

Legal issues still dog Liberty Dollar

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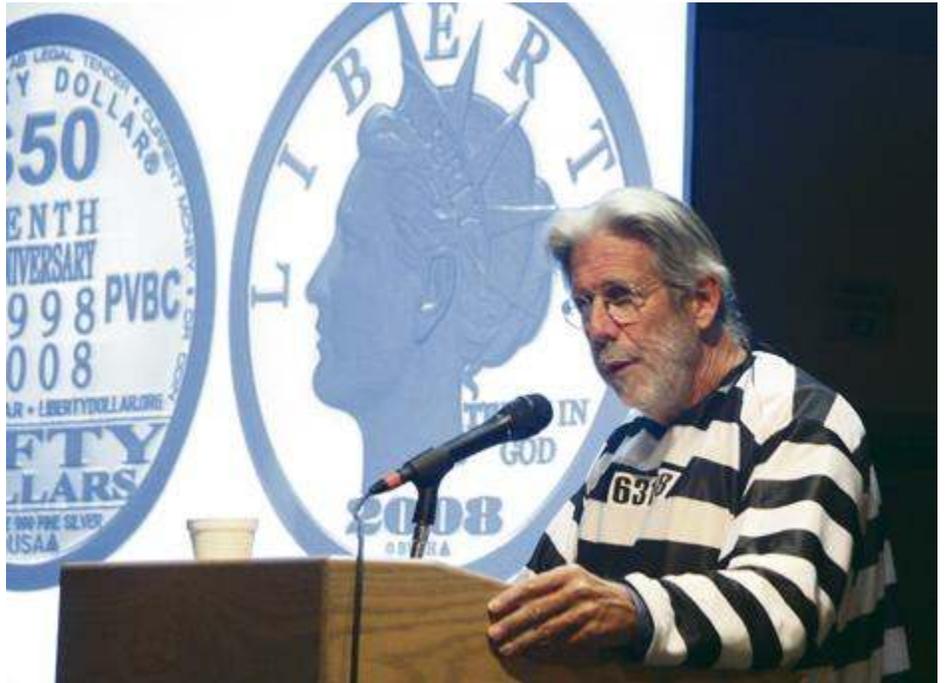
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COEUR d'ALENE -- All that was missing was shackles on his ankles.

In a symbolic finger in the eye of authorities, Bernard von NotHaus dressed in prison stripes to make his pitch for the Liberty Dollar Thursday at the Silver Summit at the Best Western Coeur d'Alene Inn.

Last November, the FBI and U.S Secret Service seized records, dies and Liberty Dollar coins from three Coeur d'Alene businesses affiliated with von NotHaus.

"The government would have you believe if you used a silver coin, you would be a criminal," he said. "I'm not a criminal. I don't anticipate going to jail."



RICK THOMAS/Press

Bernard von NotHaus, creator of the Liberty Dollar, mocked federal authorities during his discussion of the economy and precious metals Thursday at the Silver Summit, dressing in prison stripes as he awaits charges that could include counterfeiting following a federal seizure of the coins last year.

For a decade, von NotHaus and his business, NORFED (formerly National Organization for the Repeal of the Federal Reserve Act & Internal Revenue Code) has made and sold a variety of medallions in silver, gold and copper in denominations of \$5 to \$50, some stamped at Sunshine Minting in Coeur d'Alene.

As the price of metals rose, so did the face value of the coins. Included in the production run were Ron Paul copper dollars.

"They were \$1, now they are \$25," von NotHaus said. "They are going for \$35 to \$40 on eBay."

He has railed against paper currency as virtually worthless due to the declining value of the dollar.

In June, he said, the government filed a civil suit against him, and he stayed his own suit against them for six months.

"They started a war, but said they are not going to do any fighting for six months," von NotHaus said. "They are trying to find something to charge me with."

He says his coins are clearly not legal tender, but are inflation-proof investments.

He has since gone back into production, but would not say where the coins are being produced. He also threw in a few new epithets for the FBI, in language he said he knew was not condoned at the summit.

Exchanging one reference to an excretory orifice for the euphemism "belly button," he said everyone would understand the reference.

"If I say there is one hell of a belly button in the White House, you know what I'm talking about," von NotHaus said.

He said counterfeiting is one charge he believes may be coming, but he is ready to make his case. He also made a point of trying to irritate any law enforcement officers that he suspected of being at his presentation.

"I have a new definition for the FBI," von NotHaus said. "Fumbling bunch of idiots. I think I'm being kind."

The news of the past week, with investment banks toppling almost daily, was validation of the Liberty Dollar as a model currency, he said.

"It is a private, voluntary barter currency," von NotHaus said.

He was praised by Idaho Rep. Phil Hart, R-Athol, who was formerly a distributor of Liberty Dollars.

"Bernard has put his heart and soul into this," Hart said. "It wouldn't have succeeded without his blood, sweat and tears."

Von NotHaus said he expects the fallout from recent economic failures will include "currency controls, bank failures, martial law and total lockdown of the country."

He said he started the Liberty Dollar as a patriotic effort, but after a decade he is retiring in two weeks.

"This will be my last public appearance," he said.