

LET\$TALK

JAN / FEB
1996

Information Bulletin of the Richmond Valley Local Energy Transfer System

Editorial

RIVLETS is entering its eighth year. Back then, in 1988, there were only two systems operating: Melany LETS and this one. Now, multiply that number one hundred times and you'll get a rough estimate of the LETSsystems that exist around Australia, so it is not surprising that RIVLETS is getting an increasing number of new members thoroughly conversant with the LETS concept bringing with them a wealth of varied experiences.

I have personally joined-up people from Western Australia, the first state government to actively support the widespread dissemination of LETSsystems in cities and remote communities, from South Australia, where they have devised an ingenious INTERLETS accounting protocol likely to become the national standard, and from Tasmania where an electronic link of all their LETSystem is provided by the Department of Social Security's Community Information Network. If you have previous experience of LETS, I encourage you to share your views on how RIVLETS compares with your previous LETS, what is different and what is similar?

As a rule of thumb, it appears that the more self-reliant one is, the less one finds LETS to be of any use. Conversely, the more one depends on others, the more one is likely to find that

LETS boosts their quality of life. If you are unemployed, retired, a business seeking to increase its customer base or flat-out working in need of respite, then LETS is for you! If none of the above applies to you but you are concerned by the inequalities inherent in our market driven economy, LETS is for you too!

1996 is billed as the International Year of Poverty. What's your poverty? Do you lack material wealth? Do you suffer from lack of motivation? Compassion fatigue? Do you feel helpless or powerless?

As I see it, there are two critical issues facing Humankind right now.

One: Global Warming.
Two: Unequal wealth distribution.

LETS has nothing to offer about the first but it can humbly nibble at the second so think about how your trading can contribute to this commendable task.

Due to the increasing membership, RIVLETS needs to pick up speed so from now on, there will be two directories a year with listings by local area and a new Richmond River wide requests section. Do let the office know about any change in address, listing of skills and services, phone numbers, etc...

My best wishes for a happy and prosperous 1996.

Jamil Rahal

SPLIT-SECOND MONEY MARKETS

December last, a speculator managed to single-handedly drive down the value of the American dollar against the British pound by 1.5 cents in one day!

"Global Finance, more than any other industry, is being fuelled by the free flow of information, and information about money is probably worth more than the money! What separates winners from losers in this community is nothing more than the milliseconds it takes to get access to this precious information". Nicholas Negroponte in an interview published by Wired magazine



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LETS issues counselling: Do you need help to earn, spend, exchange or give "Locals"? Call Jamil on 222776 Friday mornings. LI

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REQUESTS

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Support work, minor home maintenance, cooking, car repairs, lawn mowing, etc. Community Services Fund. Call RIVLETS on 222776. LI

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PO Box 402 Lismore 2480. Phone 066 22 776.
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Computer time and layout support Steve Cooke 066 243 291.
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MANAGER'S REPORT-Jan/Feb'96:

On behalf of the RIVLETS office staff, I wish you a happy and prosperous new year. We were sorry to say goodbye to Peter in December, and wish him luck with his new job at the National Parks and Wildlife Service. He had staffed the LETS office on Friday mornings for some time and streamlined our cash accounting system during his service with LETS. Our numbers are at their lowest for some time (four). We are asking interested members to contact us if they could do a half day (am or pm) on Thursdays or are available on a casual basis.

One way for members to assist in the smooth running of RIVLETS is to check whether other members with whom you are considering a trade are current (have they a blue card?). Transactions are not being processed if either member is not current. We make every effort to contact dormant traders but addresses and phone numbers are often out of date. The onus is on you. If you do not ask, you may not be credited for the work that you do.

Do you have a debit? Are you having difficulty earning "Locals"? There are many members who would answer yes to one or both of the above. Why not advertise in the

newsletter? There are precious few members taking advantage of this facility and I encourage all members to consider advertising. If you want to spend your credit, why not use the "Wanted" section. More advertising will inevitably lead to more trading and a healthy LETSsystem. Give it a go!

Ray Flanagan



LETS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is every LETS member's dream that they should be able to pay their rates in "Locals", at least in part. While that time may be a long way off, there are plenty of other opportunities for councils to use LETS, and I think the time has come to start developing those ideas.

The Community Services Fund (CSF) might be a good place to start, since serving the community is what councils are all about. Perhaps councils could assist with the administration of the CSF, with LETS providing the people to do the work, paid for with "Locals" donated by members.

Public Works could also benefit from LETS. There are always more jobs to be done than funds to do them. Why not employ LETS labour for those projects that keep getting pushed to the bottom of the pile?

