

Henry George News

Volume 58, Number 3

May - June, 1994



Interest in Georgist economics has been rekindled in Arden, Delaware's "single tax town." Mike Curtis, Director of the Philadelphia HGS, grew up in Arden and has taught many classes there over the years, although enthusiasm had waned recently. Last September, Mike decided it was time to try again, and "To my absolute amazement, there were enough new young people." Seventeen finished the latest class.

Mike asked his Arden students when they might be able to host his North Philadelphia group (see p. 7) on a tour of Arden. Unbeknownst to Mike, they were already planning a Georgist brunch at the Arden Guild hall - to which they happily invited the Philly group. There, they announced their intention to start a Georgist guild of the Arden Club. (The Club is made up of interest groups called "Gilds.") Now, the class is starting on Social Problems, with a different student teaching each lesson. "Things are going so well it scares me," Mike says. "The interesting thing is that I'm not doing anything different from what I've always done. Things are just changing. There will always be ebbs and flows."

HGS Hosts Georgist Panel at Socialist Scholars Conference

The Henry George School sponsored a lively panel at the 1994 Socialist Scholars Conference on April 3rd, once again held at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. The theme of this year's conference, which featured over 70 presentations, was "The Chickens Come Home to Roost: the Price of Neoliberalism." Participants in the School's panel, which was titled "Marx vs. George in Deindustrial America: Radicalism and Relevance," were HGS Executive Director George Collins and Assistant Director Lindy Davies, and two prominent scholars sympathetic to the School's position on rent as public revenue, Dr. Michael Hudson, author of *The Lost Tradition of Biblical Debt Cancellations* and Robert Fitch, author of *The Assassination of New York*. Connections and arrangements came by way of Dr. Hudson, who felt that the Henry George School should be heard, if for no other reason than "No other panel in the entire conference dealt with economic issues!" Socialist scholars have for some years been focusing on other ramifications of class struggle, particularly in the areas of sociology, aesthetic theory and feminist issues. Dr. Hudson sees a telling irony in the fact that the Henry George School was the only sponsor he and Fitch could find for presenting their economic analysis.

The panel was chaired by George Collins, who introduced the speakers, and fielded questions. Lindy Davies, NY-HGS Assistant Director, spoke first, reviewing George's basic remedy, and making the case that its most complete application, in today's increasingly international economy, is on an international scale (See "The Land for the People - of the World" in our last issue.)

Next up was Michael Hudson, who showed (continued on page six)

Washington State Legislature Studies Two-Rate Tax Reform

by Eugene Levin

Three legislative bills calling for a study of the two-tier property tax system have been introduced in Olympia, Washington - one in the house, and two in the Senate. After hearings in both houses, two of the bills were passed out of committee. The Senate bill passed several steps before it languished in the Rules Committee at the end of the legislative session. They all might have gone further had the session been longer, and the legislative load less heavy. Some thirty bills dealing with aspects of the property tax system had to be dealt with, and only a few became law.

Years of effort by Washington State Georgist Association (WSGA) members, especially Marvin Saillard and Meta Heller of Olympia, and WSGA president Hamlet Hilpert, have educated a number of legislators about the merits of the two-tier tax. These legislators have become sufficiently interested to sponsor or co-sponsor the bills calling for such a study. The two-tier property tax study bill had the support of People for Fair Taxes, a well known coalition group which includes church, labor, retirement, and educational associations and the League of Women Voters.

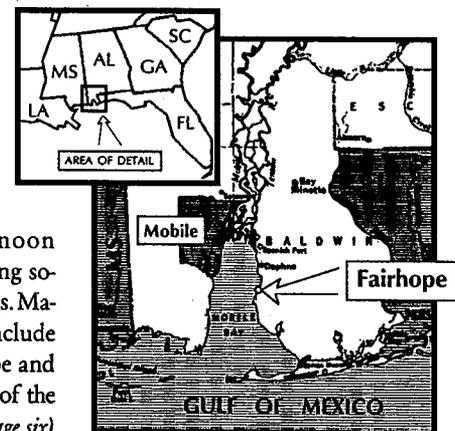
An extensive and carefully detailed proposal to do a study of the two-tier property tax in Washington State, done by Walter Rybeck of the Center for Public Dialogue, has been influential in these efforts. Also useful is a small study funded by the WSGA titled *Application of a Hypothetical Two-Rate Property Tax in King County* by Dr. Thomas Gihring, Planning Consultant.

