

ratitor's corner

march 20, 1999

march equinox, 5:44pm, pst

prior moments

Expanding the Song of Life

Learning About Community Currencies
Discovering Mister Fred's Magic Kingdom
***Life is Beautiful* -- Living Life Heroically**

Today, the Sun, appearing to travel along the ecliptic,
reaches the point where it crosses the equator into the northern celestial hemisphere.
Today day and night are of equal length.

Life has been expanding and filling with many blessings since the last time ratical was updated on the December Solstice. While it was hoped *Understanding Special Operations* would actually be finished and presented in its hypertext-entirety on this occasion, that event is still one-two months away. Here, i'd like to share some experiences of late relating to discovering the unknown and infinite possibilities of existence.

**Money is like an iron ring we've put through our noses.
We've forgotten that we designed it, and it's now leading us
around. I think it's time to figure out where we want to go --
in my opinion toward sustainability and community -- and
then design a money system that gets us there.**

**The origin of the word "community" comes from the Latin
munus, which means the gift, and *cum*, which means together,
among each other. So community literally means to give
among each other. Therefore I define my community as a
group of people who welcome and honor my gifts, and from
whom I can reasonably expect to receive gifts in return.**

--Bernard Lietaer

Learning About Community Currencies

As the year turned i was invited by friend Carol Brouillet to join the second occurrence of a three-plus day conference called "The Gathering" held at the end of February. About 70 people came sharing and exchanging a great deal of information including presentations and discussions on the monetary system, establishing and promoting community/local currencies, solar and new energy developments, sustainability, and renewal of community through such opportunities as the y2k clock-click. (On the first formal day of the conference, an article was published, by the *Christian Science Monitor* corporation that was interesting for what it actually *did* describe.)

i was fascinated by Bernard Lietaer's presentation ("the monetary system, overview-hopes") and the follow-on discussions he chaired and participated in. A selection of Bernard's writings are available in the "Money Map" area of Transaction Net. Biographical information there chronologically lists the "five different (and usually mutually exclusive) hands-on experiences with money systems" comprising his professional background:

- developed the first models of global currency management for **multinational** corporations;
- consulted with **developing countries** on four different continents about improving hard currency earnings;
- **academic** history includes a Professorship of International Finance at the University of Louvain in Belgium;
- head of the Organization and Planning Department at the **Central Bank** of Belgium for five years, where he was President of the Electronic Payment System; and
- in the **speculative** domain, served as general manager and currency trader of the most successful offshore currency fund.

Bernard's essay, Community Currencies: A New Tool for the 21st Century (which he has generously given permission to mirror on ratical) includes the following description of five functions money fulfills, "only two of which are essential:"

- A standard of measure. We compare the value of the proverbial apples and oranges by expressing each of them in dollars, for example.
- A medium of exchange that is more efficient than other forms -- barter, for instance.

Money has sometimes played three other roles in the past, and happens to play them today as well:

- A store of value. Historically, this has only rarely been the case. For example the word *capital* derives from the Latin *capus*, *capitis*, which means head, and referred to heads of cattle just as is still done today in Texas or among the Tutsi in Africa: "He is worth 1,000 head." Another example: in Egypt through the Late Classical period, and in Europe throughout the Middle Ages and until the late 18th Century, wealth was stored mainly in land and its gradual improvements.
- A tool for speculative profit, most emphatically today when more than 95 percent of all currency transactions in the world are motivated by speculation, and less than 5 percent are for trades of goods and services. This has been systematically possible only since August 1972, when President Nixon created the floating currency nonsystem we now have.
- A tool of empire. The control by the former Soviet Union of the external trade of Comecon countries via the "convertible ruble" is a recent example.

Though we tend to take for granted that money serves all the functions we are used to -- which

today means all five functions for the U.S. dollar -- it is important to realize that money really needs to serve only the two essential functions in order to be an efficient currency.

Sarah van Gelder, editor of *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures* was in attendance and provided copies of the current and back issues for perusal. i've been sifting some of these articles on the web and have found two from the "Local Currencies" (Spring 1997) issue to be extremely interesting and helpful as an overview to one such as myself who up to now had only a vague, insubstantial sense of what money actually is, what community currencies are, and, more to-the-point, what they can provide as a means of creating employment and renewing our communities and environment.

One of these is a Dialogue between Bernard and Sarah entitled Beyond Greed & Scarcity. At one point Bernard describes the state of the current monetary system:

[T]oday's official monetary system has almost nothing to do with the real economy. Just to give you an idea, 1995 statistics indicate that the volume of currency exchanged on the global level is \$1.3 trillion per day. This is 30 times more than the daily gross domestic product (GDP) of all of the developed countries (OECD) together. The annual GDP of the United States is turned in the market every three days!

Of that volume, only 2 or 3 percent has to do with real trade or investment; the remainder takes place in the speculative global cyber-casino. This means that the real economy has become relegated to a mere frosting on the speculative cake, an exact reversal of how it was just two decades ago.

"[A]n exact reversal of how it was *just two decades ago*" ?!#!?@%? Yes, as one approaching their mid-forties, i *do* recall how in the mid-seventies there was *nothing* of the kind of speculative feeding-frenzy we see escalating apace today. Let's ponder for a moment just what the implications of this are. At a minimum now, *ninety-six percent of the currency exchanged each day* -- which amounts to

$$0.96 \times \$1,300,000,000,000 = \$1,248,000,000,000$$

or, one-trillion, two-hundred forty-eight billion dollars -- *exists only in people's minds and as numeric representations stored in electronic banking systems* networked together. "Since the breakdown in 1972 of the Bretton Woods system, the world has been living with pure fiat currency--that is, there is nothing material backing the currencies of the world." (In the Transaction Net Glossary, fiat currency is defined as "Currency created by *fiat* (Latin, "let it be made" or "let it be done") whose value is guaranteed by the authority issuing it rather than by any external reference or backing. All national currencies today are issued and managed by Central Bank fiat.")

So now, during the time it takes for Earth to complete one revolution around SOL, we find ourselves living in a world where --

$$365 \times \$1,248,000,000,000 = \$455,520,000,000,000$$

-- global currencies exchanged in the amount of four-hundred fifty-five trillion dollars "exist" and are traded and exchanged *with no material backing*. At one point during his talk, Bernard paused to acknowledge the magnitude of this bubble and the fact that it will (as all bubbles do) burst.

David Korten, (author of *When Corporations Rule the World* (1995), *The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism* (1999) -- see the **YES!** article by D.K. on this, his latest book -- and president of the People-Centered Development Forum) wrote the introductory article to the "Local Currencies" issue on Money *versus* Wealth. Concisely presented, Mr. Korten lays out in the broadest terms the impasse we have reached where two fundamental polarities exist side-by-side: that although the economy is booming and the world is awash in money,

Yet we are also told there is no longer enough money to provide an adequate education for our children, health care and safety nets for the poor, protection for the environment, parks, a living wage for working people, public funding for the arts and public radio, or adequate pensions for the elderly. According to the official wisdom, even though richer, we can no longer afford what we once took for granted. How is this possible? What's gone wrong? . . .

The problem is this: a predatory global financial system, driven by the single imperative of making ever more money for those who already have lots of it, is rapidly depleting the real capital -- the human, social, natural, and even physical capital -- on which our well-being depends. . . .

In a healthy economy, money is not the dominant value, nor is it the sole or even dominant medium of exchange. Indeed, one of the most important indicators of economic health is the presence of an active economy of affection and reciprocity in which people do a great many useful things for one another with no expectation of financial gain. Such voluntary sharing creates and maintains the fabric of trust and mutual caring of which the social capital of any healthy family, community, or society is comprised.

Pathology enters the economic system when money, once convenient as a means of facilitating commerce, comes to define the life purpose of individuals and society. The human, social, and natural capital on which the well-being of any society depends becomes subject to sacrifice on the altar of money making. Those who already have money prosper at the expense of those who don't. It is a social pathology called finance capitalism.

Through a largely non-consensual process we have created an economic system with characteristics that most resemble those of a cancerous tumor. The challenge before us is to create an economic system more conducive to our long-term survival and healthy function.

One approach is to mimic the characteristics of a healthy ecosystem. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, such a system would look rather much like a proper market economy with an overlay of an ethical culture and a framework of sensible rules established by a democratic government. Nothing radical. Nothing unfamiliar. Just the practice of basic values to which most of us already claim allegiance.

--*The Post Corporate World*, Chapter 6. Embracing Life's Wisdom

Let's pause a moment and step back nineteen years to consider R. Buckminster Fuller's definition of FINCAP and it's post-1934 successor LAWCAP. As Bucky explained in his final, monumental book, *Critical Path* (published posthumously in 1981):

One of my earliest books was *Nine Chains to the Moon*, written in 1935 and published by Lippincott in July 1938, and now being published by Doubleday. In it I referred so frequently to Finance Capitalism that I developed a contraction of those two words into FINCAP. FINCAP had died a lingering death between 1929 and 1934. In this book, *Critical Path*, I refer so often to the

lawyer-resurrected "capitalism" that it is appropriate to refer henceforth to LAWCAP. LAWCAP's "capitalism" is paradoxically the most highly socialized organization in all history -- the citizens of LAWCAP's welfare-state -- the whole body of corporate stockholders -- having an annual average dole of \$100,000 per capita without their even having to make a pretense of getting a job.

If we take the billions of dollars given in the 1930s to the great U.S.A. defense-industries corporations by the New Deal's Reconstruction Finance Corporation . . . if we take the hidden tax-deduction subsidies to do research, development, and advertising given to all these companies in pre-1942 dollars between 1933 and 1980 . . . if we take the \$100 billion in foreign aid that paid for the overseas establishment of the great corporations . . . if we take the \$155 billion of atomic know-how and development taken over by the oil companies . . . and if we take the number of fine ounces of gold bullion taken out of America exclusively by the capitalist world's banking system . . . and if we take a reasonably low estimate of the unknown billions of dollars taken out of the U.S.A. by the CIA to operate exclusively on behalf of international capitalism without the knowledge or authority of the people of the U.S. of America's quasi-democracy . . . and if we multiply the sum of the foregoing figures by twenty-five, which is the amount to which our present U.S.A. dollars have been depreciated between the time of the appropriations and January 1, 1980, we come to a figure in the magnitude of \$6 trillion that has been legally transferred from the U.S.A. people's national capital account over to the capital ownership account of the stockholders of the 1000 largest, transnational, exclusively American-flag-flying corporations.

The transnationally operating LAWCAP in the early '50s resurrected the twenty-year-dead FINCAP and its "capitalist" world and left only its American-flag-flying storefronts in the U.S.A. to cover its comprehensive financial withdrawal from the U.S.A. LAWCAP silently and invisibly moved capitalism's big-time operations into the any-legally-propitious-elsewhere. With its invisibly operating CIA (Capitalism's Invisible Army) LAWCAP exploited the unwitting citizens of the U.S.A. in order -- they hoped -- to destroy socialism.

