

# the Henry George News

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## Moondreams? by OSCAR B. JOHANNSEN

NOW that man has trod on the surface of the moon, questions are arising having to do with moon tenure. This has been the result of the enthusiasm engendered by the magnificent feat of the astronauts. It evoked statements that in the not too distant future motels, factories, television stations, sports arenas, and other improvements of man would be enhancing (or desecrating) the lunar landscape. If such is to occur, then the problem of how to divide up the moon's territory becomes important.

Of course, parenthetically, it might be pointed out that man has invaded the depths of the seas in submarines for well over a generation. No human establishments have been placed on the floor of the oceans and none seem likely in the foreseeable future, despite the growth of oceanography. So, to put it mildly, the question of moon tenure may be quite academic. Nonetheless, it is being discussed and therefore merits careful consideration.

Will the moon's surface be divided in accordance with the practice of western society, that is, will it be treated as though it were private property? Or will it be treated as though it were common property and will some system be devised to allocate the moon among those desiring to use it?

Although there has not been any clear-cut resolution of this problem as

yet, space law which has been evolving gives some clues. The most important international agreement dealing with this question has been the 1967 Treaty Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Its basic purpose is to avoid such exploitation as occurred here on earth following discovery of the Americas by the Europeans.

According to space law, the moon is not subject to national appropriation, and all exploration is for the benefit of all nations. In other words, the moon is international territory, much as the oceans are. Thus, the planting of the American flag on the Sea of Tranquility did not signify that the United States claimed control of the moon as has been the case in the traditional flag-planting here on earth.

One important principle which has to do not merely with celestial bodies but all of space, and which has become generally accepted is that of freedom of space. This was initiated by the launching of Sputnik I by Russia for it passed over the territories of all the nations of the world without protest. Up to that time, it was unclear whether a nation would claim that the laws of air space (above the earth) applied as well to outer space. If they did, then a nation

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might consider any passage overhead as a violation of national territory. Practice, plus the difficulty of preventing any so-called trespass, has confirmed the right of space vehicles to orbit the earth.

While it may be utopian even to consider it, one wonders if this may not presage a gradual recognition of the absurdity of national boundaries and states. That there may be some merit to this thought is pointed up by the statement of the late Colonel Edward White. He was one of the three astronauts who lost their lives in the tragic accident at Cape Kennedy. After he had returned from his trip into outer space, he was asked what sight had interested him most. He replied it was what he did not see that was of most interest. When he looked at the earth, he did not see any national barriers. Since it would appear from the initial implementation of space law that there is a world-wide feeling that national barriers should not exist on celestial

bodies, why have them on earth?

And, if it is believed that the moon should not be treated as private property, then what system should be devised to allocate the moon's surface among the equal claimants to it? Should it be divided into more or less equal areas to be rented by those desiring to improve them? If so, to whom should the rent go? To all the peoples of the earth? And what should be done with the rent?

As men struggle with these questions, possibly they will arrive at answers similar to those Henry George found. If so, why not apply them to the earth?

Then the dreams of people who believe the conquest of the moon will usher in an era of good will might possibly be realized. Moondreams? Yes, but do not all of us have a bit of Don Quixote in us, hoping against hope "to right the unrightable wrong." It must be so, for how else could men live with themselves in view of the injustice, intolerance and discord prevalent throughout the world.

## JUSTICE AND YOUTH

Henry George was born 130 years ago on September 2nd. John T. Tetley, New Jersey HGS director, celebrates this anniversary in an article in *The Gargoyle*. In July 1897 Henry George wrote to George L. Rusby, founder of the NJHGS: "It may be a long, long struggle, but to see the truth and do what one can to spread it brings its own independent and rich reward."

New Jersey invites Georgist friends to their annual fall rally Friday, September 19, at 8 p.m., at 149 South Harrison Street, East Orange. In keeping with the theme "Justice & Youth," each adult is requested to bring a youth — young people may bring adults or other youths. The speakers will be Josephine B. Hansen of New York and Dr. Geoffrey W. Esty, president of the New Jersey Henry George School.

Word comes from Claude W. Arnold, HGS director in Fairhope, Alabama, that the notorious hurricane, Camille, which spread death and destruction through the coastal states, passed benignly over the single tax colony. There was only slight damage to a few buildings — thus one must conclude that Fairhope has a charmed life.