

LETS: DEVELOP A LOCAL CURRENCY

Kathy Ehmann

A new Local Energy Trading System (LETS) has been launched in the Southern Highlands.

The Community Exchange Southern Highlands enables locals to trade between themselves with a local currency (Gibs), without the need to earn any first.

It has been done locally before, but this time it's back with easy-to-manage online administration—so the dreary accounting is now done quickly and easily by members using an existing global website.

So, how does it work?

People join CESH (at www.cesh.org.au) and pay their lifetime membership fee (\$25 plus 20 Gibs for a single person).

Part of the membership application involves nominating services that they can offer to the community. (Other members will contact them as they require those services.)

You can also nominate needs, such as being taught how to do an oil change on your car or help pruning your trees. Whatever.

You are assigned a membership number and sent a membership card and then you are ready to trade.

TSN will have a CESH column in every issue to keep you up to date. (You will automatically be put on the distribution list when you join.)

A common concern is that people won't have anything to offer, but that isn't true. It is perhaps easiest to think of CESH as a favour trading system. Everyone has something they can do for another person.

LETS does not set out to replace the normal monetary system; it complements it.

Money usually funds necessities, such as food, electricity, fuel etc. CESH is the ideal way to organise those that make life easier and

nicer. People may not be willing to employ a team of gardeners for a day and pay them with cash, but they could pay you with Gibs and return the favour when they can.

Some may be too ill or frail to do their own grocery shopping. They could pay you Gibs to do it for them.

So far, goods and services on offer include document editing, fresh vegetables, fresh eggs, tarot reading, soap-making tuition, permaculture consultancy and high school biology tuition.

If you are reading this in a printed version and can't get to the website, no problem. Call Kathy on 4877 1614 to have a membership form sent to you. For a one-off fee of \$25, we can do all of the recording of transactions for you and post TSN to you for updates.

Joining is quick and easy and participating could change your life. www.cesh.org.au



Community Exchange
Southern Highlands

Inside this issue:

Building Community	2
Notes on apples	3
Transition in action	4
The Quiz	4
Recycling competition	5
Simple living blogs	5
Apple moysse	5
Moss Vale straw bale	6

TRANSITION DIARY

Date	Location	Event
Saturday, 10th April 10:30am—2:30pm	Burradoo	Permaculture Southern Highlands Local Seed Network Autumn Seedsaving meeting Contact: jillaroo53@hotmail.com
Monday, 12th April 7:30pm—9:00pm	Henrietta Rose Room, Bowral	Resilient Hearts meeting. Contact: francinebart@gmail.com
Friday, 23rd April 7:00pm—9:00pm	Bundanoon Community Hall	Sustainable housing forum lecture
Wednesday, 28th April 7:30pm—9:00pm	Kazcare, Bowral	Beginner folk dancing lesson—weekly until 9th June. Contact: info@kblearning.com.au
Saturday, 8th May 10:00am—5:00pm	Bowral Memorial Hall	Sustainable Housing Forum
Monday, 10th May 7:30pm—9:00pm	Henrietta Rose Room, Bowral	Resilient Hearts meeting. Contact: francinebart@gmail.com
Saturday, 22nd May 7:00pm	Centennial Vineyards Restaurant	Slow Food event: “nose to tail” Galloway dinner. Contact: jill.dyson@digitalmail.com.au
Friday, 28th May 7:30pm	Council Theatrette, Moss Vale	CANWin quarterly lecture: Dr Janette Lindesay, Deputy Director, ANU Climate Change Institute

TRANSITION SHIRE NEWS

10 WAYS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

Milenko Matanovic



Everyone plays a role in the problem and everyone must participate in the solution.

Take interest in other people's passions as much as you want them to be interested in yours. We all have ideas for how life should be. The thing is that, unless we are unsurpassed geniuses, we only see a small part of the picture. Asking others what they see can only enhance understanding.

