

## Very Tentative Program Schedule

Some of the sessions can be combined. "Open Mike" should occur at the beginning and end of each day. There are no concurrent sessions at this time.

### **Tom Johnson, America's Greatest Mayor**

**How the reforms of the Progressive Era would apply to Cleveland's problems today.**

**Lake Shore / Center City Holiday Inn Select; 1111 Lakeside Drive, Cleveland.**

#### • **Wednesday August 5**

##### • **Evening Reception**

- Welcome
- Member Reports?

#### • **Thursday, Aug. 6: Cleveland's Lost Legacy**

##### • **Non-program sessions:**

- More member reports?
- Business meeting?

##### • **Session One: The Amazing Tom Johnson**

*Part of this will be at the late-morning brunch, and part will be at Tom Johnson's statue, weather permitting. If weather poses a problem, and we hold the event at the hotel, how do we notify locals? People can visit the statue semi-informally during free time if the event is rained out.*

**Panelists:** People at the Western Reserve Historical Society say there is an ample supply of experts on Johnson. We should be able to have a panel with one Georgist historian and several local experts.

This overview session will "tell people what we are going to tell them" during the rest of the conference. Each subsequent session will tie an historical aspect to contemporary issues.

##### • **His story**

His childhood newspaper monopoly, patent monopolies (fare box, steel rails, "maglev" model), streetcar monopolies, steel mills, Johnson's employees vs. Carnegie's employees. Johnson's company towns (Moxham, PA and Lorain, Ohio).

Embracing George's proposals. Heroics in the Johnstown Flood. His Johnstown currency during the panic of 1893. His rise in Cleveland politics.

Running Cleveland like a business executive. Tax reform. Fighting machine politics in *both* parties. Fighting streetcar monopoly. Muni Electric. Parks. Land tax blocked by state Republicans. The Tom Johnson legacy. His claim to "America's Greatest Mayor."

The statue itself. Who funded it, etc.

##### • **Session Two: Political struggles**

##### • **The Progressivism in Johnson's Era.**

##### • **Progressive issues**

Single tax, greenbacks, anti-monopoly, decent working conditions, civic responsibility, livable neighborhoods. How tackling injustice invigorates a movement.

##### • **Progressive leaders**

Henry George and the single taxers, Terence Powderly and the early labor movement, greenbackers and silver-money advocates. Johnson, Brand Whitlock, William Somer (assessor) and other Cleveland progressives.

##### • **The demise of progressivism**

Vilified by the right. Coopted by socialism. Internal bickering. Johnson's stoic focus on issues. Public weary of ideological strife. How ideological divisiveness derails progressivism. Differences between early progressives and neo-progressives.

##### • **The Johnson/Hanna wars.**

##### **Panelist - Bill Peirce?, Others?**

Johnson is Dennis Kucinich's hero. Hanna is Karl Rove's hero. Streetcar wars. Public utility wars. Land tax wars. Constitutional Convention. State vs. local control. How is Cleveland hamstrung today? How can it save itself?

- Pittsburgh vs. Cleveland

**Panelist: Dan Sullivan?**

Pittsburgh was most corrupt when Johnson was cleaning up Cleveland. Pittsburgh strangled by special assessment classifications. Pittsburgh's backlash against corruption inspired by Johnson? Pittsburgh gets state-approved land value tax. One of America's *worst* mayors (Pittsburgh's mayor McNair) was also a Georgist.

- **Friday, August 6: The Second Great Depression**

- **Session One: Debt money and the inevitable crash**

- The destructive nature of debt money
- Delaying the crash and scapegoating the delayers

Why bad policies (predatory lending, government spending, the Iraq War etc.) were necessary to delay the crash.

- The social right to land and money  
Nic Tideman; panelist

Parallels between the social creation of land value and the social creation of money's value. Differences between how land and money manifest those values. Implications for land, and implications for money.

- **Session Two: What to do about debt money**

- What the feds should do (but probably won't)

Issue "greenback" currency, phase out fractional reserve banking, phase out mortgage incentives, restore bankruptcy protections.

