



# the LEDGER

economic education newsletter

## Wishes and Rainbows

*The following children's story is designed to teach students (K-6) the economic concept of "scarcity." The fable describes how a young girl named Roota and her fellow Pebblepeople must cope with a scarcity of color in their underground town. Follow-up activities are suggested at the close of the article.*

Not long ago, deep in the ground, between Boulder's Ridge and Gopher Junction, was the town of Pebbleton. It was a dark and dreary little town with buildings made of mud and tree roots and streets dimly lit by tiny lanterns. The town looked much like any other town except for one thing — there was no color. In and all around the town there was nothing but black earth, sprinkled here and there with a few white stones and brown roots.

---

**The town looked much like any other town except for one thing — there was no color.**

---

The Pebblepeople who lived in the underground town were no more than six inches high, with black hair and large black eyes. Like the world they lived in, the clothes they wore were colorless. No pretty pink blouses, navy blue pants or sunshine yellow scarves could be seen in Pebbleton. In fact, everyone in the town wore the exact same thing — white shirts, black shorts, grey ties and black and white striped suspenders.

But the Pebblepeople were not happy in their little world of no color. For centuries, they had heard stories of the legendary "Colorland," and they longed to look upon the blues, reds and yellows they had heard so much about.

Roota was a young Pebbleton girl, with short straight hair, deep dark eyes and a turned-up nose. Like all her Pebbleton neighbors, she had never known anything but the colorless world around her.

Roota lived with her grandmother, a wise old woman with graying hair and round black spectacles, who often liked to spin a tale or two. Even as a small child, Roota had been enchanted with her grandmother's stories of the brilliant colors in the world above them.

"Even when you are an old woman like me, you will never see anything so bright and cheerful as the colors in the world above," her grandmother would say. "My dream is to some day see a tree's auburn colors or a flower's softly tinted petals."

Most of the townspeople had never left Pebbleton for fear of the big people whom they heard lived in the colorful world above ground. But Roota had often ventured as far as Cobblestone Canyon in search of the colors.

One day while Roota was exploring one of the many tunnels near the Canyon, she noticed a small bright light ahead of her. As Roota got closer, the light was so bright that she could not see, and she stumbled forward onto what felt like a soft cushion of long thick threads.

Sitting up and rubbing her eyes, Roota looked around in amazement. All about her was color. Below her was the emerald green grass, above her was the sparkling blue sky, and on either side was a rainbow of different colored flowers.

"I have found them! I have found the colors! Oh, they are more magnificent than I ever imagined," Roota cried as she leaped to her feet.

Roota ran from one flower to another, looking up at the clear blueness of the sky, then down at the rich green grass beneath her feet. Touching a rosy red flower petal, Roota knew why all the stories of the colors had been kept alive for so many years.

"Oh, if only grandmother could see them," Roota thought to herself. Then an idea popped into her head. "Why not? Why couldn't the whole town see the colors?" she thought.

Glancing around her, Roota's eyes rested upon a single flower. No color could describe its beauty. It was violet, but not really violet; turquoise, but not really turquoise; golden, but not really golden.

Quickly, Roota knelt next to the flower and carefully pushed aside the earth around it. With one forceful tug, Roota pulled it from the ground. Carrying her precious flower, she walked back to the tunnel's opening and, taking one last look at the marvelous "Colorland," she descended back into the darkness.

When Roota returned with the flower, the word quickly spread throughout the town that the legendary colors had been found.

**Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Vol.7, No. 4 - Sept. 1980**

Storekeepers stopped selling, bakers stopped baking, and children stopped playing. Everyone rushed to the town square where Roota was gently planting her rare and beautiful flower.

Soon Roota's grandmother could be seen hobbling toward the crowd that had gathered at the square. As she came closer, she stopped suddenly and looked up at the brilliantly colored flower.

"You have made an old woman very happy," she said as she walked over to her granddaughter. "No longer will the Pebblepeople be forced to live in a sad and plain world with no color."

