The exchange economy and the circulation of money are not abolished, but increasingly called into question, and indeed not from a distrust of exchange, but of value: if I have something on the market and receive a universal equivalent for it — do I generally have the value of my commodity? Can I buy something with it of commensurable value to my commodity? The exchange relation is generally questioned, but not according to its substance, but its manageability.

And with this Silvio Gesell becomes topical once again.

4. GESELL'S CRITICISM OF MONEY, PROPERTY AND INTEREST

What pertains to the preoccupation with Gesell is similar to that of his admirer Keynes: he is referred to, but hardly read. So a few points where Gesell has followers, even if they maybe do not know his theories and hence do not at all know that they are in

agreement with him.

4. 1. The backing of money

A criticism of modern state paper money is that it is unprotected and can therefore suddenly lose value at any time. My main objection against such a criticism is that money and value production are things in themselves to be fought and abolished. But Gesell's criticism also has its internal contradictions.

a) Money should be backed up by commodities

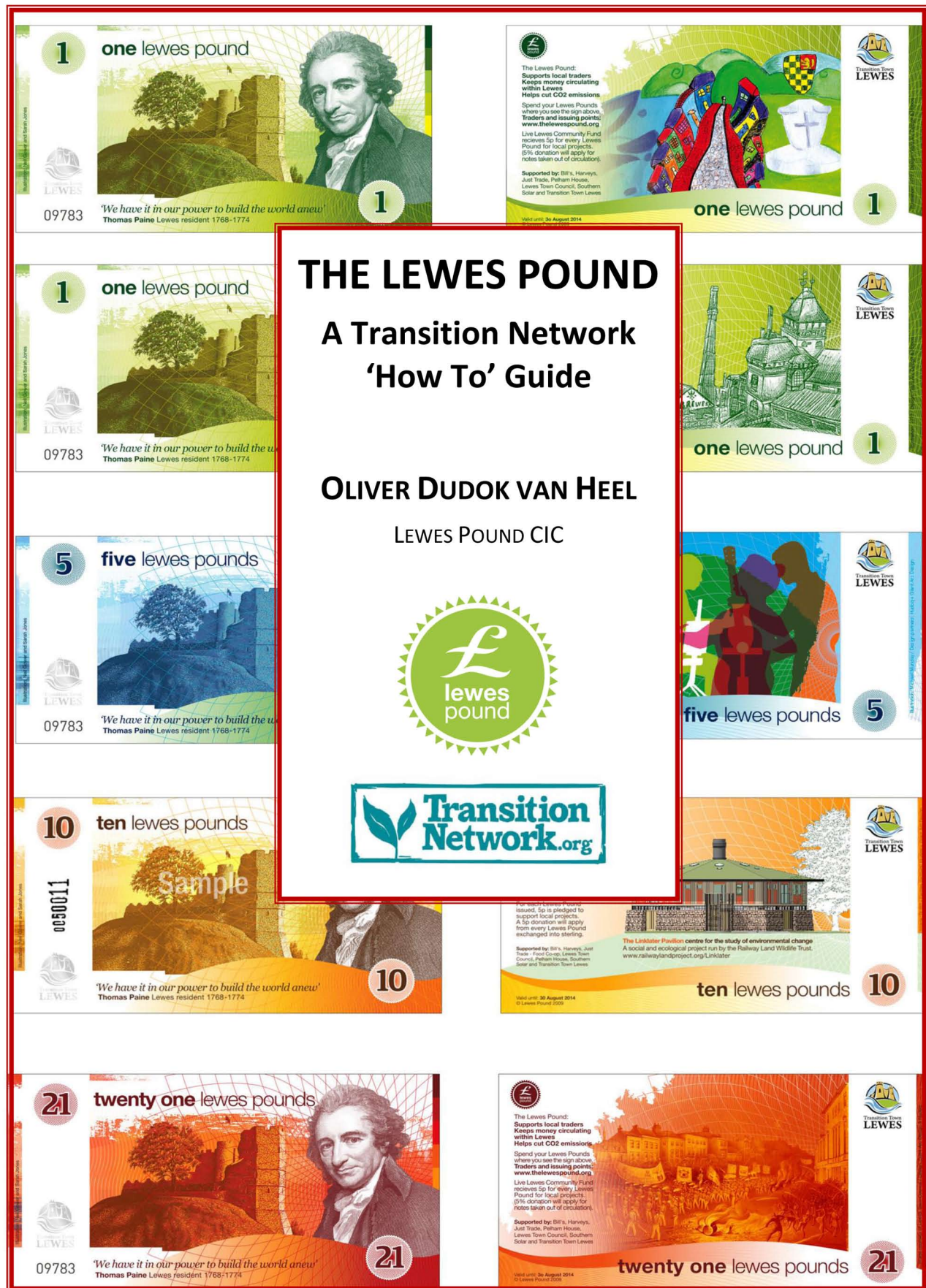
How should this go? If a nominal value is printed on bank notes and a pile of money is confronted with a pile of commodities, how should "backing" appear here? How much money a product is worth is something that first ordinarily shows up on the market. In order to realize the targeted "backing" or correspondence between commodities and money notes, one must decree the value of every single commodity in money and make price changes punishable. Then, however, there is no more market and we are in real socialism, and it also ends private production.

