

TOBY LENIHAN - THE SALT OF THE EARTH
by Catherine Covell Orloff, Providence, RI

I first got to know Toby Lenihan a short time before the Pittsburgh Henry George Conference in 2013. I think we started chatting on line, and then decided to travel together to Pittsburgh. I left Rhode Island and picked her up at her home outside Poughkeepsie, New York.

Toby lived in a very rural setting. Her address was an RR box number. When you pulled into her driveway you saw acres and acres of woods and fields that made her house look quite small, although it was actually spacious. To thank me for driving, she offered frozen venison from a deer her neighbor had shot on the land belonging to Toby and her husband. She also had chickens, a rooster and eggs, and spoke of foxes and other predators occasionally killing them, but she always started over and got more.

Toby discovered Georgism through her father, who had read an article by Yisroel Pensack on Progress and Poverty in the Newark Star Ledger. He thought it well written and contacted the author. That started a long correspondence and friendship that Toby benefitted from as well. The Georgism she learned from her father and Yisroel took deep root and motivated her for the rest of her life. She often spoke of telling a neighbor, perhaps someone she sold eggs to, about Henry George and later saying "I think she's getting really interested in this!" I doubt there were many people in Toby's life to whom she DIDN'T speak of Georgism at one time or another. She also gave Georgist seminars at local community venues.

From the room we shared at the Pittsburgh conference, Toby called one or both her children every day. She was a devoted and proud mother, excited to watch their careers take off as they graduated from college and found early internships. Toby also composed many Georgist songs and sang them to her own guitar accompaniment at Pittsburgh and other Georgist events. Like many, she was concerned about the future of the Movement and wanted to see classes in Progress and Poverty continue as they had been taught for many years under Bob Clancy at the New York Henry George School and Institute.

I hope that Toby's many creative, gutsy, and generous acts live on in a growing acceptance of mankind's equal rights to Mother Earth and the "miracle mechanism" of the Single Tax on land values. May she rest in peace. <<