

Summer Edition 2011

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Nov/Dec 2011

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only

Words from the Administrator-Fiona Thornycroft Written by Phoebe Taylor.

Kariong Trade Day was another quiet one. In fact, all Trade Days this year have been fairly quiet which is very disappointing for the organisers. Even though they have been quiet they have seemed to be enjoyed by the members who have attended.

In saying that, hundreds of shells have been raised in the last month so there have been a number of trades all together which is good to see.

Due to the time required to home-school, Fiona will be resigning as the main Administrator in January. She has said that she will be leaving the Admin duties in the very capable hands of the Admin team but also leaving a vacancy for someone if they would like to lead the group.

Fiona and the Admin team would like to say a very big thank you to Susanne Mueller-Byrnes for running the recent successful kariong Trade Day. She did a wonderful job of organising some workshops which were attended by some very grateful members.

Due to the fact that Trade Days have been quiet this year, the Admin Team would like to know if members would prefer something else other than Trade Days. Or could members let us know the reasons why they have not been attending as often and if there is anything we can do to make the Trade Days regain their spark?

Kariong Trade Day

Kariong Trade Day
Sunday 27th November
Dandaloo Street Kariong
(off Woy Woy Road)
Trading 10am-1pm
Theme: Beat The Christmas Rush!

**For enquiries on the day please see
Susanne Mueller-Byrnes.**

**Remember to bring a table to set
up on and for allocation of your
stall please see Libby.**

**There will be FREE Bouncy Castle
and face painting provided by Jo
Jo's Circus and paid for by Admin.**

LETS Keep Trading– by Susan Wise

* In Times of Economic Instability

Our global economic system is on very shaky ground right now, and the economic, political and social implications may be far reaching.

We are living in interesting times indeed. Our capitalist monetary system is under threat and the future feels uncertain. In this context, the benefits of a non-monetary system, such as LETS, are highlighted.

In the traditional system, when money becomes scarce the level of trading declines, businesses are forced to make cut backs and people lose their jobs.

As the cost of living increases, our budgets get tighter. Many of the escalating costs at present are fixed costs such as electricity and rent, which don't allow much scope for reduction. Furthermore, these types of expenses can generally only be paid for in cash, which depletes our budget significantly.

This is where LETS shines! It provides an array of goods and services that we don't have to find cash for.

Alternative economic systems such as LETS don't substitute the conventional system but compliment it. LETS fills a gap where the current system fails us, and is especially useful in times of high unemployment.

Within the LETS community, the measure of exchange is often human resources (time, skills and energy); something we have as much access to as we choose.

The ability to earn shells is much easier than the ability to earn money. Many goods and services provided on LETS would not easily attract a monetary value in conventional society, for example: working bees; home-made food; driving other members to do their shopping; handmade arts/crafts; etc.

In fact, members can find just about any way to earn shells.

Therefore, members who find themselves struggling in the monetary system have more opportunity to continue trading through LETS.

When times are tough, LETS also enables us to keep enjoying some of the less essential goods and services that we would have to forgo if limited to our money supply. (That lovely piece of jewellery, or heavenly foot massage!)

Global financial crises mean that money may be in short supply, but our human capital is not. Naturally, the system will always operate at its best when it has lots of resourceful members, so be sure to let your friends know about the benefits that they too may receive by joining LETS.

Now is the time for our community to grow stronger and provide even more goods and services that are able to be traded without the need for money.

An increase in the variety and availability of services in particular would strengthen our system and benefit all.

And as always, please consider whether a monetary component is really necessary when trading your goods and services for those of another.

The benefits of a LETS community are many, and extend beyond the economic; but particularly in these times of economic instability, LETS can provide a valuable financial management tool. And the more powerful the tool, the greater the benefits we will all reap from it.

Happy trading!

A LETS solution to a buzzing situation– by Caroline

I received a call from a friend on a weekend when I was at work. "Does your Dad still have hives?" she asked. Once we established that she meant the hives meant to house bees and not the skin condition (which was an amusing segue in itself) I told her that unfortunately he had to give beekeeping away due to health problems but I'd call and ask his advice. The recommendation was to check the Australian Beekeepers Association website (www.beekeepers.asn.au for those interested in beekeeping). The website has a "Swarms" link if you should ever need this.

Upon checking the site there was only one assistance number listed nearby in Paxton, which was an hour's drive from my friend. Then I remembered that the last trading afternoon tea at Mannering Park I met LETS member Heinz from Buff Point and he had a backyard hive. So I called him and got a message soon after from my friend that he was on his way to her to help.

