



**Welcome to this twice-termly newsletter**, with news about what's happening in the School around the world. You've received this due to your interest in the School of Economic Science and I really hope you will enjoy reading it. This first issue tells you about:

- Online classes from New York
  - Cycling with local children in Johannesburg
  - Money, a new 5 week course in London
- Please feel free to e-mail this on to interested family and friends.

With very best wishes, Christine Lambie

## Distance Learning

### Randolph Kraus, New York

In 2007, with the growth of podcasts and YouTube we received numerous inquiries - from former students who moved away from the locations where classes are offered and also from people who heard about the School and wanted to attend but again were located away from where classes are held – asking if we had recordings of classes or lectures. Because the School's class format is so dynamic and student participation is crucial, we felt we had to find a way to honor those requests yet not just send out passive recordings.

Around this time, another student put in my hands the names of several teleconferencing services. They were aimed at business use – but we saw how we could adapt it to our needs.

Not a text-based chat-room, this enjoyable format allows the entire class to be heard and seen via the internet.

We ran trials from autumn 2007 into spring 2008 – hosting a few sessions from New York with participation from students in the New Jersey and San Francisco areas. After a bit of tweaking and tuning, the Distance Learning Program was begun in the summer of 2008. This initial offering was opened to far-flung former students who were eager to try this out.

After refining our approach for another term in the autumn of 2008, we were ready to go out to the public with our first Introductory Course in winter, January 2009. Some of those students continue to this day and have attended now for 7 terms.

Several Distance Learning students have now travelled across the North American continent to the School's property in upstate New York for weekend exercises and for a 5-day retreat last summer. More plan to come in the spring and summer this year. An intermediate group for meditating students and a senior group, attended by long-time students of the school, meet weekly. Young people, away at university, are meeting in an online group hosted in the UK.

At present, around seventy students attend the online classes from around the world. Students have attended from: Albania, Argentina, Australia (Victoria and Tasmania), Bulgaria, three provinces in Canada, The Dominican Republic, Ghana, India, Portugal, Switzerland, The Philippines and twenty-five States across the U.S.A.

Time zones and students' internet connection are our biggest challenges – but with improvements in the technology and more classes popping up around the world these will become less of an issue.

For more information, go to [philosophyworks.org](http://philosophyworks.org) website or write to [DL@philosophyworks.org](mailto:DL@philosophyworks.org)

*The photo shows an online group as it would appear on screen. Randolph Kraus is top left in the photo.*

## Top Tips - a couple of items you might enjoy

*The 33*, by Jonathan Franklin

On 5th August 2010, 33 miners were trapped underground when tons of rock collapsed in a remote copper mine in Chile. In the words of the author: 'Then a miracle happened. Instead of succumbing to animal instincts and behavioral meltdown, the miners grasped the essence of the human spirit, and they never let go.' This book tells the story of their dramatic rescue as it unfolded day by day before the eyes of the world.

*Inside Job*

This film won the 2011 Academy Award for best documentary. It is a hard-hitting account of the financial meltdown. Watch the trailer: [InsideJob](#)

## JPU Cycling

Mark Petzer, Johannesburg

The Jeppe Phakamisu Ubuntu (means 'upliftment and fellowship') Community School is run under the direction of students and friends of the Gauteng School of Practical Philosophy and the Living Heritage organisation. Some 100-120 children, ages 3 – 16, from Jeppe and surrounds, attend a Saturday School at the historic building of St Mary's in Berg Street Jeppestown. This is a Public Benefit Organisation, a non-sectarian, non-profit organisation open to all children in the neighbourhood. Their programme includes activities such as:

- Arts and Crafts, baking etc.
- Singing
- Sports and Games
- Discussion groups – life skills etc.
- Outings – e.g. camping, hiking, cycling, sailing, visits to various places.

After some years of running the programme we saw that an activity for the older children was needed, as when they approached 13/14 years old, they would drift back to the street. As a number of us are keen cyclists we approached an organisation which then donated 30 BMX's. These provided an outlet for the energies of the children and in fact are a star attraction.

