

THE VISIBLE HAND: FROM STRUGGLING SURVIVAL TO VIABLE SUSTAINABILITY

Jon Li

Institute for Public Science & Art
1075 Olive Drive #4, Davis CA USA, 530-753-0352, jli@cal.net

ABSTRACT

Building an economy based on Family Sustainability through Community Information: Most of the global economy is hidden, and in a lot of trouble. This is a mechanism to turn the global economy inside out, so that most of it is transparent, and manageable. This is a model for a computer grid of a person's local economy. It should be user friendly and provide linkage of the information structure between an individual and the larger economy: decentralization in a global context.

This is about re-conceptualizing our information world - so that the social systems work. About turning the economic information system inside out, so that instead of it being difficult for everyone, make it so intuitively useful that it is commonly practical and easy to obtain whatever information you need. Anatomically, a fig fruit is surrounded by its skin, all covered; if you invert it, and expose the fruit with the skin at the bottom, it is a strawberry. This idea is to invert the global economic information system so that it is easy to use. For everybody. Turn the global economic information system from a mystery that you spend your life losing out to (the "fig" that you cannot see into) into a transparent information structure that is designed for the user (the "strawberry" that you can see all the good parts whenever you need them).

The main purpose of this model is for the INDIVIDUAL to be able to have a standard grid for her to put all of the important information in her life in an organized way. It needs to be supportive of different scales of data, for unique people, to help her organize her way out of her problems and challenges, social, organizational, and economic - both as a consumer and as a producer.

Most current policy emphasizes nation, then state, maybe region. This model shifts the focus to the village and the community, so that neighborhoods and families get their needs met. The idea is that the model should be useful to individuals and families, and all business people as well as municipal bureaucrats and citizens investigating the government.

The Power of Eudemony: Eudemony is an idea that Aristotle talked about. It means something like well-being. At its most human root, it is about a sense of self, in balance with the social and all around, in tune with the Universe. Pretty tough nut to crack, and the reason why most people need to seek religion or some other strategy to cope with the slings and arrows of the human condition.

The power equation in eudemony is to balance the material, the technical, the physical, with the social, the nutritional, the cognitive, the spiritual and the natural environment.

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That equation is different for each person. Money emerged as the medium of exchange to balance all those values, but it was always seen as a way to have power over other people, or compared to other people.

In Stafford Beer's introduction of eudemony in *Platform for Change*, he says "Money is terribly important, both to those paying and to those paid. But money is nonetheless an epiphenomenon of a system which actually runs on eudemony. It is for this reason that I have come to see money as a constraint on the behavior of eudemonic systems, rather than to see eudemony as a by-product of monetary systems."

The new metric must be dynamic, and include money and technology in it, but it also must factor in how damaging a bias towards money and technology has been in the 20th century in terms of social, natural and cognitive costs for the 99%. It should be useful for families and communities to be self-sufficient.

Notes on Education and Working Together as Art; The Power of Eudemony; Evolving Contemporary Thought; American Social Evolution; Ernest Callenbach's last public words; The Visible Hand: From Struggling Survival to Viable Sustainability; Do your own Viable System Model analysis; Housing Laws of Supply and Demand; References

Key words: eudemony, Ecotopia, Visible Hand, sustainability, Viable System Model, ending homelessness globally, WikiLife, WikiEconomy, planetwide sustainability for every woman and her children

NOTES ON EDUCATION AND WORKING TOGETHER AS ART

"Education: The mass media has tried to take away our individual right to self-discovery. The right to be different, the right to fail, to step out in a new direction and explore. Only by making mistakes can you learn, and then try something else. The point of education is to help the student explore her own world, to define it however she wants, and feels the need to. Education should provide a safe haven where the consequences can be adjusted if not controlled. Education is for people to be able to gravitate towards their interests and discover new ones. Education should help people learn to move into new worlds, open new options, take tentative steps that can be safe even if it is risky."

"Working Together: This isn't about the industrial economy, which ruins the human spirit. The economic structure should work so effortlessly that you don't even think about it and you can focus on who you are working with, what you are doing, and what you want to do with your life. Work should be mostly about personal and social fulfillment." Alan Klinger

THE POWER OF EUDEMONY

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The zen or dōw of being is to cope with the pain? More, it is about living in the moment. During times of pleasure, or just plain interest, you are lost in the moment and not even aware of it, talking with a friend, oh look at the clock, you are being as time flies. It is the slow waiting miserable hours that take forever that you wish would just disappear that you call upon some other power to lift you up.

