

Guarantee Living Income Toronto Newsbreeze March 26, 2017.

Citizens for Public Justice

These people seem to get it

<https://cpj.ca/sites/default/files/docs/files/Towards%20A%20Guaranteed%20Livable%20Income.pdf>

https://cpj.ca/GLI?utm_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm_campaign=443d3ab6bd-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_342c280cba-443d3ab6bd-140445945

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I can't wait to see this one. It seems they are getting it right, seeing BI in terms of human liberation rather than as "recalibrating welfare". I am going to see if I can organize a premier in Toronto.

The Free Lunch Society Presents; Come, Come, Basic Income.

<https://twitter.com/basicincome/status/843422759665487873>

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Register for the 15 and fairness strategizing session. Learn what is going on with these people, who could be good allies of a GLI movement.

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/8e3951a35d48e64f736884ea9/files/552bf39d-9f30-4e12-8357-51b128454a6c/PSM_Draft_Registration_Form_Program_2017.pdf

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Hey! Here is our favourite senator; Kim Pate. She gets it that the incomes paid to people must be adequate to live on without supplementation.

<https://sencanada.ca/en/speeches/senator-pate-on-motion-encourage-gov-evaluate-cost-impact-implementing-national-basic-income-program/>

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Another useful response to the Province's "what we heard"

Basic Income summary ignores 'human touch' in anti-poverty work

http://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/basic-income-summary-ignores-human-touch-in-anti-poverty-work-616442584.html?utm_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm_campaign=680853c4ba-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_342c280cba-680853c4ba-140445945

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HSAG March 23

We had three topics on the agenda; Framing Basic Income, Harm reduction and Basic Income, and "two spirits".

We also got a little business taken care of. We have a written up grants application. It is possible we can hold a fundraising event in the summer. The most likely location will be a parkette near to the Community Health Centre. We are proceeding with the idea of three sessions of "Basic Income; where are we now?" during this year.

Framing Basic Income

Basic Income needs to be framed as Human Rights. The rich think they are superior to the rest of us. Only they can dispense charity, society cannot. We are dependant on people who manipulate us. They enjoy life, but we are not allowed to.

This is why we have inequality; because we are not capable of charity, due to the philosophy of neoliberalism. We need a system that benefits everyone.

We cannot depend on academics to give us any ideas, especially economists. They are isolated from reality and wrapped up in their theories. There was some talk of an economist on T.V. and his dubious advice.

Yet the worldwide BI movement was founded by academics. The trouble is, it is very hard to find out what these people have to say. Most of it is in academic publications which are hard to access.

The BI system we are getting out of these “pilots” is just welfare by another name. BI should not be framed as a “poverty relief” program. It needs emphasis on society as a whole.

Harm Reduction and Basic Income

Harm reduction is normally applied to drug addiction. The Basic Theory is that people do what they do. It is futile to try to control them. You can either support them and get them to where they can function in society, or you can watch them die.

Paul referred to the “rat park” experiments of 1978. That was where rats were first placed in very uncomfortable circumstances and given an opportunity to use drugs to relieve the stress. Then, they were placed in a “rat park”, a paradise for rats. In the first location, all the rats became drug addicts. When moved to Rat Park, they quickly got over their addictions and were able to function like normal rats.

Basic Income could be understood as harm reduction for the whole society. If you let people live the way they want, they will be much less likely to self-

harm or engage in destructive behaviour. Harm reduction implies including the “you”; it is about the health of the whole society. Thus the “Universal” in the Basic Income concept is very important.

Paul will be doing a presentation at Herzing college on BI and harm reduction. It is the third year he has done it, but he will not have his mentor Raffi with him this year. Robyn offered to help him prepare for it.

The date is not set yet. It is some time in April. These are social work students and the class is “mental health and advocacy”. In previous years, they were very receptive to the harm reduction message. But Paul only has half an hour.

About 60 years ago it was expected that 10% of the population would have mental health problems in their lifetimes. Now it is 25%.

Back then about 6 out of 10 kids would be expected to be successful in adult life. Now, it is 3 in 10.

People are being kept in debt. This is causing people to turn away from capitalism. Some do not think the system we live in is real capitalism at all. Real capitalism is about “cutting the wood in summer so you do not have to do it in winter”.

