

Guaranteed Living Income Toronto NewsBreeze March 5, 2017.

The first **Guaranteed Living Income Salon** went reasonably well. We had three attendees, one very new to the idea of Income Guarantees. That is good, better not to have too many people coming with preconceptions about it. I also had a couple of “regrets” sent.

It is also not bad considering the very cold weather. So we got what we wanted. We sat and nibbled on a kind of potluck. Someone brought some grapes. We had some pretzels. We had an unstructured discussion in which people got their questions answered. We also were able to do a bit of planning.

Some observations; People are not being pro active about BI/GLI advocacy. This is true about other needed change in society as well. They are waiting for someone else to take care of it all.

But it is not going to happen magically. As well, people who are unhappy with the way things are going do not want to hear real solutions. They imagine some golden age to return to, which never really was.

Or, the solution is what is happening anyway. The problem is the solution for them. I think this is describing the Libertarians, among others.

Dangers of Internet

Some people seem to see everything in terms of what is on Reddit, as if the solutions would be there. Social media is really dangerous; a lot of BS. You do not know who you are talking to.

You need to talk face to face with people. The net is for communication and coordination. Sometimes it is useful as a news aggregator.

There is much exposure about domestic intelligence agencies waging “information war” on social media. There is even software developed which

enables one operator to manage hundreds of fake accounts, getting on many discussion forums to drive the discussion in a particular way. There was a lot of discussion of that awhile back but it has disappeared. There is no reason to believe the practice has stopped.

BI and immigration

Here is a sensitive topic; with certain ideological tendencies ready to burn people at the stake if the idea of a wide open border is questioned. But is a high immigration rate going to be compatible with a BI? Clearly, if people are legally in the country at all, they have to have their BI like anyone else. This will include migrant workers. What about foreign students?

Should Canada continue immigration at all? Is there a point where we just say; "we are full"? Has anyone figured out how many people we can actually support. One of us had read something about that. It seems Canada can support 70 to 100 million people. After that, we are draining other people's resources from them.

We are talking mostly food resources, of course. Right now we are destroying our limited growing land like it is infinite. We are paving it over, flooding it with unneeded hydro projects, ruining it with bad farming methods, even selling the topsoil to the Americans.

The upshot seems to be; just throwing our doors open for the world to come in is not a sane idea.

We talked about the Ontario Hydro problem.

This was on the same line as ecological limitations of being in a northern climate. The question is; where is the money coming from for the 25% cost reduction to Ontario hydro?

One suggestion; stop the cost of refurbishing all these nuclear plants. But then how do we find the money for decommissioning and demolishing the ring of "Fukushimas in waiting" around Toronto. Yet another way in which stupid government policy over the past 30 years has dug Ontario into a big hole.

There were no conclusions reached about that either, but we touched on quite a few topics related to bad government. I did not take complete notes about them; sometimes you just like to get in and participate in a discussion, instead of just scribble.

Ending thoughts

At the end, we agreed there was a need for a lot more discussion. People need to take the time to understand the BI concept and what it entails. Right now, we have an “Alice in Wonderland” syndrome within the BI movement; words mean just what the user wants them to mean.

Someone thought that BI sounded like a socialist idea. Of course, when understood correctly, it is basically a socialist idea. There is nothing wrong with that. Socialism is about organizing an economy for social needs, rather than the ends of corporations.

There is an old saying; ultimately it is socialism or barbarism. Or more exactly, a new age of feudalism. Capitalism is at its dead end. We are not really in the “post capitalist” age. We are in an interregnum, a kind of “pre-future”. The old is dying, the new can't be born yet.

There is no way the future will not include a Basic Income unless they are going to outright kill about two thirds of us. The fight will be about a liberating guaranteed income, meaning in effect a socialist system, or a neo feudal order where people are tied to corporations by things like zero hours contracts, in order to get a bare subsistence income.

“You can't just give people money.” Why not?

“How will you decide how much?” Simply have the will to figure out the costs for each locality.

“How will you fund it?” Have the will to tax the wealthy and the corporations.

Future political meetings

We talked about somebody's city councillor holding a forum next week on a BI. We need to find out information and go there. We need a few city councillors on board with us.

The next Salon will take place two weeks hence at the same time, and presumably the same place. In case the Ralph Thornton becomes unavailable, I will be looking into backup venues.

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Lights on, lights off

Something else we two old BI hands talked about lately was the very frustrating history of trying to get a BI group going. It seems that a light goes on, then it goes off again, over and over.

What it seems to me is that some people start something, they discover it takes more commitment than they are willing to make, or things do not happen as they want, and they close it down. This seems to be what has happened with Basic Income Toronto Organization (BITO)

I have not been able to get any response from the core group in several weeks. The group's original founder has gone home to the Maritimes. His heir apparent has seemed to be too busy to keep things going, but unwilling to delegate anything.

For the first year this group was in operation, I could find out nothing. It seemed they were trying to operate on Facebook, and were unwilling to accept that most serious people do not want to be on Facebook. People need to meet face to face.

I had attended the founding meeting, at someone's house, and I was given a link to some sort of social media site which never worked. I next encountered these people at the BICN congress in Winnipeg last May. They agreed to start holding "live" meetings.

Most of the rest of BITO's adventures were recorded in this newsletter. They decided to meet on the third Tuesday of every month but had a hard time finding a regular meeting place. Finally we got some help from a city councillor and got clearance to book Metro hall rooms.

But there was still the problem of actually booking the space and sending out notices, getting minutes and agendas happening. Someone did a test version of a web site, but got no feedback about it and now that has disappeared.

I made some effort to get the person who had somehow been named as the head of BITO to delegate to a couple of people who can act as joint secretaries. But one of them has an "organizing" job outside of Toronto for a couple of months and promises to get BITO organized again when he gets back. It is like he thinks he can switch people on and off. I doubt if he is much of an organizer. The other co secretary says she is kept in the dark.

There does not seem to be any way to get the lights back on at BITO so it is time to call it a flashed out organization.

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Our Friend from Kingston

Here is a particularly useful article on how to move BI/GLI things forward in Ontario. It is from Toni Pickard, who heads the B group in Kingston, one of the best ones in the province.

This was published February 6. It explains very clearly why progressives need to get into the BI movement and get the concept defined in a progressive way or the Austrians will take control of the narrative and define the concept for us.

<http://www.livingrant.ch/curdocs/Toni%20Pickard%20%20article%20.pdf>

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To keep up with upcoming events and meetings in Toronto, check this link regularly.

<http://www.livingrant.ch/#events>

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Next GLI breeze, March 12.