b) Money should be backed by precious metals

Silver or gold are stored in national depositories which should guarantee the value of the paper money put into circulation. Only: as soon as confidence is lost in the paper money and the citizens want to exchange the paper notes for the money commodity, there is of course too little of it there, and the parity has to be repealed. Because every amount of gold which is stored in the bank is a horde of dead capital, it is always held low and represents only a fraction of the money in circulation.

This type of backing only applies as long as it is believed. You can not guarantee money value. I say this because there are now again proposals to introduce a gold standard. But how should that go? As soon as a state says: 200 dirham are as much as an ounce of gold — who believes this? And the gold, in order to be able to be exchanged for any amount of paper money, has no state, and there is also not at all so much of it in the world.

You can download the guide here:
<http://transitionculture.org/wp-content/uploads/Lewes-Pound-How-To-Guide.pdf>



Please make donations via this link

https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=10403852

4. 2. Against ground rent, interest and income without labor

First, images of the kind: someone who does not work should also get nothing to eat, are unpleasant from the outset: one thinks of work camps and euthanasia. Somehow, they make up a society in which there are only those healthy and able to work, and all the others fall through the cracks.

But I also have economic objections: Gesell's free economy opposes developed capitalism with a precapitalist ideal: in opposition to the separation of the producers from the means of production it advocates a return to a state where the producers are at the same time farmers and craftsmen and sell their commodities themselves on the market. It is also popular with dropouts who seek their salvation in agricultural communes.

What is first and most important to say against this free economy is that it is adverse to reality. This model (and that it is backward is the slightest objection to it) pretends as if our economic system is based only on errors and one should just invent a better one in order to make everyone happy. Why it is about money, money acquisition and profit, and who has an interest in maintaining it — that is of no interest, so a brave new world is painted.

Constructing models and model thinking also has its use in modern economics: there it is always done in such a way as if, nevertheless, the economy exists here for all of us, and one only needs the right model. And if one already exists, and it is good for nothing, then one goes on to construct the next one. The interests which rule the world, and their executors, are nicely left aside with such castles in the air.

How Gesell's free economy eliminates ground rent and interest is also very elegant: he considers not how they come into the world, thus why they both exist, but explains them to be undesirable elements in a construction kit that one can simply eliminate — while retaining others, the better ones, like commodities or money. Which brings us to his ideal economy.

4. 3. Commodity production: a fundamental human right

Labor, provided that it is honest and one's own, gets a

fat praise. Only someone who works should also eat. It is possible that Gesell did not think so, but this is the implication in any case.

Secondly, it is just like with the avowed defenders of the market economy, as if all needs are satisfiable by the market. Everybody produces what he can and wants, and you will find a buyer for everything. Unless one can offer an equivalent, one's need is negated, as in capitalism.

