

## On His Way to a Life on the Margin

Staff members of the Henry George School in New York exchanged good-bye's and good wishes with former Assistant Director Lindy Davies on his final day at the school on March 21st. Lindy, his wife Lisa, and their first born, Eli Morris, who arrived on March 26th, will leave New York shortly to take up residence on a farm in Maine.

In a way the move represents a return to the economic margin or real margin for Lindy. He came from rural Maryland to the University of Delaware in Newark to undergraduate and graduate studies before joining the staff of the school in 1989. As a budding writer and a convinced Georgist, New York was a good move.

Perhaps the most visible aspect of his work to Georgists outside the school has been his editorship of the Henry George News. During his tenure it served to enrich the understanding of the Georgist

philosophy among past and present students of the school. It helped to draw attention to areas of concordance between Georgism and



Seated is the invaluable Lindy Davies; from left to right: David Domke, Peter Geszdorf, Ramon Alvarez, Evangelina Reusi-Liades, Carmine Crespo, Vesa Nelson, and George Collins

other seemingly disparate schools of thought from one end of the socio-economic spectrum to the other. And, of course, it has kept our students abreast of the not infrequent news of renewing interest and cautious steps toward implementation of George's reform.

The "Teacher's Corner" column which he wrote extended the pedagogical contributions and theoretical explorations that Lindy added to the teacher training programs at the school. And as an inveterate teacher, he was always learning. He applied his talents to developing new courses and used his computer skills to improve the format of most of our educational material.

Being down on the farm up in Maine will not isolate Lindy from the mainstream of Georgist work, you can be sure. True to his embrace of the advantages of the digital age, he will operate the Henry George Institute's

Website, which he designed, to teach the philosophy via the internet. So as we say our New York, real world thanks and farewell, we are happy that there will follow many virtual hellos from the margin.

(continued from first page) benefit a majority at the expense of a minority." Alternatively, if one votes as a "disinterested judge" the goals of voting are ambiguous and can conflict: should the greatest utility be created? the status quo be preserved? the rate of population growth be maximized? or some combination of these or other sets of goals? Majoritarianism "cannot provide a coherent theory of justice" because it does not define the context.

3. The contractarian formulation of justice is similar to the Golden Rule. It is only after all prescripts have been set, without taking any personal circumstances into account, that official complaints can be heard. This "approach may be a good way to seek consensus" and a good guideline for arbitration. But it is not "a good way to identify justice" because "the luxury of securing complete agreement on principles" cannot be afforded and the judgments "bear on those who have not agreed on [the] principles."

4. Egalitarianism, where justice is equality, can be understood in the light of John Rawls' proposal: "the talents that individu-

als possess [should] be regarded as a common pool, so that anyone who has more than his share has an obligation to compensate those who have less than their shares." But, as Dr. Tideman says, this definition of justice should be rejected because one's talent is not acquired at another's expense and "the quantity of talent that [one has] in no way diminishes the quantity that is available to [another]."

5. Classical liberalism includes an important principle of justice: people have the "rights of self-determination." Derived from this is the tenet that we have "the right of ownership of what we produce," which Dr. Tideman further describes as, "We have the right to cooperate with whom we choose for whatever mutually agreed purposes we choose. Thus we have the right to trade with others, without any artificial hindrances, and we have the right to keep any wages or interest that we receive from such trading."

Two camps within the group of classical liberals conflict on their view of how "exclusive access to natural opportunities [are] to be established." One camp can be exemplified by John Locke who said that

"private appropriations of land are actually not [to be] restricted, because anyone who is dissatisfied with the land available to him in Europe can always go to America, where there is plenty of unclaimed land." But, as pointed out by Dr. Tideman, "Locke does not address the issue of rights to land when land is scarce."

The other camp, "Geoists," who have been inspired by Henry George, believe that "all of the rental value of land should be collected in taxes, and all other taxes should be abolished," thus ensuring that natural opportunities do not end up belonging to those who happened to claim them first (especially since land titles can be traced back to days when violence determined ownership), nor to those who claim more than their share.

Dr. Tideman reminded us that "if you want peace for others, then work for justice. Work for freedom. Work for the elimination of all taxes on the productive things that people do. Work for equality in the right to benefit from natural opportunities." But there's also a personal side to this recommendation. He ended (continued on next page)