The 1947-50 LAWCAP decision to start a World War III had two objectives: (1) to keep capitalism in business, and (2) to prevent the Russians from employing their industrial productivity to produce a higher standard of living for their own people than that demonstrated in the U.S.A. LAWCAP's decision to start World War III inaugurated history's greatest game of poker, with the U.S.S.R. as a very reluctant player, worried about its "home-folks' " political agitation for a few "goodies." It became a poker game that called for each side adding approximately \$100 billion per year into the "killingry kitty." They have now done so for thirty years. This amounts to \$6 trillion. By complete coincidence \$6 trillion happens to be approximately the same magnitude as that of the total mileage per year traveled by light operating at 186,000 miles each second of the year.

Throughout those thirty years, the U.S.A.-half of this \$6 trillion (that is, \$3 trillion) was redeposited at various turnover rates per year in the Western-world banks, and the latter continually reloaned those dollars, at historically unprecedentedly high rates, to armaments industry. The net of it all was to convert science and technology's highest capability into accomplishing the killing of ever more people at ever greater distances in ever shorter time.

LAWCAP's comprehensive grand strategy had its Achilles' heel. (pp.114, 116)

The above comes from the chapter entitled "Legally Piggily". In the Index, the *See also* section for this term lists, "Corruption; Doing the wrong things for the right reasons; Integrity; Loss of Integrity; Making money with money; Obnoxious[1]". It's a long way we've come. From racking up a \$6 trillion debt toward our children's future from 1930 to 1980 into the "killingry kitty", we now see at least \$455 billion speculative dollars -- ***with no material backing*** -- being exchanged in the global market *each year*. Bucky wrote at great length about cosmic accounting. The final paragraph of Legally Piggily concludes:

Cosmic accounting completely eliminates the economic validity of bankruptcy accounting, except when humans make the mistake of trying to hoard or withdraw critical "capital" assets from production-functioning. Withdrawal of capital assets is akin to attempting to withdraw one of the stars from the celestial system. Into what Universe, other than the cosmic totality, may the star be transferred? Every atom and electron is an essential part of the eternally regenerative --

ergo, totally inexhaustible (but always locally ebbing and flooding) -- pulsative Universe. (p.120)

We'll come back to the behavior of hoarding and its twin motivators, the fear of scarcity and greed. While i am sure David Korten is familiar with Bucky's definition of finance capitalism, Korten's understanding of the world today exceeds Fuller's by almost twenty years. In *Money versus Wealth*, he goes on to point out how as "[f]inancial assets and transactions grow faster than growth in the output of real wealth," not only is this a sign "that the global economy is getting sick," but that

the biggest profits are going to those who deal in pure finance. For 1996, the shareholders of the seven largest US money center banks reaped an average total return of 44 percent. Mutual funds specializing in finance averaged a 26.5 percent return, besting all other industry categories by a wide margin. Funds specializing in much-touted technology stocks came in a poor second at 21 percent.

The growing dominance of money is also revealed in the increasing monetization of human relationships. Not long ago, even in the most supposedly advanced countries, half of the adult population worked without pay to maintain home and community. These are among the most fundamental and important of functions in a healthy economy. Now, it typically takes two adults holding two to three paid jobs between them to support a household. Child and home care is either left undone or hired out. Community service becomes the work of public employees -- to the extent there is public money to pay them. As the social capital of caring relations is depleted, family and community life fall into disarray.

The work performed by half the adult population without pay to maintain home and community was given by the mothers of the world. How *much* the lifeblood of our communities has been sapped! We see the cost of such a change everywhere with the disintegration of our individual as well as collective sense of place and belonging. On the other side, "legalized" gambling has never before been so systemized, nor the stakes so high, as it is today on a planetary scale. Korten demonstrates how the speculative financial bubbles continuing to be pumped up in the stock markets of the world are "little more than a sophisticated variant of the classic pyramid scheme." He goes on to point out that

Investing in a bubble is a form of gambling and it isn't entirely naive. Who cares if there is nothing behind it? The bubble is the action. The trick is to place big bets and get out before it bursts. It is a game of nerves. The action gets especially exciting when banks are willing to accept the inflated assets as collateral and lend new money into existence to stake further play, which pushes prices ever higher. This process of borrowing into bubbles with newly created money is key to making financial wealth increase faster than real wealth. Furthermore, when a leveraged bubble bursts and banks are left with substantial portfolios of uncollectible loans, governments are almost always forced to step in with a bailout to stop a banking collapse -- as the US government did in the case of the Great Depression and the more recent Savings and Loan crisis. This amounts to another money transfer, this time from taxpayers to those with money.

Betting on financial bubbles is only one of the lucrative games that attract players to the global finance casino. There are as well opportunities to speculate on short-term price movements, buy and sell simultaneously in different markets to profit from minute price differences, and bet on derivatives contracts. While economists have become exceedingly facile in rationalizing how such activities actually benefit society, in truth they are more accurately described as forms of legal theft by which a clever few expropriate rights to the real wealth of society while contributing more to its depletion than to its creation.

This explication of the magnitude of "legal theft" manifesting in our world today through such global speculation -- that is literally eating up our planet, our social systems, and the life within and without each us -- contemporarily reflects the legally piggily of Bucky's LAWCAP. And, given that the United States government will most assuredly have to step in

with a bailout of heretofore unimaginable magnitude to prevent a collapse of the U.S. banking system when the current bubble bursts, we can see in present-day terms how "LAWCAP's "capitalism" *is* paradoxically *the most highly socialized organization in all history*" -- for "those with money". Even when their money-generating system bursts, they *still* will get more . . .

Many have probably already felt the urge inside to yell, "STOP! I know this system is insane! This is only more of the endless proof that makes me want to turn it off and shut it out! *But what can we DO about this???*" Let's now step back and explore the origin of this collection of "lucrative games" based on a philosophy that greed and scarcity are naturally occurring elements of human nature and society. In school we learned that Adam Smith was the father of modern economics. As he looked around over two hundred years ago Smith saw a lot of greed and scarcity. In his dialogue with Sarah, Bernard goes to the heart of this in a manner of analysis I have never heard articulated from anyone as practiced and well-versed in finance as he:

SARAH: So you're suggesting that scarcity needn't be a guiding principle of our economic system. But isn't scarcity absolutely fundamental to economics, especially in a world of limited resources?

BERNARD: My analysis of this question is based on the work of Carl Gustav Jung because he is the only one with a theoretical framework for collective psychology, and money is fundamentally a phenomenon of collective psychology.

A key concept Jung uses is the archetype, which can be described as an emotional field that mobilizes people, individually or collectively, in a particular direction. Jung showed that whenever a particular archetype is repressed, two types of shadows emerge, which are polarities of each other.

For example, if my higher self -- corresponding to the archetype of the King or the Queen -- is repressed, I will behave either as a Tyrant or as a Weakling. These two shadows are connected to each other by fear. A Tyrant is tyrannical because he's afraid of appearing weak; a Weakling is afraid of being tyrannical. Only someone with no fear of either one of these shadows can embody the archetype of the King.

Now let's apply this framework to a well-documented phenomenon -- the repression of the Great Mother archetype. The Great Mother archetype was very important in the Western world from the dawn of prehistory throughout the pre-Indo-European time periods, as it still is in many traditional cultures today. But this archetype has been violently repressed in the West for at least 5,000 years starting with the Indo-European invasions -- reinforced by the anti-Goddess view of Judeo-Christianity, culminating with three centuries of witch hunts -- all the way to the Victorian era.

If there is a repression of an archetype on this scale and for this length of time, the shadows manifest in a powerful way in society. After 5,000 years, people will consider the corresponding shadow behaviors as "normal."

The question I have been asking is very simple: What are the shadows of the Great Mother archetype? I'm proposing that these shadows are greed and fear of scarcity. So it should come as no surprise that in Victorian times -- at the apex of the repression of the Great Mother -- a Scottish schoolmaster named Adam Smith noticed a lot of greed and scarcity around him and assumed that was how all "civilized" societies worked. Smith, as you know, created modern economics, which can be defined as a way of allocating scarce resources through the mechanism of individual, personal greed.

SARAH: Wow! So if greed and scarcity are the shadows, what does the Great Mother archetype herself represent in terms of economics?

BERNARD: Let's first distinguish between the Goddess, who represented all aspects of the Divine, and the Great Mother, who specifically symbolizes planet Earth -- fertility, nature, the

flow of abundance in all aspects of life. Someone who has assimilated the Great Mother archetype trusts in the abundance of the universe. It's when you lack trust that you want a big bank account. The first guy who accumulated a lot of stuff as protection against future uncertainty automatically had to start defending his pile against everybody else's envy and needs. If a society is afraid of scarcity, it will actually create an environment in which it manifests well-grounded reasons to live in fear of scarcity. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy!

Also, we have been living for a long time under the belief that we need to create scarcity to create value. Although that is valid in some material domains, we extrapolate it to other domains where it may not be valid. For example, there's nothing to prevent us from freely distributing information. The marginal cost of information today is practically nil. Nevertheless, we invent copyrights and patents in an attempt to keep it scarce.

SARAH: So fear of scarcity creates greed and hoarding, which in turn creates the scarcity that was feared. Whereas cultures that embody the Great Mother are based on abundance and generosity. Those ideas are implicit in the way you've defined community, are they not?

BERNARD: Actually it's not my definition, it's etymological. The origin of the word "community" comes from the Latin *munus*, which means the gift, and *cum*, which means together, among each other. So community literally means to give among each other.

Therefore I define my community as a group of people who welcome and honor my gifts, and from whom I can reasonably expect to receive gifts in return.

Everyone is heartily urged to read Dialogue, Beyond Greed & Scarcity in its entirety. It is *filled* with engaging and inspiring wholistic awareness about what money is, aspects of its history, and how community and local currencies can provide us with the means to compensate for the increasingly negative impacts wrought by national currencies and the global financial system. Early on Bernard describes his understanding of how greed and fear of scarcity, the shadows of the Great Mother archetype of abundance, "are in fact being continuously created and amplified as a direct result of the kind of money we are using. . . The scarcity is in our national currencies. In fact, the job of central banks is to create and maintain that currency scarcity. The direct consequence is that we have to fight with each other in order to survive."

Repression for thousands of years of the Great Mother archetype of abundance has created the polarities which are now being exponentially amplified *as a direct result of the kind of money we are using*. Community currencies offer us a variety *and wealth* of means to augment the kinds of money and exchange we employ for the physical and psychic well-being of ourselves, our families, and our communities. In other words, for the common good. Just like is says in the U.S. Constitution. Bernard is completing a new book -- due out in German in 9/99 and English in spring, 2000 -- called *The Future of Money: Beyond Greed and Scarcity* in which he will no doubt expand further upon the four trends he sees converging which he explained during his presentation.