A 'hotch potch' collection of road bikes was ultimately put together and some of the older teenage children were introduced to road cycling. This activity bridged the gap between children and mid-teenage, a period when here there is all too often a drift into gangs and such like with their accompanying dangers. In fact the overall programme is aimed at keeping the children off the street and providing them with positive alternatives.

Unfortunately the 'hotch potch' collection of bikes required more time to keep on the road than the time spent on the bikes. Our predicament was discussed with an overseas friend and a magnificent donation enabled us to put our 'road' team on to new bicycles. Since then our team of seven/eight riders, ranging in age from 15 – 18 years, have participated in many fun rides including the 3 nationwide Argus Cycle Tours of 110 kms. They are taken on a ride every Sunday ranging from 40 – 70 kms and also during school holidays.

As the project has grown we have had to do some fancy footwork to acquire two bicycle trailers and the necessary kit to carry on. In the beginning it took quite a while to get the boys going properly and safely on the road. Most unfortunately we did have one accident; one boy went head first into the windscreen of a car. The bike was written off and the windscreen smashed but he was fine. This boy has now emerged as the star cyclist, and in the recent 2011 Argus Cycle tour we did a few days ago, he had the fastest time of the whole team.

The training and discipline needed throughout the year has really been good for the boys and they acknowledge that. One boy said, 'Cycling has taught me so many things, to be committed and work hard to achieve my very own desired outcome, to have faith and do things calmly and relaxed because it allows me to be more efficient'. Another boy finished Grade 12 last year and has gone on to study at a local college. A further development of this project is that they are now attending a philosophy group on a Tuesday night and form the core of this group.

We are now looking to start some off-road riding. At some point the idea is to do a 600km off road ride from Johannesburg to Durban. This has been a journey of growth and development for all of us involved and who knows where it will lead to in the future.

[Watch the film: JPU cycling on UTube](#)

## Money

### Richard Glover, London

The Money course was born late last October; four of us were enjoying a meal after attending a packed Hayek Memorial Lecture at the London School of Economics. The speaker was passionate about the causes of the financial crisis.

Two ideas arose out of this: 1) the School needs to speak on this subject, and 2) people are desperate to understand. A resolution followed to take at least first steps towards making this happen. The time was ripe . . . but the rest of the meal tasted rather different.

Economics was the motivation for first joining the school in the early 1970s. After 9 magical terms of the old economics material there was something of an economics void as life and family took over. A yearning for economics study returned years later, and was satisfied through study groups, residential events and tutoring. As the importance of natural resources to the economy, the land question, became more obvious, so did a sense of non-comprehension of money, banking and finance. Underlying all this was a deepening philosophic understanding, a sense of unity in all things.

2007 came with its gradual unfolding of financial and economic catastrophe. A question formed: the world saw this as a financial crisis; some proposed money reform as the essential solution. Have we missed this, or is the land question more fundamental? If so, how can a money-reformist be convinced? This was the context of that October evening. Family life and work were affected for months. Studying books on money, papers from the Bank of England, conversations with wealthy people, reviewing the work of previous School students - there was so much material! My son came up with the banner after listening intently to the course aims.

The course covered money as a token and as such, a medium of exchange, not as wealth per se. Inflation, the banking system, currencies, exchange rate systems, trade, and the international reserve currency were all explored.

Whilst considering financial assets and real economic wealth, aspects of value emerged. The most fundamental of these are the values we hold dear, such as knowledge, happiness, health, freedom and prosperity shared fairly by everyone. Money and the economic system can support these most cherished values; this could be our vision as we move forwards. This could be the new gold standard.

**Thanks for reading.** I hope you've enjoyed these articles. Please let me know of any news, views or insights, or just give feedback on this newsletter. E-mail me at: [editor@seslondon.org](mailto:editor@seslondon.org). Best wishes, CL

The views expressed in this document are not necessarily those of the Fellowship of the School of Economic Science.