

# The Rites of Spring

## HGS Graduation 2001

David Domke

On June 28, the School held its yearly Spring Graduation ceremony. Attended by more than 40 students, each receiving a master diploma signifying their completion of the School's major program of study, *Principles of Political Economy*, the ceremony was noteworthy both for its diversity and the general feeling of camaraderie and unity of purpose. Graduates of the *Principles of Political Economy*, a three-part program consisting of *Progress and Poverty*, *Applied Economics* and *Economic Science*, come from many different backgrounds and walks of



Hector Olaya shares his thoughts with fellow graduates

and walks of life. This diversity enhanced the graduation as it showed the commonality of people as they search for solutions to social problems. The School's new Director of Education, Mike Curtis, officiated at the ceremony.

HGS and Board of Trustees President Sydney A. Mayers was the featured speaker and he presented a few well chosen remarks. Commenting on the term "graduation" Sydney said "it really should be called a commencement."



Maria Ochoa

Sydney also said "There's an old song: 'I'm Beginning to See the Light,' which all of us could sing once we've seen the light by completing the courses you've just completed here. Unfortunately, most so-called economists cannot sing it for they are simply blind to reality. One of the things they don't see is what Henry George called 'the robber who takes all.' As soon as land becomes productive, the rent rises on that site." Sydney went on to say: "I read where the Federal Reserve just lowered interest rates by one sixth of 1%. Of course, this is meant to stimulate our economy by encouraging business to increase production. But the same thing happens - most of the increase ultimately goes to rent."

Also on hand to speak were HGS instructors Bruce Oatman, Quisia Gonzalez, George DeShields, and Tito Ortiz. The School's Board of Trustees was also represented by Jack Schwartzman, Billy Fitzgerald, Irving Starer and

Si Winters.

A number of students also asked to say a few words upon receiving their diplomas.

Maria Ochoa's remarks summed up what was most on her fellow students minds in saying "We can now see and desire to follow the truth because we have recognized true justice through the writings of



Sydney Mayers welcomes graduates

Henry George. In this day and age, the study of Political Economy can still give us hope. It gives us the hope that we can effectively fight against that which polarizes society - the monopolization of land which makes the poor beg to exercise their natural born right to work the land. It is not nature that holds back its bounty. It is landowners holding back land from production that creates divisiveness and social injustice."

In concluding her remarks, Ms. Ochoa said: "It was important to me to have learned about this school through a friend who had picked up a flyer announcing one of the School's Friday Night Forums. The Forum was on my favorite philosopher, Socrates. The experience these past few semesters of sharing an education with people of different nations and cultural backgrounds was very enriching to me. I wish to thank my teachers and thank the School for giving me this opportunity. Thank you."

After the ceremony, students and teachers, attended a celebration in the School's backyard.



HGS teacher George DeShields

### Henry George News

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