This is the Newsletter of the USBIG Network (http://www.usbig.net), which promotes the discussion of the basic income guarantee (BIG) in the United States--a policy that would unconditionally guarantee a subsistence-level income for everyone. If you would like to be added to or removed from this list please email: Karl@Widerquist.com.

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1. USBIG Congress Deadline for Submissions: October 29, 2005

The Fifth Congress of the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network will be held in conjunction with the Eastern Economic Association (EEA) Annual Conference in Philadelphia at the Loews Hotel 1200 Market Street Philadelphia, Friday February 24 to Sunday February 26, 2006. Featured speakers confirmed so far include Nicolaus Tideman, of Virginia Polytechnic Institute University, and Heather Boushey, of the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

Proposals for presentations should include the following information:
1. Name
2. Affiliation (if applicable), including job title and employer
3. Address including City, State, Zip Code (Postal Code), and Country
4. Telephone number
5. Email Address
6. Title of the presentation
7. Abstract (summary of 50 to 150 words)

Proposals for panel discussions should include a title, topic, and description of the panel and the information above for each participant. If the participants are not presenting formal papers, the title of the paper and abstract may be omitted. Panels with formal paper presentations should be limited to four presentations, although discussions without formal papers can include more.

Presentations at this year's conference will be organized into two groups: Academic panels (including researchers in all disciplines) will be organized by Michael Anthony Lewis and Eri Noguchi. Nonacademic panels (including activists, practitioners, and laypersons) will be organized by Al Sheahen. Academic proposals should be directed to Eri Noguchi at en16@columbia.edu. Nonacademic proposals should be directed to Al Sheahen at alsheahen@prodigy.net.
Everyone who attends must register with the EEA. Indicate on your registration form that you will be attending the USBIG conference and you can register at the members’ price ($45 in advance and $60 on site) without paying the EEA membership fee (saving more than half of the total cost). Information about registration will be on the USBIG website soon. For more information see the USBIG website (http://www.usbig.net) or contact the conference organizers (Michael Anthony Lewis and Eri Noguchi at en16@columbia.edu, and Al Sheahen at alsheahen@prodigy.net).

2. New BIG journal: Basic Income Studies

Basic Income Studies: An International Journal of Basic Income Research (BIS) is a new international journal devoted to the critical discussion of and research into universal basic income and related policy proposals. BIS is published twice a year by an international team of scholars, with support from Red Renta Basica, the Basic Income Earth Network and the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network.

The inaugural issue of BIS will appear in 2006 with articles by Joel Handler, Stuart White and Yannick Vanderborght and a retrospective on Robert van der Veen and Philippe Van Parijs’s seminal article on “A Capitalist Road to Communism”. The retrospective includes a reprint of the original article and a set of specially written comments by Gerald Cohen, Erik Olin Wright, Doris Schroeder, Catriona McKinnon, Harry Dahms, Gijs van Donselaar and Andrew Williams.

BIS is currently inviting contributions from academic scholars, researchers, policy-makers and welfare advocates on a wide variety of topics pertaining to the universal welfare debate. The editors are interested in publishing research articles, book reviews, and short, accessible commentaries discussing aspects of basic income or a closely related topic. BIS accepts research from all main academic disciplines, and welcomes research that pushes the debate into previously uncharted areas. BIS aims to promote the research of young scholars as well as seasoned researchers, and the editors particularly welcome contributions from non-Western countries.

For more information, please visit our website at www.basicincomestudies.org or contact the editors, Jurgen De Wispelaere and Karl Widerquist, at editor@basicincomestudies.org. Scholars who want to have their books considered for review or who would like to review a book for BIS should contact Sandra Gonzales at book@basicincomestudies.org.

-From the editors of BIS

3. Alaskan Dividend influence: Alberta, New Mexico, and beyond

Dividend checks from the Alaska Permanent Fund (APF) go out this month paying $845.76 (US), to every Alaska resident. (The APF is the only existing Basic Income in the world. It pays yearly dividends based on earnings from an investment fund created out of the state’s oil tax revenues.) The amount is down slightly from last year. The reason for the decline is that each year’s returns are tied to stock market returns over the last five years, and recent market returns have been much lower than returns in the late 1990s. The recent increases in oil prices are increasing the total size of the fund, but it will be years before their affects are felt in the yearly dividends.