Eudemony has a broad range from good to bad in many directions, as many as you can think of. And more, if you want to add some. And somewhere in the middle of that range is things that you deal with through money. Unfortunately, the past 500 years of Western Civilization has devoted most of its conscious awareness to things and money, and more about money all the time. For example, forcing people to have two full time working parent families; or buying a house you can't afford, just so you can say you are a homeowner, while driving you into so much debt that it ruins your life. 50% of the homeowners in the US are underwater and more all the time.

Money is a necessary but INSUFFICIENT condition that was captured by the US media to glorify the commoditization of life, through advertising. Anyone who has ever watched television has Attention Deficit Disorder. It has scrambled our brains so that we are different sensate beings than people who have never used a telephone, or listened to a radio, watched television or used a computer.

Money is an enabler for us to meet our human needs. It is not god in its own right. Paul wrote Timothy that it is the LOVE of money that is the root of all evil.

The power equation in eudemony is to balance the material, the technical, the physical, with the social, the nutritional, the cognitive, the spiritual and the natural environment. That equation is different for each person. Money emerged as the medium of exchange to balance all those values, but it was always seen as a way to have power over other people, or compared to other people.

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ERNEST CALLENBACH'S LAST PUBLIC WORDS

Ernest Callenbach, author of the classic environmental novel *Ecotopia* among other works, founded and edited the UC Press Film Quarterly

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To all brothers and sisters who hold the dream in their hearts of a future world in which humans and all other beings live in harmony and mutual support—a world of sustainability, stability, and confidence. A world something like the one I described, so long ago, in Ecotopia and Ecotopia Emerging.

As I survey my life, which is coming near its end, I want to set down a few thoughts that might be useful to those coming after. It will soon be time for me to give back to Gaia the nutrients that I have used during a long, busy and happy life. I am not bitter or resentful at the approaching end; I have been one of the extraordinarily lucky ones. So it behooves me here to gather together some thoughts and attitudes that may prove useful in the dark times we are facing: a century or more of exceedingly difficult times.

How will those who survive manage it? What can we teach our friends, our children, our communities? Although we may not be capable of changing history, how can we equip ourselves to survive it?

I contemplate these questions in the full consciousness of my own mortality. Being offered an actual number of likely months to live, even though the estimate is uncertain, mightily focuses the mind. On personal things, of course, on loved ones and even loved things, but also on the Big Picture.

But let us begin with last things first, for a change. The analysis will come later, for those who wish it.

Hope. Children exude hope, even under the most terrible conditions, and that must inspire us as our conditions get worse. Hopeful patients recover better. Hopeful test candidates score better. Hopeful builders construct better buildings. Hopeful parents produce secure and resilient children. In groups, an atmosphere of hope is essential to shared successful effort: “Yes, we can!” is not an empty slogan, but a mantra for people who intend to do something together—whether it is rescuing victims of hurricanes, rebuilding flood-damaged buildings on higher ground, helping wounded people through first aid, or inventing new social structures (perhaps one in which only people are “persons,” not corporations). We cannot know what threats we will face. But ingenuity against adversity is one of our species’ built-in resources. We cope, and faith in our coping capacity is perhaps our biggest resource of all.

Mutual support. The people who do best at basic survival tasks (we know this experimentally, as well as intuitively) are cooperative, good at teamwork, often altruistic, mindful of the common good. In drastic emergencies like hurricanes or earthquakes, people surprise us by their sacrifices—of food, of shelter, even sometimes of life itself. Those who survive social or economic collapse, or wars, or pandemics, or starvation, will be those who manage scarce resources fairly; hoarders and dominators win only in the short run, and end up dead, exiled or friendless. So, in every way we can we need to help each other, and our children, learn to be cooperative rather than competitive; to be helpful rather than hurtful; to look out for the communities of which we are a part, and on which we ultimately depend.