Robyn thinks the solution is more worker owned enterprises. She does not think this is so radical. One reason the German economy is so productive is that in their best companies, workers have seats on the board and all management committees. They bring their special expertise with them.

Paul is also concerned about the current depletion of the earth. He believes it is declining about 1% a year. Increasingly, we are seeing ‘food deserts’ in the major cities. Even when people can afford food, they can’t get to it.

Ah, yes! There is a lot of harm to reduce. A GBI would greatly reduce the harm.

Two spirit

We did not have the time to get into this much. Paul occasionally does talk about it. This comes from aboriginal spirituality. Some have the idea that the term "two spirited"; is all about homosexuality. Actually, it means multi-spirited. It refers to people who have lived life in more than one way and have multiple perspectives on things.

For example; to have been rich and poor. To have lived in two entirely different cultures. I guess, to have had two or more very different careers in life.

We need some more multi-spirited people involved with the BI/GLI movement, people who can see it from more than one perspective.

Miscellaneous

We talked a bit about TTC. The transit tax rebate is gone. There are some concerns about who pays for administering the Presto card. There is also some trouble between Metrolinx and TTC.

Once the Presto card is fully operational, we will not be able to get on a streetcar without it. Presto is going to make things even worse for low income people.

I talked about some of my experiences with supposed advocates for low income people. I am pretty much sick of them. At the "commitment to Community" group, an adjunct of social planning council of Toronto, I dared to suggest forming a sub committee to look into reform of the city government.

I even had a couple of people agreeing with me. The response was so aggressive and unjustified that I just got up and walked out. Then I got a phone call from one of their hapless minions, not too coherent but the gist seemed to be I was not allowed to come back to their meetings. Really creepy.

Worse, it is very hard to find out who funds these groups.

Someone asked how a BI would be funded and we got into some discussion of this. A salient point was that subsidies to corporations are running \$54 billion a year according to a recent report. There is likely much more than that.

All Lives Matter? Some lives matter. Corporations are considered as 'de facto' persons. We seem to have a guaranteed Living Income for them. Bombardier's life certainly matters.

to conclude

BI is not a poverty relief program. It is better understood as a harm reduction program, focussed on the health and stability of the society as a whole. This is a perspective which deserves to be developed.

The meeting was well attended. HSAG can be very productive, but it can also get hectic. We have several very smart but unfocussed people together, without a really strong chair. One reason I am trying to get Salon going; so we can have some more sedate discussions on this abstract topics and leave HSAG more to business.

The next HSAG meeting is April 6.

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Communicating Effectively With Power

Robyn sends us a small manual with this explanation;

A few years ago I worked on a revamp of the Lobbying Handbook, which had been on the SPACE web page for some years. Originally, I was going to continue the revamp work with my friend and colleague, Pat Suessmuth. We had hoped to make more of a splash with it with different groups. Unfortunately, Pat died suddenly in the spring of 2014. So the manuscript lay untouched for a few years.

I've now unearthed it from my files, updated it a bit, and given it a new title. The result is attached in pdf

Some groups may find it useful.

Cheers,

Robyn

<http://www.livingrant.ch/curdocs/Comm%20Effect%20w%20Power.pdf>

I think we will find this useful. It can go in the resources page in the Livingrant web site when that is set up. What I like about it is that it takes a more proactive view of interacting with government. Many groups I have been acquainted with seem to have the idea that they will just sit around and feel enlightened and wait to be called.

However, in some ways it is written for a past age. I notice that, increasingly, many politicians act like they do not have to listen to anything except corporate lobbyists. We are in the age of the three minute "deputation" in Toronto. I think more emphasis has to be placed on building a powerful organization such that they have to listen to it. Especially when we are dealing with such change making ideas as a BI/GLI.

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...And one final thing. I am still doing the **GLI Salon**. I am thinking of changing the name to "Free Lunch Society". The last one was on March 18 and was a very lively and informative discussion. It would have been even more so if anyone else had shown up.

I am going to keep plugging away at it. The strategy I am taking is to promote it slowly, to determine just what kind of people will show up for such a thing. At first I cast it within the narrow group of people who read this newsletter. Now I am starting to cast it wider.

Also, the first two weeks we had lousy weather. Next Saturday is forecast to be tolerably warm and sunny.

See this week's poster at;
<http://www.livingrant.ch/april%201%20salon%20poste.pdf>

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Next GLI will be April 2nd. Tell you all about it then.