Become a mentor to others less involved in their community. In every community there is a small, overworked group of leaders who try to figure out everything for everyone. They go to all the meetings and take on huge loads of work while others are silent—until it is time for them to complain. This will not do. If you are such a leader, mentor someone with less experience. If you are not, approach someone and ask them to mentor you.

Support a cause with no direct personal benefit. We are involved with things we care about the most. That's natural. My experience tells me, however, that the most interesting and

possibly most important discoveries happen in the spaces between interests and disciplines and ideologies. Step outside your natural zone—it's necessary for uncovering new solutions.

Invite "them" to your meeting. It is convenient to show our importance by pitting "us" against "them." But "they" may have insights that will help us better understand the problem and appreciate the marvelous tensions that form a healthy community.

Reject the tendency to blame. Everyone plays a role in the problem and everyone must participate in the solution. Practice compassion towards those who, like ourselves, unwittingly contribute to the problem they wish to solve.

Confront internal contradictions. Claiming that the problem is someone else's doing conveniently absolves us from doing our part. If I drive my car to a transportation meeting and complain about traffic jams, it's necessary that I acknowledge my contribution to that traffic. At the very least, acknowledge the irony of the situation.

Practice industrial-strength listening. Do not react until you've received.

Render unto community... [Shrink your home to what is necessary](#) and

conduct the rest of your life in the community. For example, resist a "theater" room and visit your local theater instead. Anytime you bump into others you make your community a bit stronger.

Clarify your image of the future. I find that most decisions we make are shaped by impulses so deeply ingrained we fail to be aware of them. Unexamined impulse is prejudice. Examined impulse, once confirmed, is guidance that leads to something better. Examine your embedded assumptions, embrace the relevant ones, and discard the rest. What remains is a clear intuition, an image of a possible future. Then engage with others to make it a reality.

Resist the temptation to choose between the ideal and the reality. [Hold them both in your awareness.](#) Learn to enjoy the creativity and humour this tension offers. It can be quite funny.

Milenko Matanovic is a community builder and a visual artist with an international reputation and a professional career of over 40 years. He is the founding director of [Pomegranate Center](#). The non-profit Pomegranate Center facilitates the conception and construction of open-air gathering places, and integrates art into architecture, landscape and communities.

www.yesmagazine.org

TRANSITION SHIRE NEWS

SOME NOTES ON APPLES

Apple Origins. There are 35-80 species of wild apple, the 'hardest, most resilient, and most diverse fruit on earth' (Browning, 76, 70). According to the latest research, all modern cultivars derive from the one species *Malus sieversii*.

This great mother apple originated in the Tian Shan Mountains of South China/Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan.

Originally tiny, bitter, with edible seeds and bird-propagated, it became, over 10 million years, mammal-friendly fruit by being selected for larger, juicier fruit and inedible seeds by generations of deer, pigs and bears.

By the time humans arrived in the region, 5-8000 years ago, the apple as we know it had nearly evolved. Humans then further selected and propagated the apple; cultivars spread westwards to western Asia and Europe, helped along in the gut and saddlebags of the newly-domesticated horse.

Tally of Cultivars. 10,000 apple cultivars are estimated to have existed globally. 6,000 have been recorded in the UK, 2,000 in Australia; of the latter only 6-700 appear to still exist here and much in excess of 3,000 in the world.

From the early twentieth century onwards the market forces of industrial capitalism and urbanization began decimating the high diversity that had arisen since the Renaissance. Old varieties became a logistical nuisance and choice was reduced. Greater physical resilience, tough transportability, chemical treatability,

physical uniformity and high profitability were now called for.

After 1918, cool storage enabled only one or two cultivars to provide year-round, low-nutrient fruit. Glamour marketing of the visually 'perfect' apple and a taste-standardizing propaganda onslaught of 'sweet, crisp and red' did the rest. Now only half a dozen or so hardy, over-irrigated, low-taste, chemicalised varieties dominate apple markets.

