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Prefatory Note

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This year's volume of *Draftings in Economics* represents a melding of the new and the old. The first essay in the volume, "Getting Rid of the Old Gas-Guzzler," by graduate student Michael T. Heaney, focuses upon a current economic and public policy issue: the gasoline tax in the United States and the degree to which it pays for the social costs of gas consumption.

The remaining three essays all focus on economic thinkers of the past and their legacies to the economic tradition—and to society as a whole. These essays, by undergraduate students Jeri Kurtzleben, Bret Tuley, and Amy Harris, were written originally for a course in economic history and philosophy taught by University of Northern Iowa economics professor Kenneth McCormick. The range of these essays is especially striking. They focus on influential thinkers in three separate centuries, in three separate nations, having three very diverse roles: Jean-Baptiste Colbert, finance minister of France from 1661 to 1683, in the reign of the Sun King Louis XIV; the controversial Dutch writer Bernard de Mandeville, whose major work in 1723 was declared a "public nuisance"; and Walter Heller, chair of the Council of Economic Advisers during the presidency of John F. Kennedy. In each case, the legacy is important, and should not be ignored.

As in the past, the four student authors shared their research and drafts of their essays in writing groups facilitated by *Draftings* editor Barbara Lounsberry and myself. They also consulted the expertise of many members of the Department of Economics. We hope readers will enjoy these essays, and realize the importance in all ages of economic issues and thought.

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