The Pebblepeople cheered, for they too knew that the colored flower would bring great happiness to their town. In fact, the townspeople were so amazed with the flower's beauty that each and every one of them wanted a flower of his or her very own. Roota knew that they would not be satisfied with the one flower, so she promised that she would return to "Colorland" and bring back more colorful things.

The next day, Roota and her best friend, a tough but friendly Pebbleton boy named Rockie, started on their journey through the many tunnels near Cobblestone Canyon. But their trip was an unhappy one. By the end of the third day, they still had not found the opening to "Colorland."

"Are you sure that we are going the right way?" Rockie asked Roota as they pushed aside a large boulder that was blocking their path. Roota could only bow her head in disappointment and hope that the next turn would bring them closer to the opening.

For nearly a week they searched through the tunnels, but still they could not find the opening.

Finally, just as they had decided to return to Pebbleton, they noticed a faint light in the distance. Quickly, they ran toward the light, anxious to see the vast and wonderful colors in the world above. But when they reached the end of the tunnel, their excitement faded.

The light was not coming from the opening to "Colorland" but only from a small cavern. Somehow, the sunlight from the world

above was coming through the ceiling high over their heads.

"Don't be sad," Rockie said to Roota, placing his hand in hers. "Remember, we still have one colored flower."

"But one flower is not enough," said Roota, her usual playful grin turning into a frown. "Everyone in Pebbleton would like a flower of his or her own."

"We can only hope to search for the opening another time," Rockie replied.

Roota agreed and decided that the Pebblepeople would have to enjoy and share the one colored flower that they had.

But when Roota and Rockie returned to Pebbleton, the town was once again colorless. The flower that had once been bright and full of color was now grey and wilted.

Roota knelt beside the flower. As a tear rolled down her face, the flower, too, shed three seed-like tears. Roota placed the flower's tears in her hand and looked at the dreary black and white world around her.

"The flower's colors will not stay without the special light from the world above." Turning, Roota saw her grandmother standing next to her. "It is said that a flower's tears will grow into new colorful flowers if they have the special light from the world above," her grandmother said.

Roota gently tightened her grip around the flower's tears, gave her grandmother a hug, and headed toward the lighted cavern that she and Rockie had found on their journey. There she planted the tears, watering and tending them from the time the first green shoots poked through the ground till the flowers were ready to bloom.

Roota's grandmother was right. By the end of the second week, the three flower buds had blossomed into spectacular colors. News of the three flowers traveled quickly and soon all the townspeople crowded around Roota.

"I would like one of the flowers," one Pebbleperson said.

"I was here first, so I should get one of the flowers," another argued.

"I am an important citizen in this town," the mayor announced, "so I surely should receive a flower."

"What am I to do?" Roota asked her grandmother later that day. "I have only three flowers, yet everyone in Pebbleton would like one of them."

"The people of Pebbleton have been without color for too many years," her grandmother replied. "Now that they have seen its fantastic beauty they will want it more and more. They will want more colored flowers than you will ever be able to grow in the lighted cavern. Only you can decide who will get a flower and who will not."

Roota knew that her grandmother was right, so she left for the lighted cavern to decide what to do. For nearly a week, Roota stayed near the flowers, pacing from one end of the cavern to the other, drawing pictures in the black dirt and then crossing them out. Finally she made her decision, and she returned to Pebbleton to call the townspeople together.

"I have made a list," Roota explained as she unrolled a long scroll. "It begins with the oldest Pebbleperson and continues right down to the youngest Pebblebaby."

Roota crossed out the names of the top three Pebblepeople and handed each a flower.

"When the three flowers lose their colors, we will use their tears to grow more flowers," Roota continued. "In time, everyone on the list will be given a flower of his or her very own."

Years have passed since Roota promised the Pebblepeople flowers of their own. Since then, a second lighted cavern has been found and the Pebblepeople are now able to grow twice as many flowers as before.