Maybe something about how the planned economy contrasts to the market economy: planned economy means first of all only that the need should be raised first and afterwards the production is established. A plan will ensure that what is produced is exactly what is needed. Today, with the internet, this would really not be a problem, that everyone declares his wishes, and production possibilities are ascertained, and then the two are somehow brought together.

Against the planned economy, a caricature of a commission is always sketched, one which decrees the needs, designs them; and on the other hand, this holds private initiative high as the realm of individual freedom. And in this way the absurd fact is endorsed that one produces first and then see whether one finds a buyer who puts down money for one's product. As a result, if you think through the idea consistently, this accepts that needs are not met — because they are not able to pay — and poverty and misery are explained as necessities of nature.

4. 4. Money as cash, intermediary for commodity exchange

It is often said that Silvio Gesell wanted to abolish money. From what I have learned and read about him, this is a mistake. No, he was a merchant and thought like a businessman: he wanted to make money functional for commodity exchange. And he had his theories about what stands in the way of the management of money. He especially wanted to prevent money from disappearing from circulation, being hoarded, and becoming a separate commodity which is then used for speculation and lent again for interest. He wanted to keep it in circulation, therefore his shrinking money theory: hoard formation should be punished by the depreciation of money. So because he did want to renounce a universal equivalent,

money should always remain in circulation and serve the mediation of commodity exchange. His shrinking money teaching draws from the fact that he was an unconditional defender of the commodity and exchange.

Often when the issue of local money as a solution to the problems of money circulation is brought up, Gesell's theories are to support this. I have selected two examples to show why such an emergency money — because such moneys invariably arise in emergency situations and are therefore only tolerated for short amounts of time — appears and what it does.

5. TOKEN MONEY — LOCAL MONEY AS “THE ANSWER”

a. Wörgl

In the 1930s, the Austrian town of Wörgl was bankrupted by the global economic crisis and it could no longer pay its employees. So the mayor, a supporter of Gesell's free economy, decided in 1932 to issue a local currency which, through various maneuvers, should be recognized as a money substitute. This was guaranteed by the local priest and the local credit union. The salaries of municipal employees were paid in this local money and in fact succeeded in creating a regional solvency and thus animating commodity circulation in Wörgl and its surroundings. Three other villages in the surrounding region also wanted to issue local money. The regional money of Wörgl created solvency in an area at a time when insolvency had previously prevailed. The Austrian National Bank fought the regional money of Wörgl from the beginning — it was a challenge to the state monopoly on bank notes — and it was ended in 1933 under threat of military action, thus was prohibited by state intervention.

b. Argentina

In 1991, Argentina negotiated with the IMF a parity of dollars to pesos to stop the runaway inflation in the country and to stabilize the currency. One of the conditions for it was that the Argentine state had to refrain from issuing money. The IMF controlled the monetary policy in Argentina.

One consequence was that Argentine exports were

more expensive and the country lost its export markets. But also in the domestic market Argentine products were no longer competitive in comparison with cheaper imports. The IMF urged the Argentine government — which wanted to hold to the dollar parity — to privatize unprofitable companies. They could not be subsidized by the state. The privatization had in most cases the same effect as closure.

In this manner, from 1991 to 2000 Argentina liquidated a good part of its industry which originated from the times of the Peron government. This included the railroad network, the aircraft, automobile and military industries, the energy sector and the consumer goods industries. Argentina became a net importer. It had to import more and more of everything that it no longer produced in its own country. So its trade deficit grew. Argentina had ever bigger problems placing its bonds on the world market, had to offer higher interest rates and the state debt rose while the economy shrank continuously. All this has led to the national bankruptcy of the years 2001-2002.

But already in the 90s, the economics of scarce money had its consequences. In the provinces of the north, there was no money. Whatever industry there had once been was gone. The only employer was the state. Besides agricultural production, partially a subsistence operation, there were salary recipients: teachers, civil servants, doctors. They often received no salary for months.

