

## FORGING AHEAD IN 2021

By Josie Faass, Executive Director

As has become the norm, the weeks since the publication of our December newsletter have been frill to the brim with breaking news and accounts of personal struggle and heartbreak too numerous to begin to address here. Today though, two main stories capture the headlines: the continuing scourge of the coronavirus pandemic and the events which took place in Washington D.C. on December 6th. Like everyone else, we at RSF must contend with these large scale issues while charting our own course forward in the new year.

As I write this, COVID-19 has claimed upwards of 373,000 American lives, growing at a rate of more than one life per minute. The numbers are staggering. Even with multiple vaccines now available, limited supplies, flawed distribution mechanisms, vaccine hesitancy, and historically high infection rates, mean we're still months from seeing the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel.

And although the last four years have done much to normalize bad behavior in Washington, even the most cynical and disinterested among us were held in rapt, horrified attention by the images of confederate flag-toting Trump supporters storming the Capitol Building where Congress had gathered to certify the Presidential election results. The landmark results of the Georgia Senate runoff, which had dominated Google on January 5th, with 10M+ searches on that day alone, is immediately eclipsed in the national consciousness as is e searched terms like 25th amendment (5M+ searches on the 6th), Capitol (5M+), and sedition (1M+), struggling to make sense of the day's events and discern a collective path forward.

So how does RSF fit into all of this? Our answer is simple: we will continue to honor our founding commitment to advance the ideas of Henry George with the goal of creating a more just world for all people. This may seem like a no-brainer, but in a time of continual upheaval where the chasm between the have and have-nots grows ever wider, this is in fact, a bold commitment.

How will we do this? In 2021, RSF will continue to support research into issues of economic and social justice. With our own titles now fully catalogued, we will finalize our library collection policy and begin the process of identifying and acquiring materials to ensure ours is a truly unique and valuable set of Georgist resources. We will hold a series of events - ranging from our February 23rd event exploring the implications of LVT for Philadelphia, to a launch party for the fourth volume of the Annotated Works of Henry George (date TBD) - that will enable anyone, no matter where they are, to participate in our efforts and learn how we're keeping George's ideas alive today.

Through our Center for Property Tax Reform, we'll continue our research and direct outreach to communities, including our efforts to champion the creation of a 5th class in the NYC property tax system and the adoption of land value taxes in cities and towns nationwide. We'll also be rolling out new GIS tools, designed to lay bare the inequities and inaccuracies hidden in our tax codes, so that the information can be used to right these longstanding wrongs.

And as we work through year two of our strategic plan, we'll be rounding out our overall programming through efforts to standardize and better publicize our grant-making, including the creation of a totally new type of support: college scholarships.

The ushering in of a new year did not, as many of us had hoped, bring with it a conclusion to the pandemic or a more sane national political stage. But I believe those things are coming. For the time being, however, I'm focused on stewarding this one organization, whose founding commitment to promote the ideas of Henry George - the ideas of equality, opportunity, and good governance - could not be more relevant, or more desperately needed, than it is right now.