Permaculture Orchards. Although even an organic orchard is an artificial system heavily dependent on human input, we can *incorporate many features of wild fruit ecosystems into orchard design, thus making it more diverse and resilient* by: (a) maximizing different varieties, (b) maximizing different fruit/nut species, (c) native interplants, (d) insectary plants/insects, (e) surrounding native windbreaks, (f) avian predators (ducks, geese), (g) less winter pruning (retarding growth, increasing fruiting), (h) denser planting (retarding growth), (i) 'shocking' trees into fruiting via tying and trellising. We can abstain from toxic chemicals, artificial fertilizers and over-watering.

Culinary & Medicinal In Shakespeare's time apples served at dessert were often accompanied by caraway. An apple pie in Tudor times contained much cinnamon and ginger and was coloured with saffron. Apple Moysie was an old English confection made from roasted apples, egg yolks, rose water, sugar and butter boiled, then strewn with crumbed biscuits or cinna-

mon and ginger added on top [see page 5]. Apple Butter was a kind of jam made from tart apples boiled in cider with added allspice.

Once, every western English farmhouse made its own apple cider, the standard alcoholic drink of the common people in Britain since 1066, also in the US, Normandy, Brittany, Asturias, Basque land and parts of Germany before the victory of beer in the 19th and 20th centuries. Apple brandy (French: Calvados) was also made.

Today's surviving markets are dominated by industrial cider, a standardized product made from cheap apple juice concentrate, corn syrup, citric acid, colouring and carbon dioxide.

Traditional cider depends not only on specific cider apple varieties but also, like wine, on the 'terroir' (soil, aspect, climate) and complex wild yeasts and bacteria present locally. Thus it changes from one maker, season or vintage to the next.

Fermented naturally in the bottle, traditional cider is more 'alive'. It also becomes more alcoholic and dryer over time and the end result can be more volatile and inconsistent. The industrial standards of consistency demanded by national and global markets cannot be met.

Medicinally, apples are good for: diarrhoea and constipation (pectin), digestion of rich foods, stomach acidity, intestinal disorders and infections, anaemia, lowering of bad cholesterol and raising of good chole-

Peter Lach-Newinsky



The tempting goodness of a fresh and organically-grown apple

sterol, strengthening of the immune system (especially by regulating intestinal bacteria), strengthening of the cardiovascular system, strengthening the nervous and mental system, teeth cleansing and protection, reducing weight and, as recently discovered, cancer prevention.

Research on rats at Cornell University showed procyanidins in apples (especially the peel) encouraged colon cancer cells to commit suicide, stopping cells from spreading, and reduced breast tumours by between 25 and 61%.

Apples in supermarkets are heavily loaded with chemicals, nutritionally poorer than organic apples and can be 10 months old. If you want to eat fresh fruit, don't buy apples out of season, buy mangoes. In Australia, fruit that has been kept in storage can legally be called 'fresh'.

References on request

Five things you can do for Transition...

- Join Community Exchange Southern Highlands at www.cesh.org.au
- Check out local theatre/music/art
- Be more mindful of your food consumption. Don't buy more than you need and don't waste it
- Be mindful of the change in season. Get in touch with nature and its changes
- Choose a local issue that concerns you and do something about it

TRANSITION SHIRE NEWS

TRANSITION IN ACTION



Clockwise from top left: the CANWin stall at Berrima's Australia Day Fair; schoolchildren at the School Environment Day, Lake Alexandria; children pledging to "use less stuff" at Berrima; Newcastle Transition training group; barrows at Berrima; Sustainable Housing Forum in Moss Vale; action station at Lake Alexandria

The Quiz

How many barrels of oil are used, every year, in the production of disposable water bottles in Australia?*

- A) 25 000
- B) 100 000
- C) 300 000
- D) 400 000+

How many litres of water are used to refine one barrel of crude oil?***

- A) 125
- B) 2450
- C) 7007
- D) 9542

What is the cost of 1 litre of tap water:bottled water?*

- A) \$0.40:\$1.25
- B) \$0.20:\$6.28
- C) \$0.90:\$2.50
- D) \$0.01:\$2.53

Answers
 1 D 400 000+ barrels
 2 C 7007 litres
 3 D \$0.01 for tap & \$2.53 for bottled
 *www.australianmuseum.net.au
 **Ha, T. *Green stuff for kids*
 Melbourne University Press, 2009

TRANSITION SHIRE NEWS

THE POWER OF DOING

In this time of uncertainty, it is easy to become overwhelmed by daily projections of climate, energy, food and employment strife. Indeed, there is a new wave of syndromes that you can delve into.