The idea of the fund is gathering more and more attention around the world. The Alberta government is preparing to send checks of $400 (Canadian) to every resident of the province. The checks are a one-time response to the province’s large budget surplus, which has been caused largely by the recent increase in oil tax revenue. Although this is a one-time grant, the program’s architects credit the APF as inspiration. New Mexico, which also has a growing budget surplus thanks to the recent increase in oil prices, may be the soon follow suit. Governor Bill Richardson and prominent members of the state legislature have been discussing a one-time tax rebate in the neighborhood of $50 (US) per person.

The spread of the Permanent Fund idea does not stop with Alberta and New Mexico. Recent editorials have discussed the idea around the world. Kevin O’Flynn, writing for Newsweek International, mentioned the APF as one of the possible models for reform of Russia’s oil industry. Two recent editorials have argued for a permanent
oil dividend in Iraq. Lenny Glynn, writing for The Weekly Standard, argues that enshrining an oil dividend into Iraq’s constitution would be a force for democracy, national unity, and economic development. It would almost certainly make the constitution more popular. Ronald Bailey, writing for Reason on line: Free Minds and Free Markets, includes the creation of an “Iraq Permanent Fund” in his list of things the Bush administration should have done for a successful post-war Iraq (http://www.reason.com/links/links081805.shtml).

Petroleum.com: Latin American Energy, Oil & Gas included a commentary by Michael Rowan, entitled “the Sinkhole,” praising Permanent Fund and comparing it to Venezuela’s nationalization of its oil industry. Governor Jay Hammond began setting up the permanent fund at about the same time that Carlos Andres Perez nationalized Venezuela’s oil industry in 1976. Rowan argues that nationalization of 100% of Venezuela’s oil revenues had no noticeable affect on poverty in Venezuela, but the Alaska fund, which distributes only a fraction of the taxes on Alaska oil revenues, has provided a real and verifiable benefit to low-income Alaskans—and has been especially important in reducing poverty among indigenous Alaskans. “If [Perez] had done what Hammond did in 1976, Venezuela's Permanent Fund would have about $120 billion this year, paying a dividend of $1,500 to each of 8 million Venezuelan families.” The editorial is hostile to activist government policies, but it is not hostile to policies that effectively help the poor. Rowan’s endorsement shows that the Permanent Fund idea is a good way to promote anti-poverty policies with the political right, but that’s not all there is to it. People who normally favor redistribution should not ignore Rowan’s argument that getting money into the hands of the poor can be more effective toward economic equality than putting government in direct control of resources. Rowan’s commentary is on line at: http://www.petroleumworld.com/Ed081105.htm.

4. Namibian BIG Coalition puts Basic Income on the political agenda

BIEN reports: According to the newspaper "The Namibian" (Sept. 27, 2005), on Friday 23 September 2005 Reverend Phillip Strydom (the General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Namibia) had an important meeting with the Speaker of Parliament, Theo-Ben Gurirab. Strydom was representing the Basic Income Grant (BIG) Coalition, a group of organizations proposing the introduction of an unconditional, N$100 monthly grant to every Namibian not yet eligible for a Government pension. The coalition presented the Speaker with a resource book it has compiled, and which contains research results, as well as a model of the proposal's social, developmental, and financial impact. The Speaker of Parliament Theo-Ben Gurirab, "The Namibian" reports, has assured the BIG Coalition that he would hand over the document to the relevant body, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources and Social Development, led by Swapo Chief Whip Ben Amathila. The article from "The Namibian" can be found at http://allafrica.com/stories/200509270031.html

5. Basic Income is a hot topic in Germany

BIEN reports, basic income has gained new momentum and publicity over the past year in Germany. In several recent articles and interviews, Götz Werner (http://www.iep.uni-karlsruhe.de/seite_469.php), owner and CEO of a German drugstore chain and professor at Universität Karlsruhe, and Benediktus Hardorp (http://www.iep.uni-karlsruhe.de/download/a_tempo_Portraet_Hardorp.pdf), expert on tax issues, have been proposing a shift from taxing income to taxing consumption and using it to support basic income. Werner and Hardorp have been strong proponents of BI. They consider a BI and such a new tax system to be one and the same idea.

The German magazine Brand Eins (www.brandeins.de), known for its progressive take on economic developments, dedicated its July-August edition to the issue of work. In his opening essay, Wolf Lotter criticizes welfare-to-work programs by describing how unemployed are “trained” for new jobs which never materialize, acting as if they were performing meaningful labor. Lotter refers to numerous German initiatives and, following Götz Werner, suggests that a promising strategy for financing any basic income would be an increase in sales tax, hence taxing consumption, not income. The latter idea has been gaining ground within the German basic income discussion.

