

# Ernstraud Magazine

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**happiness sharing as a way to peace**

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## §1 How to get to a Flat Tax

The fair road to a flat income tax is bedded on *flat incomes*. As long as there is any form of income disparity, **caring** people will apply tax policy to repair the damage.

We humans are hard-wired to rise to our highest capability; we do not require money incentives to get us there. If strawberry pickers were paid as much as lawyers, I would still choose to become a lawyer. In appropriate numbers, strawberry pickers and other laborers are as necessary, and should be paid as much, as this lawyer.

People with extraordinary needs or incapacitations require extra consideration. It will probably work out more smoothly to create exceptional channels, other than tax breaks, for delivering their needs and keeping them as productive as they can be.

When we have spread the jobs and resources evenly, we are ready for a simple flat tax that will be fair to everyone.

## § 2 Labor Day Celebration

When I grew up in the Space Age, Labor Day seemed to celebrate the struggle of the common man against inhuman exploitation. The parties to labor disputes had been bitterly pitted in opposition to each other, and in this adversarial setting, workers had united to assert their dignity and overcome the greed of management. The power of collective bargaining had won improved working conditions.

Is it necessary for one side to lose when the other side wins?

Now that my adulthood falls into the Information Age, the names have changed. "Personnel Department" has become "Human Resources Department" to acknowledge that every worker is to be nurtured and cultivated to his or her full potential. By cooperating in a common enterprise, we accomplish more than by directing our energies against each other. Although we have not yet achieved equal pay between the top management and the bottom entry level, we have come a long way in recognizing that worker morale is the key to productivity. Without coercion or confrontation, enlightened employers respect and encourage human dignity as never before. We improve our lives together.

Let us hope that every Labor Day will celebrate further understanding of our shared life within the human family.

*See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Deming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Deming) and <http://deming.org/> for background discussion of the philosophy of Dr. W. Edwards Deming, 1900-1993.*

### § 3 The Open Mike Gaffe

*"If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."*

Diplomacy protects us from the embarrassing "open microphone" gaffe. How many public speakers have spoiled their images by saying or whispering out of place comments when they *thought* the microphone was switched off! Before the press examines our embarrassing words, let us examine our own hearts. Why should we harbor thoughts that we must not speak?

Of course some facts are confidential and there are good reasons we do not divulge them. On the other hand, a typical gaffe reveals an opinion or feeling that is more negative than factual. We can avoid blurting out something of that nature by not entertaining the thought in the first place. Instead of biting our tongues, we civilize our thinking.

For example, we can focus on the positive. The phrase "Joe just doesn't understand negotiation" should have been *perceived* as "Joe and I haven't agreed yet; we have some ground to cover before we take action." When I sincerely respect Joe's side of an issue, even my unguarded comments will display that respect and further a good working relationship. I won't blurt out any hurtful thoughts because my *attitude* will be kind and positive. Indeed, we manifest the good in ourselves when we can recognize and address it in others.

This does apply to the "other" candidates for political office.

## §4 I'm So Glad I Could Talk

Customers are always happy to hear their pianos after I tune them. Is that the only happiness they share with me? No, my other obligation is to be so kind that the customers say to themselves "I'm so glad I could talk to Kent today."

*Peace activism* is not only fine-tuning an institution like taxation or social welfare. It is also a commitment to delivering the message so that the audience will say "I'm so glad I interacted with Kent today." Indeed, if I do not inspire that happiness in my listener, there is little chance that my message will have a positive effect.

Undertaking to be against something constitutes being in opposition. **Progress**, on the other hand, is a matter of being in support of something. *Peace building lifts the self-esteem and happiness of the parties to the peace.*

When I try to tune two people who think they hate each other, it is crucial for both of them to conclude "I'm so glad I could talk to Kent today."