

# Henry George News

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*The Earth is the birthright of all.*

## In This Issue:

*News and Notes.....p. 2*

*Town Adopts LVT.....p. 3*

*From the Archives.....p. 3*

*London Journal.....p. 4*

*Genesis of Modern Economics -  
New HGS Course.....p. 5*

*School Alumni Plan Trip.....p. 6*

## A PRESIDENTIAL COMMENTARY

One might not consider the present the most suitable time to actively promulgate the Georgist economic philosophy, with its emphasis on solving the Problem of Poverty. *Poverty?* Business is thriving, unemployment is down, incomes are up, inflation is controlled, and Wall Street is more bullish than ever. Why rock the boat when we are apparently enjoying the best of times? Or are we?

Not all of us, it seems. If we look somewhat beyond the front pages of our journals, proclaiming the blissful prosperity enjoyed by those it comforts, another picture emerges. Smaller headlines and less exuberant reports reveal news not so welcome: that not all *boi polloi* (we, the people) share in the prevalent economic boom. Thoughtful observers point out that the division between so-called haves and have-nots keeps widening constantly.

Once those basking in luxurious living were millionaires; nowadays billionaires are no longer rarities. Meanwhile, those at the lower end of the economic order become less and less able to afford the necessities of life.

As long as so vast a difference exists between the affluent and the dependent, just so long does essential economic poverty prevail. This is the signal we must recognize, inspiring us to vigorously carry on the mission to which we are devoted: through extended education to teach, preach, and promote, as effectively as we can, knowledge of Henry George's economic principles. The need is urgent and the time is *now*. Let's continue the good work. Happy New Year!

SYDNEY A. MAYERS

President, Henry George School of Social Science

## LVT at UN Forum

Bruce W. Oatman/HGS Instructor

The United Nations was the setting this past September for a well-received presentation of tax policy reforms by three Georgist organizations — the *International Union for Land Value Taxation*, the *Center for the Study of Economics* and the *Robert Schalkenbach Foundation*. The occasion was the annual gathering of up to 800 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), all of which are accredited to the UN.

Alanna Hartzok, of the International Union, presented some imaginative reworkings of various land-tax ideas by a wide range of contemporary groups. These included the imposition of "extraction fees" on such non-renewable resources as soil and minerals, "user fees" for hydropower

projects, and pollution permits for activities that sully the air, land and water. These fees and permits are intended to prompt industries to devise more efficient, and less intrusive, ways to create their products while maintaining an environmental balance; the fees themselves would also promote distributive justice by returning to the communities a larger share of land rent.

To me the most promising aspect of Alanna's presentation was her description of the degree to

which Georgist ideas are finding acceptance (albeit in sometimes attenuated form) by sectors of the environmental, or "green" movement. She cited such green groups as the *Sierra Club* and the *Northwest Environmental Watch*. I person-

*continued on p. 7*