In the first Dialogue session after Bernard's presentation at the Gathering, i asked a question that included the phrase "alternative currencies". Bernard was quick to make the distinction between alternative and *complementary* currencies. He explained his rational that national, competition-generating currencies will still have a role in the competitive global market. But he went on to stress the point that local and community (because some communities do not exist in the same geographical locale) currencies are eminently better suited for developing cooperative, local and community economies. Transaction Net includes a rich abundance of information in the section on Complementary Currencies including :

- Backed Currencies, Scrip, and Barter,
- LETS (Local Exchange Trading Systems),
- ROCS (a Robust Complementary Community Currency System),
- Ithaca HOURS,
- National Currency Systems, and
- Time Dollars Service Exchange.

Each one of these complementary systems of currency is explained in great detail with a profusion of definitions, local and off-TransactionNet-based links (some are dead -- if you find one, please send mail to zisk@well.com or thru one of their many comment fill-out forms) and some images.

In his Dialogue with Sarah, Bernard mentions the trend towards continuing decreases in employment rates and how local and community currencies are perfectly designed to offset this decline:

I believe we're seeing one of the last job-driven affluent periods in the US right now. As Jeremy Rifkin argues in his book, *The End of Work*, jobs are basically not going to be there anymore, even in "good times."

A study done by The International Metalworkers Federation in Geneva predicts that within the next 30 years, 2 or 3 percent of the world's population will be able to produce everything we need on the planet. Even if they're off by a factor of 10, we'd still have a question of what 80 percent of humanity will do.

My forecast is that local currencies will be a major tool for social design in the 21st century, if for no other reasons than employment. . . . For example, in France, there are now 300 local exchange networks, called *Grain de Sel*, literally "Grain of Salt." These systems -- which arose exactly when and where the unemployment levels reached about 12 percent -- facilitate exchanges of everything from rent to organic produce, but they do something else as well. Every fortnight in the Ariège, in southwestern France, there is a big party. People come to trade not only cheeses, fruits, and cakes as in the normal market days, but also hours of plumbing, haircuts, sailing or English lessons. Only local currencies accepted!

Local currency creates work, and I make a distinction between work and jobs. A job is what you do for a living; work is what you do because you like to do it. I expect jobs to increasingly become obsolete, but there is still an almost infinite amount of fascinating work to be done.

For example, in France you find people offering guitar lessons and requesting lessons in German. Neither would pay in French francs. What's nice about local currency is that when people create their own money, they don't need to build in a scarcity factor. And they don't need to get currency from elsewhere in order to have a means of making an exchange with a neighbor.

Edgar Cahn's Time Dollars are a classical example. As soon as you have an agreement between two people about a transaction using Time Dollars, they literally create the necessary "money" in the process; there's no scarcity of money. That does not mean there's an infinite amount of this currency, either; you cannot give me 500,000 hours -- nobody has 500,000 hours to give. So there's a ceiling on it, yes, but there's no artificial scarcity. Instead of pitting people against each other, the system actually helps them cooperate.

In his 1997 post, Internet Currencies for Virtual Communities Bernard describes "why the budding cybereconomy should look beyond the limits of Industrial Age currencies (i.e. our 'normal' national currencies such as the Dollar, Deutsche Mark, Pound Sterling, etc.) toward a richer variety of payment systems specifically adapted to the requirements of cyberspace." In the fifth section, "Currencies which could meet these Characteristics", there is a graph showing the Number of Community Currency Systems Operational in Twelve Countries 1984-1996 which ranges up to more than 1,400 -- and that was more than two years ago.

(Bernard is cited in the *CSM* article as putting the number up to about 2,000 today.)

Bernard's Community Currencies: A New Tool for the 21st Century essay opens with the following:

The three most important concerns of our contemporaries in the developed nations are remarkably convergent--unemployment, the environment, and community breakdown--and there are strong indications that these same issues will remain on top of the agenda well into the next century. Emerging technologies promise to keep unemployment a major issue, even if all Western economies get out of recession. By 2010, China will introduce as much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as the entire world does today. And community breakdown is one of the most systemic, deep, and complex societal trends of the past 30 years, with no signs of any reversal.

Precisely because we will have to live with these issues for the foreseeable future, only a long-term structural approach can successfully resolve these problems. Here I show how community currencies could contribute to tackling all three problems and also permit us to "retrofit" economic motivation to desirable human behavior.

The links at the bottom of this section include pointers to places and information in addition to what is being cited in this text. As an example of what the demonstrably positive affects can and *already have manifested* let's go to Ithaca, New York, which employs a local currency system they call Ithaca HOURS. This currency uses "the hour of service as unit of account and thus may be measured the same independently of place and circumstances."

Their web site offers a marvelous array of resources and information including the *Hometown Money Book* and Starter Kit. Keep in mind, this book was published in 1995. In it, "The founder of Ithaca HOURS explains step-by-step how to start up and maintain a local currency system. Since 1991, \$65,000 of Ithaca HOURS, worth \$10 each, have been issued and used by 2,000 people, including 350 businesses and 40 community organizations, adding over \$2,000,000 of trading to Ithaca's Grassroots Local Product." Talk about increasing the health of one's community by increasing the dynamism and interactivity of its community-based economics system! Other Hours Cities contains three lists of cities with existing, planned, or non- HOURS programs. Find/join one near you!

At the end of *Money versus Wealth* David Korten writes that "Because we have so little experience in designing money systems to create societies that benefit people and nature, we will need to be creative.

To heal society we must heal the money system. This will involve a two-fold process of reducing money's importance in our lives and restoring its appropriate role in service to the creation and protection of real wealth.

- **It will be necessary to de-myth money.** I earned MBA and PhD degrees from one of the world's leading graduate schools of business, but I was never taught the difference between making money and creating wealth, nor how to distinguish between productive and predatory investments. Such lessons should be a basic part of education for business or responsible citizenship.
- **We need to reweave the social fabric.** In a society in which relationships are defined by love, generosity, and community, the importance of money in mediating personal exchange and allocating resources is likely to decline markedly. This will require reducing monetary dependence and restoring non-monetary exchanges through a process that selectively delinks individuals, families, and communities from dependence on the predatory institutions of a global economy, downscaling consumption to reduce dependence on paid work, increasing reliance on local products to meet basic needs, and

strengthening the engagement of all persons in the productive life of family and community.

- **The truly monumental task** will be to redesign the money system to make money the servant of the creation and protection of real wealth. Among other things, corrective measures will need to:

1. make speculation unprofitable;
2. limit the growth of financial bubbles;
3. increase incentives for cooperation among people and communities;
4. reward productive work and investment;
5. create a just distribution of claims to real wealth;
6. provide incentives for patient and locally rooted investment in real assets; and
7. strengthen the social fabric of family and community.

A common currency exclusive to the members of one city or geographic region is one means of moving towards these goals. Another is to introduce zero- or negative-interest money. We should also consider whether it makes sense for private banks, rather than government or communities, to create money, and seriously consider substantial taxes on short-term speculative gains.

The purpose of such measures is not to promote global growth and competition, but rather to create healthy and prosperous societies that provide economic security and just rewards for productive contribution to their members, have a strong and caring social fabric, and live in balance with their natural environment.

Regarding negative interest rates, Bernard spoke about the the system of applying a *demurrage charge* which is defined as " A time-related charge on outstanding balances of a currency. Acts similarly to a negative interest rate, and was designed to give a disincentive to hoard the currency. Savings would then occur in forms other than accumulation of the medium of exchange. Silvio Gesell developed the theory that money is like a public service (like public transport), and therefore a charge is justified. Both John Maynard Keynes and Irving Fisher provided theoretical foundation for this approach, and it was implemented in the 'stamp scrip' of the 1930's." This is described in section 5. Reprogramming the "Invisible Hand" of Bernard's Community Currencies essay. The following excerpt, from another of Bernard's works, A 'Green' Convertible Currency augments this:

A negative-interest currency--like any commodity that has a significant storage cost--becomes automatically more valuable over time (a look at the price of future delivery of gold or copper in the financial pages compared to today's "spot" price shows that effect).... There is an additional beneficial effect with regard to the environment. The higher the money rate of interest, the stronger is the pressure to discount the future and to place immediate gains ahead of long-term concerns. With negative-interest currency, this pressure is not only absent but even reversed, and more environment-friendly priorities automatically prevail. During the economic depression of the 1930s, Europe saw a number of practical monetary experiments with negative-interest alternative currency. The device worked splendidly. The alternative currency (typically issued by a small city or region) had many times the rapidity of circulation of the official currency, and the anticipated employment and environmental benefits were actualized. In Worgl, for example, people spontaneously started replanting forests just to dispose of their negative-interest currency in anticipation of future cash flow to be expected from the growing trees.

There was much discussion at the Gathering about the end of the year clock-click. Along with the potential for the uncertain magnitude of significant interruption of "business as usual", people were also very interested in considering the opportunities such a situation presents for re-focusing awareness regarding people's fundamental relationship within local community. The y2k event provides a chance to step back and critically analyze the degree

of dependence in a community on a national currency economy for local commerce and trade. It affords us the opportunity to consider *augmenting* this by manifesting a more nationally-decentralized, community-centralized system of exchange composed of a one or more local currencies that keep more of the wealth of the community circulating within its own borders.

Michael Linton, who developed and opened the first LETS system in 1982 and has worked on community currencies since then, was also present at the Gathering. As described in the FAQ about LETSsystems:

A LETSsystem is a trading network supported by its own internal currency. It is self-regulating and allows its users to manage and issue their own 'money supply' within the boundaries of the network.

The key points include:

- **co-operation:** no-one owns the network.
- **self-regulation:** the network is controlled by its users.
- **empowerment:** all network users may 'issue' the 'internal currency'.
- **money:** money, as a means of exchange, is an integral feature.

LETSsystem recording services keep track of transactions and issue statements of LETSsystem trading.

The word "LETS" was chosen to highlight an invitation (let's) and a culture of consent. LETS embodies the 'Law of Two Feet' - *"If you like it, you walk in. If you don't, then you walk away"*.

Eric Frank Russell, the story writer, expressed this as *"Freedom I will, Freedom I won't"* - everybody has choices.

LETS supports trading which results in win-win outcomes. This is to be contrasted to the more coercive types of behaviour often seen in communities which are short of money -- "I've got the money, so you have to work for me." In LETS, there is never any obligation to trade.