To generally maintain some money circulation, the provinces issued their own money — the money tokens were called Bonos — which were recognized only within the province. The IMF turned a blind eye on this and this money was not included in the money creation policy of the Argentinean state. However, it was not enough to create a frictionless economy, and there were in the 90s hunger riots in these provinces, which were suppressed by the police and the military.

In 1995 even a nation-wide alternative currency, the Credito, originated in flea markets and unemployed exchange markets. This parallel currency was also tolerated because it prevented the collapse of the economy. This regional creation of purchasing ability of course also led to abuse. Those who issued these

tokens took something for themselves. In the end, these money tokens were no longer recognized. Today the peso is worth just as little as the local currencies, which no longer exist. One consequence of the state's bankruptcy in 2001 was the end of the local moneys.

WHAT SERVICE DID THEY HAVE?

1. To generally hold together the cohesion of the state. If we all do not get salaries as state employees: teachers, civil servants, doctors — for what do we still work? These people were kept on staff with “bonos,” local money. These people with “Bono” regional money, when the rod held.

2. To maintain the infrastructure. Buses had to travel between provincial towns, and between the capital and the provinces.

Now I don't want to bore anybody further with details about the Tyrol in the 30s and Argentina in the 90s. I have only given these examples because such local moneys are referred to as illustrations of Gesell's theories. The local moneys are created in times and regions in which capitalism has failed as value production, but where nevertheless the principle of value production and commodity exchange should be retained. They are necessarily temporary: because money is just the general equivalent that should represent value.

If one sees the issuing of local money as a way out of the crisis, one does not understand what money is: first, a general equivalent that everyone recognizes, thus accepts as a representative of value. Secondly, and just therefore an expression of value, a means of business: the attempt to introduce money in a regional context and to preserve it as a means of circulation is nothing else than the attempt to survive the crisis of capitalism so that it can rise again later in full bloom: as the exclusion of the needy, those without property, from the goods of the world, or the use of the poor for the business of the propertied.

Source:

Retrieved on August 2, 2009 from

<http://www.ainfos.ca/en/ainfos22840.html>

Notes:

A talk delivered at the Anarchist Congress in Berlin April 11, 2009

Who's Printing All This Local Money?

Smith & Ouzman of course

This is from the Smith & Ouzman Ltd. December newsletter.

In September 2008, Lewes, the county town of East Sussex, launched its own local currency - the Lewes Pound. Following the success of the first issue, which was valid for just one year, S&O was commissioned by The Lewes Pound Group to print a second issue of the Lewes Pound notes with improved security print features, higher denominations and a longer validation period.

In September 2009, Brixton followed suit and became the first urban town to introduce its own local currency.

S&O printed notes in denominations of One, Five, Ten and Twenty-One Lewes Pounds and One, Five, Ten and Twenty Brixton Pounds, incorporating multiple security print features to protect the notes against counterfeiting and forgery. A variety of overt and covert security devices were used, including watermarked paper with embedded fibres, sequential serial numbering, ultraviolet (UV) ink that fluoresces under UV light, micro-text and a hologram foil.

Patrick Crawford from the Lewes Pound Group commented: “The knowledge and support attained from our partnership with Smith & Ouzman has allowed us to improve significantly the security of our Lewes Pound notes and provide multiple denominations that can only increase the prosperity of the town.”

The Lewes Pound and Brixton Pound notes have been designed to commemorate local heroes. The effigy of Thomas Paine, the 18th century radical thinker who lived in Lewes for six years, appears on the front of all the Lewes Pound notes, where the Brixton Pound notes depict notable figureheads including, Vincent Van Gogh who moved to Brixton aged 20 and Olive Morris, the political activist who established the Brixton Black women's Group.

