

School Notes

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TRUSTEE REPORTS

Felice Gruskin, Henry George School trustee, is the founder and Executive Director of TRIP — Transit Riders In Pursuit, Inc. — a membership organization devoted to improving the quality, and lowering the consumer fare, of New York City's subway and bus systems. One of TRIP's proposals is to fund mass transit by a surcharge on land value taxes.

TRIP has embarked upon an advertising program to increase its membership (dues are \$1 per year — the equivalent of one ride on bus or subway). As a result of three ads placed in *The Village Voice*, inquiries were received and TRIP's membership total was nudged over 800. More ads have now been placed in other local papers, i.e., *Newsday*, *Our Town*, and *Westside Spirit*.

The Subway and the Impact of Land Value Taxes has been shown several times on Manhattan and Paragon cable stations. This is a half-hour video program featuring Nan Braman and Robert Clancy of the Henry George Institute, and Ms. Gruskin. High on the agenda for the next half year is the writing of a position paper on the effects of LVT on taxpayers. Using the subway system as a starting off point, it will also show how subway riders will gain. TRIP may be reached at PO Box 310, New York, NY 10032.

Steven Cord, another School trustee, heads the Center for the Study of Economics in Columbia, Maryland, assisted by Hanno Beck, a Henry George Institute graduate. The Center has recently coached Clairton and Oil City, Pennsylvania, in adopting "two-rate" property taxation (i.e., taxing land at higher, and buildings at lower, rates). The Center is now preparing to advise Philadelphia on the effects of switching to LVT.

Dr. Cord has also made a recent trip to Taiwan "to present the new hard evidence for LVT to an international group of academics and tax-gathering professionals." The conference was sponsored by Taiwan's land reform institute. Other activities of Dr. Cord include testifying in Utah before a joint state legislative committee considering a tax-exemption-on-improvements constitutional amendment; and presenting studies in Detroit, Kalamazoo and Lansing, Michigan. Dr. Cord and Mr. Beck will also be preparing studies on how those cities which have adopted the two-rate tax approach are experiencing increases in building construction.

UNDERSTANDING ECONOMICS IN BELOIT

Thanks to the efforts of Nadine Stoner and the Wisconsin Property Owners League, the School's nine-part videoseries, *Understanding Economics*, has been broadcast on Beloit Cablevision in two halves on January 3rd and 10th — and again on January 17th and 24th.

School Notes

PENNSYLVANIA & DELAWARE: WINTER CLASSES HELD

The winter semester has proved a busy one for the Philadelphia school. With its regular headquarters, Henry George's birthplace, being renovated for the summer sesquicentennial celebration, classes are being given at specially-arranged locations. Part I of *Principles of Political Economy, Fundamental Economics*, is being taught on Wednesday evenings, 7 to 9:30 at the Gershman YM&YWH. *Understanding Economics* is being held on Wednesday afternoons, 12:15 to 1, at The Free Library of Philadelphia, *How Wall Street Works*, Part I, is being taught on Tuesdays from 7 to 9 PM, also at Gershman YM&YWH. Two Saturday seminars were also scheduled this semester: *the Income Tax and You*, January 28th; and *The Property Tax and You*, February 18th — both at The Free Library from 1 to 3 PM.

Mike Curtis, director of Arden Activities in Delaware and soon-to-be director of the Philadelphia school [see article beginning on front page], has recently completed a six-week *Seminar in Fundamental Economics* in London Grove, Pennsylvania. The students were recruited by Artie Yeatman and Lindy Davies, and class was held at the Quaker Meeting House. George Collins, current Philadelphia director, presented diplomas and words of wisdom. Mr. Davies also continues a weekly seminar on the law of rent, low wages and unemployment at Plummer Work Release Prison in which the students are engaged through Socratic questions, role-playing and building an economic model.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: A NEW LOOK FOR THE MERCURY

The Mercury (Winter 1988-9), newsletter of the San Francisco school has recently been published. Edited by E. Robert Scrofani, and sporting a new two-color logo, *The Mercury* is an attractive 4-page collection of lively articles and photographs, and one cartoon (in which "We the white, male landowners of the United States" is deemed "too long" an opening for the Constitution). Items covered include: Roman Catholics Seek New "Land Ethic", National Conference: Georgists in Georgia, Celebration of George's Birthday in Philadelphia, and Common Ground's Sapiro Speaks in the Bay Area.

An article by Mr. Scrofani calls attention to nationally known ecologist Harold Gilliam who has called the economic theories taught in California high schools "musty concepts that have been obsolete for generations" and a "mishmash of facts, pious assumptions . . . and fairy tales" which omit any recognition that what we buy in stores "originates in the Earth, and that their production depends on the healthy functioning of the biosphere." Gilliam advocates NNP (Net National Product) to replace GNP (Gross National Product). GNP is a "fraud" since it includes not only "goods" but "bads" such as the cost of automobile accidents. A *Net* National Product, on the other hand, would subtract these costs as well as the value of depleted resources used to produce wealth. Suggesting that it might be better to not teach economics at all than to leave out the role of land, Gilliam went on to say that "Economics without ecology, i.e., our dependence on limited resources of the earth and its natural systems, is like a house without a foundation." His thoughts were echoed by Economics Professor Herman Daly of Louisiana State University.

Another article focuses on Robert Gilman, editor of the "new age" journal *In Context*. Gilman advocates a George-inspired model to redistribute the rental value of land as a Common Heritage Dividend (\$4000 per capita annually) after setting some aside to support wilderness areas and soil conservation. Those wishing to receive a copy of *The Mercury* may contact the San Francisco headquarters.