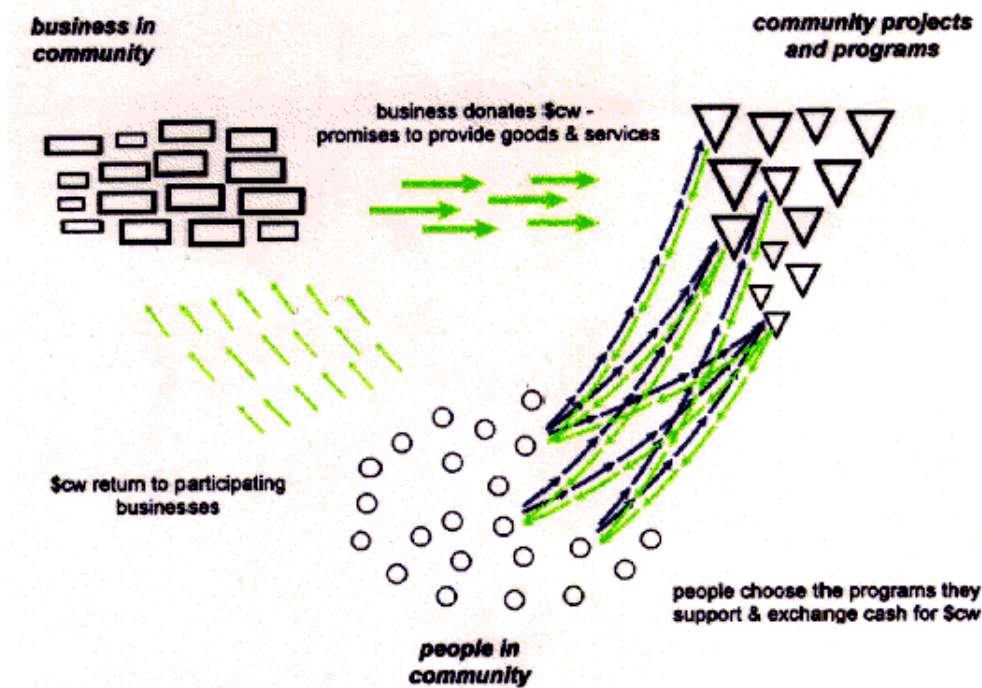
The use of LETS as an acronym was an afterthought. The most common rendering is 'Local Exchange Trading System'. However, we prefer to avoid the use of the word 'local', as it suggests a geographical emphasis, which can be misleading.

Michael's persona combined elements of Pan and Puck. His energy was consistently upbeat, playful, and creative. In the Directory printout, Michael's web-presence points to community currencies in '99 providing the entry point to information on how "cc can be lifeboats for our communities, maybe even arks, so let's do it, now. Like the cc99 project itself, these pages are work in progress. y2k rules, ok?" Within, one will find concise and clearly articulated **reasons, means, and actions** we **ALL** can learn about, explore, and participate in to re-invent our society, world, and future.

Ernie Yacub came from Cumberland, British Columbia where, since 1995, he has been focusing on design of a "community way" program of local currency. He passed out an explanation of this that describes the process in the following way:

Raising funds the community way

Community way is a new approach to locally based fund-raising. Donations in a community way (cw\$) connect community service organizations, business, and people. Each gains from the recirculation of the money, and nobody loses cash. The goal of the first phase of the program is to raise \$2 million in the Vancouver region . . . new money that will stay in the community.



- businesses donate cw\$, not cash or products, to support organizations, programs, and projects of their choice, undertaking to accept cw\$ in part payment (usually between 15% and 50%) of a sale.
- people finance the projects they want to support by exchanging cash for cw\$, 1 for 1, which they then use in any participating stores, restaurants, etc.

Why community way works

For business, this is a simple and cash-free way to help the community, increase sales, develop the local economy, and secure customer recognition and loyalty.

Since the cw\$ is as good as cash with participating business, people can help without hurting, and by shopping local they are voting for the community they want.

Community way works much like the common practice of auctioning or reselling donated goods and services, but this program is more flexible, revenues are more predictable, and the community service organizations raise more dollars at less cost.

Elisabet Sahtouris presented the opening overview for the conference. In it she spoke in her consistently expansive and wholistic-seeing way about holarchies and life's self-organizing systems; how each level from the most micro, moving out more and more to the macro, exist in ever greater collections of complexity and capacity. Each part functions both as its own whole and as part of a greater whole. While discussing holarchy she mentioned in passing one of the most significant books she has ever taken in called *Kinship with All Life*. ("Simple, challenging, real-life experiences showing how animals communicate with each other and with people who understand them.") Written by J. Allen Boone and published in 1954, one can find numerous, affordable, used copies available through my favorite book source, www.bibliofind.com. I like bibliofind infinitely more than the likes of amazon.com because it is composed of and connects you directly with individual book sellers who register their copies of whatever they have in their stores that searching quickly pinpoints. Elisabet is extremely gifted and creative in what she perceives and connects. For her to speak so highly of this book is the best recommend I can think of.

It was as i was poking around the net while writing this that i discovered David Korten's latest book *The Post-Corporate World -- Life After Capitalism*, just published on March 1, 1999. Sifting the web excerpts i could see this was something especially significant and found a copy at my local book store. My sense of its importance was fueled that much more when i read the beginning of the dedication page: "*To two leading-edge thinkers from the field of biology, Mae-Wan Ho and Elisabet Sahtouris, whose pioneering work on living systems inspired this book. . .*" David's understanding of the living wisdom of the eternal feminine is something most all of us in post-industrial culture who inhabit male bodies never begin to grasp during our lives.

As I reflect on such wonders as the incredible inventions of the bacteria that terra-formed the planet and learned to live within their natural limits I come to wonder--not whether bacteria have a capacity for intelligent collective action--but whether we humans have yet achieved a comparable capacity.

--*The Post Corporate World*, Chapter 4. The Incredible Journey

The book's Acknowledgments pages contain *many* names, most of whom i haven't heard of. Those who are familiar are people likewise deeply involved with and committed to exploring how to re-claim and re-establish human participation in the song of life. Amongst the "Reader's Comments are the following excerpts: "He dares to build on the invisible expertise of women who have been growing a different paradigm from the bottom up" - Gloria Steinem; "a watershed book. Marrying ground-breaking analysis with heartening prescription **it is 'must' reading for all who dare to hope for a livable future**" - Joanna Macy; "Increasingly, thinkers like David Korten are re-establishing connects that embed us in the real world, exposing the new demons as phantoms without substance and lifting our spirits with a new vision of human and natural communities" - David Suzuki; "All those haunted to the point of despair by the prevalent TINA philosophy (There is No Alternative), will derive renewed force and optimism from this visionary work" - Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan; "Drawing on Adam Smith's much-neglected *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Korten points toward a genuine market economy as a life-giving economy, celebrating locality and neighborliness and human creativity" - Elise Boulding; "David Korten, amongst a few prescient others, predicted the collapse that was set in motion in Asia and is now spreading worldwide. Beyond the fear and enormity occasioned by this growing discontinuity, David once again looks ahead, envisioning the rudiments and principles of an economy that is guided by life rather than currency. It is an articulate and hopeful expression by one of the leading architects for a positive future" - Paul Hawken; "**does for our view of corporatism, what Betty Friedan did for our view of women and Rachel Carson did for our view of the environment. . . . One of its strengths is the way it connects what we are learning about living systems, the environment, colonial economics and democracy**" - Peter Block; "offers a visionary blueprint for putting life in all its forms at the center of human endeavors in the next century" - Jean-Bertrand Aristide; "Globalization, which was meant to establish corporate rule worldwide, is floundering everywhere. With the backdrop of the failure of globalization in Asia and climate catastrophe in Central America, the main

challenge is not global market integration but survival. The *Post-Corporate World* **shifts our priorities back from fictitious money to the real issues of living and dying. It helps us become energized in life beyond globalization**" - Vandana Shiva; "presents . . . a way that would lead us to that world of wonder and delight and fulfillment that is the proper world of human existence. He understands, with rare insight, the difficulties that the present industrial-commercial-financial corporation structures of our society have gotten us into. Fortunately he also has the practical experience and the judgment needed to guide us into that more integral life fulfillment that awaits us, if we respond wisely to the new millennium that is opening up before us. We can create a better life situation for ourselves, for our children and for the planet on which we live" - Thomas Berry.

Everything i've been learning about community currencies since The Gathering has expanded me to a threshold where i feel each day now a tangible sense of hope about what *is truly and actually possible* for each and every one of us to engage the gift of life expressing itself through us. *The Post-Corporate World -- Life After Capitalism* focuses on how life itself creates economies for living and how we can "retool our economy according to the principles of a living economy." Korten observes how living systems are self-organizing and cooperative, localized and adapted to place, bounded by managed, permeable borders, frugal and sharing, and diverse and creative. In the Prologue he writes,

This is not a how-to book on the ten simple steps to creating a better world. It is a book about changing the way we perceive reality and think about its possibilities. That said, I do hope you will find both ideas and inspiration for personal action in the pages that follow. . . . Part IV tells about people who are creating the new story by living it. They embody many useful ideas and much inspiration. Chapter 14 suggests a wide range of possibilities for individual action you may wish to consider in developing your personal strategy for engaging in the creation of the post-corporate world. (pp.16-17)

At one point at the conference Bernard articulated his sense that where the promotion of life is concerned, the primary issue with any money system is the democratization of how capital is invested. i had occasion to meet and talk with Peter Ziegler, a designer, manufacturer, and developer of renewable energy and sustainable agroeconomic systems for the past 25 years. As was the case with others i met, Peter was very much a practitioner of Bucky's comprehensivist, doing-more-with-less kind of seeing, thinking, and doing. One night a group of us watched a film he brought that has been produced by a new company he is part of called Millennial Goods. The video, entitled, *Ecological Design: Inventing the Future*, started with a marvelous summation of the history of doing more with less technologically in the 20th century with a *lot* of focus on the work of Buckminster Fuller. It then moved more and more into work a host of creative, comprehensivist-minded people have been engaged in relating to manifesting sustainable practices to address a problems centering on and in urban environments and sustainability.

One of the most exciting points for me was when biologist John Todd was shown describing his interest in creating and experimenting with "living machines" in symbiosis with their human counterparts that perform all the regulating functions in a house such as heating and cooling, lighting, purifying the air, and breaking down waste into organic composting materials. There was *much, much more* going on throughout this movie that i cannot now remember. What i do recall is the sense of grounded, gentle, dedicated spirit of the people filmed describing their own creative pursuits designing systems for growing food, human

habitation, transportation, recycling on a scale where *everything* is re-used -- just like nature does -- and a host of other processes rooted in the sense that the living world *already knows* how to create interconnected levels of self-organizing and directing holarchies. Our challenge is to once more re-cognize our own place in all this and participate in the song of life going on within and without us every moment.

Although the culture of materialism has been created by the most sophisticated and highly paid propagandists, it is at its core a falsified, manufactured, and non-consensual culture. If material acquisition was truly the dominant value of the human species, then surely capitalism would find it unnecessary to spend \$450 billion a year to propagate it throughout the world. Nor would so many of the advertising messages and images that promote these desires be designed to appeal to our longing for acceptance, love, and contact with nature. Successful as capitalism has been in creating a mass consumer culture, the fact remains that its values are largely alien to our basic nature.