For further information on the Lewes Pound notes and Brixton Pound notes, visit www.thelewespond.org and www.thebrixtonpound.org

Get Trading with a Direct Mail Marketing Approach

Community currency and local trading systems are becoming very popular these days! In 2009 there were more than 70 new time banks in 28 different states across America. Starting a new local trading system can be fun but also presents a marketing challenge...where to get new members? Luckily, in today's economy, there are plenty of folks who want to trade and join these new systems but how do you reach them?

The Sharehood trading system, based in Melbourne, Australia recently showed how they started their trading with a direct mail letter to local residents. Here is that story and a copy of the mail. The Sharehood is a community of neighbours that have recently started talking to each other and sharing goods and services in a small section of Northcote, Melbourne. A letter was dropped in the mailboxes of 240 neighbours:

“I’m interested in setting up a local community that shares the resources we have. The things I’m thinking of include sewing machines, tools, wheelbarrows, washing machines, wireless internet, cars (carpooling or car sharing) and probably a million other resources that I can’t think of. Perhaps we could set up a fruit and veggie box co-op in order to bulk buy and reduce costs. We could organise co-ordinated garage sales between three or four streets, or “really free markets” where we offer everything we don’t want anymore for free and grab anything we want from other houses. We could co-ordinate child-minding between families. We could put on garden working bee days in our respective gardens.

“We’d have a localised distribution system for our skills and our produce. If you wanted to share or trade your homebrew, your artworks, the sprouts you grow, your garden produce, your homemade jam or anything else you make, you’d have a little local community to distribute to. If you wanted to share your skills, whether they be in accounting, gardening, building websites (that’s me), bicycle or car fixing, essay editing, handiwork or anything else, you’d have a group of people within five minutes walking distance who want what you can offer. It’d be amazing to be able to borrow a circular saw for a day rather than buy one, or to get some accounting advice from a neighbour rather than pay for it; that kind of sharing is easier on our purse strings, is better for the environment, and will give us a feeling of community.”

A meeting was held, a backyard barbecue two weeks later and we were on our way. This website now allows neighbours to put up a profile of the goods they are willing to lend, the produce they create, the skills they are willing to share, things they want, contact details and anything else they might want to say about themselves. Logged in neighbours also have an events calendar, forums and photo galleries that anyone can post to.

Samaras are the digital unit of value in the Sharehood trading system which is based on a Local Exchange Trading System (LETS)

For more information please visit their web site:

<http://thesharehood.org/tradingsystem>

Look for the “letterboxing” tab on their web and find out more about hooking up with your locals. There is even a draft letter.



Stuyvesant Town
by Beatriz Vizcaino



Tribeca
by Chia-Wei Liu



**Upper West Side
by Carmen Dukes**



**Harlem
by
Derek
Chan**

**Fashion District
by John Finley**



**Chinatown
by Colleen Miller**

THE LETSYSTEM DESIGN MANUAL

1.1 Money and Community

“Give someone a fish and they’ll eat for a day, teach them how to fish and they’ll eat forever.”

The problem with money

Many of us are active in creating and maintaining a sense of community amongst our friends and neighbours. But more and more our hands seem to be tied: the world is in serious trouble, both ecologically and economically. Few people would argue with this, but how many would recognise a major cause of our problems? We assert that a major problem, perhaps the major problem, lies in conventional money and the form that it takes.

Every modern community depends on the flow of national currency through its internal economy. The money swirls in and it rushes out again. Money flows into the community from exports, visitors and government spending. It flows out on imports, travel and taxes.

When local industry loses an export market, when fewer visitors arrive or when governments cut spending, the money that leaves is not replaced.

As the amount of money circulating in the community falls, so does the level of trading. Business declines and people lose jobs, not because they have nothing to offer, but because there is not enough money to go around.

In the contest for a share of this limited supply, people work in ways that damage their own health, the environment and the well-being of the community.

People are prepared to do almost anything for money because they need it to take part in the game. This is the source of the problem, since money, by virtue of its very structure, is scarce and hard to come by.

There are three reasons for this:
there is only so much in circulation;
it can go virtually anywhere, and so it does;

you can’t issue it yourself.