Publication of this special issue has prompted less progressive journals to turn their attention to a basic income, such as the influential weekly "Die Zeit" (www.zeit.de), which published an informed article in which its author, Kolja Rudzio, restates some standard criticisms (“Who would still want to pursue paid work? And would this not
erode the very income needed for a UBI?" - see "Sozialhilfe für alle" [social assistance for all] by Kolja Rudzio (www.zeit.de/2005/38/Kasten_Arbeitslos).

Moreover, in an interview given together with the Munich mayor Christian Ude in the newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung (Sept. 10, 2005), the renowned German sociologist Ulrich Beck has argued not only for a basic income combined with volunteering, as he has for years, but for the first time in favor of an unconditional basic income: "The utopia of the work society consisted once in freeing ourselves form the dominance of work. We have to expand what we already have: income security independent from labor and volunteering."

Finally, two new books on basic income have just been published. Attac-Germany has edited a volume on the topic ("Grundeinkommen: bedingungslos"), and Vanderborght & Van Parijs' introductory book has just been translated from French ("Ein Grundeinkommen für alle?").

6. One of Canada’s largest private banks recommends BIG

LIFE reports that TD Canada Trust, one of the largest Canadian banks, has released a report slamming the Canadian welfare system and recommending a form of guaranteed income, "Providing a new credit at the federal level would open up an opportunity to collapse existing federal and provincial refundable credits in to a single program in a way that better serves the needs of all low-income Canadians." TD Economists Don Drummond and Gillian Manning argue that Canada needs to "address cases of labour market failure, where wages are too low or hours of work insufficient to generate an adequate income" because "being employed is not a guarantee that people will not fall into low income... in 2001, 653,000 Canadians were in low income despite having a high work effort throughout the year." The authors recommend combining federal and provincial tax credits in a single credit and falls short of a livable BIG, but according to Larochelle and L'Hirondelle, of LIFE, it is a step in that direction and a big change from the usual proposed solution of slashing welfare and from arguments that a job is the best safety net.

For the full LIFE article go to: http://www.livableincome.org/atdreportanalysis.htm.
For an article in the Toronto Star on the TD report, go to: http://www.vivelecanada.ca/article.php/200509090708448/print
For the full TD bank report: http://www.td.com/economics/special/welfare05.jsp

7. BIG receives several endorsements in New Zealand

Several different individuals and groups have endorsed basic income in New Zealand. Lowell Manning in an editorial “A Better Way” for Scoop, Independent News (September 12), criticizes the tax reform policies of all the major New Zealand parties, proposing a transaction tax and a basic income. Democrats for Social Credit, a small party primarily concerned with monetary reform, include introduction of basic income on a short list of what they would do in power. BIEN reports that “Parents Centre” chief executive Viv Gurrey, “would like to see something like the Green's proposed universal basic income to recognize the value of caring for children”. According to Gurrey, such a basic income would "validate our role as parents and pay us to stay home and look after our kids". Democrats for Social credit website is: http://www.democrats.org.nz/.

Parents Centre's website: http://www.parentscentre.org.nz

8. BIG events around the world

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina 25 April 2005: Public Presentation of the Argentinean Network of Basic Income. The Argentinean Basic Income Network (REDAIC) held a public presentation at the Cultural Institute of
Cooperation Floreal Gorini on April 25, 2005. Speakers included Rubén Lo Vuolo and Elsa Gil, of REDAIC, Patricia Aguirre of the National Ministry of Health Antoni Doménech of the Spanish BIG network (Red Renta Basica). More information is available on the REDAIC website: [www.ingresociudadano.org](http://www.ingresociudadano.org)

-from BIEN

VIENNA (AT), 7-9 October 2005: Basic Income Congress.

BIEN reports, the German Basic Income Network together with the Austrian Network for Basic Income and Social Cohesion, ATTAC Germany, and ATTAC Austria hosted a three-day conference in Vienna. The program included several plenary sessions and 18 workshops covering themes from "basic income and global justice", "BI and labor market policy", "BI and democracy", "BI and gender relations" to "BI and alternative economies." Speakers included Philippe Van Parijs, Luise Gubitzer and Eduardo Suplicy. More information is on the web at: [www.grundeinkommen2005.org](http://www.grundeinkommen2005.org)

-from BIEN

BARCELONA (ES), 2-17 November 2005: Seminar "Charter of Emerging Human Rights".