--The Post Corporate World, Chapter 11. Culture Shift

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

There was *so much more* that transpired and was shared at the Gathering that I have not been able to include here. John Pozzi's presentation of the Global Resource Bank ("The GRB's environmental accounting system is based on the shareholder's appraisal of Gross Ecosystem Product as the index to ecological and economic progress... GRB credits can be used locally, nationally and globally... To stabilize the current situation the GRB's Capital Exchange Account exchanges its commodity based credits for other all other currencies and the current public debt.) -- EVERY HUMAN ON EARTH NEEDS TO JOIN THIS, Ron Swenson's development of electric vehicles and solar energy systems, Amanda Bellerby's involvement with *Sojourn* magazine, Debora Schramm's representation of barter.com, Genevieve Vaughan's championing of the gift economy, Thomas Greco's writings and observations on Y2k, monetary transformation, local exchange, and sustainable economics Andrew Michael's Resource Exchange Bank project. . . . Yes, there were a lot of other participants and contributions.

Most of the following is made up of links to sites people who attended the Gathering are involved with. Video and audio recordings were made of each presentation. For list of what is available in **video**: contact Options 2000, Box 1047, Bolinas, CA 94924, 415/868-1900, opt2000@nbm.com; in **audio**: contact TUC Radio, Box 410009, San Francisco, CA 94141, 415/861-6962, tuc@tucradio.org.

- People-Centered Development Forum :
 - *The Post-Corporate World -- Life After Capitalism*, by David Korten, 1999
 - Life After Capitalism, presentation by David Korten, 11/98
- **YES! A Journal of Positive Futures** :
 - Local Currencies : (Spring, 1997)
 - Money *versus* Wealth by David Korten
 - Beyond Greed & Scarcity, Bernard Lietaer and Sarah van Gelder Dialogue
 - Tools for new currencies and exchanges
 - Economics as if *Life* matters : (Spring, 1999)
 - The Post-Corporate World, by David Korten
 - Ownership Matters, by Ted Howard

- MAI Free Zones, by Tracy Rysavy
- What You Can Do To Build a New Economy, by Tracy Rysavy

- Transaction Net: How Currency Systems Work (a Money Map) :
 - Community Currencies: A New Tool for the 21st Century, Bernard Lietaer
 - draft of *The Future of Money: Beyond Greed and Scarcity*, Bernard Lietaer
 - A 'Green' Convertible Currency, Bernard Lietaer
 - Complementary Community Currency Systems and Local Exchange Networks
 - Internet Currencies for Virtual Communities, Bernard Lietaer
 - The Internet and the Future of Money, Howard Rheingold
- community currencies in '99
 - The LETSsystem Design Manual
 - Community Way Proposal for Kitsilano Community Centre
- E.F. Schumacher Society's Local Currencies pages:
 - Local Currencies: Catalysts for Sustainable Regional Economies
 - Local Currency Groups in the Americas
 - (i spoke with Susan Witt on 3/18/99 asking about the home page's statment "last updated: 04-18-98". She explained there has been more recent updates inside but not on the home page. They continue to prepare more content to be presented on their site and she expects the Local Currencies listing to be updated within the new few months or less. --ratitor)
- Ithaca HOURS Online: Local Currency in the Service of Community
 - Introduction: Creating Community Economics with Local Currency
 - Ithaca HOURS Currency, "**Local currency is a lot of fun, and it's legal**"
 - *Hometown Money* Book and Starter Kit
 - Other Hours Cities - find one near you - **LARGE compendium, irreplaceable!**
 - *Hour Town* Archive: Cover Stories :
 - Taking Control of Health Costs, Text by Paul Glover/Artwork by Jim Houghton, 3/99
 - Who Controls the Money? In Ithaca, You Do!, by Paul Glover, 2/99
 - The Multiplier Effect of Local Currency, by Monica Hargraves, 12/98
 - City Hall vs. Ithaca, by Paul Glover, 10/98
 - Protecting Ithaca from Computer Chaos, by Paul Glover, 8/98
 - Information on Ithaca HOURS is also available in Espanol (Spanish), Deutsch (German), Francais (French), Turkce (Turkish), Suomalainen (Finnish), Svenska (Swedish), Portuguese, Nihhon-go (Japanese), and Zhong-Wen (Chinese, 100k).
 - and many more!
- Time Dollar
 - Time Dollar Institute
 - Maine Time Dollar Network
 - Time Dollar Santa Cruz
- Local Money Strengthens Communities, by David Block
 - Keeping Currency Moving
 - Stimulating Services Through Time Dollars

(*In Business:: Creating Sustainable Enterprises & Communities*, July/Aug 1998)
- Local Currencies across North America, by Susan Witt

(*Orion Afield*, Autumn 1998: Community Economics)
- Millennial Goods

(3/20/99: Their website has been down since last week. Address is 640 Butte St., Sausalito, CA 94965. please stand by...)
- Global Resource Bank, the people's bank of ecosystems. A transparent clearinghouse for a sustainable global economy.

- *Sojourn*,
 - Fall, 1998 :**
 - Weaving Worlds Together, Cover Artist, Gloria Simmonds
 - Understanding Advantages of a Complementary Local Currency Exchange, by Jerri-Jo Idarius
 - Reweaving the Web of Life: An Interview with Carol Brouillet
 - Spiritual Community on the Internet with Annie Raitt
 - Making Democracy Work, An Interview with Mary Rose Kaczorowski
 - "In order for democracy to work, people have to find time to take an active, informed part."
 - Summer, 1998 :**
 - A Tribute to Marija Gimbutas, by Joan Marler
 - From the Realm of the Ancestors, Book Review by Liz Haapanen
 - Bridging the gap between Christianity and the Goddess, by Anne Newkirk Niven
 - European Pagan Traditions, thru the eyes of five women
- COMMUNITY INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER, Thomas Greco, Director
 - The Millennium Crisis -- Disaster or Opportunity?, 8/98
 - Proper Management of the System Trading Account in Mutual Credit and Local Currency Systems, 6/98
 - Improving Local Currencies, or How To Make a Good Thing Better, 2/98
 - New Money: A Creative Opportunity for Business, 1997
 - *New Money for Healthy Communities*, 1994
- barter.com seeks to establish a more equitable, universal commodity-based currency
- EcoTopia/Systems, a design strategy for the new millenium, building a sustainable future
 - Solar Quest Virtual SchoolHouse
- For-Giving, A Feminist Criticism of Exchange, by Genevieve Vaughan
- Resource Exchange Bank, in the San Francisco Bay Area
- Alternative Tauschkreise (LETS-Systeme), Germanic countries

Footnotes

1. Bucky invented The World Game which is based on love, compassion, truth-telling, abundance, sharing of basic resources and voluntary simplicity. Bucky defines Obnoxico at the very end (pp. 225-6) of the "World Game" chapter:

I consider it essential to pay all my bills in the swiftest possible manner. In whatever system I find myself I commit myself to "play the game," for I am not a political revolutionary; I am a design science revolutionary.

Responding to criticism by individuals who said that the reason Buckminster Fuller was not *trying* to "earn his living" was because he was incapable of doing so, I told one of my audiences in 1947 about *Obnoxico*, a theoretical enterprise I had invented through which I could make vast amounts of dollars in one year on an entirely legal basis -- but one as typically undesirable to me as is all money-making.

I said, "You have to decide whether you want to make money or make sense, because the two are mutually exclusive."

I do not consider it to be money-making when I insist upon being refunded for the development and overhead cost of the services I perform annually for others, which performance I undertake only in response to the requests of others.

The private-enterprise corporation called Obnoxico was schematically designed only to serve as an object lesson. Obnoxico was designed to exploit the most sentimental

weaknesses of humanity. In my theoretical Obnoxico's catalog the number-one item suggested that on the last day that your baby wears diapers you very carefully remove them, re-pin them empty, and stuff them full of tissue paper in just the shape in which they were when last occupied by your baby. You pack this assembly carefully into a strong corrugated-paperboard container and send it to Obnoxico, which will base-metallize the diapers, then gold- or silverplate them and send them back to you to be filled with ferns and hung in the back window of your car. The easily forecastable profits from this one item ran into millions of dollars per year.

Eagerly my friends of 1947 on being told of Obnoxico joined in the fun and began inventing items for its catalog. Next they began sending me Obnoxico items then beginning to come on the market in 1950 for the first time and as advertised in magazines: plastic pebbles for your garden walk and the now-prevalent, but then-new, plastic flowers.

I then showed how the contributors of the original items sent to me in fun -- to keep the joke going -- could be persuaded to accept shares in Obnoxico in exchange for their contributions. Then the Faustian aspect of the enterprise revealed itself, for it was clearly foreseeable that the stockholders would swiftly become so rich that they would tend to take the whole matter seriously. Overnight they would lose their sense of humor as their greed was stimulated and they became ruthlessly deliberate exploiters of humanity.

Somehow or other the theoretical Obnoxico concept has now twenty-five years later become a burgeoning reality. Private enterprise is now building airports with ever-longer walkways and hotels with ever-increasing numbers of levels of ground-floor and basement arcades to accommodate the evermore-swiftly multiplying Obnoxico stores.

Human beings traveling away from home with cash in their pockets, thinking fondly of those left behind or soon-to-be-joined loved ones, are hooked by the realistic statuettes of four-year-old girls and boys with upturned faces saying in a cartoon "balloon," "What did you bring me, Daddy?"

As the banking system pleads for more savings-account deposits (so that they can loan your money out to others at interest plus costs) the Obnoxico industry bleeds off an ever-greater percentage of all the potential savings as they are sentimentally or jokingly spent for acrylic toilet seats with dollar bills cast in the transparent plastic material, two teddy bears hugging an alligator, etc.

World Game is Anti-Obnoxico and commits itself to making Obnoxico and allied activities obsolete rather than attacking it directly.

Discovering Mister Fred's Magic Kingdom

Up through the end of last year, i had been feeling stuck finding situations to volunteer playing piano for kids in local schools. Since last spring when i started trying to do this i had been dogged by a lack of confidence in having a "substantial enough" collection of songs in the repertoire to justify coming back to a given teacher's classroom in any sort of on-going basis. In this context, "substantial enough" meant a sufficient cross-section of composers and styles from Bach to Monk. Admittedly, here was a contemporary instance where my perfectionism -- albeit *greatly* diminished compared to the degree to which it *used* to influence my actions and choices -- still can significantly limit my engagement with seizing the moment and living life here and now. (i *have* come to better appreciate how perfectionism is a form of self denial as well as self hatred. Seeking to do something as "perfectly" as one can denies one's own indelibly human fallibility. Such denial of one's nature can easily slip over the edge into the extreme of hating what one is because it is not and can not be perfect.)