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Practical skills. With the movement into cities of the US population, and much of the rest of the world's people, we have had a massive de-skilling in how to do practical tasks. When I was a boy in the country, all of us knew how to build a tree house, or construct a small hut, or raise chickens, or grow beans, or screw pipes together to deliver water. It was a sexist world, of course, so when some of my chums in eighth grade said we wanted to learn girls' "home ec" skills like making bread or boiling eggs, the teachers were shocked, but we got to do it. There was widespread competence in fixing things—impossible with most modern contrivances, of course, but still reasonable for the basic tools of survival: pots and pans, bicycles, quilts, tents, storage boxes.

We all need to learn, or relearn, how we would keep the rudiments of life going if there were no paid specialists around, or means to pay them. Every child should learn elementary carpentry, from layout and sawing to driving nails. Everybody should know how to chop wood safely, and build a fire. Everybody should know what to do if dangers appear from fire, flood, downed electric wires and the like. Taking care of one another is one practical step at a time, most of them requiring help from at least one other person; survival is a team sport.

Organize. Much of the American ideology, our shared and usually unspoken assumptions, is hyper-individualistic. We like to imagine that heroes are solitary, have superpowers and glory in violence, and that if our work lives and business lives seem tamer, underneath they are still struggles red in blood and claw. We have sought solitude on the prairies, as cowboys on the range, in our dependence on media (rather than real people), and even in our cars, armored cabins of solitude. We have an uneasy and doubting attitude about government, as if we all reserve the right to be outlaws. But of course human society, like ecological webs, is a complex dance of mutual support and restraint, and if we are lucky it operates by laws openly arrived at and approved by the populace.

If the teetering structure of corporate domination, with its monetary control of Congress and our other institutions, should collapse of its own greed, and the government be unable to rescue it, we will have to reorganize a government that suits the people. We will have to know how to organize groups, how to compromise with other groups, how to argue in public for our positions. It turns out that "brainstorming," a totally noncritical process in which people just throw out ideas wildly, doesn't produce workable ideas. In particular, it doesn't work as well as groups in which ideas are proposed, critiqued, improved, debated. But like any group process, this must be protected from domination by powerful people and also over-talkative people. When the group recognizes its group power, it can limit these distortions. Thinking together is enormously creative; it has huge survival value.

Learn to live with contradictions. These are dark times, these are bright times. We are implacably making the planet less habitable. Every time a new oil field is discovered, the press cheers: "Hooray, there is more fuel for the self-destroying machines!" We are turning more land into deserts and parking lots. We are wiping out innumerable species that are not only wondrous and beautiful, but might be useful to us. We are multiplying to the point where our needs and our wastes outweigh the capacities of the biosphere to

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produce and absorb them. And yet, despite the bloody headlines and the rocketing military budgets, we are also, unbelievably, killing fewer of each other proportionately than in earlier centuries. We have mobilized enormous global intelligence and mutual curiosity, through the Internet and outside it. We have even evolved, spottily, a global understanding that democracy is better than tyranny, that love and tolerance are better than hate, that hope is better than rage and despair, that we are prone, especially in catastrophes, to be astonishingly helpful and cooperative.

We may even have begun to share an understanding that while the dark times may continue for generations, in time new growth and regeneration will begin. In the biological process called “succession,” a desolate, disturbed area is gradually, by a predictable sequence of returning plants, restored to ecological continuity and durability. When old institutions and habits break down or consume themselves, new experimental shoots begin to appear, and people explore and test and share new and better ways to survive together.

It is never easy or simple. But already we see, under the crumbling surface of the conventional world, promising developments: new ways of organizing economic activity (cooperatives, worker-owned companies, nonprofits, trusts), new ways of using low-impact technology to capture solar energy, to sequester carbon dioxide, new ways of building compact, congenial cities that are low (or even self-sufficient) in energy use, low in waste production, high in recycling of almost everything. A vision of sustainability that sometimes shockingly resembles *Ecotopia* is tremulously coming into existence at the hands of people who never heard of the book.

Now in principle, the Big Picture seems simple enough, though devilishly complex in the details. We live in the declining years of what is still the biggest economy in the world, where a looter elite has fastened itself upon the decaying carcass of the empire. It is intent on speedily and relentlessly extracting the maximum wealth from that carcass, impoverishing our former working middle class. But this maggot class does not invest its profits here. By law and by stock-market pressures, corporations must seek their highest possible profits, no matter the social or national consequences—which means moving capital and resources abroad, wherever profit potential is larger. As Karl Marx darkly remarked, “Capital has no country,” and in the conditions of globalization his meaning has come clear.