The WSGA sponsored a 25 page booklet, *Look to the Land*, also by Walter Rybeck, with contributions by some well-known and not so well-known Georgists. Just published in March, the booklet targets Washington, but can provide a basis for similar efforts in other states. For more information about the bills, studies or booklet contact Eugene Levin, 1161 21st Avenue East, Seattle 98112. Phone/FAX: 206-324-6742.

Fairhope 1994: Theory to Practice

The Fairhope Single Tax Corporation - the governing body of the thriving "single tax" community of Fairhope - is sponsoring this year's Conference of the Council of Georgist Organizations on October 6th - 9th. The theme of the conference, which celebrates the centennial of Fairhope's incorporation in 1894, is "From Theory to Practice."

Planned activities include morning educational sessions and panels, afternoon sightseeing, and evening social events and meetings. Major program topics include the history of Fairhope and the continued viability of the FSTC (continued on page six)



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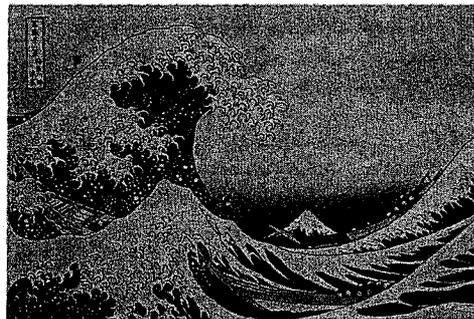
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Undersea Land Grab

"No one owns the abyss", according to a recent *New York Times* article on mining rights and the ocean floor, an "unclaimed wilderness" rich in valuable deposits of ores and exotic flora and fauna. In November of this year a UN treaty entitled "The Law of the Sea" will go into effect. One of its many clauses proclaims the ocean floor to be "the common heritage of mankind." None of the industrial nations, however, including the United States, has ratified the treaty — for the most part because of that very clause. The Clinton administration says it may ratify the treaty if it could be modified more in favor of "free enterprise and American interests," two terms it apparently believes to be synonymous.

The Law of the Sea Treaty considers all natural resources on or below the sea bed as belonging to the people of the world, and one of its proposals is that the UN establish an agency to oversee the development and distribution of these resources. While intensive exploration and mining of the sea floor is still a decade or more in the future, the industrial powers are already scrambling to map out and claim huge underwater territories as their exclusive domain. The same *Times* article quotes Senator Daniel Akaka of Hawaii, who recently chaired a Senate hearing on such mining, as saying "The potential payoffs are vast, the race is on."

At stake are billions of tons of "nodules" lying scattered on the ocean floor. Rich in copper, cobalt and nickel, these nodules are so plentiful in places and so densely packed "they look like cobblestones."



Katsushika Hokusai, "The Great Wave of Kanagawa"

"Wise Use" is Pernicious Policy

An important warning, directly relevant to Georgist analysis, was sounded in a letter to the *New York Times* by Richard Schuckman of Fair Lawn, NJ, on April 27th. Schuckman points out the dangerous wrong-headedness of the concept of "wise use" of land and resources, which is being championed by such friendly-sounding organizations as Citizens for Sensible Control of Acid Rain and The Information Council on the Environment (both of which are funded by coal and energy-industry concerns). The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, of course, provides for just compensation when the government confiscates private property. But the "wise use" policy incorporates the notion of "takings" — that is, if any government policy decreases the value of an individual or corporation's landholdings, that owner is due a payment from the government. The particular value-degrading policy under discussion is the cost of complying with pollution regulations. These costs can indeed lower the value of a piece of land — for its value has already been inflated by an externalizing of the costs of pollution produced on it. We have seen fit to enact laws to preserve our air, water and forests. Do we now want to weaken them? Were we to allow polluters to shuck the cost of compliance back onto the taxpaying public, that would be the effect.

by David Domke

Four American consortiums have already been formed to take advantage of about 190,000 square miles of nodule-rich underwater land, specific claims to which have already been staked out by the United States. Because the US has not yet signed the treaty, these consortiums would have exclusive privilege to mine in those areas — without paying any rent for the value of those resources.

In a March 31st *New York Times* column, William Safire characterizes those who are in favor of the treaty as a "collectivist cartel" who are bent on "conflicting with

our national interests" and are betrayers "of the spirit of capitalism." Safire simultaneously raises the flag of nationalism and the specter of communism (saying that the UN Law of the Sea is based on a "Marx-ian collec-

tivist philosophy.") He dubiously drags in Locke to justify all this: "John Locke, on whose writings Thomas Jefferson drew, held that when a person mixed his labor with a material resource, the person acquired a property right to that resource." Safire ignores the fact that Locke went on to say that a person has the right to that resource only so long as there is land of comparable value freely available to the entire community. And Locke begins the statement (to be found in his "Essay on Civil Government") by saying that the earth and all its resources are "common to all mankind."