It will take the councils some time to figure out how they can accept rates in "Locals", but I suggest we don't need to wait for that. We could set up a council account, to receive donations. This fund could then be used to pay for LETS services: maybe gardening, cleaning, maintenance, artworks childcare: the possibilities are endless.

Because of the cap on rates that councils can charge, the option of getting jobs done for "Locals" could help councils balance their budgets without needing to cut services. Using LETS would also mean that local labour is employed.

Imagine the benefit to the local economy if all tenders called for by councils included the condition "25% of this contract will be paid in "Local" dollars". Once the value of LETS has been proved in this way, we can look at ways for councils to earn "Local" dollars to remove the reliance on donations.

In the meantime, RIVLETS has opened an account for the five local councils (Ballina, Byron-Bay, Casino, Kyogle and Lismore), and you are invited to contribute with donations or loans to the CSF Councils No.3 LETS Account. You can also specify what you would like your contribution used for. Let's have it as a new year's resolution to make an official hand over to the five local councils that are in the Richmond bio-region when the account has, say, L2,500.

(Adapted from an article by Peter Vogel published in the Blue Mountains LETS Inc. Weekly Newsletter No.34)

Directory Update Jan/Feb '96.

Administration	865	Cathy Henkel	291449	LI
Astrologer	794	Karen Cayoun	213673	LI
Aura Balance	68	Bryan Branston	337195	KY
Baby Sitting	792	Kat & Justin	Rosebank	DU
Bamboo Furniture and Crafts	68	Bryan Branston	337195	KY
Builder	865	Jeff Canin	291449	LI
Building Consultant/Designer	296	Toni Appleton	849185	MU
Computer Sales, Service & Train.	68	Bryan Branston	337195	KU
Environmentalist	865	Jeff Canin	291449	LI
French Conversation	794	Karen Cayoun	213673	LI
French Courses	794	Karen Cayoun	213673	LI
Fund Raising	865	Cathy Henkel	291449	LI
Garden / Lawn Maintenance	908	Andre Achjian	855481	BB
Gardening	296	Wikitoria	849185	MU
Hair Wrapping	296	Wikitoria	849185	MU
Horse and Rider Training	296	Toni Appleton	849185	MU
Horse Riding Instruction	296	Wikitoria	849185	MU
Karmic Analysis	794	Bruno Cayoun	213673	LI
Karmic Astrology	794	Karen Cayoun	213673	LI
Karmic Studies / Workshops	794	Bruno Cayoun	213673	LI
Massage	68	Bryan Branston	337195	KY
Massage	808	Michael & Sandra	882161	LI
Natural Healing	68	Bryan Branston	337195	KY
Organic Gardener	865	Jeff Canin	2913673	LI
Tarot Courses / Workshops	794	Bruno Cayoun	213673	LI
Tarot Drama	794	Bruno Cayoun	213673	LI
Tarot Readings	794	Bruno Cayoun	213673	LI
Teacher / Tutor	865	Cathy Henkel	291449	LI
Tree Planting	296	Wikitoria	849185	MU
Trees -Rainforest L 50 %	745	Paula Vermunt	282050	DU
Typing / Word-processing	794	Karen Cayoun	213673	LI
Video Production	865	Cathy & Jeff	337195	KY



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Money as a Guru!

"You want to talk about money?"

"That's unfair. Money's not the only thing I'm interested in!"

"Don't be defensive. It'd be a bad sign if you weren't inclined towards abundance. Abundance in all things -- material, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, -- is the goal of any first-rate soul. But into which of those categories does money fit? Automatically, you say 'material.' Money may be our greatest spiritual teacher. More edifying than a stadium full of swamis. Nothing can knock a pilgrim off the path as fast as money. That's the job of a spiritual teacher, you know. Not to hold us on the path, but to knock us off it. Until we can stay on the path without ever being knocked -- or tempted -- off, until we can resist the teacher's carrot and withstand his rod, our transformative journey can

be little more than fits and starts. When it comes to illuminating the inner structure of consciousness and highlighting its weaknesses and flaws, nothing, not even love, casts as bright a beam as money. The things we are willing to do to obtain it, to protect it, to express our guilt over having it, are incomparably revealing. There's a thin line between charity and greed: at bottom, they are both expressions of insecurity and manifestations of ego. If you want to know how insecure you are, how swollen and stiff your ego is, what your chances are of staying on the path, just examine your attitudes towards the juice. Money's a terrible servant but a wonderful master. Far be it from Uncle Larry, my dear, to come between a seeker and her guru."

Extract from a dialogue between the two main characters in Tom Robbin's novel Half Asleep in Frog Pyjamas.



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