

Guaranteed Living Income Toronto Newsbreeze March 12, 2017

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Sorry I am late getting this out, folks. I have been extremely busy and have not been feeling well or a few days.

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Stuff to read or listen to.

Surviving Post-Capitalism: Coping, hoping, doping & shopping

Here is something to be considered by BI activists. We are indeed in a post capitalist order. Capitalism is not being overthrown, it is falling apart on its own. The question is; what is coming for it. Right now, we are in an "interregnum".

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/873735747802/>

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Here is a really interesting article by one of the best thinkers around right now on BI; Want utopia? Start with universal basic income and a 15-hour work week. By Rutger Bregman

<http://www.wired.co.uk/article/universal-basic-income-utopia>

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And here is something from the even smarter Katja Kipping. "Basic Income as All-inclusive Democratic Subsidy" Its a translation of a speech in German.

<http://basicincome.org/news/2017/02/basic-income-inclusive-democratic-subsidy/>

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Now, it is time for me to post something I have been working on. **The design of a Constitutionally Guaranteed Living Income.**

It is important that a GLI be embedded into the constitution of the country. That is a big topic in itself because of our current arrangements wherein we cannot amend the constitution and can't enforce social rights.

I also think I have thoroughly debunked the "can't afford it" rift. This will be a major point of discussion at the next GLI Salon

<http://www.livinggrant.ch/curdocs/CGLI.pdf>

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Speaking of said GLI Salon; the next one is March 18. I am going to start promoting it with increasing intensity. I will give it at last five more sessions for a useful number of people to start coming out.

The venue will continue to be at Ralph Thornton but moved around to the front meeting room,, a more comfortable and smaller space at the front of the building, second floor.

You can find the event poster at <http://www.livinggrant.ch/salon.html>

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HSAG March 9

The Grant application

Grants of \$1000 are available from the South Riverdale Community Health centre. They are normally given out in October but if they like us we could apply earlier and have it by summer.

What do we do with the application if we get it? For one thing, it would help Robyn's project of building a corps of advocates for GLI. The idea of a Summer barbecue was floated. Where and when exactly would this occur?

Also, we need a silkscreen banner to use at events. We can carry it around in parades or lay it over a table when we hold events or are at an event. For example, the earth day party scheduled for April 22nd, at which we can have a table.

Plans are still in a chaotic state of formation at present. They must be worked out further before we make an application. We need to develop some literature to give out, explaining the GLI issue and introducing ourselves to people. Robyn's leaflet fits the bill pretty well. We could get the design worked up a bit. Do we need it in colour?

Printing up a quantity of the leaflet could take up some of this grant. The barbecue should be a fundraising barbecue but we must be careful about fundraising activities. We cannot hold such an event on SRCHC premises and they cannot endorse the event.

But we have to start learning how to hold events and raise money on our own. Yet for that we need some seed money. The question of also getting some buttons done or sale was brought up again.

Entertainment at the barbecue? Paul has a some spoken word performances he can give deliver. Other than that? We wonder what kind of talent is out here in Toronto Basic income land.

Herzing college

HSAG has been invited by Herzing college to deliver a presentation to interested students about the idea of a BI/GLI. This will be March 28. The next HSAG meeting on the 23rd will be focused on perfecting the presentation for Herzing.

Twitter feed and password

Paul has developed a Twitter feed and handle. It is at Health&StrengthActGp@stableii <https://twitter.com/stableii>

Someone is already following it from Calgary.

He wants us all to sign up for it. Some of us do not really want to be on twitter. It is hard enough to get anything done. I use twitter only as a news feed and usually delete accounts with too much useless chatter on them.

People need to learn to use social media, not be used by it. It would help if more people develop the competence to set up their own web sites and use peer to peer networks instead of going through proprietary hub networks. At least Twitter is less controlling than Facebook. I will never be on Facebook.

Etc.

Paul is doing a pretty good job of keeping HSAG going. He has a job at SRCHC doing harm reduction and is able to arrange the room.

Coming up this Summer is a symposium on the fallacy of the Gross Domestic Product or GDP. This is supposed to be the standard measure of the wealth of a country. It really is not useful as a measure of how well an economy can provide for its population.

A more accurate measure would be useful in determining how high a GLI should be, and how much money is really available to fund it. As well, some sort of high income measure is needed so as to know when wealth taxes should kick in.

This event is being organized by Evelyn Forget in Winnipeg, a prominent figure in the Basic Income movement. Robyn has been invited to submit a paper. We will know later this year if she is accepted as a presenter. The event will be held in Toronto.

Good luck, Robyn.

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Here is something to think about. It is from one of our friends and GLI advocates in Toronto, Robyn Peterson, from her quarterly "Sayout" newsletter.

One of the objects of a GLI is to eliminate this idea that we need endless growth to keep the economy going. Growth is needed to pay back the interest on loans, the money for which does not exist when the loan is made.

All talk about "growth" is gibberish.

Grow, grow, grow forever!

When politicians or economists talk about building a healthy economy, they almost invariably talk about growth. 'Grow the economy' becomes a mantra. We must have growth on top of growth. Fundamental questions come in here. For how long can you have growth? Can growth truly last forever?

Producing more and more goods along with the inevitable piles of garbage, including toxic waste, obviously has limits. After all, our planet is fixed in size. Producing more and more stuff could end up crowding everyone out.

Richard Douthwaite has warned: "The pathology that endangers our future is uncontrolled, undifferentiated, aggregate growth in economic output and consumption." (The Growth Illusion, 1999) If growth truly has become a pathology of our times, those who continue to insist upon ever more growth are urging us to engage in a pathological pursuit. Is it wise to keep insisting on this kind of pursuit?

More and more growth could mean more and more urban sprawl. It could mean destroying more and more good agricultural land. It could also mean producing more and more pollution of different kinds. Would that kind of growth be good? Is that kind of growth necessary to our very survival?

As Tim Jackson has noted (Prosperity Without Growth, 2009): "An economy predicated on the perpetual expansion of debt-driven materialistic

consumption is unsustainable ecologically." If our continuing insistence on growth of the traditional kind is unsustainable, and if we really want to support positive measures to limit climate change, shouldn't we at least contemplate some changes in our concept of what growth actually means?

We could think about growth that would actually nourish our society. We could have growth in leisure and health improvements and in personal possibilities. Brain pursuits not brawn pursuits could expand. But that kind of growth might not increase GDP simply because GDP might not include it. So it might not be seen 'officially' as growth at all. But growth that does not involve producing ever more stuff might just have unlimited and beneficial possibilities. It might actually be good for us.

We might want healthy growth as opposed to unhealthy growth, but if healthy growth is not recognized as being economic growth, we're unlikely to get it. This means that unhealthy growth with its consequent toxicity could continue to plague us for some time to come. Unhealthy growth may mean profits for investors. But the unhealthy and profitable growth might mean the poisoning of land and water for the sake of a new structure such as a mine. Does that matter? It does for the people living near that new mine or pipeline. Their lives could be badly damaged.

If we don't see, hear or feel the distress of people suffering from the imposition of unhealthy growth, does that distress really register with us? Or does it remain reassuringly hidden from us by politicians and the media? Growth can be good. It can also be bad. Which do we really want? Do we want to grow in health or grow in stuff? Let's choose well. It's our future after all.