Sometime later in 1998 a four-page newsletter arrived from the Live Oak School District addressed to `Resident`. It sang the praises of the one Middle and three Elementary Schools

where i live. i had "filed it" in a paper-pile intending to call the school's numbers listed in back to make the volunteer pitch but had not followed through with this intention. In January on the day of the week i don't work i finally got up the nerve to call the Shoreline Middle School (6th-to-8th grade) and ended up in the voice-mail of the music teacher, Gary Fredrick. i left a message stating my interest in playing for kids as a volunteer and was surprised when Gary called back before the morning was out. He said he had a lot of kids learning to play piano and could use any help he could get working one-on-one with those having a time of learning the basics of sight-reading music and even identifying the keys on the piano. This wasn't what i had expected but i was intrigued by what he was proposing so i went over the following Tuesday to see what i could see. The school is only five minutes from my house.

So it was that i found my way to something that has since come to fill my life with an indescribably rich sense of connection and involvement with people in my *own local community*. Gary, or "Fred" or "Mr. Fred" as he is affectionately known by all the kids, has been teaching music in Santa Cruz for close to thirty years. At Shoreline he teaches four classes *five days a week* to kids learning to play piano! The classroom is built for a medium-sized band with three levels of risers reaching up to the back wall. Two of the classes are beginners in level-one, one is level-two, and one is level-three. The size of these four classes ranges between something like 25 to 40 kids. For the seven periods of the day, the first three run with a level-one, then level-three, a ten-minute break, then level-two, and the seventh period has the second level-one class. The kids use an assortment of five-octave electric keyboards with rechargeable batteries and collapsible stands. At the end of third and seventh period they have to put everything away in preparation for a band class in fourth period and clean-up after the end of the day.

There was never anything like this when i was growing up. If kids wanted to learn piano they'd take private lessons. In very short order i became enchanted with Gary's scene and after obtaining a "letter of character" from my boss's boss at work, i summed up my own sentiments in the second paragraph of my cover letter thusly:

As the years turn into decades i feel more and more the urge to contribute where i can to my community and my world. A deep love of music has always significantly expanded my appreciation of life and its multitude of blessings. i would like to participate in the music world Gary Fredrick has created to lend a modest hand helping stoke the fires of interest and curiosity in the resplendent array of kids i've seen in the past two weeks who are learning to play piano and read music in Fred's magic kingdom.

The first day i came to see what was going on was right at the end of the year's first term. The following week the second term began with the next set of four piano classes. Before the end of Tuesday in the third week i had seen enough of the light to realize i wanted to participate in this more than just one day a week. i am fortunate to be able to work at home two of the four days of my work week within a schedule of flexible hours. As long as the work gets done, i am left to my own devices. Thus i have now been drinking in Gary's magical musical kingdom three days a week in all four classes. For over the first month at the outset of each class Gary would announce my availability to anyone who wanted extra help on a first-come first-serve basis. As time has marched on i've experienced an increasing sense of belonging there and by degree the kids have more and more grown comfortable approaching me to help them work on whatever.

Gary combines teaching how to play by sight-reading from manuscript as well as learning by ear. He is very cognizant of the critical importance of giving kids enough right off the bat to turn them on and keeping alight their fires of interest so things don't become a drudgery and too mechanical. However i continue to be struck by the number of kids in level-two and even level-three who are not facile with reading music, particularly the bass clef. This makes sense of course -- it's much more exciting *and satisfying* to quickly learn a new song by hearing (and possibly watching) how it goes than it is to chip away at a musical score, measure by measure.

The repertoire of songs Gary is teaching this term covers a wide range of styles including renditions of *In the Mood*, *Canon in D*, *Green Onions*, *Money*, *Happy Together*, *Para Adelaide* (this spelling is probably wrong), *Right Here Waiting*, *Head Over Feet*, *Titanic*, *A Soulin'* (i think this is supposed to be the/an X-files theme), and *Goin' Home*. (A file drawer next to his desk is full of the scores of songs kids have learned to play in past years. This file drawer is just one of the archives of elements of past class's repertoires.) Once at the end of third period as they were putting everything away i played *Prelude No. 2 in C minor* from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I* on the one acoustic (spinet) piano in the classroom. From way up in the corner of the other side of the room where he was putting keyboards being handed him away in two large closets Gary shouted, "What's the name of that one?" He said it would be a good one to expose the kids to. The next time i came in he had me play it for the level-three class and, after acknowledging that this was within reach of their own levels of skill, asked how many would seriously be interested in trying to learn it, not as part of a grade but simply for the practice and the challenge. More than half raised their hands. Just yesterday a boy named Ahren approached me for the first time asking for help. We worked through portions of *Happy Together* and *Green Onions*, and then the beginning of *Prelude No. 2*. He hadn't really tackled it yet, but we got through the first five measures of the right hand and when we were done he remarked, "It's really not as hard as I thought it would be."

Gary is *very* appreciative of me being there. For my part, i feel daily *a deep upwelling of gratitude* that life has led me to this place, blessing me with this opportunity to grow and expand that much further into the unique individual expression of life's infinitude that "i am". Along with giving individual help to whoever asks for it i am simultaneously learning more and more about the art of teaching by watching how Gary does it. He is gifted in that way of being able to still remember what it's like not to know the subject matter. All too often instructors forget what it was like when they themselves as "young'uns" were having trouble grasping a new concept or unfamiliar fact. Gary is able to hear the question and respond on the same level where the person asking it is coming from. He's a very humble man. That's probably one of the greatest gifts any teacher can possess: a humility that enables one to relate to one's students on an equal basis rather than falling into the self-limiting trap of superior-inferior engagement. Complementing this irresistibly sweet side, he also is a seasoned pro at "classroom management". I've only seen him get angry once. The demonstration was exceedingly effective at re-asserting "the line" they are not allowed to step over. Gary also has played music professionally throughout this life. There is no substitute for living what one teaches!

i am likewise blessed with having all three of my older siblings travelling their respective paths as teachers of extraordinary means and gifts. Steve teaches Shakespeare at Mills

College and is a practicing avant garde poet (likewise living what he teaches) as well as running Avenue B, a small press that publishes others in the field. From the time i went off to boarding school in high school, i've always looked up to Steve for his deeply creative and expressive gifts in the field of literature and poetry. It always made me feel expanded to know i had such a brother who was so engaged with and connected to his own gifts. And he's always pursued and been true to them. Back in February he finished the contents of his next book, a collection of 365 poems of a very specific structure and methodology, each written at the beginning of each day over the previous 12 months. Lucky and blessed are the people who have had Steve for a teacher!

Bruce teaches biology, electronics, physics, and a senior-level research class. He uses science to teach at Computech, a magnet school in Fresno. One of Bruce's maxims is "I don't teach biology, I use biology to teach." Of the four of us Bruce was always the most interested in the physical world and how things work. One of our nick-names for him while growing up was "scientificky" as he was always conducting various experiments to teach himself whatever he wanted to know about and building whatever was required to assist with this such as the home-made blast furnace i'll never forget with a vacuum cleaner, coal, and a five or ten gallon metal drum. Bruce is magnificently inspired in teaching his students how to think and see wholistically and in challenging them again and again to go beyond their own limits and find their way to what it is inside that most is yearning to come out and be expressed in their selves and their lives. Bruce is like that extraordinary teacher you never have forgotten from your own past because s/he was such a significant and unique catalyst in your own life's flowering and development.

Although teaching her two daughters (ages 7 and 10) has been a full-time occupation in the school of life, last June sister Patty completed her Masters Degree -- called Integrating the Arts in the Curriculum -- in general education in Spokane, Washington. She is now cutting her teeth in substitute teaching positions and feels very discouraged by the dumbing-down of the U.S. educational system which she is at present endeavoring to begin establishing herself within. But on the other side of "blue and down" is my sister who is every bit as gifted, inspired, and blessed as her three brothers with what she inherited from our parents and who she her self is, independent of ancestry. What she and a group of like-minded souls are wanting to do is create their own new school in Spokane that can participate fully, with all their collective creativity and wits, in the song of life continuing within and without us every moment. Given all she's learned in the college of life she's been attending over the past ten years, i know that Patty's maternal, feminine wisdom, lived and felt as none of her brothers can ever know it, will provide her with the ability to manifest the limitless to assist in birthing the future that we all want and need to be involved with.

i visited Patty and her family in January and watched one day as she was teaching the class of her younger daughter in a Montessori school to sing the Japanese song *Haru ga Kita* (*Spring has Come*). Patty lived in Japan for four years in her twenties soaking up the culture, its language, and some of its traditions, and learning the art of No-Ren (sp?) a process for dying silks. Decades later in Spokane, here she was teaching these children to sing *Haru ga Kita* along with *Kaeru no Uta* (*Song of the Frogs*) and *Aoi Me no O-ningyo* (*The Blue-Eyed Doll*). Every year, March 3rd is Girls Day Festival in Japan. Boys Day Festival is on May 5th. These celebrations are practiced there instead of individual birthdays. In Spokane there exists the Muko Gawa Institute, a satellite program of a Japanese Junior

College for young women outside of Osaka where the students can elect to take english classes and come to Spokane for 14 weeks at Muko Gawa to do so. The children Patty was teaching these three songs to were learning them so they could sing to the students at Muko Gawa on March 3rd. It was, apparently, an event that was *very much appreciated* by its Japanese audience.

The night before i had listened to my sister express her fears with great feeling about the scarcity of teaching jobs and trying to break into a field where the "practical" process of education has become almost entirely co-opted by the corporate culture we live in. A culture where, starting with Kindergarten, children are prepared to simply get good jobs when they reach their twenties. Joseph Chilton Pearce says it so well in a 1998 interview in *Wild Duck Review* now available on ratical:

In its original, genuine sense, Waldorf is not preparing the child to be a dollar commodity in the marketplace, but is meeting each stage of a child's life with the environment that allows the child to be fully and completely and wholly a child at that time. My statement has always been that the three-year-old is not an incomplete five-year-old, but a complete, total and whole three-year-old. If a child is given all the nurturing to be here as a three year old, they'll be the perfect five year old later on, and so on.

The first thing I would say about any true educational system is that it is not founded on the notion that we are preparing a child for life. The theory we are preparing the child for life, or for the future, is a terrible travesty which betrays every facet of the human being. We don't prepare for life, we equip the child with the means to live fully at whatever stage they are in. The idea we're going to train a child at seven to get a good job at age twenty-seven is a travesty of profound dimension. It makes for a world where every 78 seconds a child is attempting suicide, as is true today. It is this kind of terrible despair we breed in our children when we don't see the difference between preparing and equipping our children to be present to life.

And here the next day, while i watched and listened to my sister sing with and teach her daughter's class -- full of human beings who will be the elders of tomorrow -- how to sing *Haru ga Kita*, i was moved to tears seeing Patty as the child of light she is, expanding and loving the world she is in community with with all her heart and soul, while at the same time knowing how terrified she was feeling inside about her future monetary prospects in the education industry. By meeting Gary life has taught me something new about fear that i've never consciously understood before now. Teaching teaches the teacher as much as the student as i'll explain more fully in the final section below.