The looter elite systematically exports jobs, skills, knowledge, technology, retaining at home chiefly financial manipulation expertise: highly profitable, but not of actual productive value. Through “productivity gains” and speedups, it extracts maximum profit from domestic employees; then, firing the surplus, it claims surprise that the great mass of people lack purchasing power to buy up what the economy can still produce (or import).

Here again Marx had a telling phrase: “Crisis of under-consumption.” When you maximize unemployment and depress wages, people have to cut back. When they cut back, businesses they formerly supported have to shrink or fail, adding their own

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employees to the ranks of the jobless, and depressing wages still further. End result: something like Mexico, where a small, filthy rich plutocracy rules over an impoverished mass of desperate, uneducated, and hopeless people.

Barring unprecedented revolutionary pressures, this is the actual future we face in the United States, too. As we know from history, such societies can stand a long time, supported by police and military control, manipulation of media, surveillance and dirty tricks of all kinds. It seems likely that a few parts of the world (Germany, with its worker-council variant of capitalism, New Zealand with its relative equality, Japan with its social solidarity, and some others) will remain fairly democratic.

The United States, which has a long history of violent plutocratic rule unknown to the textbook-fed, will stand out as the best-armed Third World country, its population ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-educated, ill-cared for in health, and increasingly poverty-stricken: even Social Security may be whittled down, impoverishing tens of millions of the elderly.

As empires decline, their leaders become increasingly incompetent—petulant, ignorant, gifted only with PR skills of posturing and spinning, and prone to the appointment of loyal idiots to important government positions. Comedy thrives; indeed, writers are hardly needed to invent outrageous events.

We live, then, in a dark time here on our tiny precious planet. Ecological devastation, political and economic collapse, irreconcilable ideological and religious conflict, poverty, famine: the end of the overshoot of cheap-oil-based consumer capitalist expansionism.

If you don't know where you've been, you have small chance of understanding where you might be headed. So let me offer a capsule history for those who, like most of us, got little help from textbook history.

At 82, my life has included a surprisingly substantial slice of American history. In the century or so up until my boyhood in Appalachian central Pennsylvania, the vast majority of Americans subsisted as farmers on the land. Most, like people elsewhere in the world, were poor, barely literate, ill-informed, short-lived. Millions had been slaves. Meanwhile in the cities, vast immigrant armies were mobilized by ruthless and often violent “robber baron” capitalists to build vast industries that made things: steel, railroads, ships, cars, skyscrapers.

Then, when I was in grade school, came World War II. America built the greatest armaments industry the world had ever seen, and when the war ended with most other industrial countries in ruins, we had a run of unprecedented productivity and prosperity. Thanks to strong unions and a sympathetic government, this prosperity was widely shared: a huge working middle class evolved—tens of millions of people could afford (on one wage) a modest house, a car, perhaps sending a child to college. This era peaked around 1973, when wages stagnated, the Vietnam War took a terrible toll in blood and money, and the country began sliding rightward.

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In the next epoch, which we are still in and which may be our last as a great nation, capitalists who grew rich and powerful by making things gave way to a new breed: financiers who grasped that you could make even more money by manipulating money. (And by persuading Congress to subsidize them—the system should have been called Subsidism, not Capitalism.) They had no concern for the productivity of the nation or the welfare of its people; with religious fervor, they believed in maximizing profit as the absolute economic goal. They recognized that, by capturing the government through the election finance system and removing government regulation, they could turn the financial system into a giant casino.

Little by little, they hollowed the country out, until it was helplessly dependent on other nations for almost all its necessities. We had to import significant steel components from China or Japan. We came to pay for our oil imports by exporting food (i.e., our soil). Our media and our educational system withered. Our wars became chronic and endless and stupefyingly expensive. Our diets became suicidal, and our medical system faltered; life expectancies began to fall.

And so we have returned, in a sort of terrible circle, to something like my boyhood years, when President Roosevelt spoke in anger of “one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-fed, ill-clothed.” A large and militant contingent of white, mostly elderly, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant right-wingers, mortally threatened by their impending minority status and pretending to be liberty-lovers, desperately seek to return us still further back.

