

From The Geonomist

Jeff Smith, Director of The Geonomy Society (from Portland, Oregon and around the globe) puts out one of the most eclectically pithy publications our movement has to offer.

A Loophole to Die For In the sunshine and flowery fragrance of a spring sprung six weeks early, I read of an American nun who spent decades in northern Brazil, fighting efforts by loggers and large landowners to expropriate lands and clear large areas of the Amazon rainforest; she worked with a price on her head. Riding to a morning meeting, Dorothy Stang, 74, was shot in the face three times. In 1988, rubber tapper Chico Mendes was also shot dead there for the same causes. Loggers and landowners also threaten local farmers with death. (AP, Feb 12) People have not clearly grasped, and we few proponents have not made clear, that the worth of Earth belongs to us all to share. In the Third World, the privileged kill for good land. Here in the First World, we merely vote to cap, repeal, defeat, or exempt ourselves from taxes on land. Doing so, we foster the attitude that land value can be taken and hoarded, owing no one anything. We fail to set the example of people, living cooperatively in society, sharing the values, which we create, of land, which we did not create. To that extent, the elderly nun's blood is on our hands.

The News and Views in these little pages one can read in the mainstream press – outside America. In New Zealand, Auckland's Herald titles an article not "Home Values Buoy the Economy" but "Dream of own home becoming nightmare: Average NZ house now worth 6 ½ times the average salary" (Jan 28). When reporting the government's official statistics, the reporter writes, "the Consumer Price Index is effectively a national lie; when mortgage rates rise, they are not reflected in the CPI at all." And, "The values of financial assets such as homes and share investments generally rise faster than inflation. Own them and inflation means money in the bank." (Sunday Star-Times, Jan 23) Refreshing. If you can't avail yourself of the Kiwi press, enjoy these pages.

Underworld Prefers Euros The US dollar has long been the world's *de facto* common currency, but with it declining in value against the Euro, it is beginning to lose favor with some cash connoisseurs. It's not just central bankers who're holding more of their reserves in Euros, less in dollars, but also global drug dealers. The greenback has long been the favorite of drug dealers, black marketeers, arms dealers, and anyone else who would like to keep his transactions off the books and his assets in liquid form. More than half of the \$700+ billion in circulation is held outside the US,

according to the Federal Reserve. But for the last two years, the number of Euros in circulation has been expanding faster than the supply of dollars, and it is becoming the currency of choice for those lovers of liquid cash. Part of the Euro's new appeal to the underground economy is its strength relative to the declining dollar. But equally important is the fact that while the largest US denomination readily available is the \$100 bill, the European Central Bank has started in recent years to print 200- and 500-Euro notes. With a 500-Euro note worth \$682 at today's rates, better those big Euro notes than bulky dollars. (Grant's Interest Rate Observer in Slate.com) One way global bangers and foreign bankers unload dollars is by buying American stocks, bonds, and real estate. While some fret about the changing nationality of our overlords, at least the land beneath factories, offices, and homes is not about to go anywhere, remaining liable for taxation by local government.