

## Henry George Newsletter

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## TO HELL IN A HANDBASKET...

*To Hell In a Handbasket: The future of American Education - Why Johnny still can't read (and what might be done about it)...* this was the theme of the Los Angeles School's Christmas dinner held at Michael's Restaurant at 6:30 on December 14th in Hollywood. Sponsored by the Alumni group, the gathering was preceded by a meeting of the LA chapter of Common Ground which included a discussion of split roll taxation and projects for 1990.

The Alumni Group's program began at 8:15 with graduation ceremonies for students completing the Fall semester. Eighteen adults completed Harry Pollard's class in *Classical Analysis (Part I)* in Burbank. This was followed by presentations on the theme by the speakers: Bret Barker, 9th grade teacher at Shurr High School in Montebello; Mason Gaffney, graduate school economics professor at University of California, Riverside; Virginia Rettinger, a professor who teaches teachers at Claremont Graduate School; and Tom Rosenstein, 12th grade teacher at El Monte High School. A "Round Table" discussion chaired by Frank Tilton followed the presentations.

Some of the items discussed included the unbroken decline in

Scholastic Aptitude Test scores; the superior performance of Catholic high school students; the (lack of) effectiveness of certain education reforms (such as lowering teacher/student ratios), and the cost-effectiveness of our system (West Germany spends 4.5% of their GNP on education, Japan spends 5.7%, and the US spends 6.7%. Yet US students do poorly in international competition.)

Mason Gaffney brought home a salient point when he asked Bret Barker to open randomly to any page of a university phone book on hand and then say how many of the first ten names listed were actual teachers. The answer: two. And it was pointed out that teachers often spend much of their time in non-teaching tasks. A message was also read from Fred Allen, TV and radio personality who could not attend the dinner. Allen is the author of "Dumph", a book on ignorance and illiteracy in America.

The festive gathering concluded at 11 PM - earlier than usual, due to being held on Thursday instead of the customary Final Friday. The theme of 1990's Winter/Spring Final Friday series will be environmental pollution. January and February will deal with inner pollution: *The "Controlled" Substances: Smoke and Drink* in January, and *The "Uncontrolled" Substances: Drugs* in February.

## SEEING GREEN

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*Synapse*, the Unitarian/Universalist Association Youth Newspaper, quotes Boston Georgist Mitch Chanellis, who is also a spokesman and delegate of the Eastern Massachusetts Greens: "95% of the privately owned land in the US is owned by 3% of the population, and the \$10 billion plus Rockefeller family fortune is greater than the net worth of all minority and poor white families combined." A flyer put out by The Eastern Massachusetts Greens states: "There is a deep human yearning with each new generation for a fair share of the earth's resources. Yet, we are all held in bondage by the invisible lines that divide the world up into political and real estate empires -- lines that may have been unjustly drawn many generations ago. Land is treated as capital, as if it were expendable." And in a forthcoming book by Sara Parkins called *Green Parties*, we find, in a chapter on "The Minimum Green Position", an endorsement of "a gradual shift in the

burden of taxation from labour... to taxes on land, such as land value taxation... making labour much more competitive with capital.... Derelict land held for speculative purposes in the inner cities would be released as land value taxation was applied..." *Green Parties* is being published by Inland Book Co., East Haven, Connecticut. The Eastern Massachusetts Greens can be reached c/o Mitch Chanellis, 21 Unity Court, Boston, MA 02113.

Moving further west, the Los Angeles HGS reports hosting ongoing meetings with regional Greens in Ventura and Santa Barbara with the help of Jeff Smith, *Geonomics* advocate from San Diego. Similar contacts with Greens in the San Francisco Bay Area have been reported previously in this Newsletter. Nor should it be forgotten that one of the earliest Green organizations, created long before Die Gruenen, is the *School of Living*--founded by Ralph Borsodi and Mildred Loomis. The SOL carries on with its journal *Green Revolution* which has

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