Today, the streets of Pebbleton are lined with flowers of every imaginable color. But the townspeople are still not content. Many of them want two, three and even four flowers of their own, but Roota cannot grow that many flowers in only two lighted caverns. So Roota and Rockie search each day for the opening to "Colorland," hoping that some day they will be able to fill Pebbleton with more colorful things.

# Wishes and Rainbows





So don't be surprised if some summer day when you're lying on the green grass and looking at the blue sky, you hear voices and footsteps coming from underground. It could be Roota and Rockie searching for the opening to "Colorland."

#### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- What color is Roota's flower? Have younger students color the flower on insert page to serve as a springboard for the following activities!
- Discuss some reasons why Roota wanted to bring the colored flower back to Pebbleton. Why did the townspeople want more and more of the colored flowers? Is there an unlimited demand for colored flowers in Pebbleton?
- Give reasons why the Pebblepeople were unable to get all the colored flowers they wanted. Are colored flowers a limited resource in Pebbleton?
- Introduce the term "scarcity" to the students. Use the story to illustrate how there was a scarcity of color in Pebbleton. Have students draw pictures or list other instances in which scarcity exists, e.g. two children wanting to ride one bicycle.
- List the ways in which Roota tried to handle the problem of scarcity in Pebbleton, e.g. share, made a list. What other ways could Roota have solved the scarcity problem, e.g. vote? What role does decision-making play in solving the problem of scarcity?

#### CONTEST

What do Roota, her friends, Pebbleton and/or "Colorland" look like?

The *Ledger* wants to know how your students visualize *Wishes and Rainbows*. Just have them draw or paint pictures relating to the story and submit them by October 27, 1980 to the *Ledger*, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Public Services Dept., Boston, MA 02106. One drawing will be selected from the entries, and the picture, along with information about the artist, will be printed in November's *Ledger*.

## Innovative Classroom

Following a review of economic decision-making and scarcity, the instructor briefed her class on the day's topic — production. Dividing the class into production groups, she handed out glue, tape, scraps of material, scissors, egg cartons, construction paper and crayons.

Some might question the use of such tools to teach economics unless they realize that the class was actually comprised of 4 and 5 year olds from the Cyrus E. Dallin School in Arlington, MA. Involved last spring in a 10-week program known as "Kindereconomy," the Arlington kindergarteners, along with students (K-2) in several other area schools, were taught basic economic principles. Consumption and distribution, money versus barter, supply and demand, goods and services, production and specialization, opportunity cost, business and scarcity were the topics introduced to these "Kindereconomy" classes.

"Kindereconomy" was just one program sponsored last year by The National Center of Economic Education for Children, located at Lesley College in Cambridge, MA. Scarcely over a year old (its formation was officially announced May 9, 1979), The National Center is devoted to the advancement of economic education for the elementary school level. Guidance materials, teaching strategies, training, staff, information and speakers are services The National Center provides to achieve its goals.

In addition to the "Kindereconomy" program, The National Center has also trained and advised teachers on "Mini-Society," an unstructured, 10-week program in which students, grades 3 through 6, create their own economic society. Students learn economic concepts by setting up their own businesses, designing currency, creating laws, paying taxes and making other decisions common to everyday economic life. Both "Kindereconomy" and "Mini-Society" were created by Dr. Marilyn Kourilsky, professor at the UCLA Graduate School of Education.

In order to promote the development of curricula and material for economics in elementary schools, The National Center has set up an annual awards program. Cash prizes are awarded to winners in three elementary categories: pre-service teacher training, in-service teacher training and teaching materials. Awards are also given to each entrant who qualifies for an "Award of Distinction" in each division.

The National Center's eight-page publication, *The Elementary Economist*®, provides teaching materials on a particular economic concept and informs educators about The Center's activities. Teachers are encouraged to contribute to the publication which contains articles by their colleagues about successful economics teaching methods for grades K-6.