Gary has remarked how parents have told him their kids come home and won't do much studying, but *will* go to their rooms, or wherever the keyboard is, and play all evening. Clearly he gives his students something of great meaning and value. i know that for my part i am receiving and am learning at least as much as i hope i am giving and teaching to these human beings. A girl name Genai came up two weeks ago in the level-three class asking if i would give her lessons because Fred was already filled up and had no time for more private students. If she had asked back in early February i might have tried to stall as my own sense of confidence would not have been ready for such a responsibility. But now, in soaking up what i so far have of Gary's process and approach, i *do* feel capable of rising to this occasion and helping someone to expand further along their own path.

She came over last Tuesday and was very struck by the Yamaha Grand in the living room that contains a Disklavier recording/playback unit. We worked a bit on *Prelude No. 2* and i began to learn more about what she wants to focus on, some of which happens to already

exist as sheet music i still have from when i was studying at age 13 in 1968. Before she left i invited her to record something she already knows on the disklavier and she played a marvelous rendition of the *Titanic* song while her Mom and i went outside so she could have the space to herself. Before they left i gave her Mom printouts of "Money *versus* Wealth," "Beyond Greed & Scarcity," "Community Currencies: A New Tool for the 21st Century," and the draft of *The Future of Money: Beyond Greed and Scarcity* as well as the single page printout from the Time Dollar Santa Cruz page and explained how i was interested in beginning to find ways of conducting exchanges with people that don't require national dollars and that keeps more of the real wealth and value in our community circulating within its local sphere. She said she'd give them a read.

i've already signed up on Time Dollar Santa Cruz offering piano lessons (via the "Tutoring" selection). However i'm especially interested in getting involved helping to start up an HOURS program in Santa Cruz as i find what i've read so far on the Ithaca HOURS website to be especially interesting, particularly the part about creating, issuing, promoting, and protecting a local currency. i have ordered the *Hometown Money* Book and Starter Kit and if the nuts-and-bolts of the information it provides bears out what i already have some sense of regarding the possibilities, then i'll commence searching for others who are already getting going with this or start the collaboration from scratch with like-minded spirits.

Life is Beautiful -- Living Life Heroically

Two weeks ago Gary called me up on Friday evening to ask if i was doing anything and invited me over for dinner where i met his wife Nancy and their three children. i felt very comfortable in their house and we enjoyed a superlative pair of quiches Nancy had just concocted. Gary wanted to go see *Life Is Beautiful*. i had the barest hint of what it was about (the less i know about a movie before i see it the better) but Gary didn't. The mythic dimensions of this story were incredible for me. i follow mainstream media very little and movie critics not at all. But i have heard from friends something about the reception this movie has received. i attribute its popularity at least in part to the fact that the protagonist, Guido Orefice, engages all that life presents to him with such a dynamic and creative spontaneity that irrespective of how chaotic, intense, or serious things get, his ability to bring to bear all his wits and imagination to respond to whatever the situation manifests never fails him.

In its climax there is more than enough in the subject matter of the story to evoke any of the ultimate primal experiences of anguish, fear, and/or terror in anyone. Guido's ability to apply levity and his unique brand of inexhaustible creativity to such a desperate situation raises his own character's persona to the lofty realm of indefatigable hero, courageously pursuing the path with heart, even in the face of such daunting and seemingly hopeless odds. i think it is this archetype of living life heroically despite the dire straits, "stacked-deck" nature of the situation that gives many people encouragement and hope at this particular moment of the life and time on Earth we are all living in. For myself, living alone through so much of my adult years, i find myself occupying an area of psychic space that is foreign to practically all of my friends and contemporaries who are involved in intimate relationship whether married or not. Having had so much occasion to ponder the import of traveling this path in a

predominantly singular mode, i relate deeply to the following passage from Lauren van der Post's magnificent *Yet Being Someone Other* :

It occurred to me in time that this kind of separation, even in the animal, was necessary to create a greater awareness which it was impossible to acquire in the context of sympathetic numbers of their own kind. In the years I had already spent in devout observation of the creatures of Africa, it was most striking how these lone phenomena developed senses so keen that the beasts who preyed on them and their kind would leave them alone, because they realized they were no match for the qualities of vigilance produced by loneliness and isolation. It was, in fact, far easier to prey on animals who assumed that there was safety in numbers. If this were true and necessary for the increase and renewal of animal awareness, I often wondered how much more necessary it was for the human being. Unlike the animal, the human had no sheer, blind obedience to the will of nature which is instinctive. On the contrary, he had an inspired kind of disobedience to the laws of nature which led to a recommitment of life in a more demanding law of individuality designed for the growth of consciousness. This growth set the implacable pre-condition that any new awareness had to be lived out in isolation before it could be understood and known, and made accessible to society. I believed that Thor Kaspersen was just such a spirit. (p.75)

(Thor Kaspersen was the captain of the Norwegian whaling ship Laurens worked on in his twenties. In their relationship, each gave to the other something both felt lacking within.) Having more familiarity with physical loneliness than most all of my close friends, i find something especially noble and profound as well as personally inspiring regarding Guido's self-resourcefulness. True, much of his motivation is based upon the special and deep love he has found with Dora. But early on in the movie the same alertness and ability to respond to whatever occurs with an delightful ingeniousness is clearly present and ready for whatever the moment presents. Learning to be more self-sufficient when no one else is there has heightened my own sense of the gifts and grace that life offers every moment regardless of whether or not we are inclined to be watchful for and mindful of its blessings.

From where i can perceive things, the rate at which blessings are manifesting has been steadily increasing. Most recently this is thanks to Carol's invitation to attend the Gathering and Gary's invitation to help kids learn to play piano. At this point i feel more strongly than ever that when one is ready to fully commit one's heart and mind to a course of action, life is there at one's side like an old friend to "make it so". i draw great inspiration from the passage by Laurens in *The Lost World of the Kalahari* immediately after he has decided to fulfill a pledge he made in his diary as a child on October 13, 1914: "I have decided today that when I am grown-up I am going into the Kalahari Desert to seek out the Bushman." Some twenty-odd years later he woke up one morning finally finding himself ready to commit to this and immediately set out to contact certain friends to ask their help.

. . . all the aspects of the plan that were within reach of my own hand were worked out and determined there and then. What took longer, of course, was the part which depended on the decisions of others and on circumstances beyond my own control. Yet even there I was amazed at the speed with which it was accomplished. I say "amazed," but it would be more accurate to say I was profoundly moved, for the lesson that seemed to emerge for a person with my history of forgetfulness, doubts and hesitations was, as Hamlet put it so heart-renderingly to himself: "the readiness is all." If one is truly ready within oneself and prepared to commit one's readiness without question to the deed that follows naturally on it, one finds life and circumstances surprisingly armed and ready at one's side. (p.72)

i recently was going through *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics* (edited by Alan Aldridge, 1969)

-- a book that stands as one of those particularly potent point-in-life "memory-buoys" for me. i was looking up some of the songs where i'd written out the chord changes that i used to play for a girl named Jessica in the level-two class who is learning *Hello Goodbye*. Turning the pages, i was struck by a quote of Ringo's that captures the essential nature of what has been gathering momentum inside since late December. **"I've never really done anything to create what has happened. It creates itself. I'm here because it happened. But I didn't do anything to make it happen apart from saying 'Yes'."** (p.14)

Although i did initiate the call that connected me with Gary, it is also true that by saying 'Yes' to the two above-mentioned invitations, the flow of energy and life that has ensued fills my cup till it runneth over like never before. Carol contacted me just a few days before i called Shoreline for the first time. i am filled with excitement at the prospect of learning how to help to establish local currencies where i live -- that i and everyone in my local community can benefit by -- *and* that offers me the chance to meet and interact with more of the people who live where i live. The wider implications of this, as are so perceptively articulated in *The Post-Corporate World*, leaves me more positive and hopeful than i can recall ever actually feeling before now in my adult life.

And to round out the community-wide possibility for increasing interaction and engagement with others where i live, is the indescribable benediction i've received working with Gary and following his lead in his magical domain. i belong in this setting. i belong to it to help pass on the gift of music to the kids who are likewise blessed to be there. i deeply appreciate Gary's philosophy of making a positive difference, however small, in the life of these kids by giving whatever one can to nurture and grow their ability to express themselves musically. This also makes possible the fulfillment of passing on more tangibly than ever before what i received in learning from and knowing Mary Lou Williams. The unparalleled creativity she manifested in her life as expressed through her love of music and people -- especially children -- was unique in so many of the dimensions in which she inhabited and from which she created such timeless beauty.

Up to now i've felt uncomfortable about calling or even thinking of myself as a "teacher". It always seemed so presumptuous! But Bernard's marvellous example of how repression of an archetype results in the emergence of two shadows which are polarities of each other -- *and how these shadow-polarities are connected by fear* -- has bestowed inside a kind of achieving-escape-velocity "kick in the psychic pants." i have seen for quite some time how depression and grandiosity were, for me, shadows of the archetype of wholeness. When i was coming of age my parents marriage ended and the challenges this presented included feeling a deep lack of wholeness within my own sense of self. The primary way i learned how to compensate for this fact that i did *not* feel good about myself (in retrospect i believe i blamed myself to whatever degree for my parents getting divorced since the primarily visible arena they argued about was how we kids should be brought up) was by literally turning off. i learned how to respond to the terrific pain, confusion, anger, and sense of betrayal by "shutting down" and being depressed. To a less pronounced degree i also engaged in grandiose behaviours that in part were motivated by the desire to literally "pump myself up" as a different polarized means of feeling better about myself.

But before now i've never come to terms with living up to my own deeper potentials as a teacher to young people where music -- specifically playing piano -- is involved. And it is in

this particular arena where i am so deeply grateful i've met Gary. Aside from the fact i personally like him very much, there is the irreplaceable gift he has given me of seeing *live*, "in action", how a teacher *can* shine and serve life's deepest purpose as a kind of "sacred catalyst" igniting flames in the hearts of young people that were always waiting for just such a chance to fly. Losing my own sense of wholeness when i was young, i created a substitute that was rooted in fear. Fear of ever allowing myself to feel as deeply again as i naturally had up to the death of my parent's union. Thus it was through the long years that i actually came to fear a re-emergence of wholeness within in a truly contemporary way. Because if this were ever to happen, i would once again be vulnerable to the awesome power and range of feelings -- especially pain and grief -- that had felt so unbearable so long ago. Also i see for the first time that an additional fear of re-gaining inner wholeness would be the fact that now i would be the one solely responsible for its further growth and expansion.

Response ability: the ability to respond with *all* of one's wits, infinite creativity, and resourcefulness. i've written about this before on a rational but i've not grasped its deeper intrinsic meaning inwardly in quite the way i am seeing it now. Guido's imagination always supported him and carried him through whatever he was faced with or challenged by. i saw this as an expression of the heroic archetype, living with all that one has at one's disposal to increase the light and the love of life in the world. But now i see it in more of a deeply personal, heart-felt context than ever before. And i *mean heart-felt* in an especially expansive way. Consider the following excerpt Joseph Chilton Pearce describes more fully in the 1998 interview :

. . . neurocardiology . . . is the general title of the newest field of medicine. Oxford University brought out a huge, thick volume of medical studies from all over the world entitled, *Neurocardiology*, which includes studies that haven't worked their way into the journals yet. Discoveries in the field of neurocardiology are, believe me, far more awesome than the discovery of non-locality in quantum mechanics. It is the biggest issue of the whole century, but it's so far out and so beyond the ordinary, conceptual grasp, that a lot of the people doing the actual research are yet to be fully aware of the implications.

