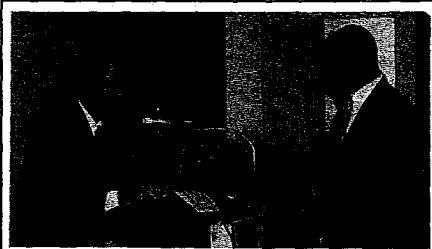


Graduation at the New York HGS: A Celebration of Empowerment

The New York Henry George School's Winter Term Graduation ceremony on March 31st, was held, as usual, in the ground-floor auditorium. That is the largest room in the building, but it is by no means large enough to seat the number of students who complete courses each term (the average is 300). The inevitable crowding is partly alleviated by additional seating before a closed-circuit monitor in the classroom one flight up. It is always a cozy — perhaps even intimate — occasion.

That does not daunt the students, though; they bring their friends and family, their cameras and their contributions to post-program refreshments. The room may be crammed and close, but



*Nibaldo Aguilera, Lindy Davies
and George Collins in action on the 31st*

spirits are high, and speaker after speaker (a valedictory volunteer for each class) calls forth hearty applause by declaring the merits of the school's educational work. Director George Collins makes skillful use, each term, of this moment of enthusiasm and vision. His graduation speech addresses the students who have completed the first course — those who have just finished reading Henry George's classic *Progress and Poverty* — as newly-initiated members of a community of people in the know. Having come to the school expecting no more than the vague promise of a "free course in economics" (that most abstruse and frustrating of topics), they have come away with an understanding of principles that offer hope for designing a just and prosperous economic system. He congratulates them on their brave perseverance, and exhorts them to move on to further study and action.

(continued on back page)

Graduation: Empowerment

(continued from front page)

The sense of everyday frustration over economic questions was eloquently voiced by L. Lizbeth Monroe, who spoke for John Alexander's Wednesday F.E. class.

As I worked and walked around a city...which was familiar to me throughout my childhood and college years... now forced me to turn my head and look the other way to avoid the hurt....Why do we have white stretch limousines and people dying in the streets all within the same city block?

Some of the other things that bothered me were: Scams in every field from investing to medicine. Hostile takeovers of corporations. A legal system where justice is rarely done... A skewed press that seems to delight only in the morbid side of human nature....

Not to mention:

Football heroes who get away with murder. Dirty dealing. Crooked angling and — last but not least — Kinky sex.

In *Fundamental Economics* Ms. Monroe found comprehensible and irrefutable answers, and along with many other students, she expressed her gratitude.

Gratitude was expressed in particular to two of the school's most accomplished professors. Sydney Mayers's students of public speaking presented him with a plaque in recognition of his positive and effective teaching. And the *Progress and Poverty* students of Nibaldo Aguilera presented their mentor with a plaque that read "We, the class of 1995 — for your devotion and selfless sense of mission, who sees solutions not visible to the traditional eye — Thank You!"

Indeed, almost all of the HGS faculty could be said to fit that description, for most are volunteers, who have undergone the school's teacher-training program on their own time, and who donate their skills. In recognition of this, George Collins revived another old Henry George School tradition on March 31st: he awarded each faculty member with a symbol of their accomplishment: an HGS lapel pin. — L. D.