

# *Setting the record straight Supporting the liberty dollar*

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By, Gavin Lesnick

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The man behind the liberty dollar returned to his organization's Evansville headquarters this week for the first time since federal agents raided it and seized gold, silver and 60,000 newly minted coins featuring Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul.

Bernard von NotHaus, the founder and "monetary architect" of Liberty Services, said he came to Evansville to meet with supporters, assess the situation here after the raid and to at least temporarily shut down the group's main office, which is in a shopping center at 225 N. Stockwell Road.

Von NotHaus said the Nov. 14 raid — and the legal battles that will likely follow, including his possible arrest — will not diminish the group's mission to make an "inflation-proof," alternative currency to the U.S. dollar.

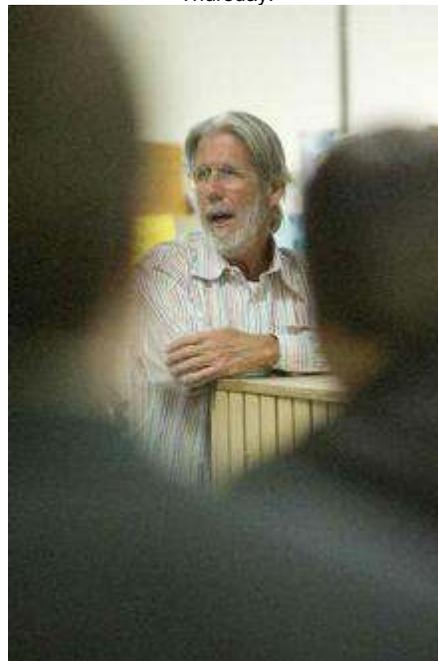
"I have rights to do whatever I want to do which is not illegal," von NotHaus said during an interview Thursday at the group's Evansville office. "I'm not out here selling drugs. I'm not even out here selling gold and silver. I'm out here making exchanges. So yeah, I think we're going to be vindicated."

The group, which has manufactured and sold gold-, silver- and copper-backed liberty dollars in metal, paper and digital forms, was raided as part of a lengthy investigation into the legality of the operations.

Von NotHaus, who founded the organization about 10 years ago, contends it produces a "private, voluntary barter currency" that falls within the boundaries of the law.



DENNY SIMMONS / Courier & Press Twenty or so employees, business associates, Ron Paul supporters and some curious individuals listen to Liberty Dollar founder Bernard von NotHaus, center, talk about his business's raid by the FBI two weeks ago at the Evansville headquarters Thursday.



Bernard von NotHaus

barter currency" that falls within the boundaries of the law.

Federal officials, who have been investigating von NotHaus for more than two years and will soon convene a grand jury to seek an indictment, disagree.

At least a dozen people attended a potluck dinner and meeting Thursday at Liberty Services' national office.

Serious supporters

Supporters came from as far away as Indianapolis. All were upset about the raid and the government's attitude toward von NotHaus.

"I feel like the government stole from me," said Deborah Ingram, of Boonville, Ind., who had purchased some of the silver medallions and copper Ron Paul dollars seized by federal agents.

"I think our government is out of control and our elected officials are ignoring our Constitution," said Don Taylor, of Evansville.

"I support what they are trying to do. Trying to get value back to our currency is what I support," said Paula Reis, of Mount Vernon, Ind.

"It's kind of sad for the people. I don't think the government has done Bernard right," said Jim Thomas, former publisher of the now-defunct Media Bypass magazine.

No information on the case has been released by investigators, but an affidavit of probable cause that von NotHaus said was leaked by authorities is linked on the liberty dollar Web site. It alleges that Liberty Services is in violation of federal codes that prohibit making metal coins to be used as "current money ... whether in the resemblance of coins of the United States or of foreign countries, or of original design."

Von NotHaus, who the affidavit accuses of money laundering, wire fraud and mail fraud, said the charges are baseless.

"We've been very, very specific on how we market the liberty dollar," he said. "We don't misrepresent the product. We tell people it's a private, voluntary barter currency."

Von NotHaus said he has been in contact with the FBI agent investigating the case, who, he said, has told him to expect a grand jury to hear the case at some point in the near future. That will take place in Asheville, N.C., where the investigation originated at the office of a regional liberty dollar affiliate there.

Von NotHaus said he will turn himself in as soon as federal authorities ask him to.

But he said paying for the defense is a concern because, in addition to raiding the Evansville office, authorities froze von NotHaus' bank accounts.



DENNY SIMMONS / Courier & Press Frank Findley of Boonville, Ind., left, uses an eyeglass to check out the newly "hallmarked" copper liberty dollar Bernard von NotHaus, right, stamped for him at the company's headquarters in Evansville on Thursday night. The "Arrest" liberty dollar hallmark features a set of handcuffs. Findley's business, DEF Arms, accepts liberty dollars as currency.

"They took all of our money — they took everything," he said. "This is what I often refer to as economic suppression or persecution. They take all your money and then they charge you eventually with something and you don't have any money to defend yourself."

To raise funds in the interim, von NotHaus said he has appealed to supporters for donations and the results have been promising.

Liberty Services has received thousands of dollars in contributions to its legal defense fund, he said, as well as donations of Ron Paul dollars minted and sold before the raid.

Those will likely be listed on eBay, von NotHaus said, where the buzz over the raid has inflated their value considerably. An auction ending today for a \$20 Ron Paul silver dollar had bids higher than \$250 Thursday afternoon.

"With the raging prices on eBay right now, we don't have any dissatisfied customers out there," von NotHaus said. "People are thrilled with what they have."

But even with those fundraising efforts, von NotHaus said he may be forced to use a public defender because a federal criminal trial would cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Optimistic outlook

But he said he is still optimistic the outcome will be in his favor.

"I do feel positive about it," he said. "First, I'm not doing anything wrong. Second, I can substantiate that. And third, I don't think that a fair and impartial jury will convict me. Because we have a very strong case. And I don't think the government has a very strong case."

Since the raid, thousands of orders previously placed for Ron Paul dollars and other items seized have gone unfilled.

Von NotHaus vowed Thursday to win the case and fill the orders.

"The government better be safeguarding our property," he said. "Because we're going to want every single thing back."