

### ANNUAL GEORGIST CONFERENCE IS HELD IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

by Louise Pulini

The 1981 Joint Georgist Conference attracted over one hundred people from the United States and Canada during the three day meeting held at Franklin Pierce College, in New Hampshire, the first conference ever held in the state.

The tax problem in New Hampshire was spotlighted in the opening session, with legislators and the audience debating the merits of imposing a sales and/or income tax on the states's voters, to generate additional revenues. New Hampshire is the only state in the union without an income or sales tax, and is heavily dependent on its property tax. It is also the fastest growing state on the Eastern seaboard.

Professor Jack Schwartzman spoke of the similarities between Henry David Thoreau and Henry George in their passionate discourses against the railroad monopolies and land speculation. Thoreau lived not far from the conference site, and often climbed nearby Monadnock Mountain.

Ed Dodson of CGO, John Burger, a management consultant, and David Asman of the International Center for Economic Policy Studies (ICEPS), presented their individual interpretations of the validity of the Reagan administration's economic policies in a morning session on Reagonomics or supply-side economics. The Money Question, concerning money supply and regulation, was covered by Oscar Johannsen of the Schalkenbach Foundation, Robert Swann of the Schumacher Society, and George Machen of the American Institute for Economic Research. Innovative ways to circulate and store money and possible solutions to the chronic dollar shrinkage problems were explored and debated.

Alanna Hartzok of the San Francisco HGS explained the Sagebrush Rebellion to the audience with the use of charts and land-use maps of the Western United States. She also pointed out the significance of the Appalachian study in exposing the concentration of ownership of much of America's land. The afternoon's program concluded with a talk by Gerald Shaw of the School of Economic Science in Calgary on Alberta. This western Canadian province has no retail sales tax, no gasoline tax, subsidized heating costs, and only 4% unemployment, due in particular to the Alberta Land Trust, which gives the ownership of natural resources (such as petroleum, discovered in 1947) to the people.

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### CGO OFFICERS ARE REELECTED

The officers of the Council of Georgist Organizations were reelected to serve for a second one- year term at the meeting held at the Annual Joint Georgist Conference. Bob Clancy of the Henry George Institute is Chairman, Ed Dodson, a banker from Philadelphia is Deputy Chairman, and Mark Sullivan, current Secretary of the Council, remains in his position.

The main function of the Council, by agreement of those who attended the meeting, is to have a continuous role in coordinating and disseminating information and to serve as a communications center for Georgist groups and individuals not otherwise affiliated. One future aim of the Council is to set up its own organization status as a corporation, and to plan a series of materials indicating scope of activities and bylaws, including membership dues.

# EDITORIAL

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Almost everyone who attended the 1981 Joint Georgist Conference expressed good feelings about the event. Many said it was the best conference in recent years and some thought it was even the best ever. There was much to justify the positive response.

The setting was perfect. The mountains, lake, pines and birches combined with sunny days and sparkling nights to display New England in her best summer finery. Franklin Pierce College was a splendid host with the most attentive and helpful staff and pleasant facilities. No request for any service went unheeded for very long, a quality not often available even at luxury hotels.

Beyond the setting, the program in less than three days demonstrated the diversity of interests and issues that followers of Henry George will pursue. From the local politics of New Hampshire to the global concerns of Bread for the World, an important message was conveyed in every arena. From the techniques of the classroom to the use of the media, almost all forms of communication were explored, if not in depth, at least with real attention. It became clear in 1981, as perhaps never before, that Georgists are very much involved with the world and its current problems. We are neither hidebound protectors of a doctrine from the past nor radical visionaries of some distant future. We are rather, no matter what the particular motivation or interest, a contemporary group joined by the compelling wisdom and justice of the remedy we seek to apply to many of the ills of the world in which we live.

It is significant too that we can relate the political crises of the Caribbean to the anger of taxpayers in Massachusetts or see "supply-side" economics in the broader context of the free market for ideas as well as goods. Not that we are ready to offer the same nostrum to all but that the central principle of collecting the economic rent of land, which works very well under another name in Alberta, as we were told, could be a practical solution in many other arenas as well.

The conference was the first one planned and executed through the Council of Georgist Organizations. The value of the Council in cutting across group and geographic lines and in reaching out to other bodies as well was clearly demonstrated and confirmed in the unanimous agreement to continue and formalize its existence and functions. The Henry George movement has shown it can get its act together. At next year's international conference, we can start taking it on the road.