Americans like to think of ours as an exceptional country, immune through geographical isolation and some kind of special virtue to the tides of history. Through the distorted lens of our corporate media, we possess only a distorted view of what the country is really like now. In the next decades, we shall see whether we indeed possess the intelligence, the strength and the mutual courage to break through to another positive era.

No futurist can foresee the possibilities. As empires decay, their civilian leaderships become increasingly crazed, corrupt and incompetent, and often the military (which is after all a parasite of the whole nation, and has no independent financial base like the looter class) takes over. Another possible scenario is that if the theocratic red center of the country prevails in Washington, the relatively progressive and prosperous coastal areas will secede in self-defense.

Ecotopia is a novel, and secession was its dominant metaphor: How would a relatively rational part of the country save itself ecologically if it was on its own? As *Ecotopia Emerging* puts it, Ecotopia aspired to be a beacon for the rest of the world. And so it may prove, in the very, very long run, because the general outlines of Ecotopia are those of any possible future sustainable society.

The “ecology in one country” argument was an echo of an actual early Soviet argument, as to whether “socialism in one country” was possible. In both cases, it now seems to me, the answer must be no. We are now fatally interconnected, in climate change, ocean impoverishment, agricultural soil loss, etc., etc., etc. International consumer capitalism is

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a self-destroying machine, and as long as it remains the dominant social form, we are headed for catastrophe; indeed, like rafters first entering the “tongue” of a great rapid, we are already embarked on it.

When disasters strike and institutions falter, as at the end of empires, it does not mean that the buildings all fall down and everybody dies. Life goes on, and in particular, the remaining people fashion new institutions that they hope will better ensure their survival.

So I look to a long-term process of “succession,” as the biological concept has it, where “disturbances” kill off an ecosystem, but little by little new plants colonize the devastated area, prepare the soil for larger and more complex plants (and the other beings who depend on them), and finally the process achieves a flourishing, resilient, complex state—not necessarily what was there before, but durable and richly productive. In a similar way, experiments under way now, all over the world, are exploring how sustainability can in fact be achieved locally. Technically, socially, economically—since it is quite true, as ecologists know, that everything is connected to everything else, and you can never just do one thing by itself.

Since I wrote *Ecotopia*, I have become less confident of humans’ political ability to act on commonsense, shared values. Our era has become one of spectacular polarization, with folly multiplying on every hand. That is the way empires crumble: they are taken over by looter elites, who sooner or later cause collapse. But then new games become possible, and with luck *Ecotopia* might be among them.

Humans tend to try to manage things: land, structures, even rivers. We spend enormous amounts of time, energy and treasure in imposing our will on nature, on pre-existing or inherited structures, dreaming of permanent solutions, monuments to our ambitions and dreams. But in periods of slack, decline, or collapse, our abilities no longer suffice for all this management. We have to let things go.

All things “go” somewhere: they evolve, with or without us, into new forms. So as the decades pass, we should try not always to futilely fight these transformations. As the Japanese know, there is much unnoticed beauty in *wabi-sabi*—the old, the worn, the tumble-down, those things beginning their transformation into something else. We can embrace this process of devolution: embellish it when strength avails, learn to love it.

There is beauty in weathered and unpainted wood, in orchards overgrown, even in abandoned cars being incorporated into the earth. Let us learn, like the Forest Service sometimes does, to put unwise or unneeded roads “to bed,” help a little in the healing of the natural contours, the re-vegetation by native plants. Let us embrace decay, for it is the source of all new life and growth.

Ernest Callenbach lived until April 15, 2012.

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Society is us. There is no “them.” Before Adam Smith wrote the Wealth of Nations about competition, he wrote a book on cooperation and mutual sympathy as the foundation of all economic transactions, The Theory of Moral Sentiments. The only way to succeed economically is to see yourself as part of a much larger group of people, and rewards come more from helping than from competing.

The 20th century drive for competition led to a gross expansion of the financial sector at the expense of the real needs of the 99%. Since World War II, bureaucrats and financiers have built monstrous pyramids of financial complexity, so that every step has to be paid for. A financial Tower of Babel.

The emphasis on money undervalues the foundations of the economy: the society and the natural environment.