A recipe for a piece of LETS artwork By Caroline Bohlsen

Ingredients

Horseshoes (bought for 100% shells from Danielle at Wye)

Reinforcing steel (scavenged item, often found in small pieces left over from building jobs)

Welding (100% shells from Terry at Chain Valley Bay)

Rust converter paint and spray enamel paint (had to pay cash for these)

Gyprock mounting screws (bought from hardware shop)

Instructions

On a sheet (or sheets taped together for larger designs) of newspaper, lay out horseshoes in desired layout

Trace around the horseshoes

Mark locations for reinforcing steel pieces for hanging hooks

Mark locations to drill for mounting screws

Give to welding maestro

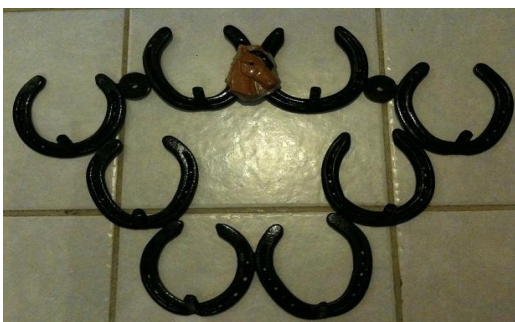
Pick when ready

Leave outside to get a good coating of rust

Paint with rust converter paint

Paint with spray enamel (several light coats)

Mount onto wall - voila!





CENTRAL COAST LETS (LOCAL EXCHANGE TRADING SYSTEM)

Sometimes...it takes time. By Phoebe Taylor

When explaining LETS and its main concept to family, friends and people we know, it helps to practice patience. It can sometimes take a while for people to “get it” taking at times 6 months to one year. Myself being the former and my Mum being the latter.

The manner in which I finally “got it” was for my cousin to sit me in front of the computer, show me the website and explain how the transactions were made. However, the “penny dropped” for my Mum only after she attended a Trade Day. Bear in mind it is not for everyone and not all people will be interested.

There are many reasons for joining a LETS group, some of which are listed:

- ◇ Saving conventional money
- ◇ Meeting new people
- ◇ Supplementing household income
- ◇ Feeling part of a community
- ◇ Obtaining what you could otherwise not afford

I am sure there are many more reasons why members have joined. When my cousin first very excitedly told me about LETS I shared in her enthusiasm and wondered why I had not heard of this concept earlier in my life. However, as previously mentioned it took me a while but once I got on board I have enjoyed every minute of it ever since. I originally joined to save money and obtain items and services which I could not otherwise afford.

A side benefit for me has been to meet some wonderful people and start new friendships. At first I thought “how would trading with strangers really work out”? Albeit those strangers have now become friends. Also I have learned a lot through LETS. I have learnt more and more about how the system works, about permaculture and how a food co-op runs. All very interesting stuff, not to mention helpful. What have you gained out of joining LETS? Please share your story and email me at: phab-phueb@yahoo.com.au

Legal Goods Only

It has come to the attention of the Administration team that there may be some illegal goods for offer. The LETS website is just like any other website therefore all goods and services offered MUST be legal in this country.

An example of an illegal product being offered are burned Cd's or DVD's. Anything copied is not allowed to be traded on the LETS website OR at Trade Days. Please understand this and abide by this.

Thank you. -Ed.

Info passed on from Fiona Thornycroft

Annette Loudon, who used to be Sydney's main Administrator is now putting together a team to launch a locally hosted version of the CES online trading system. This has the support of most Australian groups. They are in the process of setting up a server. If all goes well they will contact a couple of groups next year to start the process of moving the data over.

They are still looking for ASP programmers to support the project. If there are any Windows style programmers who would be willing to help please let us know. Tim, who runs the CES from South Africa, will be involved in the beginning, but the goal is to train up a new team over the next 6 months so it can be independent.

If you are thinking of making any sort of donation this Christmas...why not place a gift under the Christmas Tree for the under-privileged at any one of a number of Shopping Centres.

When doing this, make sure to put a LETS flyer in with the gift. After all the recipients of gifts from donations are perhaps in need of such a wonderful organisation such as LETS.

You will find a LETS flyer on the home page of Central Coast LETS website which you can print out yourself. Or alternatively you can contact Caroline Bohlsen and she will post one or two flyers to you.

