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Justice and prosperity through economic education

SANDIA PEAKS: THE COUNCIL OF GEORGIST ORGANIZATIONS 24th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, JULY 21–25, 2004 ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Cay Hehner

When the wheels of the 737 hit the runway the traveler could see a storm gathering at no great distance. Thunder and lightning, solid sheets of rain, fire and brimstone – to an avowed urbanist it seemed like the creation of the world the hour before man appeared in that New Mexican wasteland – stark with strange beauties and forces. Overlooking the mesa were what the traveler would later learn to be the Sandia Peaks – a power spot in Castaneda's world with the city of Albuquerque spread out beneath it like a toy town of a divine being that had moved on to other worlds – a spot surely worthy as a meeting ground for the children of the land. After an uneasy and jetlagged night the following day brought a flurry of activity and promise.

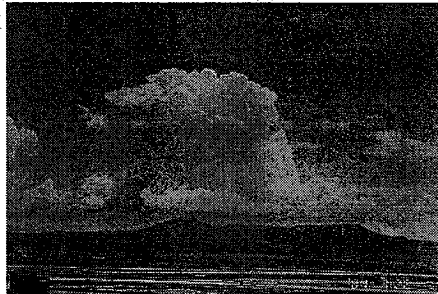
The conference was organized along the following main areas and issues:

- Member reports 2003/2004
- Furthering of Economic Education
- Balancing outreach and inreach activities
- Outstanding contributions: Mason Gaffney, Robert Andelson, Lindrith Davies for the Henry George Institute
- Featured speakers and guest speakers: J.W. Smith, Anne Goeke, Carol Miller, Brendan

Hennigan, John Fisher, John Hooker

- Closer Schools cooperation
- Closer newsletters cooperation
- New media

Overall it may be said that the CGO conference in New Mexico was extremely well organized, there



seemed to have been a general consensus that old hatchets were worthy of getting buried and consequently there was a wave of good will and "can do" attitude that encompassed nearly all the projects presented and items discussed on the agenda. All guests were warmly welcomed by the CGO officers Mark Sullivan, Alanna Hartzok, Dan Sullivan, Jake Himmelstein, Ted Gwartney and the organizers Sue and Scott Walton who did an extremely competent job in keeping everything going and every one together. For the Henry George School New York the following Board members attended: Dan Kryston, Bruce Oatman, Gil Herman, as well as outgoing Director of

Education Mike Curtis, and incoming Director Cay Hehner.

Wednesday and Thursday were mostly spent on the reports of all CGO member reports. A general feeling prevailed that it was time to close old chapters and establish contact to new groups and individuals to be exposed to George. As to the future of the CGO conferences it was felt that a more balanced approach to outreach and inreach should prevail. In other words as important as outreach to local groups and activists and the addressing of their problems in a Georgist manner undoubtedly its conferences should also set aside good time for "in-house" and "inreach" discussions. In this context it was felt that it would be good to enhance the time at upcoming conferences to be given to education and mutual understanding of the "larger picture" and where Georgism should be taken in the future.

Chuck Metalitz welcome informal invitation for a meeting of directors and instructors of the George Schools should thus be formalized and given an extra afternoon or day at the conference in Philadelphia 2005. The larger area of Chicago has been designated for the conference 2006. But no decision has been made as yet for the locations of conferences after that.

During the Saturday evening banquet came the general highlight of the conference the presentation of three prizes to:

- Professor Mason Gaffney as the most outstanding Georgist educator

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)
Sandia Peaks

of the year

- Professor Robert Andelson, posthumously, as the most outstanding activist (The prize was accepted by Bonny Andelson in his stead.)
- The Henry George Institute, represented by Lindy Davies, as the most outstanding Georgist organization



Mason Gaffney

Mason Gaffney gave an eloquent, witty, and rousing speech on "The Taxable Capacity of Land in All its Forms and Tenures" which should silence once and for all those nit-pickers who perpetually maintain that George's Single Tax would not be able to "pay for everything" a modern society needs. According to Professor Gaffney given the correct application, we all would not only get wealthier, but we all might even get money back! Mason Gaffney, Bonny Andelson, and Lindy Davies all received standing ovations from the 70-odd audience of significant length.

Outstanding among the invited speakers were J.W. Smith who presented and summarized his book **Economic Democracy** in which he identified the monetary monopoly and the patent monopoly as additional monopolies to be addressed in order to reach what he called "honest or supercharged capitalism". John Fisher talked about his

success of getting the national Greens Party of Canada to adopt a full Georgist platform for their upcoming Economics Program nationwide. Carol Miller talked about the persistent danger of nuclear US-testing not only in and around Los Alamos, but in the whole of the United States. Alanna Hartzog and Anne Goeke from the Earth Rights Institute bridged the gap to other groups promulgating the "New Urbanism" and "New Ecological Awareness", John Hooker, a town planner and former local mayor running for State Senate in New Mexico gave examples of the application of "New Urbanism" and Georgism in the area, and Brendan Hennigan talked at length about the common ground of Christian Socialism and Georgism with frequent recourse to relevant papal encyclicals.