The apparatus by which the UN intends to collect what is essentially ground rent is to create a UN entity called the Enterprise, which (continued on back page)

You Can Start a Common Ground Chapter! Common Ground - USA was formed in 1984 to serve as the political arm of the Georgist movement and is a membership organization with chapters in many states. Its purpose is "to promote equal opportunity, economic justice, liberty and prosperity, by abolishing taxes on labor and capital and replacing such taxes with revenue derived from socially created values embodied in land, natural resources and government-granted special privileges." The guiding lights of the organization are John Burger, Executive Director, Marion Sapiro and Dr. Steven Cord. Recently they have published a guide entitled *How to Start and Operate a Chapter of Common Ground - USA*.

Why are such chapters needed? "In Chapters, we can assemble the many hands and heads needed to multiply our capabilities, divide the work and specialize. We can tap special skills and extend our range of contacts... we become a more effective political entity. Much of what needs doing calls for state and local action."

Only five dues (continued on back page)

Schwartzmania

On the day of his 82nd birthday, Prof. Jack Schwartzman, the Georgist movement's 'roving scholar' was a featured speaker at the annual convention of the University Professors for Academic Order in San Diego. Jack, who is a Trustee of the organization, gave a talk on "Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine: Synthesis." This topic, he



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said, is "at the very heart of the Georgist Philosophy," because it dealt with "the very heated (and bitterly acrimonious) dispute concerning the House of Peers and the Land Question." The talk quoted "with much relish" Paine's ringing denunciation of the land monopoly.

A contingent from the Los Angeles HGS attended the event. Harry Pollard, Bret Barker, John Wiggins and Anthony Orlandella were on hand to sing the birthday song. Another longtime Georgist friend, Rev. Edmund Opitz of Massachusetts, also addressed the conference, and the inimitable Mr. Pollard demonstrated his "interstudent" teaching methods, which Jack characterized as "delightful as always... It is wonderful to be insane!"

Names in the News: George, Tolstoy & Malthus

Henry George received prominent mention by no less a pundit than Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in no less prestigious a forum than the letters to the editor of the *New York Times* on March 27th (see box). Tolstoy's admiration for Henry George is well known among people in our movement, but Schlesinger's letter is a most welcome public recognition of this important connection.

Alexander Cockburn's "Beat the Devil" column in *The Nation* on April 11th warms the cockles of Georgist hearts. In a discussion he entitles "Malthus and the Modern World," Cockburn lambastes a long article by Robert D. Kaplan in the February issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, "The Coming Anarchy." Kaplan's article described "how scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet," and was essentially a travelogue of the world's hotspots of suffering and violence. This article, according to Cockburn, "still spews its way through the fax machines of environmentalists" who are thrilled at its avowal of Malthusian pessimism. However, although there are many reasons to be depressed about the incoherent mayhem of our "new world order," Kaplan's account of them is, to say the least, misguided.

The photos accompanying the Kaplan article are breathtaking in their grislyness, and go even further than the text to fill the reader with despair over the savage incompetence of "the rest of the world." One, whose caption reads "The press of population: doing the wash in a lagoon in Abidjan," shows hundreds of women washing their clothes over stones and old tires in a muddy river. Cockburn comments:

The picture might as well have been captioned, "Africans show the West the environmentally correct way to do the laundry. No bleaches or detergents, no electricity, power lines, sewage treatment plants to remove phosphorus and bleach from the waste water, no security guards to watch the cars carrying the day's take from the laundromat."

Kaplan's underlying assumption, Cockburn says, "that the Third World is

incapable of self-reformation or improvement, and efforts to assist it are useless," is once again being raised to the level of a natural law by many writers in many prominent journals of opinion. A vision is emerging of the coming global society which utterly gives up on an internationalism based on justice, but merely seeks to provide effective means for the propertied classes to control the suffering multitudes. This is Malthus in a nutshell; he believed that society progressed by the efforts of property owners — the only ones who had the leisure necessary for the progress of the arts and sciences.

But "In contrast to Malthusians," Cockburn writes, "followers of Henry George are invariably filled with a genial optimism." Perhaps that is true; then again, his affable Georgist correspondents have probably not referred him to "Whence shall

BY GEORGE!