Article idea by Caroline Bohlsen. Written by Phoebe Taylor.

Words from Phoebe the Editor.

This Newsletter has been a bit of a rush job so please excuse anything that is out of date (the advert for the Kariong Trade Day). Caroline Bohlsen is very resourceful and is a huge contributor to the Newsletter, so I would like to throw out a HUGE thank you to her. However, I would still like a lot of other members to write in with their contributions.

I really enjoy Trade Days for a lot of reasons. Of course being a woman the love of shopping is in-built and without spending money (that has to go into the car for petrol or the inevitable electricity bill) is a huge benefit. The other aspect of Trade Days which I love is the social side. Catching up with friends who I would not have met if it wasn't for LETS. It's great as the Editor as well because I get to hear some members thoughts and feelings on how the system is working for them.

Please, I cannot stress enough that this Newsletter is to inform and hopefully at times entertain YOU, the members. So please take the time to sit down with your favourite beverage and have a read, if not, just a browse. And, if you can make the time, please send in anything at all that you think is relevant for the Newsletter. Perhaps in the Christmas holidays you will have more time.

Speaking of Christmas, I hope all our Central Coast LETS members have themselves a Merry Christmas and most of all a safe and healthy new year!

Take care and have fun, Phoebe (Ed)

phabphee@yahoo.com.au

Respect- all members. Try not to judge a book by it's cover and have patience as everyone is different.

Etiquette- is part of LETS to ensure the smooth running of this wonderful community organization.

Spaces- on the website in the 'offerings' in particular need to be kept to a minimum. Perhaps try using bold or italics instead. Also ONLY up to 10 postings per week from each member is allowed.

Permission- do not debit any members account without permission and only debit once the goods are delivered or the service is carried out.

Endeavour- to treat people the way you would like to be treated.

Care- about each other, the environment, our community and beyond.

Trades- please make trades from beginning to end of transaction as promptly as possible. Communication is the key here. Keep in touch with the person you are making a trade with and inform them if and when you can carry out the trade. If you cannot make it in time, make contact with the member and let them know.



The Benefits of 100% Shell Trading

Firstly, let it be said that there are transactions for which percentage cash is perfectly justifiable. This is an issue to be decided by the two traders involved in the transaction. Members could seek to buy all parts/ingredients/materials on shells where possible and thus be able to charge 100% shells for their labour. Sometimes this is not possible especially in the case of a carpenter making repairs who cannot supply expensive materials for all shells. It may be best to agree to pay for these materials outright in cash and negotiate the labour costs in shells. Rarely would the cost of materials be equal to 50% of the total cost of a product, as labour is usually the most expensive aspect of any product. For example, an intricate craft piece may use \$10 worth of materials, but take 5 hours to make. If the seller feels he/she must recoup costs in dollars, then he/she could charge \$10 for the materials + shells for the labour at an hourly rate.

However, the question we need to ask ourselves is: "Do I need to recoup the cost of materials in dollars?"

After all, what do you use your dollars for? -to purchase goods and services.

What do you use your shells for? -to purchase goods and services.

Therefore:

Shells are as valuable as dollars!

When you advertise your goods, services and skills for 100% shells you're sure to get a trade. Some members are more likely to trade with the 100% traders. Some members who always offer their skills, services or goods for 100%, then ask for trading with another member who quotes 50/50, most often than not, will not go ahead with that trade, simply because of the principle of the matter.

Trading 100% is great for the growth of the LETSsystem. At the same time it is a clear demonstration to non-members and new members of the benefits of the system.

With 100% LETS trading, many of our members who may be on low cash income, pension or benefit are able to purchase luxuries (like massage or craft items) which they may never have had before, until LETS came into their lives. For that matter, even get their house painted for dollars for the cost of the paint and shells for the labour. A huge cost saving!! Why not then pass on the benefits of 100% trading to LETS members and trade 100% shells yourself. Do your best to provide goods and services for 100% shells and expect the same service from other traders where appropriate.

When trading 100% some members have remarked on how good they feel when they buy or sell goods and services for all shells. Most members left the No-Money Markets with smiles on their faces at getting goods for all shells. Remember, what you give out will always come back multiplied 100 fold.

So give out the good, positive and quality and that will be returned to you 100 times.

Question members who are trading 50/50 without apparent need. Let them know the benefits involved.

As 100% shells trading continues, it will strengthen our currency and our trading system.

HAPPY 100% TRADING