All over the world communities suffer from a shortage of money, simply because there is only so much of it, it’s gone elsewhere and they can’t print their own.

When you think about it, this situation is nonsensical. Money is merely a means of exchange, a set of tickets, a number in your bank account. It has no value in itself - you can’t eat it, wear it or build anything with it.

It is a measure of value, like an inch measures length or a ton measures weight. There need never be a shortage of the measure.

Imagine a carpenter not working because he has run out of inches!

Yet we are often idle when all we lack is the means of exchange. There may be plenty of materials, equipment, skills, time, goods and needs to be met, but we cannot work or trade with each other because there are no tickets around, no scores on the sheet, no means of measuring relative value.

The problem suggests the solution

We can get around this problem by creating local money to finance local needs, to generate wealth and protect us from poverty.

A local currency can’t leave the community it serves, so it ensures connections between people exchanging skills, goods and services. With a local currency, the community is less affected by fluctuations in the external money supply.

Local currencies have been common throughout history, emerging whenever a community needs to protect its internal economy from outside disturbances such as war, or depression. The Social Credit movement was one example, and more successful systems were used in Austria before the second world war.

Not surprisingly, the current economic climate has spawned several systems ranging from small, informal self help networks to the hundreds of commercial “barter” networks now operating throughout the US,

and increasingly elsewhere.

The growth of these commercial networks is extraordinary. In 1991 they reported \$5.9 billion trading among 240,000 clients, in 450 systems. Two years later estimated trading had almost doubled to \$10 billion, at a time when the US economy as a whole was standing still. This growth has occurred despite the high costs of taking part.

At present the LETSystem - Local Exchange Trading System - is the most advanced form of local currency in circulation.

The first LETSystem was developed in Canada's Comox Valley, in 1983, where some people adapted the "barter" network model and turned it into a full scale community system with greater advantages, yet operating at a fraction of the cost.

This prototype was very successful, despite considerable antipathy and even active resistance from key elements in the local community, and about 20 similar systems sprang up across North America.

By 1988 a combination of factors, principally research and development costs and fragile user confidence, caused trading in the Comox Valley system to decline virtually to a standstill.

While this created a general loss of confidence in N. America, LETSystems began to grow worldwide. Since 1987 some 70 LETSystems have been established in New Zealand and almost 200 in Australia. In Britain the number has rocketed from 7 systems in early 1991 to 150 by the end of 1993.

All these systems are based on the original prototype in Comox Valley, which has recently resumed trading with improved computer software, administration and more ways of introducing and educating people about LETSystems.

For a local currency to work people need to be able to use it alongside conventional money, and its design should resolve the three fundamental problems of that money. A local currency should ideally stay within the community it serves be issued by the people who use it exist in sufficient supply to meet the needs of that

community.

The LETSystem meets these criteria. It is also friendly, convenient, cost effective, simple and secure. It works much like a bank or a building society. Everyone has an account, but instead of money transferring from one bank to another, all exchanges are within a single system.

Personal Money

Each new account starts at zero and thereafter may hold a positive or a negative balance. Those with negative balances have, quite simply, created the money which is in the positive accounts. So this local money is essentially a promise by some members of the community to give service to others.

Money like this, which you issue yourself, is personal money.

Conventional money, while easy to spend, is hard to earn. As a result it is coercive by nature - people with money exercise power over people without it. Who pays the piper calls the tune.

In a personal network, however, money is easy to earn. Everyone has money to spend.

By the same token, nobody needs it, so things only happen when people want them to. People serve willingly, or not at all. Nobody can tell anyone else what to do.

We are acknowledged for what we give to others. Acknowledgement in the local money has value because that money is actually the commitment of people in the community, to the community.

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<http://www.gmlets.u-net.com/design/dm1%5E1.html>

Michigan Conference Envisions Local Future of Resilience and Sustainability

by Edward Hoogterp and Brian Lawson

THOMPSONVILLE, MICH – A spirited debate on nuclear energy, policy aimed at bolstering the state's renewable energy industry and a vision of prosperity for the state of Michigan were among the highlights of the 2009 Conference on Michigan's Future held this past weekend at Crystal Mountain Resort and Spa.