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Watching a dramatization of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* at the Moscow Art Theatre, the American Ambassador was electrified to hear the leading man, looking straight at him, say, "There is an American by the name of George, and with him we are all in agreement." Was this a daring political gesture? Back at the embassy, Kennan took down Tolstoy's novel and found that the line referred to Henry George, the champion of the single tax on unearned increase in land values and an American much admired by Tolstoy.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., New York

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and work there for forty years.

In 1893 the population of New York City was a million and a half, 75% of which were either new or first-generation immigrants. These people, who had been accustomed to gardens, light and air, found themselves huddled together in a writhing mass struggling with noise, misery and hopelessness. Above all, there was no one to instruct them on the ways of their new country. With 190,000 on 50 acres, the Lower East Side of Manhattan quickly became one of the worst slums in the world.

In the summer of 1893, the entire country plunged into a financial depression which rebounded hardest on the tenement dwellers. Factories closed down or went on part-time schedules and little East side shops were boarded up. Thousands were thrown out of work, with the East siders being the first to go.

Lillian Wald found herself being exposed to the grimmest lesson in economics; an over-rapid expansion had come to an abrupt halt and no provisions had been made to handle the inevitable calamity. Each day she accomplished whatever she could, working against an avalanche of want. From her work as a nurse, moving amongst the tenement dwellers to care and heal, grew "The Visiting Nurse Program." Responding to children's curiosity and energy, she sponsored innumerable clubs for all ages and purposes: Classes for mechanics, painting, sewing, cooking and housekeeping — classes to inform people how to shop and cope in their new land. She worked in the local schools to integrate education with the realities of life, and established a free "Penny Lunches" program.

Out of plays and pageants at The House sprouted "The Neighborhood Playhouse" (1915) which presented plays and trained actors and actresses. In the process it developed prestige and permanence. Growing out of these early beginnings, "The Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre" is a present day feature on East 54th Street, and is itself responsible for the careers of many successful performers, as well as for the creation of "The American Place Theatre," which is going into its fourth decade of presenting new plays by contemporary American Playwrights.

When Lillian Wald moved to the East side in 1895, thousands of children were employed in deplorable conditions, children who never visited a classroom. Lillian Wald was responsible for "The Children's Bureau" and in 1902, "The Child Labor Committee of the Neighborhood Workers' Association" came into being.

In 1908 Miss Wald suggested that the Red Cross, chiefly identified with wartime activities, undertake a program of public health. As a result, this organization's new Department of Town and Country Nursing was formed to teach standards of health and sanitation in remote areas.

The house became a center for national causes as Lillian Wald mediated discussion for proponents of the Russian Revolution, launched a Pacifist Movement in response to World War I, a Women's Suffrage Movement (1920), and ongoing work helping women organize themselves to protect their jobs and improve their working conditions.

By 1909 there were 1,413 public health nurses registered in

the US. Three years later Lillian Wald was the first president and chairwoman of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing. By 1931 there were nearly ten thousand public health nurses, and their numbers have increased steadily ever since.

After 40 years of dedication, in 1933 Lillian Wald relinquished her position to Helen Hall, who was to guide Henry Street Settlement for the next 35 years. Innovation and assistance to the community continued unabated. A Credit Union to combat the loan shark racket in 1937; a Home Planning Workshop to help community members repair furniture and mend appliances, make clothes and mend shoes, one of the earliest programs in a public housing facility, and in 1946, Henry Street's Mental Hygiene Clinic, one of the first in the country, serving more than 500 people annually.

In 1972, the Urban Family Center was founded, one of the first transitional housing facilities for homeless families. Today it houses 100 families in individual apartments in six buildings. Each building has its own live-in social worker, and the participants are given job training and taught basic education as well as independent living skills. Ninety-five percent move on to permanent housing.

In 1993 Henry Street Settlement celebrated 100 years of service to the community.

Following the bank of the East River in an uptown direction, one arrives at the Upper

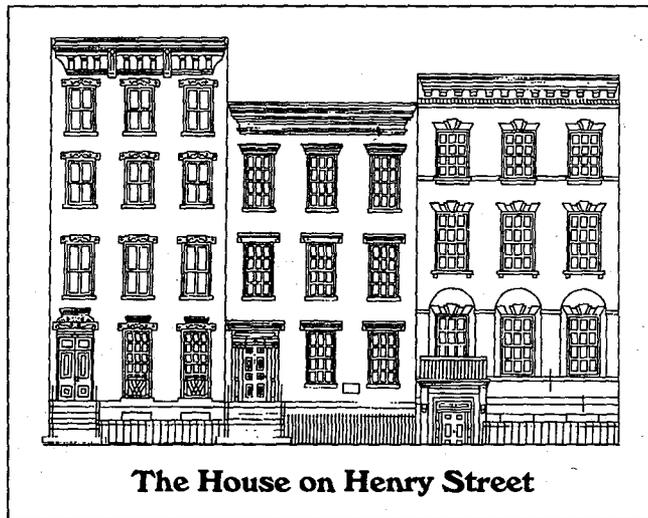
East Side, and finds its sister settlement, LNHA, or the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association.