Hazel Henderson thinks the economy can be graphically represented by a “cake chart,” a take-off on the pie charts economists use to express percentages. The top layer of the cake is the “private” sector: production, employment, consumption, investment, savings. The next layer is the “public” sector: infrastructure, schools, municipal government and various services. The third layer down is the underground economy including tax dodges, crime, black market exchange, and the like. Beneath these three “monetized” layers, in which cash is used as a means of valuation and exchange, is the non-monetized layer, based on bartering, home-based production, “sweat equity,” and what she calls the “love economy” of volunteerism: working to support family and friends with vegetables, cleaning, baby sitting, medical advice, and so on. In turn, this base layer of the human economy rests on the bottom layer of the cake, nature's economy: the natural “resource base,” which ultimately provides everything basic to the human need for sustenance.

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This is about re-conceptualizing our information world - so that the social systems work. About turning the economic information system inside out, so that instead of it being difficult for everyone, make it so intuitively useful that it is commonly practical and easy to obtain whatever information you need. Anatomically, a fig fruit is surrounded by its skin, all covered; if you invert it, and expose the fruit with the skin at the bottom, it is a strawberry. This idea is to invert the global economic information system so that it is easy to use. For everybody. Turn the global economic information system from a mystery that you spend your life losing out to (the “fig” that you cannot see into) into a transparent information structure that is designed for the user (the “strawberry” that you can see all the good parts whenever you need them).

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The Grid: WikiLife/WikiEconomy: a computer information structural idea for creating a global grassroots economy. Basically it is a dynamic information catalogue for all the parts of a woman's life: income, food, housing, health care, transportation, clothing, education, media, entertainment, taxes, managing the economy, public services, infrastructure, utilities. That information matrix has components that scale up physically/geographically: family, 10; neighborhood, 100; village, 1,000; community, 10,000; district, 100,000; and region, 1,000,000.

Matrilineal? Let's face it: 3000+ years of patriarchy has failed. Socially, ecologically and evolutionarily. Men mostly only care about themselves, so if the information system is sophisticated enough that it meets any woman's needs, the men will be able to get along just fine. One of the problems is that we have had men designing systems that women and families must live/cope with - and most men don't have a clue what they were doing to the social fabric.

WikiLife/WikiEconomy is like the strawberry: you can see everything you want to look for. It is an information structure that allows many people to fill in the beginning of cells of a decentralized economy at the neighborhood, village & community levels locally, while other people will discover what is actually happening in the larger economy at the regional, state, national, continental and global levels. It would need to focus on the local community that makes up the environment of an individual and their extended family. Recognize tribal connections without allowing cultural traditions to prevent self-determination by every woman and her children. And it would need to be able to take into account the national/international economy.

A Real World Example

From what I understand, the Danes have an excellent prototype in use as their national information system now. To the extent this is not true of the Danes, this is what I envision:

One computer information network unifies the entire country or state. Each person in the society has an ongoing account, and it includes all of their personal, business, social and commercial activities.

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A primary job of people who work in the government is to assist people in accessing their individual computer information; if there is some kind of bureaucratic complication preventing someone from doing what they want, to assist them in clearing up the problem. Since this account includes all of the individual's banking data, when a person is making a business or commercial proposal, there is no question as to the source of the information, and the quality can be determined.

How it would feel physically:

You custom design your own web page. It includes a portal to your business accounts, which are firewalled. Complete audit trail of anyone who goes in and what they do. You buy a bicycle; it is documented. Included is the annual public fee, which will continue to be charged as long as you own the bike. When you get rid of the bike, you make a data change as documentation, the fee stops, and changes are reflected in other parts of your web sites, and the relevant community statistics about number of bikes owned.

If something is improper, you go to a local official, who you have spoken with before and built some trust, and the official helps you through your difficulty. Public officials who do inappropriate things will be identified and handled, and prevented. Most people will see the information system for what it is, a valuable public service that allows them to get on with their lives, get their needs met, and have control of their personal economy.

Then you can build your own economy. Create the data and information for you to identify new ways to generate income. Identify parts of your life that you want to know more about. Take more control of your life. Identify needs and future options.

So the challenge is ecologically efficient social action with quality, timely information. The portal to that is electronic connection that serves as competent, minimal governmental information interface with privacy protections.