For more information about The National Center's programs and/or free publications, contact The National Center of Economic Education for Children, Lesley College, Cambridge, MA 02238.



Courtesy of Lesley College

## Multi-media

October 5-11 has been designated National Consumer Education Week. To help promote consumer awareness, the Boston Federal Reserve Bank recently published the *Consumer Education Catalog*. The catalog describes consumer education materials and programs which are offered by the Boston Fed.

**Money and Barter**, produced by AIMS Instructional Media Services, Inc.

In colorful cartoon form, these four filmstrips present the mechanics of money and barter. The filmstrips include — (1) introduction, (2) basic banking services, (3) use of credit cards, (4) currency — plus accompanying records and a teacher's manual. (Appropriate for elementary school students.)



**Land, Labor and Capital**, produced by Oxford Films.

This 10-minute film discusses the three basic components of any economy: land, labor and capital. Each factor of production is shown to be equally important to the development of an economy. (Appropriate for junior high and elementary school groups.)

*The above free publication & filmstrips are available by writing to the Bank and Public Information Center, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Boston, MA 02106; or by calling (617) 973-3459. The filmstrip can be obtained on a free loan basis.*

## New England Update

### MAINE

The **Maine Council on Economic Education** is planning two follow-up economic education workshops for the fall semester. Tentatively scheduled for November and December, the workshops are open to all teachers, including those who did not attend the Council's summer workshops.

The Council is also planning a 15-week economic education course in Portland, ME. Part of the Developmental Economic Education Program (DEEP), the course is tentatively scheduled to start in October and is open to all secondary teachers. For more information on the Council's activities, contact Robert Mitchell, 22 Coburn Hall, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04473; (207) 581-7069.

### MASSACHUSETTS

School systems interested in workshops or courses offered through the **Center for Economic Education at Boston University** should write to Anton Lahnston, School of Education, 765 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, MA 02215; or call (617) 353-3201.

### RHODE ISLAND

A puppet show presented by the **Center for Economic Education at Rhode Island College** is now available to all Rhode Island schools. Illustrating the economic concept of "choice," the puppet show involves a 5th grade child, who receives \$20 for her birthday, and her adventures with Mr. Dollars and Mr. Sense. The 30-minute show is appropriate for 4th, 5th and 6th grade classes and is available free of charge. For more information, write to Agnes Johnson, Rhode Island College Center for Economic Education, Room 200, Alger Hall; or call (401) 456-8036.

### VERMONT

Ten videotaped programs, dealing with Vermont's economy and produced by **Econ Trek — Vermont Economic Education**

Project, can now be copied for individual classroom use. Entitled *Econ Trek*, the half-hour programs are shown on Vermont's educational television station four times a year and include topics ranging from "Blue Collar Capitalism" to "Wood Energy." Those interested in making copies of *Econ Trek*, or of the *Trade-offs* or *Common Cents* series, should send a blank videotape and \$4.50 per program to the Media Library, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405.

## FED Update

□ From October 18 to 26, over 500 Boston area artists will open their studios to visitors as part of "Art-week Boston 1980." Free maps locating each artist's studio and listing related programs sponsored by museums, arts institutions and groups will be available at the Boston Fed from October 15 through October 22.

□ A new series of lunchtime concerts will be held at the Boston Fed this fall. The free concerts will take place in the Bank's auditorium on Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. For more information, contact Kathy Toussaint, Public Services, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Boston, MA 02106; (617) 973-3368.

□

## the LEDGER

Editor: Debra Carpenter-Beck  
Graphics Arts Designer: Ernie Norville

*This newsletter is published periodically as a public service by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. The reporting of news about economic education programs and materials should not be construed as a specific endorsement by the Bank. Further, the material contained herein does not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston or the Board of Governors. Copies of this newsletter and a catalogue of other educational materials and research publications may be obtained free of charge by writing: Bank and Public Information Center, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Boston, MA 02106, or by calling: (617) 973-3459.*