The four-day conference (November 13-16), with a focus on Michigan's energy, economic and environmental future, brought together over 200 participants and better than three dozen experts in business, energy, public policy, environment and economics. This group of leaders with a diversity of expertise and perspective traveled from across North America to offer ideas to help Michigan reach beyond its recent history of economic and environmental decline.

"Michigan needs jobs and needs them now," said Aaron Wissner, conference director and founder of the non-profit Local Future organization. "The conference is about the citizens of the state taking the wheel and charting our own course to a prosperous, sustainable, and resilient economic future."

The mix of speakers created productive discussions concerning the role renewable energy will have in revitalizing the economy and sustaining natural resources. The conference investigated the value of feed-in tariff legislation to further incentivize the growth of wind and solar energy. Peak oil was a focal point and the need to transition to forms of transport and community planning that reduces dependence on oil. Much was discussed about alternative economic philosophies placing higher emphasis on sustainability, resilience and quality of life.

Each of the presentations from the Conference on Michigan's Future can be viewed online at FutureMichigan.org including the following state and nationally recognized experts:

THE DEBATE ON NUCLEAR ENERGY

Dr Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace and nuclear advocate as co-chair of CASEnergy, and Harvey Wasserman, senior advisor to Greenpeace and the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, participated in a spirited debate about the role nuclear will and should play in the state and nation's energy future.

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

Robert Costanza, director of the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Vermont and co-founder of the International Society for Ecological Economics for which 2009 Nobel Prize Winner Elinor Ostrom is an editorial board member. Dr. Costanza described the need for new economic indicators such as sustainability and quality of life to replace those purely based on indexes such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He concluded the conference with an interactive seminar developing potential futures for Michigan.

IT TAKES AN ECO-VILLAGE

Albert Bates, author of 14 books, including "Climate in Crisis," and a founder of the Global Ecovillage Network spoke about eco-villages, bio-char and sustainable regional enterprises.

PEAK OIL SOLUTIONS

Megan Quinn Bachman, co-producer of a documentary on post-Soviet Union Cuba and their response to petroleum shortages, spoke on the Cuban experience and potential community solutions to impending

shortages in the United States as a result of Peak Oil. (Click [here](#) to listen to Megan Quinn Bachman's presentation)

A NEW CURRENCY

Thomas Greco, author and expert in alternative monetary systems, proposes parallel types of currency to augment the present monetary system, which is dominated by credit, banks and the Federal Reserve.

LEGISLATION TO RE-ENERGIZE MICHIGAN

State Representative Dan Scripps (D-101st District), who proposed the Re-Energize Michigan package of bills, discussed legislation to encourage the proliferation of renewable energy in the state including renewable energy payments also known as feed-in tariffs. Under a renewable energy payment program utilities would sign long-term contracts to pay a premium price for electricity generated from windmills and solar panels.

The Conference on Michigan's Future received widespread support from business leaders such as Dow Chemical, Michigan Chamber of Commerce, and Traverse City Chamber of Commerce, educational institutions like Northwestern Michigan College, and Michigan State University's Land Policy Institute, utility companies DTE Energy and Consumers Energy as well as other organizations like Interlochen Public Radio, Renewable Power Solutions, USDA Rural Development, Mancelona Renewable Resources, Pure Eco Environmental Solutions and Crystal Mountain Resort and Spa.

For video and audio from each of the conference presentations and additional information on Local Future, visit www.FutureMichigan.org.

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~~~~ Editorial Notes ~~~~

This was Local Future's third major conference focusing on peak oil and climate change.

This year's conference featured increased emphasis on the issue of monetary reform with speakers Richard Douthwaite (author of *The Ecology of Money*), Thomas Greco (author of *Money: Understanding and Creating Alternatives to Legal Tender*), Stephanie Mills (board member of the Bay Bucks local currency), and Michael Sauvante (advocate for publicly owned banks).