The *Boston Globe* (www.boston.com) reported in February, 2009 that ongoing negative change to one's home environment will become a source of chronic stress.

Disruptions to the global food supply will result in more "depression, demoralisation and disillusionment".

The same article mentions a young Melbourne man who was admitted to a psychiatric ward because he was refusing to drink water. He feared that ongoing drought had made water so precious that his drinking it would result in the deaths of millions of people. He was the

first documented sufferer of "climate change delusion", presumably a close cousin of climate change anxiety syndrome.

It doesn't sound great and it's an enormous concern, particularly for the young and impressionable. There is a fairly constant stream of bad news for them to digest: drought, flood, melting ice, earthquakes, famine...the list seems never to end.

I think that young people (including children) need to be told the truth because otherwise, they will pick up random information and join their own dots.

Let's not scare them unnecessarily, nor make it sound completely helpless—and then do something about it. They need to see that action can make a difference—because if it doesn't, what can *they* do?

We can't continue to rely on local, national or even global leaders to sort it out. Action needs to be taken by each one of us on whatever level we choose.

The local options are wide. Write to your relevant politicians and tell them what you would like to see. Lobby local council to plan for a future that involves local water and food security.

Plant food. Teach your children how to grow, cook and preserve it—and to wonder at it. Make your own bread. Brew your own beer.

Mend your clothes. Take care of your possessions so that they last longer. Shop at charity or second hand shops to extend the life of someone else's possessions.

Make your house less dependent on power for comfort and function.

Kathy Ehmann

Walk more and drive less.

Learn new skills. Get together with others to practise those skills. Have fruit preserving parties.

Help others. Visit that elderly neighbour and chat about their peonies. Volunteer to help with the local school's reading program.

These things may not have a significant impact on the wellbeing of the planet, but they will almost certainly improve your own—and your children's.

They will see you taking helpful action and may feel more secure in your ability to help them.

It's all looking grim, but teaching young people—who, frankly are the ones who will really be stuck with the problems—the power of doing something for the greater good can have benefits far into the future.



*Simple living expert,
Rhonda Hetzel*

SIMPLE LIVING BLOGS

Over the next few issues, I'm going to be reviewing a few blogs and forums that are relevant to local and simple living. Actually, less reviewing than promoting ones that I like.

Down to Earth is produced by a fabulous Brisbane woman, Rhonda Hetzel.

She and her husband live very simply, enjoying the liberation of using only what they need.

Recent topics include liquid soap making, vegetable growing, knitting and a series of photos that readers around the world have offered of their own kitchens.

Rhonda also has a forum attached to the blog, where you can ask questions about why your cow has stopped producing milk or how to get a nasty stain out of your carpet.

Check out her blog at <http://downtoearth.blogspot.com>

APPLE MOYSE

Ingredients

2 large or 3 - 4 medium cooking apples
2 egg yolks
1 tsp rosewater
1 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp butter
Ground cinnamon & ginger or crushed sweet biscuits

Method

Roast peeled and cored apples for 45–60 minutes in a medium oven until cooked.

Cut off any too-brown bits. The eggs will lighten the puree, but you don't want brown flecks in it.

Puree your apples. You can, of course, put them through a strainer or potato ricer at this stage, but I find that for pureeing, a food processor is a wonderful thing!

Add the egg yolks as you mix, then the rosewater.

Keep beating until the apple mix is light and fluffy and thoroughly blended.