The community it serves is one of the most diverse in the world. More than 204,000 live on 3000 blocks, an area more densely populated than London or Tokyo. Although the community's image is one of wealth, over 15,000 live below the official poverty level and an equal number exist on the margin.

In the early days of the settlement house movement, the entire East Side was carpeted with teeming tenements interspersed with factories. In the Lenox Hill area the factories included a confectioners, a cigar factory, a steam laundry, a storage and carpet cleaning company, and the Long Island Pickle Works. Where the United Nations stands today, there were slaughter houses and tanning factories. The majority of the residents were Italians, along with Bohemians, Slavs, Irish, Jews and Germans. Men worked in the hotels or factories, or as laborers, porters, carpenters, and painters, while women found work in the cigar factories or laundries, or washed and cleaned for private families. A 1919 investigation found that they "find little time for rest or recreation; the proper stimulus for developing them physically and mentally is noticeably lacking."

This report lamented that the factories emitted "steam and noxious odors," that they were noisy and cut off light and sunshine, causing some tenement dwellers to live in perpetual darkness. It also complained about the continual traffic of trucks, wagons, autos etc. driving over 1st Avenue's cobbles, and the additional noise created by the elevated trains on Second Avenue. The emerging picture is one of desperation and deprivation as over-crowding in dismal quarters is darkened by landlord exploitation.

(to be continued in our next issue!)



The House on Henry Street

New York Times Visits Fairhope

The *Sunday Times* travel section on March 27th featured an "Alabama ramble, with porches and parks," through our favorite town on Mobile Bay. Writer Scott Norville, whose vision of Alabama had been "tainted by the Gothic glasses" of Truman Capote's descriptions, was pleasantly surprised by Fairhope, "an immaculate village full of tidy cafes and smiling shopkeepers." Norville was enchanted by the ambience of the town, with its "gaily-painted Victorian cottages bordered by camellia bushes and vines of multi-colored wisteria," and especially by the duck crossing signs posted at a waterfront park.

The article notes one fact that is, unfortunately, all too rare in today's economy: that

Fairhope's downtown is thriving. Gone are the farm-supply and dry goods stores. In their place is an array of specialty shops, antique stores and restaurants serving fresh flounder and soft-shell crab from the bay. The bookstores are filled with signed copies of books by some of the nearly two dozen authors — Fannie Flagg, Judith Richards and Terry Cline, among them — who have homes in the area. Gallery windows display the works of local artists.

There are three paragraphs on Fairhope's history as a single tax colony founded by followers of Henry George (although George is less-than-accurately referred to as a "Philadelphia journalist"). It is noted that the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation still owns about 9,000 acres, leasing land out to homeowners and businesses and charging rent in lieu of conventional taxes. "The practice," writes Norville, "...was intended to check land speculation."

And so it has. It might have been instructive for Mr. Norville to make the connection between Fairhope's vibrantly healthy local economy and its public revenue system. There are conflicts over land policy in today's Fairhope, mostly stemming from disputes over the administration of the town's growth past the corporation's original holdings (and the speculative gains to be had therefrom). Nevertheless, land speculation has been prohibited for a century from the heart of Fairhope, Alabama, and the result makes for tasty travel-section fare.

Socialist Scholars... *(continued from front page)*

that the surpluses from land and other monopolies are the fuel for a rapacious and ultimately destructive financial system. Modern society has forgotten the distinction made in Medieval Canon Law between productive and unproductive (usurious) loans, he argues. Debtor countries all over the world pay interest on loans that cannot be expected to be repaid — except by selling off their natural resources and public enterprises. This widens the polarization of rich and poor. Indeed, Hudson showed how most of the jobs created in our economy in the past twenty years have been in fields that produce no new wealth but merely transfer existing wealth.