BIEN reports, the Human Rights Institute of Catalonia and the Spanish Basic Income Network "Red Renta Basica" organize the seminar: "Charter of Emerging Human Rights: Towards a Basic Income of Citizenship". It will take place in Barcelona from the 2nd to 17th of November, and it is aimed to students, members of associations, social workers, politicians, academics and civil employees of local and regional administrations, among other collectivities. Its objective is the formation about the tool of the Basic Income, an innovating and stimulating answer to the current economical and social inequalities. The course is divided in theoretical and practical modules. It will also be a discussion meeting about the Charter of Emerging Human Rights, adopted in September 2004 in the framework of the Universal Forum of the Cultures-Barcelona 2004. Main working languages: Catalan and Spanish.

For further information: [www.redrentabasica.org](http://www.redrentabasica.org)

-from BIEN

BUENOS AIRES (AG), 5 November 2005: Meeting of the Argentinean Basic Income Network

BIEN reports, the next meeting of the Argentinean Basic Income Network (REDAIC) will take place on November 5th, from 9am to 1pm, at the Faculty of Economics, University of Buenos Aires. The topic of the workshop will be "Basic Income, work and ethics".

For further information: [redainc@ingresociudadano.org](mailto:redainc@ingresociudadano.org)

-from BIEN


BIEN reports, on November 26-27, the German Basic Income Network will host its annual Meeting in Berlin. The thematic focus of this year's meeting will be the crisis of full employment and new vistas beyond full employment a basic income opens up. A call for papers has been issued and contributions dealing with the questions set out are cordially welcomed. See [www.grundeinkommen.de](http://www.grundeinkommen.de) for the call for papers as well as for updates on the program.

-from BIEN

THE INTERNET: GLOBAL INCOME FOUNDATION DISCUSSION FORUM

According to BIEN, a new discussion has been started on the Discussion Forum of the Global Income Foundation by a contribution of Robert F. Clark, author of several books on global poverty. Topic: the financial and political feasibility of global guaranteed income proposals. Robert Clark proposes a global reimbursable tax credit of $365 a year as a more feasible proposition than other proposals.

Website: [www.globalincome.org](http://www.globalincome.org)

-from BIEN

9. New Discussion Papers

The USBIG Discussion Paper series posts working versions of academic papers related to the basic income guarantee, for discussion in advance of publication. They can be found on the web at [http://www.usbig.net/papers.html](http://www.usbig.net/papers.html).
ABSTRACT: Over the past half-century or so, the international community’s strategies for coping with global poverty have evolved through several stages. Each retains its partisans. Each in its own way has advanced the agenda of promoting economic growth and reducing extreme global poverty. But insufficiently. In stylized fashion, we can for convenience review these strategies under the following headings: (1) Growth Alone, (2) Growth and Infrastructure, (3) Growth, Infrastructure, and Jobs, (4) Growth, Infrastructure, Jobs, and Services, (5) Growth, Infrastructure, Jobs, Services, and Transfers. Despite global economic progress, the extent and severity of human poverty remains an affront to the world’s conscience. This is not likely to change in the coming decades unless antipoverty strategies evolve further. A straightforward but comprehensive remedy for extreme global poverty is a guaranteed minimum income. This paper concludes with a proposal for implementing that remedy internationally.

10. New publications
Americans could stop U.S. poverty
The Los Angeles Daily News, Tuesday, September 6, 2005
Al Sheahen, Guest Columnist
Writing a few days after Katrina struck New Orleans, Sheahen argues that poverty was one of the causes of death in the hurricane. “The rich and middle-class families were able to escape Hurricane Katrina in planes and cars. But many poor and homeless families, with no cars and little money, were stuck. And so they died.” He discusses recent increases in poverty and argues that most workers in the United States are no more than six months from homelessness if they lose their jobs in the increasingly contingent labor market. He closes with a plea for a basic income guarantee, which, “would be like an insurance policy for everyone… [I]t could give each of us the assurance that, no matter what happened, we and our families wouldn't starve.”
http://www2.dailynews.com/search/ci_3002836

War, Famine, Pestilence and neo-liberalism
On-Line Opinion. Australian e-journal of social and political debate, August 8, 2005
John Tomlinson.
John Tomlinson, a senior lecturer in social policy at Queensland University of Technology, argues that Australia should spend money for improving the health, social security, and education of its poorest citizens rather than spending resources on waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan. More generally, he argues that "there are alternatives to debilitating poverty in both the developed and developing world.” One such alternative, Tomlinson writes, "is the provision of a Basic Income". He refers to the Basic Income Guarantee Australia, as well as to Brazilian and South African debates. Referring to Myron Frankman's proposals for a planet-wide citizen's income, he writes that "if such a basic income scheme were introduced then we could claim to have succeeded in making absolute poverty history".
Tomlinson's article can be found at http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=3738

11. New members
Membership in the USBIG Network is free and open to anyone who shares its goals. Six new members have joined USBIG in the last two months. To become a member of USBIG, go to http://www.usbig.net.

