

## OPEN FORUM 4

Sir,  
Fred Harrison's article (*Ideas 'feud' blocks progress*), in your Autumn 1996 issue is a total distortion of the facts as they relate to the Henry George School. The reasons not to continue our option of association with Dr. Hudson were many. Fred's hatchet job based upon the Plotch Report is selective in its quotes. It maligns the School and the Trustees who dedicate a good part of their lives to the Georgist cause.

"Professional assessments" by only 52 people surveyed is not valid and acceptable to researchers. It should be viewed as *opinion* at best! Many of the people interviewed have self-serving interests (as does Fred in publishing such a series of distortions). While the views may, to Fred, be representative, they in no way accurately state the facts and realities the trustees of the Henry George School deal with on a daily basis.

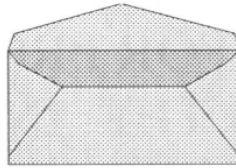
The "priorities summary" Fred quotes enumerates 18 Adult Education and 12 Social Science Forum votes separately. Actually they are part of a School-combined outreach effort. One of many we have implemented. Hudson's research project, and other works too, were part of the School's outreach efforts.

Fred gives no credit for Trustee conceiving, funding and implementing the Hudson National Research Program. He seems oblivious to the obvious question: Why Trustees who supported Hudson's Research for over a year would end it?

Money left to the School was intended for education purposes! Thanks to Lancaster Green, Arnold Weinstein, Steven Cord, Ed Dodson and professional managements, we built the Fund to the point where we were able to underwrite Hudson's trip to Russia, in support of Fred's efforts and to Germany to present an important paper. We also underwrote Hudson's manuscript on Biblical Debt Cancellation and supported his papers presented at Notre Dame and the Eastern Economic Association.

The School also underwrote a Symposium highlighting Hudson in conjunction with N.Y.U. It produced papers written by some of the foremost scholars from Harvard, Russia, Germany, Italy, Israel, and Canada. In attendance also were scholars from Yale and Columbia.

The Symposium and papers opened scholars' minds to the significance of the land question. The papers were published by Harvard and will be read by hundreds (if not more) of influential people who educate



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thousands. A second Symposium was recently held. A third is scheduled for May '97 at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. They are outgrowths of our seed money.

We have approved funding of another Symposium in co-operation with N.Y.U., to be sponsored by Dr. Gaffney and Dr. Netzer. Subject: Land Speculation and the Business Cycle.

These are but a few of the educational projects we have *recently* funded (This does not include our extension schools support).

Regarding "compensating" of board members. Currently there are two. The funds for Steve Cord enable him to continue his Local Research which has produced 16 city conversions resulting in the collection of some \$65 million in land rent.

Their "compensation" has been for projects approved by the Trustees (for subjects like the Hudson and Gaffney Symposiums). Their total compensation for two series of programs - over a two year period - is less than what was spent on Hudson's *one* year research project!

The "compensations" in one case, cover Trustee outlays. Costs would run into hundreds of thousands were outside marketing services employed. That retiree is primarily responsible for conceiving the projects for which he hired Hudson - and from whose "compensation" Hudson was paid.

As for Steve Cord's two rate campaign, we submitted it for evaluation by professional researchers who do work for my previous employer, Unilever. They found it of value and convincing for presentation to mayors and community managers (against whom it is targeted).

As for lifetime board tenure, we Georgists are few in number. It would be easy for a disciplined minority, willing to procrastinate and delay decisions, to take control of the board. Indeed, recently we discovered a trustee accepting money from a supplicant in the employ of the School with a personal agenda and a following who could have stacked the board and taken over the School

portfolio to the detriment of the movement!

Mr. Plotch, on several occasions, advised that we *not* undertake an extensive campaign to raise funds *until administrative changes were made*. We are attempting to implement his recommended changes.

As for Trustee "discord" (if debate and strongly held opinion should so be labelled) most of it revolves around the issues raised by Plotch. (What would Fred have written had we *not* acted upon the Plotch document?)

Plotch said it would cost the School \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 *per year for at least five years* before we *might* begin to get our investment back from a fund raising campaign.

I know Fred means well, and his sacrifices for the movement are enormous; his judgements respected, but his oversimplified view of School affairs reminds me of a joke which is a suitable response to his advice (in a recent letter) that we build our portfolio by hiring "better portfolio managers":

*Joke:* How do you get six elephants into a Volkswagen?

*Answer:* You put three in the front and three in the back!

It may also surprise Fred to know that Trustees have been active in political reform. Without an educated local public, there can be no sustained support of LVT by politicians, or a *national* single tax.

The School hired Hudson to write books (about 124 pages each) and papers. The Social Science Forum helped pay for speeches, travel, typesetting, printing and publicity. Again, from the "compensation" Fred criticizes.

Furthermore, Hudson was initially made aware of Fred's work, and recommended for the Research Project, by the Social Science Forum.

*Where Economics Went Wrong* was a project conceived and initiated by the School, as a 124 page book (for our use) which Hudson indicated a desire to flesh out as a major Georgist work. We encouraged him to do so.

In conclusion, the School will continue to support the movement in every feasible, legal way possible. But we will not jeopardize the portfolio and intent of our benefactors who have made it all possible. Simon Winters, New York, USA

**Fred Harrison replies:** My report contained no expression of personal opinion. It was a summary of the facts contained in a lengthy report.