Finally, Robert Fitch delivered a provocative paper, arguing that the methodology of the classical economists, culminating in the insights of George and Marx, is far more relevant to the economic dilemmas of our time than anything that has come out of the "neoclassical" school, whose attempt to avoid all proscriptive bias has rendered its analysis impotent. "George's time," Fitch said, "has come again."

The panel generated considerable interest and discussion. The school's Sunday afternoon time slot was shared with fifteen other panels, yet over 25 people gathered to hear it - and the question-and-answer period went on well beyond the scheduled closing time. It seemed that economic theory is not a dead topic among socialist scholars after all.

By George!

(Continued from page thr...)

investments the economic life also improves. There are more jobs, more products and more business. It is natural to conclude that more government or private investment would "save" the town from disaster.

What actually happens is the following. The investment or improvement in the town causes local rents to increase. New people coming into town have to pay more for an apartment or a house. Businesses have to pay more rent when their lease is up. Houses will cost more and industry will have to pay higher prices for places to build or expand. These higher costs put a damper on economic activity after a short time. This "recession" in turn requires a new injection of investment to pull the town out of the slump again.

This is a dilemma. This cycle has the appearance of a Catch-22. There is a way out. [Nobel Prize winner] Paul Samuelson and many other economists recognize [it.] It is simplicity itself... The community must interrupt the land value increase cycle that normally results from community-generated improvements. How can it do that?

We know - don't we? - how that can be done. Thanks to Ernest Kahn for continuing to get the message out.

Mequnwibile, Stan Frederiksen from the St. Louis chapter of Common Ground has been on the phone. Stan brandishes his blistered index finger and urges Georgists everywhere to call our message in to radio and TV talk shows. So far he has gotten on the air with Rush Limbaugh and Roger Fredinburg, tailoring his comments on the efficacy of site value collection to fit whatever social problem was under discussion at the time. He urges us to be persistent, to form our comments in advance, to be topical, to mention the name of Henry George, and never, if at all possible, to use the word "tax." He reminds us forcefully that taxes are precisely what we want to abolish. The community should simply collect the value that the community itself creates: the rent of land.

- L.D.

Fairhope 1994: Theory to Practice...

(continued from front page)

experiment, input from Arden, Fairhope's sister community in Delaware, developments in New York, Pennsylvania, Russia, Estonia and elsewhere, education and tax reform in Alabama, and the single tax and land reform in Latin America.

In the afternoons, visitors can choose from a lavish variety of activities including tours of the Botanical Gardens, Civil War forts, the Battleship Alabama Naval Air Museum, and a number of museums and historic old Fairhope homes — or they can relax on Gulf Shore beaches. Evening activities will include a reception/supper at the Fairhope Art Center and a fish fry on the beach. There will be an open mike session and a CGO business meeting, or free evenings at jazz/piano bars in Fairhope. If that's not enough excitement, night life in Mobile or Pensacola is close by.

The Columbus Day weekend was chosen, rather than the customary July dates, for two reasons: accommodations become less expensive in the fall, and the searing Alabama heat gets less oppressive to northerners. Conferees will stay at the Ramada on the Bay (lovely Mobile Bay, that is), and the preferred airline is Delta. CGO stalwarts Scott and Sue Walton will be making complete information available in July. Look for details in our next issue!

Readers! If you have access to electronic mail, please send some to the Henry George News! Let's get a mailing list going, and bring our brand of Political Economy to this incredibly efficient pathway. England... California... Australia... distance is utterly conquered on "the Net!"

Send Email to: hgsld@echonyc.com

Mike Curtis, Director of the Philadelphia Henry George School, who has been teaching Georgist political economy for some twenty-five years in Arden, Delaware, and in the Delaware state prison system, decided this year to take his classes to the Wharton Center, a community center in one of the most ravaged neighborhoods of North Philadelphia. Response was enthusiastic. Lindy Davies had the following conversation with Mike about his philosophy of teaching *Fundamental Economics* to such diverse groups.

LD: How do you tailor your presentations to your various audiences?

MC: Of course, it's good to know your audience. I don't focus on the same problems in Philadelphia as I do in Arden. But in North Philly the focus is essentially the same as in the prisons - I'm talking to people in cities, people who are unemployed, or likely to be. When we talk about homelessness or poverty, it's something out of their daily reality. In Arden, the possibility of becoming homeless - or being stabbed on the street - is not seriously thought of.

I sold several books for this class in the fall [in North Philadelphia]. But I have no idea whether anyone did any reading. Of course, lucky for me that I wasn't dependent upon anybody reading - and that started back when I was teaching the prison classes.

LD: It sounds like the prison classes were an important formative experience.