Four states, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New York were represented in the evening session on Developments in the Property Tax. Professor Steven Cord, a HGS trustee, pointed out the success of five cities in Pennsylvania with the graded tax, particularly the building boom in McKeesport, and the Pittsburgh Renaissance, where in both instances formerly undeveloped and underused urban areas have become revitalized with a higher tax on land. Philip Finkelstein, HGS Director in NYC, presented four alternative property tax plans for Nassau County in New York, which include a homestead exemption for one and two family dwellings and a tax on the full value of land and current assessed value of improvements. Arch Woodruff, President Emeritus of the University of Hartford, reported on the pressures for an income tax in Connecticut and Mitch Chanelis of the HGS in Boston presented the results of a program held in May at the school on Proposition 2 1/2. William Lucey of Fairhope, Alabama, a Georgist community, Mal McCarthy of Peterborough, Ontario, and Craig Cringan of Toronto briefly outlined property tax issues in their respective areas as well. Following this session, Ms. Hartzok presented a film, New Hope for Global Crisis, which prompted serious discussion on world problems, such as hunger, poverty, and the nuclear and arms race.

The second full day began with a panel of Georgist educators, including Fryda L. Ossias, a HGS Trustee, Stan Rubenstein, HGS of Long Island Director, George Collins, Philadelphia HGS Director, Harry Pollard, Los Angeles HGS Director, Mitch Chanelis and Bob Clancy of HGI, who presented their methods of teaching Fundamental Economics to adults and high school students. Richard Barbuto, Democratic candidate for a legislative seat in Westchester County, New York, spoke on the importance of reaching the "real power elite", those who are wealthy and politically active and would have the clout to put the Georgist fundamentals actively into use. Formal sessions were over by noon on the second day, when conferees gathered for a picnic lunch by the lake on the conference site, where Tillman and Eva Schafer played their guitars and sang for the group. Organizational meetings followed, including reelection of officers and a strategy planning session for the Council of Georgist Organizations.

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## CENTER FOR LOCAL TAX RESEARCH RESPONDS TO LEGISLATION

Proposals to resolve the property tax issue in New York City and New York State have been analyzed by the Center for Local Tax Research at the request of the Governor's Office and legislative leaders.

The proposal drafted by the legislative leadership is criticized an attempt, probably unconstitutional, to legalize the admittedly unequitable status quo. The Center agrees, however, with the objectives of the Governor's proposed legislation, although simpler and better means are suggested to meet the goals of an equitable property tax system.

Some of the recommendations made in the responses include keeping the land portion out of the homestead exemption and retaining it throughout the state and a simpler classification system in which all land is assessed at full value and taxed with the highest class.

The analysis has been circulated throughout the city and state following the legislative session which postponed action on the issue at least until October.

## WALTER RYBECK OUTLINES PROGRAM FOR WASH., DC BUREAU

At the Annual Joint Georgist Conference, Walter Rybeck, former aide to Congressman Henry Reuss, announced his Georgist education and outreach program, which will be supported by the Henry George School, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, and the League for Urban Land Conservation, who will monitor the 12-month project. The program will be aimed at introducing more Georgist thinking into mainstream discussions of economic theory and practice.

One of the major goals of the operation, based in the Washington Metropolitan area, is to set up a speaker's bureau so that there can be a successful matching of appropriate Georgists with program opportunities. To this end, Rybeck distributed questionnaires to the conferees in order to get a working list of leading Georgists who would be available to speak on the conference circuit. Major organizations, such as the American Planning Association, the National Governor's Conference, National Urban League, American Bar Association and the National Association of Homebuilders would be contacted to obtain information on the dates of their future national and regional conferences, major themes and subtopics, deadlines for choosing speakers and names of program directors or planners. In this regard, the speaker's bureau list and conference schedule would enable Rybeck and his associates great flexibility and provide many opportunities to get the ideas of Henry George heard in a broad-based arena.

An annual seminar, organized in cooperation with prestigious co-sponsors, which would include panelists who are experts on a newsworthy or timely subject, is being considered for further development, as is the continuation of a two-year project instituted by Rybeck for support of a National Land Price Index.

Publicity, promotion and the dissemination of information will be an integral part of the program. Any inquiries or requests can be directed to Rybeck c/o U.L.C., 1150 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., 11th floor, Washington, D.C., 20036.

### PROFILE: R. LAWRENCE BARBUTO

R. Lawrence (Rich) Barbuto, who presented a speech, "Local Folks on the Move", at the Joint Georgist Conference, can speak with first-hand knowledge and conviction about being "on the move". Currently he is moving in three areas, as assistant Vice-President of the Real Estate division at a major New York City Bank, as Director of an organizing group for the Christian Citizen's Lobby, Bread for the World, and as a democratic candidate for the Westchester County, NY Board of Legislators.