- What Cleveland can do

City prohibited from issuing currency. Cleveland's landlords can issue currency equivalent.

- **Luncheon speaker: Table topics?**

- **Session Three: Why Cleveland?**

- Foreclosure Leaders: California, Nevada and Ohio
- California and Prop 13; Nevada, mining and gambling
- Ohio, the rust-belt decline, the commuter tax and industrial flight  
Foreign dumping fuels land speculation. Flight to booming areas. Destructiveness of productivity taxes. Importance of the real estate tax on land.
- Why not Pittsburgh?

How Pittsburgh's land value tax saved it. Pittsburgh misses the land boom of the 1920s, and was less damaged than Cleveland by the Great Depression. Pittsburgh's post-war Renaissance. LVT in the 1980s. Pittsburgh today. Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Buffalo during the collapse of Big Steel. Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Buffalo today. Pittsburgh now backsliding.

- **Worst, or just first?**

Cleveland as "the canary in the coal mine." California, Nevada, Arizona, Florida and other "speculator dream states" could be hit the hardest. Columbus and Cincinnati had better take notice as well.

- **Session Four: Restoring Cleveland's Economy**

- **Could the collapse of pricey places save Cleveland?**

The rent wedge, the tax wedge and the debt wedge. Attracting business from the most overpriced locations.

- **How would land value tax affect Cleveland today?**

Reduced taxes on most mortgage holders, banks more reluctant to foreclose, more eager to let go of what is already foreclosed. Attracting businesses back to city. Attracting residents. State obstacles.

- The dynamic land trust in Cleveland

Different from protective trusts. Has all the rights of a private landlord. Differs from traditional landlord roles. Functions as a quasi-municipality. Can absorb tenants' taxes from rent. Can issue alternative rent-credit "currency." Can set up better internal democratic processes. How it can save Cleveland.

- **Day Three: The Privatization Scam**

- **Session One: Licensed Monopolies**

- "Privatized" vs. naturally private

A sketch of what is naturally public and what is naturally private. See *Social Problems*, Chapter 17, "The Functions of Government"

- Muni Electric

Johnson creates Muni Electric, and Kucinich saves it. Both vilified by neo-libertarians and conservatives. Public utilities as licensed monopolies. Johnson, George and Kucinich on public utilities. Vilification by license monopolists. Cleveland's lower electric bills. Why Cleveland was spared from the great blackout of 2003, which started in a privately owned power station in a suburb that adjoins Cleveland.

- Mass Transit

Johnson and George on mass transit.

Johnson's "streetcar wars." Private mass transit and land development. The demise of private mass transit as a development tool. Public take-over of mass transit nationwide. "The railroad power" as opposed by George, Powderly and Johnson. The demise of oil and the return of rail.

- Privatizing Turnpikes

Economic "quick fix." Literally selling out the country. Effects on tolls. Effects on turnpike communities. The common-law right to travel.

- Theft of the commons

Land and money as the first things privatized. How this leads to further privatization. (See Nock)

- The effect of monopoly privilege on government

*"Once you've privatized Congress, privatizing everything else follows"* - Dennis Kucinich. Why privilege occupies itself with influencing government.

- **Session two: Contract Patronage**

- Wage patronage vs. contract patronage

Tammany Hall based on contract patronage. Progressive movement reacts to contract patronage. Introduction of civil service. Contractor is an additional layer of quasi-public bureaucracy. Rigging contract bids. Lack of accountability. Waste by military contractors. Contractor destroys Pittsburgh's assessments. "When "new brooms" get old. How Contract patronage evolves into licensed monopolies.

- How to oppose privatization

Lessons from the progressive era. How we forgot those lessons. How they apply today. The natural opponents of privatization. Teaching them how to broaden their message.

- **Luncheon Speaker:??**

- **Boat tour of Cleveland or business meeting?**

- **Banquet:**

- Speaker and topic??

- **Sunday: Fare well, Cleveland**

- Early session (should be upbeat)

- Spiritual Invocation?

(It is Sunday, after all, but we haven't had a religious leader as a regular attendee since Wylie Young.)

- Champagne brunch and toasts