Close to a century ago, Rudolph Steiner said the greatest discovery of 20th century science would be that the heart is not a pump but vastly more, and that the great challenge of the coming ages of humanity would be, in effect, to allow the heart to teach us to think in a new way. Now, that sounds extremely occult, but we find it's directly, biologically the case.

I can't in a brief time share with you the full implications of neurocardiology except to say three things. First, about sixty to sixty-five percent of all the cells in the heart are neural cells which are precisely the same as in the brain, functioning in precisely the same way, monitoring and maintaining control of the entire mind/body/physical process as well as direct unmediated connections between the heart and the emotional, cognitive structures of the brain. Secondly, the heart is the major endocrine glandular structure of the body, which Roget found to be producing the hormones that profoundly affect the operations of body, brain, and mind. Thirdly, the heart produces two and a half watts of electrical energy at each pulsation, creating an electromagnetic field identical to the electromagnetic field around the earth. The electromagnetic field of the heart surrounds the body from a distance of twelve to twenty-five feet outward and encompasses power waves such as radio and light waves which comprise the principle source of information upon which the body and brain build our neural conception and perception of the world itself. This verifies all sorts of research from people such as Karl Pribram over a thirty year period, and opens up the greatest mystery we'll ever face.

Roger Penrose, for instance, in England, has just recently come out with a new mathematics to prove that where dendrites meet at the synapse -- of which you've got trillions in your body and brain -- is an electromagnetic aura. And, we find that the electromagnetic field of the heart produces, holographically, the same field as the one produced by the earth and solar system. Now, physicists are beginning to look at the electro-magnetic auras as, simply, the organization of energy in the universe. All these are operating holographically -- that is, at the

smallest, unbelievably tiny level between the dendrites at the synapse, the body, the earth, and on outward. All are operating holographically and selectively. . . .

For this reason, I am the arch-optimist of all. I think these discoveries, the implications, are terribly exciting. Of course, our whole cosmology will shift dramatically when we realize what I call the "holographic heart." But, you see, at the very time we're moving into a period of total chaos and collapse, this other incredible thing is simply gathering. I think of Ilya Prigogine's comments that so long as a system is stable, or at an equilibrium, you can't change it, but as it moves toward disequilibrium and falls into chaos then the slightest bit of coherent energy can bring it into a new structure. What you find in Waldorf families, and people who read *Wild Duck Review*, and others, may seem small, but they will be the islands of coherent energy which then bring about the organized, entrained energy for a new situation. I think it will happen very rapidly.

In the next issue, I expect to work with the idea of one's capacity for metaphor as one's capacity for a full life.

Jerome Bruner once said the great beauty of human language is its metaphoric capacity . . . that we could represent the world to ourselves metaphorically, mutate our metaphors and change ourselves in the world. Bruner came up with that very beautiful and brilliant insight thirty or forty years ago.

There is a book by a medical doctor living in Seattle, Leonard Shlain, called *Art and Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time and Light*. In it he says art is always presaging what will happen in the whole scientific, social world. He gives the most incredible defense of this idea over the past 600 years -- how art has always shown exactly what will happen in the scientific and social structures a century later.

The great Margaret Mead once said, "No education that is not founded on art will ever succeed." I think the beauty of the Waldorf system is that they don't teach art -- it's not a subject. Art is the way by which everything is taught and learned. Art is "high play" and only through high play does real learning take place. Yes, this is the way to a real life. The rest of it is conditioning to another's employ, another's motive, another's idea of life.

i see all around me signs of the coherent energy Pearce mentions concerning Ilya Prigogine's comments. The more one can realign one's own intelligence and awareness to the limitless possibilities of existence -- *we know so very little about what's actually going on here!* -- the more coherent energy can tangibly manifest just as it always has in the self-organizing and directing ways of living systems all around and within our own human overcoats. And while Shoreline Middle School is not a Waldorf school, i know from experience that what is going on in Mister Fred's Magical Musical Kingdom is truly a "hotbed" of "high play".

i've worked up an excerpt from Laurens' *A Walk With A White Bushman* that is the transcript of a series of extended conversations with Jean-Marc Pottiez. In this segment, that explores a *large* landscape of the human spirit, Laurens points out in passing how our problems are our most precious possession in the gifts they bestow upon us:

Somehow we should learn to know that our problems are our most precious possessions. They are the raw materials of our salvation: no problem -- no redemption. And it is only by bringing to our problems the whole of ourselves -- which means all that we have rejected in these specialized aspects of ourselves we call civilization -- that life can be renewed in a greater dimension of itself. But these in-between moments are frightening; and they are the moments that the first people of Africa, who feared them most, attributed to 'a loss of soul'. (pp.71-2)

The hope i feel all around me each time i am able to participate in and partake of Gary's classes is my most tangible guiding light at this time. Truly one of the greatest joys is that this *is* a two-way street. i am receiving and learning *so much* from everyone there. And each time i glimpse new hints of how i am helping and encouraging the kids to expand their

facility with expressing themselves through music. Swirling all around me are children becoming adults. But inwardly they haven't yet been caught in the fear-drenched cynicism of the modern world where the a primary mode of expression is the limited hangout of "just playing it cool", hiding behind a mask of dark glasses, scowls and all the other paraphernalia of incoherent, suffocating fear. i was recently reminded of the lyric from *Hey Jude*: "For well you know that it's a fool, who plays it cool, by making his world a little colder." These human beings are most assuredly *not* limited to such forms of psychic imprisonment. With the love of life and of music that Gary is giving and passing on to them, they have received one of the greatest gifts anyone coming of age today could hope for.

Each one of us has to find our own way. No one else can show us how to be our self. But all of us can join in together to learn anew what the nature of our estranged self truly is and how to once more lift it and "lift this moment in time, in which we are all imprisoned, back again onto a level where the great act of creation is going on, whether we heed it or not." As lost as we may feel inside, the hope of life and of creation is all ways there ready to join us at our side if only we are willing to "make fools of ourselves in the eyes of our established selves" and "be individual and specific in terms of the totality of our own natures." Laurens' sense of how gift and sacrifice are intimately and forever joined is something i constantly am moved by to realize more fully within, as he expresses in another excerpt from *A Walk With A White Bushman* :

I have often felt that it is as if there has been only one modern man and we crucified him two thousand years ago. We still have to make his example truly modern in ourselves and be individual and specific in terms of the totality of our own natures, as he was. This is the way we have to go. But we now have to do our own leading. We have not to wait on masters; we do not have to wait for foolproof spiritual exercises; we can go to people and seek what they seek, but we cannot do it wholly their way and be stereotypes of one another. Like the leaves on the trees, we are compelled to be each our own way, again and again. We have, for this, to turn inwards -- to look into ourselves; look in this container which is our soul; look and listen in to it and all its hunches -- incredible, silly, stupid as they may appear to be. It might tell us to make fools of ourselves in the eyes of our established selves but, however improbable, just listen, just give it a chance in yourself, particularly at this moment when everything is increasingly impersonal. Until you have listened in to that thing which is dreaming through you, in other words answered the knock on the door in the dark, and discovered your estranged self, you will not be able to lift this moment in time, in which we are all imprisoned, back again onto a level where the great act of creation is going on, whether we heed it or not. We can join in with increased awareness, thanks to the creator's evolution, or stay out. If we stay out we perish; if we join in, we live for ever. (p.85)

The song of life all ways calls us anew to join in with its harmonious, self-organizing and directing vibration. Its gifts of universal abundance exist within and without us. The question is not whether or not the abundance is there. It is only whether or not we can *see it*. What must be sacrificed in order to see the gift? Guido gave the most magnificent gift of life to his son Joshua through the supreme act of sacrifice. Gift and sacrifice; each is a mirror of the other.

Life's gifts, its energy and intelligence, are constantly present here with us, inviting us to participate in the furtherance of its unfolding. These excerpts from *The Post-Corporate World* are a call to all of us to join in to nurture and support what awaits the life exploring itself here on this infinitely precious home we all belong to and are part of by right of birth.

Chapter 14. Engaging the Future

Our task is no longer one of creating counter cultures, engaging in political protest, and pursuing economic alternatives. To create a just, sustainable, and compassionate post-corporate world we must face up to the need to create a new core culture, a new political center, and a new economic mainstream. Such a bold agenda requires millions of people with widely varied expertise working at many levels of society--personal and household, community, national, and global. It requires breaking the bonds of individual isolation that leave us feeling marginalized when, in fact, we may represent the new majority. There are thousands of useful tasks to be undertaken. The following are illustrative of the possibilities. . . .

Epilogue: Planetary Consciousness

To participate in these densely interconnected communication networks of people who care deeply for the places where they live and the future of all life--is to experience a new way of being and relating that is at once grounded in every person and every place, yet transcends both individuals and geography. The many physical and cyberspace forums in which we gather serve us as learning centers in which we hone our capacities for mindful choice and participation in highly democratic processes as we reflect, think, share, and deepen our sense of the creative possibilities that lie ahead. We learn as we participate, growing in confidence in our ability to function as part of a conscious self-organizing, life-serving planetary whole. Having lived a quarter of my life in Asia, I find special meaning in what I experience as a melding of the Western emphasis on the individual and the Eastern emphasis on the collective as we rediscover life's profound wisdom that the power of the individual depends on the health and integrity of the whole as the potentials of the whole depend on the individual's exercise of the creative initiative that flows from mindful freedom.

And finally, if people can suspend for a moment the present-day negativity associated with using the male form of third-person plural, Laurens' expression of that community that *we -- female and male -- are a part of* which has not yet fully manifested, augments what David evokes above.

I hear people everywhere saying that the trouble with our time is that we have no great leaders any more. If we look back we always had them. But to me it seems there is a very profound reason why there are no great leaders any more. It is because they are no longer needed. The message is clear. You no longer want to be led from the outside. Every man must be his own leader. He now knows enough not to follow other people. He must follow the light that's within himself, and through this fight he will create a new community. You see, wherever I go in the world, this to me is a general trend. I am aware of the fact there are already people in existence today -- take us -- who really belong to a community which does not exist yet. That is, we are the bridge between the community we've left and the community which doesn't exist yet.

In this future community, how shall we be ruled and governed? By a group of wise men?

I do not think it can be that. It has got to come through the creation of more and more individuals who will take upon themselves the task of leading themselves, and to the extent to which we can lead ourselves properly and decently other men will follow. It cannot come collectively, it cannot come through groups; not yet, if ever. (pp.68-9)