As the new Director of Bread for the World for a three-year term, Barbuto has initiated the Green Pastures Project, which promotes the organization's focus on land use and hunger. He feels that because of the importance of Georgist fundamentals, it is vital that both the outreach of the Georgists and those connected with the Green Pastures project reach the "real power elite", or "those folks who are politically active, wealthy and can work with their neighbors in democratically participating in the attainment and maintenance of the basis for quality of life that can be called human". The message of the Green Pastures project is primarily directed to those leaders in big business who out of their sense of human solidarity, can join in this plea to the poor of the world: "Wait, we do hear you, we are in solidarity with you, we want green, not ever greener, pastures". Making these "insiders" aware of the Georgist taxation concepts and how they can be best implemented is a priority as well. Barbuto believes that "as business people concerned about land use, we seek the input of Georgists to help us in our objectives. We are simply "local folks on the move" who seek green pastures for ourselves and mankind".

# SCHOOL NOTES

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## NEW YORK

On Monday, September 14, the Fall Semester begins at the Henry George School in New York, with a roster of four courses in Fundamental Economics, two advanced courses and a daily Luncheon Forum series. All courses are offered free to the public, with each course and run two hours weekly, from 5:30pm-7:30pm for a ten week period. Students are invited to bring their lunch and participate in informal discussions led by staff members, Mondays through Thursdays from 12:00pm-1:00pm. The two advanced courses are Money and Banking, taught by Oscar Johnsonsen, and Social Problems, taught by Philip Finkelstein. Direct mailing and radio spots will be used to publicize the semester.

## LONG ISLAND

Classes in Progress and Poverty will be held at five high schools on Long Island according to HGS Extension Director Stan Rubenstein. The classes begin in October and a complete list of time and location is available by contacting Rubenstein. If students have completed both Progress and Poverty and Contemporary Issues, an advanced class in Economics at Oceanside High school is available, beginning September 14. This course goes into greater depth on many of the issues that were dealt with during the first course.

## SAN FRANCISCO

Alanna Hartzok reports that eighteen students graduated from the Spring, 1981 F.E. Course at the San Francisco school, and thirteen students graduated from the East Bay program. The school is moving to a storefront in the Mission District, and a new address and telephone number will be printed in the next issue of the Henry George News.

## BOSTON

Mitch Chanelis presented three Wednesday evening programs in June and July, to "promote economic justice in the Commonwealth and elsewhere". The first session focused on Land Reform Through Tax Reform, with a showing of the film, My Country is Occupied. The second and third sessions were on Political Economics: Beyond Left and Right, and Ireland and the Economics of Human Rights. The enthusiastic participation and attendance has prompted Chanelis to schedule similar evenings during the Fall.

## TORONTO

The following letter by Craig Cringan, Director of the School of Economic Science in Toronto, ran in the July 13, 1981 issue of Business Week:

"In discussing where to find a replacement for the federal subsidies to mass transit in 'Transit on its own' (Editorials, June 8), you hint at a solution in the words, 'whether the new money comes from regional taxes or higher fares'. May I suggest another source. In Toronto, the School of Economic Science has a land-value map of the city showing sharp concentration in land value strung out along the mass transit routes with a peak land value near every subway station. Whether mass transit is worth having, the transit facilities create additional land values in excess of their cost. Let's tax a part of the land value created by the mass transit. This seems fairer than collecting from a bunch of people who do not benefit from transit".

Following a champagne reception and a lobster dinner, Richard Noyes, as MC, opened the proceedings at the Annual Banquet by introducing Jack Kelly, Schalkenbach Trustee, who spoke of the power of the press in informing or misinforming the public. Professor Robert Wood of MIT and a former Secretary of HUD, gave the keynote address on the successes and failures of legislators at the state, local and federal level in developing a coherent land use and property tax policy program for their constituents. Wood noted that according to a recent MIT report, affordable housing no longer matches what middle class families can afford. Following Wood's speech, Lancaster Greene, and Heman Chase entertained the audience and Jack Schwartzman acknowledged the contributions of Robert Clancy and Mark Sullivan, among others, for making the conference such a rousing success.

A two-hour morning session on the Land and the People featured the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for Massachusetts, Slow Turtle, who spoke of the symbiosis between the Georgist ideals and those of the modern Native American movement. He led the group in an outdoor circle ceremony of songs and chants.

Evaluation of program and schedule of this year's conference was discussed, with the unanimous agreement that the choice of a college campus as a conference setting is a good one and similar facilities should be checked out for future conferences, and the Council's plans to coordinate next year's conference with the International Conference in Holland were examined before the program came to an official close.

#### SANTO DOMINGO REPORTS GAINS

Lucy de Silfa reports nearly 700 graduates in five locations including special courses for employees of the Ministry of Finance and the Agrarian Reform Institute where Henry George is now part of the national training program. Support for land value taxation continues to grow in the Dominican Republic with serious discussions on radio and tv and newspaper analysis of the benefits of its application.

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