Do your own Viable System Model analysis:

Take 10 pieces of paper: the first 4 is to map your personal life; the second 4 is to map your professional/work/income life; the last 2 are for someplace else in the world:

First 4: draw 3 concentric circles on each one: self-family-neighborhood;
self-neighborhood-village; self-village-community; self-community-district/region/state

Second 4: self-supervisor; self-customer; self-potential customers; self-options

Last 2:

Fukushima Daiichi Japan nuclear disaster, and some other place you hope to visit.

Now Play with your life: map your daily activity; then start thinking about things you want to do but don't or haven't.

Now make a 10 page map for each of the people in your immediate, nuclear family, and then ask them questions, if you are brave, show them what you have written and be

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loving enough to hear their reaction, because it will probably open new channels of communication in your relationship and improve daily living with the people you are most likely to have friction with every day.

If you are a MOM, then you have the honor to do a 10 page map for each of your children. It will become your guide as they grow up and your expectations and responses need to change. It can be a source of ongoing reflection, especially after they are on their own.

Begin to build a component of the global economy;
To begin to develop your community wiki information, network through email contact@localwiki.org.

Build a network within each country and each state. The coolest thing about the US Department of Defense design of the Internet is that it is completely decentralized, so it is a metaphor for the new post-globalization economy.

Pick a country to explore and add to the Wiki/Economy information at the neighborhood/ village/ community/ district/ region/ state/ nation information in one of the policy areas: income, food, housing, health care, transportation, clothing, education, media, entertainment, taxes, managing the economy, public services, infrastructure, utilities.

The attachment 2000,8 C+G+I+EX Pop GDP is the global database for building the Wiki Economy. It gives you the ability to see major trends in 90% of the global economy, and 80% of the population. Absent the attachment, prepare your own trend analysis of the region to begin to learn what seems to be happening. At this point, you are going to have to develop your own analysis, because most of the industries' analysis are too competitive and proprietary, and useless to the larger population.

For each of the countries listed you have the basis to build a model of that country's dynamic evolving economy: the population in 2008, the Gross Domestic Product in 2008, the percent of GDP in Consumption, in Government spending, in private Investment, and net Exporting, for 2000 and 2008. Notice the change in emphasis as the economy shifts. The operating hypotheses of the model are: 1) GDP of every country in the developed world is dropping, and 2) since the Lehman Brothers AIG meltdown in September of 2008, Investment has dropped and Government spending has risen due to 1% political pressure.

Be personally responsible and claim shared ownership for one of the cells, like "district/food" and find out everything you can about how that whole sector of the economy actually works, follow the money and find out who really is controlling the decisions and how the Sustainability Party should take a position in terms of how that particular cell should be evolving. Take responsibility for that cell's quality. Become part of the leadership of that cell. Save lives. Create a healthier economic environment.

The Visible Hand

HOUSING LAWS OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The 20th century was epitomized by the post-Great Depression/World War II pursuit of material wealth, where property and status reflected great income. A home has always been considered a symbol of long term sustainability, as well as the primary location for all the other material possessions that were supposed to add up to happiness.

At this point in economic history, there are some things that are so severely out of balance that a natural evolutionary adjustment will mean a totally different situation, forcing a bifurcation, a new choice of actions.

A bifurcation is literally a fork in the road, where a new direction must be taken. Mathematicians call these kinds of events discontinuities. Here's the transformation principle: A system's instabilities can become so serious that it cannot continue operating as it has been any more; it must make a radical change, travel into new territory that is significantly different from all past behavior.

Jane Jacobs describes the emergence of air-breathing vertebrates from an ancestry of marine vertebrates: fish becoming amphibians. My favorite example is when a dinosaur/lizard built wings and flew to evolve to a bird. The discussion here is about decisive evolutionary change. In science, it is called paradigm shift. In history, it is called revolution.

Global Economic US Imbalances

The most significant imbalances are:

- the US has the largest trade imbalance in history
- the US budget deficit (accumulated, and continuing to grow) is the largest in history
- because the US Dollar remains the global currency of exchange, it still accounts for a plurality of the currency in the global market, and the standard for the rest.

From the end of World War I to the Clinton administration, the US Dollar deserved the respect to be the global currency. Later administrations threw away the idea of fiscal and financial prudence, and let both the war budget and the financial industry go wild. The September 2008 global financial meltdown was the consequence, and that traumatic event redefined the relationships between the banking industry, the governments and the financial markets. They still don't know what the rules are with each other.

