EDITOR'S NOTES

Our first issue of the new year contains more than the usual share of opinion pieces, since we were able to sum up most of 1991 in our last issue. We include our annual message from the School president, on page one. The discerning reader will also notice a few changes in graphic style. And we hope the quality of articles continues to improve throughout the coming year.

Henry George Institute announces the launching of its correspondence course in *Human Rights*. This is one of four courses offered by the Institute, the other three constituting the sequence on *Principles of Political Economy: Fundamental Economics, Applied Economics,* and *Economic Science.* This new course is based on an earlier version developed at the Henry George School by then director Robert Clancy, who now heads the Institute. *Human Rights* examines American, French and United Nations declarations on the subject, papal encyclicals on social issues, and several works by Henry George *(A Perplexed Philosopher* on Herbert Spencer, *The Irish Land Question, Property in Land,* and the *Open Letter to Pope Leo XIII on the Condition of Labor.)* As pointed out by HGI, this course goes to the heart of the Georgist philosophy, which is built upon a vital concern for social justice. Those interested may contact the Institute at 121 East 30th Street, New York, NY 10016 (212-689-0075).

New Visions for a Fragile Planet is a series of five lectures offered by The New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, New York (212-220-8747). Presented in cooperation with other environmental organizations as part of the Earth in Rebellion series, these lectures are held at 6 PM on Thursdays beginning January 16th at Chemical Bank, Third Floor Auditorium, 270 Park Avenue at 47th Street, Manhattan. Costs are $64/series; $14/ individual session.

Ernie Bryan of British Columbia has been sending us a regular series of letters on interesting themes. Mr. Bryan is a very individualistic Georgist who is quick to criticize the encroachments of the group whenever and wherever he finds it: From politics and economics to education, philosophy, and even the sports arena. For example: "We are told in school that we send a person to Parliament, not with fixed instructions how to vote, but to ponder on our behalf all measures brought before the legislature. This representative will vote after mature consideration that we in the boondocks could not possibly give. Somehow this rep. will acquire a higher intellectual status that those who voted for him or her. He or she will be a sublimation of the voice of the people; - the kind of sublimation that results in belief in such fanciful things as the Divine Right of Kings; the Social Contract; or the existence of leprechauns." Mr. Bryan's address is: 46129 Lewis Ave., Chilliwack, B.C. Canada V2P 3E2.

Modest Proposal *(continued)*

person - while New Yorkers will lose over $17 billion in the process." No wonder poor Cuomo and Dinkins can't balance their budgets.

My modest proposal is this. Let's not pay off every single S & L depositor. Everyone knows that most of the bailout amounts to a huge transfer of wealth from working taxpayers to high-flying venture capitalists. This evil seems necessary, for how can we distinguish the parasites from the deserving, small-time depositors? Well, to do that, I suggest we ask the people who worked in S & L's prior to 1980. Community people, who know who is who, can go case-by-case through the portfolios. You'd hear things like, "Oh, this is Max & Maxie Schmoo, they've been with us for years, we'd better pay 'em..." It would be more fair than the current scheme, and far less expensive. And as for the approximately $175 billion in real estate the RTC still owns, I suggest not selling it. Selling that much real estate in this market is simply not sensible. I suggest the RTC lease out the land instead, at its current annual rental value, and then sell the improvements. This would have two tremendous advantages: 1) It would make the properties so inexpensive that they would stand a good chance of being put to productive use; 2) It would be a laboratory test, a regular photo-opportunity for Georgist reform.

Do we expect this to happen? No. It would make too much sense. The rent-collectors will, most likely, continue to make out like bandits. Everyone should be hopping mad, livid, fit-to-be-tied about this, but Georgists particularly.

FREE ACRES - FREE SPIRITS

Free Acres, New Jersey was the subject of a November 17 lengthy feature by reporter Mark Di Ionno in the *Sunday Star-Ledger.* Entitled "A place for free spirits", the article says this "Single-tax community was a mosaic of artists, writers and average Joes." Mr. Di Ionno gives an informal history as seen through the eyes of current Free Acres residents Joe Romano ("one of the unofficial historians of Free Acres."), Marion Conner, and Laurel Hessing. Ms. Conner is the daughter of Thorne Smith, who wrote the "Topper" series, and lives in the house her father owned in Free Acres. Land in Free Acres is owned by the community in land-trust fashion. One of the rules, that trees could not be cut down, led to "a few trees growing up through the (roof overhang of the) house."

The author gives background on Free Acres including a short history of the career of Henry George and the founding of the community by Bolton Hall. "The first group of Free Acreites met in the Greenwich Village apartment of theatrical designer Amy Mali Hicks in early 1910 to take applications for the leaseholds. By spring, they were taking the train from New York to the area, where a local farmer named Bob Rogers would meet them and bring them by wagon up to Free Acres. The 30 people who spent that first summer at Free Acres camped in tents. Water was drawn from a spring, and the Green Brook was used to keep food cool and for bathing."

"Even today, Free Acres residents do not own the land, they buy 99-year leaseholds. 'The theory is that more people could own their homes if the didn't have to pay for land,' said Romano. 'That makes some people uncomfortable, but it shouldn't. The fact is, if you keep the property for 99 years, you can renew the lease at no charge." And the community spirit is still very much alive: monthly residents' meetings are still held in the farmhouse which holds the community center, library, and children's play group. Town clerk Geraldine Runfeldt keeps the community records and handles complaints and suggestions. Residents also continue to share in the communal expenses. According to Laurel Hessing, "You get to know people. You get to know what they believe in. You get an idea on how to form consensual opinions as a community. And you know what? It works."

A smaller article by Mark Di Ionno accompanies his main *(continued on page 5)*