Accomplishment include:

- * The local NPR station's manager served as emcee for the event, and subsequently is editing the audio recordings for prime listening hours

- * All presentations were recorded in high definition and are currently at the video production studio to be mastered into one or two DVD's for distribution to state legislators, business leaders, community educators, etc.

- * Controversial topics including nuclear, coal, and renewable energy payments (a.k.a. feed-in tariffs) were presented with both pro and con speakers

- * Five state legislators attended and/or spoke at the conference

- * Podcasts of all talks, most of the slide shows, and a handful of full-length uncut videos are available for download and distribution from the conference web site: FutureMichigan.org

In addition, for 2010, Local Future is now seeking partners for hosting the following conferences in 2010:

- * The International Summit on Money 2010 -- Featuring leaders on money, monetary reform, and steady-state economics; a major networking event to bring together the best understanding of money as it relates to energy and resources; and to develop effective models for resilient, ethical and sustainable money systems.

- * The International Conference on Energy, Economy & Environment 2010 -- A call for presentations event for all speakers with interest in presenting innovative ideas and proposal for protecting and restoring the environment; a networking event for all Plan B, Plan C, and Plan D environmental/activist organizations, to bring a common understanding of climate, energy, money, and provide opportunities for mass collaboration.

- * The Conference on Michigan's Future 2010 -- Specifically designed to attract and educate Michigan's leaders and decision makers, to bring them up to date on climate science, peak oil & coal, and solutions that increase resilience and lead to sustainability and beyond.

Local Future is seeking nonprofit partners and volunteers to design and implement each of these conferences in 2010.

Please contact Aaron Wissner for more information: aaron@localfuture.org



**Times Square
by Jeff Kirsch**

Santa Cruz Local Money? Could be....

The idea for a local currency is gaining momentum in the Santa Cruz area writes Mara Ortenburger for GoodTimesSantaCruz.com

"An enthusiastic crew of health care providers, wellness educators, and local food activists are drawing up plans for a mutual discount network that is tentatively being called the Santa Cruz Wellness Exchange Cooperative. The group wants to infuse the county economy with an alternative currency (a "Santa Cruz Wellness Buck," perhaps), designed to bolster business for local health care providers and food producers. The currency network would incorporate the mission of New Earth Exchange, a membership network for local businesses committed to environmental sustainability and mutual-aid, but would have an expanded focus and a greater reach."

Read more here:

<http://www.goodtimesantacruz.com/santa-cruz-news/santa-cruz-local-news/396-santa-cruz-cash-.html>

ALSO SEE: Santa Cruz Wellness Exchange Cooperative organizers (L-R) Daz Haela, Stephanie Winn and Langdon Roberts hope to introduce a local buck to Santa Cruz.

Visit <http://www.newearthexchange.org>

MERCOSUR MULLS TRADE IN LOCAL CURRENCY

Brazil has proposed Mercosur to trade in local currencies rather than the U.S. dollar, The Wall Street Journal reports. Mercosur's Local Currency Payment System currently functions only between Brazil and Argentina.

Under the system, buyers and sellers can pay in their own local currency, eliminating some foreign exchange risks as the dollar continues to slide against currencies in the region. The Brazilian government also wanted to include Uruguay in the first quarter of 2010, said Luiz Melin, Brazil's Finance Ministry cabinet chief. Brazil has also discussed local currency trade with China and India this year.

Source: <http://www.emii.com/Articles/2353722/FX/Other-Articles---FX/Mercosur-Mulls-Trade-In-Local-Currency.aspx>

SAO PAULO (Dow Jones)--Brazil is trying to convince its peers in the Southern Cone Common Market, or Mercosur, to conduct trade in local currencies and not the U.S. dollar, the local Estado newswire reported ...

Mercosur (Southern Common Market) is a Regional Trade Agreement (RTA) among Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay founded in 1991 by the Treaty of Asunción. Its purpose is to promote free trade and the fluid movement of goods, people, and currency.



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