MC: They really were. It's an interesting process. Over the years at the prison, I thought I was learning to present the courses this way because the students lacked the skills, or they lacked the peace of mind, in a prison environment, to do lots of reading. But I noticed that as I got to be a better teacher, my students in every setting did less and less reading. This got to be a pattern, over twenty years of teaching, until when I came to these urban classes I didn't even try to emphasize the book. But it's really no different from people in the suburbs who are busy and don't have time to read.

LD: So, basically out of necessity, you've evolved a way of teaching that doesn't depend on the book. What are some of the features of that method?

MC: Well, one thing I realized, when I started trying to find a way to teach P&P in a way that didn't depend on 560 pages, was that it is very hard for people to think conceptually. Not because they lack the ability, but simply because it takes

If I could teach them the root cause - the reason why there are slums, and why they're getting worse, they might start advocating for a change in the tax system.

practice. Most people who don't have a lot of experience with a formal classroom setting, tend to "think hands-on." They don't make abstract mental pictures; they think about the problems of everyday life. So it seemed to me that role-playing exercises would help them to understand the concepts without having to think abstractly. As often as possible I try to set up a situation in which they have to make a choice: "What would you do?" I do this, as much as I can, just in the general flow of the discussion - and if you can get two or three students involved in role-playing, so much the better.

When I first started teaching the class, I wasn't confident about the subject. I had the manual, with the answer to each question. Looking back, I realize that in those days there was a high percentage of people who did their homework. But as I became more confident and effective as a teacher, I noticed less and less willingness to do the homework. I don't think it's a coincidence, because Ken Ford, who has just taught the basic class once at the Philly school, had just about all of his students do their reading and answer the questions each week! I think that if the teacher sets it up so that the group has to depend on the book and lessons for their learning, they will be much more likely to do the work. It can work both ways.

Of course, we're always on the lookout for new teachers, and new teachers can't just jump in with years of experience and the

whole course in their heads.

LD: But as they become better teachers? What makes a good teacher?

MC: Many people have told me I was a good teacher. But there's no way to know for sure. If the student doesn't learn, of course, the teacher hasn't taught. But if the student does learn, it doesn't necessarily mean you're a good teacher - it could be that you attract good students. And when a student says you are a really good teacher, does it mean that you really are, or just that they found the class entertaining?

I've never had any formal training as a teacher. But someone told me very early on in my teaching years that rather extensive research had shown that there are two paramount things that correlate with effective learning: that the student believes the teacher likes him or her, and that the teacher sincerely desires the student to learn. All the other factors - the environment, the teaching aids, computers - were minor compared to those two things.

Years ago, the famous Grand Prix driver Graham Hill was interviewed after winning a major race, and was asked what his formula for success was. "Well, here's how I do it," he said. "I get in the car and I drive as fast as I can."

LD: You were not successful in school, and have always struggled with dyslexia. Have those things made you particularly sensitive to the different learning styles of your students?

Even today I am a lousy student. I think those difficulties have given me more patience, which has been a real asset as a teacher. Also, my memory is bad. I have always been forced to really know the material I'm presenting, to be so conversant with it that I will never lose my place. I think this lack of confidence has given me an advantage - inadvertently, it has helped me to develop this improvisational teaching style that I have now.

Another funny thing, though, is that I had thought prisoners would be at a decided disadvantage because of their lack of formal education, but that didn't prove to be the case at all. Many students in Arden or Philadelphia with Ph.D.'s had worse trouble with the concepts of fundamental economics than the prisoners did! And I think that was because they had agendas - they were often just unable to let go of what they "absolutely knew."

LD: Why did you choose the North Philadelphia venue?

MC: The same reason I had for holding classes in the prisons. For so many years I taught middle-class students, most of whom certainly were in favor of a land value tax, but weren't willing to devote any effort to propagating or implementing the idea, because they saw no chance of it ever coming into effect. But now that they knew how to play the game, they had the money to invest, and they started to invest in real estate. But the prisoners don't have any money to invest, and I thought maybe they would be willing to put some time and effort into the enlightenment process, or into legislation.

They certainly are a more receptive audience. They have no ego invested in the ownership of land, and they don't try tell you that poverty is not so bad. But I do notice that a fair percentage of them say, "When I get out of here, I'm gonna buy me some real estate." But I still think it's a better - or every bit as good a group - as well-educated middle-class people.

TEACHERS' CORNER



(continued on back page)

Undersea Land Grab...

