

HENRY GEORGE NEWSLETTER

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NEW YORK CITY GEORGISTS STIR ACTION ON LOCAL FRONT

Georgists and incentive taxers from the New York City area have seized the opportunity provided by the statewide study of land value taxation currently in progress and worked dilligently in recent weeks to focus the attention of city officials on LVT.

The first thrust of this effort was a simple ceremony held at the New York School's graduation exercise. Assemblyman Daniel Feldman presented the pen used by Governor Mario Cuomo in signing the study bill to Nan Braman and Felice Gruskin. Feldman was tne bill's chief sponsor in the Assembly.

"In a way you could call this presentation a memorial to Phil Finkelstein," Feldman said, recalling the latedirector. "I only wish ne could be here tonight to witness what I hope will be only the first of our legislative successes."

Trustee Bill Davidson organized a luncheon for city officials several days later. On hand were Commissioner William K. Block of the rinance Department, David Goldstein, the chief assessor, Councilman Stanley Michels, and representatives from the offices of Deputy Mayor Kenneth Lipper, Council President Carol Bellamy and several other local officials.

The luncheon was preceded by a viewing of the new documentary, "A Tale of Five Cities -- Tax Revolt, Pennsylvania Style." The animated discussion which followed included this backhanded compliment from Commissioner Block:

"I know what this tax is supposed to do, but the city doesn't want it. We don't have the infrastructure to handle such development."

Representing the Georgist point of view were Davidson, Lowell Harriss of the Academy of Political Science, Dr. Oscar Johannsen and Michael Gavaghen of the school, and Richard Barbuto and Felice Gruskin.

A third project designed to focus attention on LVT in the city is the February 10th program sponsored by the Graduate Research Committee. "Progress Without Poverty for the People of Harlem" will probe a proposal for the city to undertake a study of LVT which would include the famed uptown community.

The program will begin that Sunday afternoon with a 1 PM bus tour of Harlem, led by Dr. Rita Webb Smith, a community organizer and outspoken Georgist. The bus will depart from the school (5 East 44th Street) and reservations are necessary. Call Elizabeth Reeves at 697-9880 to reserve space.

The probe itself will take place at the Harlem State Office Building at 7th Avenue and 125th Street, beginning at 2 PM. George Collins, director of the Philadelphia HGS, will moderate a panel of non-Georgist experts on banking, real estate development, community organizing, zoning, urban planning and taxation and assessment. The program will include several audio-visual presentations and will conclude at 5 PM.

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SCHOOL NOTES

NEW YORK

A series of extracurricular programs brightened the between-semester period.

The first, sponsored by the Graduate Research Committee, focused on the problem-plagued transit system. Guest speakers were New York City Comptroller Harrison J. Golden and Felice Gruskin, director of Transit Riders in Pursuit, a transit watchdog group.

Another GRC program featured a heated debate on alternative housing strategies. Sydney Mayers, HGS trustee and educator, spoke on Georgist solutions to the urban housing crisis. Susan Raddosh, of the Metropolitan Council on Housing, addressed the topic from a Socialist stance. Their exchanges were at times heated and extremely well-received by the 50 students in attendance.

A third program brought 75 high school seniors to the school for a day-long session entitled "You and New York's Changing Job Market." Co-sponsored by the school and the New York City Council on Economic Education, the session included a panel of top executives from local corporations.

Information on upcoming programs at the school can be had by contacting Elizabeth Reeves at 212 697-9880.

LONG ISLAND

The two-hour seminar, You and the Property Tax, which explains how the tax works, its impact on Long Island homeowners and the implications of any movement toward a more Georgist approach, will be offered at the following locations:

--Bellmore--Merrick; Kennedy High School, Thursday, January 31 at 8PM.

--Glen Cove; Glen Cove High School, Thursday, March 7 at 8 PM.

--Islip; Islip High, Tuesday, February 5 at 8 PM.

--Lindenhurst; Lindenhurst Senior High; Tuesday, February 26 at 8 PM.

--Patchogue/Medford; Patchogue/Medford High School, Thursday, April 4 at 8 PM.

--South Huntington; Walt Whitman High School, Monday, March 4 at 8 PM.

For further information, contact Stan Rubenstein at 516 734-7543.

SCHOOL NOTES

PHILADELPHIA

Dr. Irene Hickman, former assessor of Sacramento, CA and currently an active member of the Missouri-based Public Revenue Education Council, recently spoke to a number of Philadelphia Georgists at the birthplace. Dr. Hickman emphasized the need to promote not only land value taxation but the entire Georgist message.

Mike Curtis, director of the Arden Activities, continues to make one-hour presentations on land rent to members of the Breakthrough Foundation. His efforts have recently been coordinated by alumnus Jim Joiner.

Some 45 people attended the dedication of the historical marker erected by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in front of the birthplace. Commission member Mrs. J. Welles Henderson, HGS trustee Edward Dodson, and Henry George Foundation trustee Richard L. Biddle performed the unveiling. Speakers included commission member Mrs. Robert S. Ross; Professor Arthur P. Dudden of Bryn Mawr College; Dr. Richard Tyler, historian for the commission; Professor Steven Cord, of the Henry George Foundation; Stanley Rubenstein, director of the New York School; and Charles E. Peterson, Philadelphia Architectural Historian.

LOS ANGELES

The Los Angeles School is moving through stage two of its plan to revitalize its teaching programs. Foremost in the project is the recruiting and training of teachers. The school now boasts an active faculty on nine -- all of whom have received a minimum of 60 hours of study before facing a class. Five of these are new instructors who graduated in 1984.

Six Georgists from San Diego drove to Los Angeles to attend the Christmas dinner and graduation ceremonies at the Los Angeles Press Club. Legislator William Filante spoke to a packed house on "Politics: It ain't much, but it's all we got." Filante had two other Georgist meetings in Los Angeles before he was allowed to return to Sacramento.

Director Harry Pollard addressed the Free Marin Supper Club in the Bay area on "Why the Free Market Always Fails", or, "Why freedom is too important to be left to libertarians."

CABLE TELEVISION

UA Columbia Cablevision of Westchester has agreed to carry the basic Georgist course, Understanding Economics, on its public access channel. UE will appear on Channel 8 every Thursday at 8 PM through April 4.

IN THE NEWS....

A recent article in the Christian Science Monitor examined efforts to implement dual-rate property taxes in a number of states.

Entitled "Moves to Tax Land and Structures Separately Gain Momentum", the George B. Merry article was largely the result of public relations work by Anne Sayre in Boston.

In addition to providing background information on the split tax concept, the article explores recent efforts in Pennsylvania, New York and Missouri....

The Los Angeles Times, in its business section, featured "America's Single-Tax Town"--Fairhope, Alabama. It told the story of Fairhope, from its inception in 1894 to the present day.

Staff writer Charles Hillinger interviewed Mayor Jim Nix as well as single taxers Sam Dyson and Gale Rowe.

The media network response to the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Statement on Capitalism garnered several news items. Earl Hanson of Utahns for Tax Reform converted the release to an op-ed piece which ran in two local papers. Similar coverage was given in Philadelphia's Germantown Courier. The Long Island Catholic made reference to the Georgist response in a compendium of reactions to the Bishops' letter.

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