

## **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CARRIES ON**

We are happy to report that all School associates were unharmed by the recent massive earthquake that hit the San Francisco Bay Area. One tragic highway collapse, and one near-collapse on the Bay Bridge, brings home—in an all too painful way—the need for adequate public funding of urban infrastructure. The deterioration of urban infrastructure is becoming an increasing problem in US cities from San Francisco to New York as we enter the last decade of the 20th century—reminding us that much of this infrastructure is now close to a century old!

Mother Nature, however, was still not too kind to the School. The Sacramento extension, reports Evelyn Friend, held a yard sale at the home of Gayle Voeller on September 16th—only to be rained-out! Much more successful, however, was the one-day workshop sponsored by the School at the Unitarian Universalist Society on Sierra Boulevard in Sacramento on September 23rd, cosponsored by the Church's Social Responsibility Committee. *Economic Justice and Land Rights* was the theme of the seminar, which was facilitated by Alanna Hartzok. The program consisted of presentations, video tapes, slides and discussion. Subjects covered included poverty and the maldistribution of wealth, homelessness and the housing crisis, and the land rights struggle in both the Third World and our own.

## **THE ILLINOIS GEORGIST**

Volume 2, Number 2 of *The Illinois Georgist* has recently been published. This is the Newsletter of the Chicago HGS, and each issue contains articles and information of both local and Georgist interest. Included in this Fall '89 issue is an article by Robert Jene on a current property owner protest over increased assessments on the northwest side of Chicago. "Untaxing property," he writes, "leaves only that much more value to fuel ever increasing market values that price housing out of the reach of more and more people. This value is chiefly in the land which tends to inflate in price at least twice as fast as ordinary costs of living. People do have a right to complain about paying a tax based on inflated values. Getting rid of the tax, however, is not the answer to the problem." Other articles include an open letter by James Frederiksen to *Habitat World* on rising land costs and homelessness; an article on a new Census Bureau report on vacant land (18% of all assessed parcels in the US!) by Charles Metalitz; reports on the '89 Conference by Robert Jene and Adam Monroe, Jr.; and lots more. To receive a copy of *The Illinois Georgist*, contact the Chicago HGS.

## **AN OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNIST WORLD**

Norman J.M. Horing is a Professor of Physics and Engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey. A student at HGS many years ago, he has recently seen George's analysis as increasingly relevant to the modern scene. Recent events in eastern Europe have prompted him to write and send *An Open Letter to the Communist World*. In his letter, he comments on the move toward capitalist practices, founded on the fact that "Human nature requires reward for the investment of its capital resources as well as its labor. This is a very personal requirement and cannot be controlled by government domination." But he also cautions that great care must be taken in turning toward capitalism, and points to inflation in China. Of course, it is Henry George's philosophy that is featured as holding out a way to adopt the best features of capitalism while avoiding its worst; and, given that communist societies have collective ownership of land, it may be easier for them than for the West to move toward George's Single Tax on land values. But this does not relieve the West of the responsibility to create more fairness and decency at home: "Surely America should expunge problems like homelessness and poverty before becoming comfortable with the notion that our system works better for all constituents than that of the collapsing communist world."

## **VI PETERSON**

We report with sadness the death of Violetta G. Graham, known to many of us as Vi Peterson, on November 21st this year at age 87. Mrs. Graham was employed in 1936 by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, the publisher of the works of Henry George and a sponsor of *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*. She served untiringly for 40 years as its Executive Secretary, and continued after her retirement as a member of its Board of Directors. Her published works include two essays, *Pathways to Land Reform* and *Land Reform in Hawaii*. A citizen of the United Kingdom, Mrs. Graham retired from New York in 1976 to Acton, Massachusetts, then to Boca Raton, Florida where she spent her last year. She will be sorely missed.