(continued from page two)

would collect half of the proceeds from any country's mining of the sea floor. These proceeds would then be distributed on behalf of the world's peoples. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration is seeking a compromise and wants to negotiate, according to the *New York Times* article, "a workable accord [that would] streamline the Sea Bed Authority, eliminate provisions forcing the transfer of mining technology to the Enterprise, create a grandfather clause for American claims ... and increase American influence in the governing process." The *Times* goes on to quote a State Department document that says the United States is seeking a clause that would allow it "and a few other industrialized nations acting in concert to block decisions inimical to our interest."

The underlying assumption in the arguments of those who oppose the treaty as it now stands is that the terms "free enterprise" and "American interests" are somehow interchangeable; the subtext of this argument is, of course, that "American interests" are really the interests of large land-owning corporations who have the means to collect, and therefore the access to, this sunken treasure.

In her pamphlet *Financing Planet Management; Sovereignty, World Order and the Earth Rights Imperative*, Alanna Hartzok has a chapter entitled "Common Heritage Funding: Local to Global," in which she presents a well thought out mapping of the collection of ground rent from the local community level to world level. "The ground rent of certain specific types of land resources can be collected by clearly delineated governing bodies from the local to the global level," Ms. Hartzok writes. "Thus, cities and counties would draw their funding from the ground rent of surface lands, regional authorities would collect the ground rent of oil and minerals, and global governing agencies would be funded by a percentage from these two levels as well as that of deep sea resources... and other transnational resources." If such a setup is not implemented, Ms. Hartzok says, "the concentrated control of earth in the hands of the few will continue unmitigated, thus advancing the conditions of social turmoil.... Unless a reformed or empowered United Nations or other world government is built firmly upon the principle of equal rights for all to our planet, then both the government and the planet will be controlled by a handful of vested interests."

In contrast to William Safire, whose rhetoric seems merely designed to reheat the cold war over this crucial issue, Alanna Hartzok presents a well-reasoned and coherent strategy based on the principle of common heritage, a principle by which, she says, we can "protect and fairly share our common body Mother Earth."

Teachers' Corner...

(continued from page seven)

LD: *It sounds like you believe that the school's educational work is especially valuable for a disadvantaged audience.*

MC: My students in North Philadelphia can't just leave the slums. Maybe if I could teach them the root cause - the reason why there are slums, and why they're getting worse, they might start advocating for a change in the tax system. It might empower them to go ahead and make some changes in their neighborhood.

My classes in North Philadelphia were just a delight, in that there were so many people there who were willing to take an interest in their community. I got a

great variety of students; I'd say they ranged in ages from 25 to 70. I never asked them who they were or where they came from. Just all kinds of people, men and women, some coming from work, some obviously unemployed - but they all live in that area. I had no idea what kind of reception I would get - what kind of suspicions I would have to overcome, but there was very little of that. I felt really fortunate.

My hope is that there will be enough people who have taken those classes in North Philadelphia that someone running for office who wants their vote will hear, "Now what about the land value tax? We saw a slide show, we know the principles of it. And you could force this city to redevelop the ghetto, starting tomorrow morning, if you would pass this reform - now why aren't you supporting it? Why don't you know about it?"

Many students with Ph.D.'s had worse trouble with the concepts of fundamental economics than the prisoners did! I think that they were often just unable to let go of what they 'absolutely knew.'

You Can Start a Common Ground Chapter...

(continued from page three)

paying members are needed initially to form a local chapter. Membership in this growing national organization entitles members to a number of benefits, including voting rights, annual subscriptions to Common Ground publications such as *Groundswell*, *Insights* and the *Letter Lobby*. The *Letter Lobby* supplies four information packets a year pertaining to major issues and each packet includes sample letters and directions on whom to write. In turn, local chapters are encouraged to supply similar packets as they relate to city, county and state issues. Local chapters are also encouraged to have a statement of purpose and a "Project and Action Plan."

Also part of the agenda for any local chapter should be the following: education of local politicians and community leaders; persuading Georgists themselves to seek positions of community leadership and political office, conducting local public meetings and symposiums, addressing other community organizations, and sponsoring classes and programs to promote the ideas of Henry George. Also: the exploration and promotion of opportunities for the adoption of Land Value Taxation principles and the arrangement for Henry George books and related literature to be placed in local university and public libraries. For those who want a deeper involvement in the spreading of the Georgist philosophy, this is a great opportunity. For a copy of this chapter membership guide write to: John Burger, Executive Administrator, Common Ground-USA, 1475 Terraceview lane N., Plymouth, MN, 55447-2407. -D.D.

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