Put the apple mix in a pan on a gentle heat and mix in the sugar and butter. Remember to taste.

And then—as the original recipe suggests—caste byskettes or synamon and gynger upon them and so serve them forth.



*Apple moyse...perfect for
Autumn evenings*

Christina Nevin <http://thorngrove.typepad.com>

TRANSITION SHIRE NEWS

MOSS VALE STRAW BALE TRIUMPH

Jill Cochram

On the weekend of 5th and 6th December, 2009, community garden volunteers and participants gathered at the Community Garden in Railway Street, Moss Vale, to take part in a workshop erecting a shelter shed.

The men and boys from the Mentoring Towards Manhood project, which takes place at the garden on Mondays, had already erected the corner posts and roof of our proposed "infill" strawbale building and the garden volunteers had constructed the base plate of gravel-filled recycled tyres and hardwood upon which the strawbales would rest.

This project is funded by a grant from the NSW Environmental Education Trust and is one of the many workshops and demonstrations scheduled over a two-year period. The shelter shed will provide a pleasant protected area during inclement weather for the volunteers and visitors to the garden— a nice spot to "chew the fat"



During (left) and with just painting to be done.

over a cup of tea and a bite to eat.

Angus Stephen, of Angus Constructions, is a local builder with strawbale building experience. He ran the workshop and took us through the processes of strapping, twitching, and shaving the bales, with the result amazingly solid walls thanks to the base, middle and top plate holding it all together with wire. By the end of the weekend, the walls were up and the secondhand window in place, ready for the rendering. To protect the

structure from wet weather until it could be hand-rendered in February, the bales were spray-rendered with a sand/lime mix.

The hand-rendering workshop took place at the end of February and soon a coat of mineral paint will make it more weatherproof as well as more aesthetically pleasing.

The floor will be paved and the servery completed with a beautiful mosaic motif by the Mentoring Towards Manhood team in the coming months. We envisage a pergola

draped in fruiting vines and a cob oven attached to the building within the year. Just can't wait to christen it with our first wood-fired pizza! A huge thanks to all who participated in creating such a lovely and useful structure for us at the community garden.

If you wish to know about other educational workshops we have held, plus those that are in the offing this year, go to our website: www.mossvalecommunitygarden.com.au

Do you know of a group practising Transition principles in the Southern Highlands?
Do you have a Transition-friendly event that you would like to have listed in TSN?
Would you like to subscribe to this newsletter?
Contributions and comments welcome.
Email the editor at kathy_ehmann@acenet.com.au

OTHER THINGS

Would you like to gain a deeper understanding of Transition? Then we can think of no better way than to meet with a small group of interested people to read and discuss each chapter of the Transition Handbook. Group members will take it in turns to facilitate discussion of various questions after reading each chapter. Phone Maree Byrne on 4861 1588 or email gmbyrne@bigpond.net.au to discuss suitable time and venue.

* * *

Bob Thomas and Sandra Menteith recently led a two-day "Training for Transition" workshop at Fassifern, near Port Macquarie. A group from the Coal Point Progress Association sponsored the workshop and hosted participants from as far away as Foster, Taree and Maitland, including several people from Transition Newcastle. Coal Point is not yet an official Transition Initiative, but recognition is probably not far away. Members of the group anticipate that it will not be long before Sandy & Bob are invited back to train another batch of recruits.

• * *

A new website has been launched by Transition Town Totnes, which encourages other initiatives to add content: www.transitionnetwork.org. Anyone can register and those who are nominated by their Transition Initiative can add or modify content on the website. If you wish to be a contributor to the website, contact Bob Thomas or Sandra Menteith. Transition Shire Wingecarribee has been categorised as a local hub, leaving an opening for individual towns to apply for recognition as transition town initiatives.

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From the makers of *The Story of Stuff* comes *The Story of Bottled Water*, a look at the impact of our packaged water habit. Easy to watch and not without humour. Check out <http://storyofstuff.org/bottledwater/> for reasons to drink from your tap.