While there has been talk since OPEC in 1973 about creating a new global currency, the US Dollar remains useful. While the Chinese are in the premier position to establish global currency control, that appears risky. A significant assumption of this analysis is that the Chinese have been right all along about where they have pegged their currency, and the US should have devalued the Dollar rather than saber-rattling about China using its currency to maintain its trade with the US. So, hold the Chinese currency right where it is.

The Visible Hand

If Greece defaults and must leave the Euro, it may bring down the Euro, and force each of the Euro nations to re-establish their national currencies. The argument for the German Mark as the replacement for the US Dollar as the global standard is that the German economy, the German government, the German society, and the German culture/German history (especially the Nazi embarrassment), are small enough now that they can survive the scrutiny that should go with the standard currency's country. Much more transparent than either China or Switzerland.

The US Dollar becomes ordinary

The US Dollar's buying power from its global currency status is so inflated that when another currency replaces it as the global currency, as the US Dollar followed the British Pound after World War I, there will be significant adjustments to the US economy, much as happened after Britain after World War I and again after World War II.

1. Property rights have been the center of the Western economic value system since the Dark Ages and even Roman times. Property has always been valuable because it has been scarce: because most of it was held by the Church, then Royalty, then Business. Property has always been the symbol of power and wealth. That eventually grew to the housing financial tower of babel that we have today.
2. Housing property values have only inflated, regardless of the economy in the 20th century, with the argument being replacement costs have all gone up: land, materials, labor, gadgets and appliances, local development fees. Now we are at the end of that business wave, where we are much over-built. Post-World War II, with the assumption that energy was free, the 1950s and 1960s saw a frenzy of poor design and bad quality rushed building construction, in a suburban obsession to pay tribute to the automobile.
3. At this time in history, the US has a poorly planned auto dependent economy. The housing finance structure hurts the homeowner and rewards the banks, the mortgage and the construction industry.
4. Now, half the homes in the US owe more than their market value (they are underwater), from grossly inflated market expectations. People are being evicted, and structures that were homes are now vacant, then ignored, neglected, vandalized and made unsafe and worthless.
5. The immediate inequity is how many people are homeless while vacant commercial and office property rots. The short-term solution is to turn vacant commercial buildings into co-op housing communities.
6. When there is a US property values rebalancing, prices will start dropping, and they will keep dropping, reflecting the artificially high floor of the housing prices the past decade.
7. Housing represents a majority of the paper value of most of the banks. (The rest is commercial property, accrued assets, and business value.) When the US property values drop, and then disappears, the foundation of the US-Western economy goes with it. US wages will drop and then stabilize something below the Germans and above the Chinese. Most of the Municipal Bonds will disappear, and most public pension funds with them. Most US contracts will be subject to dispute because they will not be possible to fulfill.
8. The value of the US Dollar will drop compared to foreign currencies, so the cost of imported goods will climb, a lot. Ten times, some a hundred times. Imported oil will

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be so expensive we only use domestic oil. The strategic reserves will be tapped. Goods previously bought from Mexico or China will be cheaper when made in the US.

9. Of the 15% of the US Gross Domestic Product that is now the financial industry, the 2/3rds that was added since 1990 will disappear, and the US GDP will shrink by 10% that is all mathematical models and derivatives, and no real world wealth at all.

10. The long-term solution to the global economy is: housing as a right. For the quarter of the people in society on the edge and at risk, it will cut down the need to violate other people to survive, and cut the need for police in half. Humans will always need hotels and hostels for places to stay when you are traveling and seeking hospitality.

11. Housing for all completely changes the economics. At this point the US needs to dismantle half of its structures (that are ecological disasters) and let the land revert to a post-automobile environment.

12. A re-established economy in the US can be built around an arbitrary designation of a 3-bedroom house at \$5,000; a really awesome mansion at \$10,000. That completely changes what the definition of a US Dollar is. Since we have more supply than demand, we have excess paper value. This would stabilize it. If housing is adequate, then the entire economy can be driven by sustainability rather than greed.

Rule #1: People can stay where they are, and have title to their current residence.

Rule #2: Local governments set up community decision making groups to identify all property (for countries like Greece that cannot tell you), take ownership of all land and property that current owners do not reside in, decide who may take over the property and the buildings, and what is to be done long term with the buildings (torn down or weatherized).

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