The members of USBIG are (new members in bold): Karl Widerquist, Cassopolis, MI; Eri Noguchi, New York, NY; Fred Block, Davis, CA; Michael A. Lewis, New York, NY; Steve Shaferman, Washington, DC; Brian Steensland, Bloomington, IN; Al Sheahen, Van Nuys, CA; Robert Harris, Roosevelt Island, NY; Philippe Van Parijs, Brussels, Belgium; Stanley Aronowitz, New York, NY; Carole Pateman, Los Angeles, CA; Frances Fox Piven, New York, NY; Eduardo Suplicy, Sao Paolo, Brazil; J. Philip Wogaman, Washington, DC; Chris LaPlante, Blacksburg, VA; John Marangos, Fort Collins, CO; Fransisco Sales, Carretera Mexico City, DF, Mexico; Manuel Henriques, Lisbon, Portugal; Amelia Baughman, Williams, AZ; Robert F. Clark, Alexandria, VA; Jason Burke Murphy, Saint Louis, MO; Joel Handler, Los Angeles, CA; Glen C. Cain, Madison, WI; Timothy Roscoe Carter, San Fransisco, CA; John Bollman, Bay City, MI; George McGuire, Brooklyn, NY; Adrian Kuziminski, Fly Creek, NY; Hyun-Mook Lim, Seoul, Korea; Kelly D. Pinkham, Kansas City, MO; Michael Murray, Clive, IA; Josep Ll. Ortega, Santa Coloma, Andorra; Michael Opielka, Königswinter, Germany; Brenden Miller, Cambridge, MA; Myron J. Frankman, Montreal, Quebec, Canada; Frank Thompson, Ann Arbor, MI; Harry F. Dahms, Knoxville, TN; Buford Farris, Bastrop, TX; Roy Morrison, Warner, NH; Robley E. “Rob” George, Manhattan Beach, CA, Almaz Zelleke, Brooklyn, NY; Gonzalo Pau, Montevideo, Uruguay; Elisabetta Pernigotti, Paris, France; Ross Zucker, New York, NY; Sean Owens, La Mirada, CA, Dean Herd, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Hugh Thompson, London, UK; Jan von Knippenberg, Kinrooi, Belgium; Adam Csillag, Berlin, Germany; Steve Gazzo, Pittsburgh, PA; Mike Cottone, Weaverville, CA; Brigitte Sirois, Quebec, Quebec, Canada; Guy Standing, Geneva Switzerland; G. W. Putto, Den Haag, the Netherlands; Anonymous, Berkeley, CA; Pete Farina, Washington, DC; Robert Wiengard, Fair Share, Florida; Urban Boljka, Ljubljana, Slovenia; Ronald Cohen, Bennington, Vermont; H.T.L. Quan, Chicago, Illinois; Lourdes Maria Silva Araujo; Espirtio Santo, Brazil; Patrick S. O’Donnell, Santa Barbara, California; Stephen Nathanson, Boston, Massachusetts; Jerey Vogt, Washington, DC; Justine Lam, Arlington, Virginia; Ricardo A. Bunge, San Antonio, Texas; Aziz Akgul, Ankara, Turkey; Judith A. Kaluzny, Fullerton, California; Leonard Butters, Spokane, Washington; Peter Christiansen, San Francisco, California; Kyle Patrick Meredith, Chattanooga, Tennessee; Benjamin Hyink, LaGrange, Illinois; Nancy Folbre, Amherst, Massachusetts;
12. Links and other info

For links to dozens of big websites around the world, go to http://www.usbig.net, and click on "links." These links are to any website with information about BIG, but USBIG does not necessarily endorse their content or their agendas.

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The U.S. Basic Income Guarantee (USBIG) Network publishes this newsletter. The Network is a discussion group on basic income guarantee (BIG) in the United States. BIG is a generic name for any proposal to create a minimum income level, below which no citizen's income can fall. Information on BIG and USBIG can be found on the web at: http://www.usbig.net. If you know any BIG news; if you know anyone who would like to be added to this list; or if you would like to be removed from this list; please send me an email: Karl@Widerquist.com.

As always, your comments on this newsletter and the USBIG website are gladly welcomed.

Thanks,
-Karl Widerquist, Coordinator, USBIG. Karl@Widerquist.com