

# The Henry George News

Volume 44, Number 3

April 1980

## 1980 Conference Planned at New HQ

The 1980 Joint Georgist Conference will mark the opening of the new modern headquarters of the Henry George School in midtown Manhattan. The conference is planned for the Labor Day weekend, at which point the School will be in full operation.

A six-story brick structure, built at the turn of the century as one of New York's ornate casinos, the building had been used in recent years as the headquarters and offices of The Value Line, a national investment advisory organization.

Located at 5 E. 44th Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues, the new headquarters is at the very center of the busiest section of the city, between Times Square and Grand Central Station, three subway lines, theatres, shopping, and major office buildings. Some of the leading men's fashion shops, including Brooks Brothers, are clustered on the same block as the school.

Thousand of daily passers-by will have an opportunity to see displays in the front window at street level, including books and periodicals of timely interest. The ground floor will also house an auditorium, which will be the setting for public events held at the school, including plenary sessions for the conference. A lounge and coffee shop for students and guests of the school will be accessible below the auditorium. Major classrooms will be one floor above, with the library and seminar rooms occupying the third floor. The upper floors will house the offices of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, the Center for Local Tax Research, the Trustees meeting room, and school offices.

Construction, now in full swing, is scheduled for completion in several months, when the school moves from its present location.

*All Communications should be continued to be addressed to the Henry George School at its current address, until further notice.*

With the new headquarters serving as the location for all conference events, guests will be free to choose from the broad range of hotel accommodations in the immediate vicinity. A list of hotels and their price ranges will be made available at the school to save conferees time and money.

Those planning to attend have been urged to

indicate their preferences in programs, special events, speakers, and outings. Responses may be addressed to the Conference Committee at the School in New York.

### SF Director Blasts 'Muni' Tax Proposal

*Bob Scrofani, Director of the School in San Francisco, recently sent a letter to the President of the Board of Supervisors in City Hall, to suggest a benefit assessment district for transit, in light of the projected Municipal Railway Fare Increase. Excerpts of the letter are printed here:*

"The Muni Fare affair has turned into another attempt to impose a myriad of new taxes on the people of San Francisco. Not only does the Mayor and the Public Utilities Commission recommend doubling the fare during the commuting hours, when service is most needed by residents, but recommends doubling parking meter fees, parking tickets, and increasing a number of other business and nuisance taxes."

"The Board of Directors of the Henry George School of Social Science believes the P.U.C. is following a path that ignores sound tax policy and has counter-productive results. The P.U.C. plan would:

- 1) reduce patronage when the Board of Supervisors has consistently supported a transit first policy.
- 2) penalize San Francisco homeowners and renters for the use of a vital city service.
- 3) fall into the selective tax trap which calls for continuous subsidies which clouds attention to sounder solutions.
- 4) ignore the possibility of using a revitalized government planning and development tool—the benefit assessment district.

"The special assessment district was used by the builders of San Francisco, who completed the Twin Peaks Tunnel and the Stockton Street Tunnel. This

# SCHOOL NOTES

## Santo Domingo

Increased economic awareness and political expression has helped to promote interest in the Henry George School throughout the Dominican Republic. Lucy de Silfa, director of the School, in Santo Domingo, reported to the Trustees, in New York, last month. She also credited the widely-publicized visit of New York School Director Philip Finkelstein, last year.

In order to accommodate the larger number of students attending, the school is planning to renovate its landmark colonial building in the old downtown section, badly damaged by Hurricane David. New classes are also being organized in other areas, including Santiago, the second city, Puerto Plata, on the north coast, and smaller communities in the East and West. Programs are also being conducted with university and government personnel in the capital city.

## New York

Khana Chakraborty, Librarian at the school in New York, has compiled a partial list of periodicals, newsletters, and other serials that are currently received by the library:

*American Economic Review*  
*American Journal of Economics and Sociology*  
*Appraisal Journal*  
*Appraiser*  
*Assessment Digest*  
*The Brookings Bulletin*  
*Center City Report*  
*Economic Review*, published by Federal Reserve Banks of Atlanta, Kansas City, and Richmond  
*Environmental Comment*  
*Fragments*  
*The Freeman*  
*The Georgist Journal*  
*Good Government*  
*Henry George News*  
*The Indian Libertarian*  
*Intergovernmental Perspective*  
*Land and Liberty*

*MidAmerican Outlook*  
*Monthly Economic Indicators* published by Chemical Bank  
*Monthly Tax Features*  
*National Tax Journal*  
*The New Leaf*  
*People and Taxes*  
*Persuasion at Work*  
*Progress*  
*Quarterly Review*, published by Chemical Bank  
*Resources for the Future* (R.F.F.)  
*Tax Review*  
*Taxing and Spending*  
*The Urban Institute-Policy and Research Report*  
*Urban Land*  
*Ways and Means*  
*Weekly Economic Package*, published by Chemical Bank

## SF Director from page 1

system reflects the desires of the people who voted for Proposition L3-the belief that people should have an opportunity to vote on increased levies and that beneficiaries should pay for services."

"The major beneficiaries of a transit system are the land holders whose values are enhanced by the accessibility of population and services. This is why a city follows the trolley tracks, and why lands along BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) or any subway are enhanced in value by the public investment."

"The benefit district legislation to finance transit projects is directly related to the fact that land

values increase as transit services increase. Senator James Mills, the author of the law, believes that a benefit district applying a tax on land values could provide the needed funds for the municipal railway to pay for its projected improvements and deficits. A report done for the board once before on this issue shows that homeowners would pay less under a property tax (land and buildings) than under a fare increase."

"The lines for such a benefit district which requires a 2/3 vote of the people could be drawn around the entire city of San Francisco, or limited to the downtown sector, which benefits most directly."

"One of the results of Proposition L-3, according to the assessor, is that within five years, homeowners will be bearing a greater percentage of the real estate tax in this city, possibly greater than downtown. A benefit district, around the financial district which most greatly benefits from transit expenditures, would help rectify this inequity."

"This kind of tax, and system, is an ancient and honorable way of raising money to pay for public facilities responsible for the increase in land values. Toronto is using it effectively to expand its subway system, rather than the sales tax in use here."

"We recommend that the possibility of using the method of solving the continuous municipal transportation crisis be examined carefully before the juggernaut urging higher fares led by the P.U.C., and now M.T.C., overcomes any rational attention to other solutions."

## Profile:

### Lucy de Silfa

Lucy de Silfa, Director of the Henry George School in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, attended the March meeting of the Board of Trustees at the School in New York, where she was interviewed by Louise Pulini:

Q. How did you become interested in Henry George?

A. I was living in the United States when Trujillo was dictator in my country, since I did not agree with his politics. I was going through some old books one day, when I came across a very dusty copy of *Progress and Poverty*, or *Progreso y Miseria*, as it is called in Spanish. I happen to be allergic to dust, but I became so interested in what George was saying, that I sneezed my way through the book. I found out that the school in New York was offering a course in Georgist economics, and also a teacher-training course, so I bravely took both courses at the same time. This was a challenge, but then I have never done things the "easy" way. I felt very comfortable at the school, and took other courses as well. I always felt that I would like to teach Henry George to my people, so I