Finally a closer cooperation of the various Georgist newsletters and news-outlets was pronounced to be desirable and a more frequent use of new media for the spreading of our Message.

Most conference attendees were so enthralled in all the round-the-clock multifarious activities that they literally did not manage to set foot outside of the conference hotel during the entire period. There was, however, one exception. Anne Goeke, from Earthrights offered during a short break period after lunch Friday to take interested parties up the Sandia Peaks. HGS board members, and John Poulter, the representative of the Australian Georgist organizations, were among those who took up the offer. It proved to become an unexpected opportunity for heroism on part of the intrepid and indefatigable group. From the foot of the mountains a cable car, according to the operator the "world's longest aerial tramway", took the small Georgist expedition up over dangerous craggy and rocky peaks to the top

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)
Sandia Peaks

which gave a breathtaking view of Albuquerque and a fair part of the New Mexican mesa. While the ascent proceeded in perfect sunshine with cables swinging in the wind, and lower rock peaks seeming to scratch the bottom of the car with a free fall of never less than several hundred feet or "just a plank between you and eternity" the descent got delayed by a thunderstorm which hit from the other side of the mountains. The "world's longest aerial tramway" does not operate during thunder and lightning our small Georgist party was told after they had been caught in the downpour. Man fancies himself to have dominion over Nature. In times like ours Nature does like to remind us from time to time that it is she who hosts, shelters, and condones us – not vice versa. Down came our mountain team wet and exhausted, but certainly richer in experience: The earth does indeed matter! The Sandia Mountains proved to be a "power spot" and the power of nature it was that captured and released our small team of intrepid Georgists unscathed back to the conference tables.

Alanna Hartzok invited those interested for a tour to the adjacent Native Americans and her adventures can be viewed:

www.earthrights.net/trek.html ■



Mark Sullivan, John Poulter,
and Lindy Davies

Successful Summer Session and Third Annual Film Festival

HGS teacher Pia Francesca DeSilva presented a six week accelerated version of the School's Fundamental Economics course for the third year in a row. She had an enrollment of nine, and they all completed the course. The graduates are now attending various fall term classes.

The film festival held during the summer drew over a dozen attendees every week. After each showing there was an unusually lively discussion of the film and its related issues.

Undoubtedly the new larger screen format helped attendance. Also, by coincidence, two Marlon Brando films had been selected for viewing which served as a fitting memorial for the actor's untimely death.

Popularity of films with discussion has encouraged the school to begin preparation for film series during the regular year. The projected format is *Henry George and ...*, where "..." will be a featured director or a theme. Films in a series will be shown one evening and the discussion will be held the following evening. ■

New Enrichment Courses in the Offing

Two enrichment courses, *Philosophy of Life* and *Human Rights*, have been added permanently to the curriculum and are being taught in the current fall term.

HGS teacher Pia Francesca DeSilva who is teaching *Philosophy of Life* this fall term says of the course that: She looks forward to revealing "the nucleus of the philosophy and economic teachings of Henry George that are embedded in the precepts of Oscar Geiger, the founder of the Henry George School. As a young man living in New York City during

the 1890's Oscar Geiger had met, and became a student as well as a devout follower of Henry George. Henry George has been quoted as saying that Geiger would become "... the future economist of our movement."

HGS teacher and Director of Education Cay Hehner who is teaching *Human Rights* this fall term says of the course that: "Even when a government provides a decent economic standard of living and/or eradicates social ills, in the long run it falls if it ignores basic human rights. How can the basic human rights be respected when a small minority have the monopoly upon all the natural opportunities?"

The world of literature will have a more prominent role in the future. HGS teacher and staff member Vesa Nelson is preparing a course *The Land Question in Russia: Henry George and Tolstoy*. Leo Tolstoy was a prominent nobleman and a follower of Henry George in Tsarist Russia. What influence, or lack thereof, did the literati have upon the Tsar's policies? Vesa is readying the course for the winter term.

Cay Hehner plans to follow up in the spring term with *Henry George and George Bernard Shaw*. Shaw was another adherent of Henry George and prominent man of letters. ■

HENRY GEORGE IN PRAGUE: INTERNOISE 2004 A CONFERENCE OF PHYSICISTS, ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERS and SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

The conference took place in the capital of the Czech Republic from Sunday, August 22 till Thursday, August 26, 2004, and Dr. Cay Hehner had been invited to give a talk on "Henry George and the benefits of his Theory for Technical Environment Protection". He ad-

(Continued on page 8)