FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE
NEWSLETTER #286 — DEC. 7, 2012

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Post-Cliff Income Taxes

(posted by Jim, Dec. 7, 2012)

There is a lot of panic talk about the "fiscal cliff" and what it will do to your family. You can discount a lot of that.

If the Congress does nothing -- which we have come to expect-- then the Bush tax cuts expire like they were supposed to do years ago. They were sold as a temporary thing or they could not have been passed in the Congress. They knew they were reducing the government income and they had to balance that with cuts so they made the cost seem less by limiting the years it would be in effect. Then they extended them two or three times.

But when (if) the rates go back up where they were the first sign most people would see would be a new withholding table that would withhold a little more from your pay.

As soon as those smaller paychecks show up the Congress will get a lot of pressure to "do something" and they will. And new tax tables will be generated and people can adjust their withholding again and will not end up paying more taxes (unless you are in the 1%)

The Congress has the power to pass new tax laws and make them retroactive. So most people will soon get tax rates back down again. The trick is going to be to not restore the low rates on the high incomes.

I prepare income tax returns for people. I have done this since 1968 so I have seen a lot of tax rates. We have had cases in the past when Congress passed laws this time of year extending tax cuts that were set to expire the preceding December 31, and making them retroactive to the preceding January 1 so that they were available for the whole year even though the year was almost done when they were passed.

The IRS had already printed up the tax forms under the assumption that the provisions had expired and they had to be creative to find ways for us to file returns to give people the tax breaks.

I just received my software for the 2012 tax returns. It does not have most of the forms that I will need because they are waiting to see if Congress does anything in December that will change everything.

It would be nice if they settled things sooner so that there would be less uncertainty, but it would be better if they got it done right than rushing through something stupid.

WASHINGTON'S STALE MATES.

FotM NEWSLETTER #286 (Dec. 7, 2012)—HYPERTEXT INDEX

20121206-02	10:13	SteveB	"Top Two Percent to GOP: Tax Us"

"Top Two Percent to GOP: Tax Us" by Ryan Grim and Sabrina Siddiqui, Huffington Post

Dec. 5, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/05/top-two-percent-tax_n_2245596.html?utm_hp_ref=politics)

(WASHINGTON) Congressional Republicans' opposition to any tax rate hike on the top two percent of earners shows few signs of letting up as the debate wears on. But the beneficiaries of that opposition, the nation's wealthiest executives, have themselves begun opening up to the possibility of a rate hike.

On Tuesday, FedEx Chairman and CEO Fred Smith, an adviser to Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign, said that the notion that tax hikes on the richest Americans would kill jobs was simply "mythology."

And on Monday, a gathering of the nation's top defense executives took a surprising turn when they endorsed tax rate increases on the wealthy and cuts of up to $150 billion to the Pentagon's budget. Top executives from Northrop Grumman, Pratt & Whitney, TASC and RTI International Metals appeared at the National Press Club at an event organized by the Aerospace Industries Association, the top defense contractor lobbyist.

David Langstaff, CEO of TASC, said that the executives were speaking out because so far leaders of the defense industry were "talking a good game, but are still unwilling to park short-term self-interest." After the event, he told a defense reporter for Politico that tax rates need to go up.

"In the near term, [income tax rates] need to go up some," Langstaff said. "This is a fairness issue -- there needs to be recognition that we're not collecting enough revenue. In the last decade we've fought two wars without raising taxes. So I think it does need to go up."

David Hess, head of Pratt & Whitney, said his parent company, United Technologies Corp, believed personal income tax rates should be on the table; Dawne Hickton, CEO of RTI, said he would back a rate hike if it led to a deal.

The CEOs join other high-profile executives who are willing to chip in more. Following a meeting with President Barack Obama last week at the White House, executives emerged to endorse higher rates. "There needs to be some revenue element to this, and [Obama] started with rates," said Joe Echeverria, CEO of Deloitte LLP. "And he started with rates on what we would define [as] the upper two percent … that we have to pay our fair share. And I think everybody was in agreement with that notion."

AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson, who was also at the meeting, said in a statement that a deal "will require a compromise involving an increase in both tax rates and revenue."

Goldman Sachs Chief Executive Lloyd Blankfein, meanwhile, told CNN after the meeting that "if we had to lift up the marginal rate, I would do that."

When asked Wednesday about increasing support among wealthy executives for higher taxes on the rich, Republicans on Capitol Hill showed no signs of letting up.

Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) said he had not heard the CEOs' remarks this week but insisted he would not support rate increases. He would rather see revenue generated through capping deductions, he told The Huffington Post.

"The reason deductions is a more attractive way to do this is because it doesn't hit small businesses nearly as hard as rate increases do," Thune said. "That is a concern to me, because ultimately what we need to be thinking about is economic growth. Do our policies inhibit or facilitate economic growth? And rate increases on small businesses are going to be counterproductive in terms of growing the economy and creating jobs."

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) struck a similar chord with respect to rates, saying he would not support any deal allowing tax rates for the top two percent to expire.

"I'm deeply concerned that raising rates or further complicating the tax code is going to make it harder for us to generate the revenue we need to get out of this hole that we're in," Rubio said in an interview. "To me, it's not about a pledge -- it isn't about protecting millionaires and billionaires. It's about creating new taxpayers, because that's the only way we're going to get out of this."

But Sen. Dan Coats (R-Ind.) was slightly more flexible. While he reiterated the need for comprehensive tax reform, the senator acknowledged that he did not think restructuring the tax code would be possible before the end of this year, when the Bush-era tax cuts are set to expire.

"It's very hard to see that we can get that done in a quick two to three week process here. So I'm hoping that whatever comes down will have enforceable instructions that certain goals must be reached through comprehensive tax reform at a date certain in 2013," Coats told HuffPost. "To cherry-pick right now on tax would be -- what we'd have to do is come back and revisit and revise, and we need more certainty."

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said he did not want to deal in hypotheticals, but added that he has been considering the opinions of a wide variety of sources. Asked about executives expressing a willingness to see their rates go up, he responded, "I am always glad to receive advice … I can't speculate on what might happen, [but] I have some confidence in the Speaker and Sen. McConnell in arriving at a resolution."

Still, some Republicans have broken with their party and indicated their support for accepting President Barack Obama's proposal to extend tax cuts only for the first $250,000 of income. Last week, Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.) urged fellow Republicans to agree to the president's tax plan, and since then a number of Republicans have made similar statements, including Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine.), Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), Rep. Kay Granger (R-Texas) and Rep. Robert Dold (R-Ill.).

20121206-11	23:09	SteveB	"Ann Coulter Says GOP Should Give In to Obama on Taxes: 'We Lost the Election'" (w/ video)

"Ann Coulter Says GOP Should Give In to Obama on Taxes: 'We Lost the Election'" (w/ video) by Huffington Post

Dec. 6, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/06/ann-coulter-gop-taxes-obama-hannity_n_2249545.html?utm_hp_ref=mostpopular)

Ann Coulter shocked Sean Hannity on Wednesday when she conceded that she thinks Republicans should let tax rates for the rich go up.

House Republicans are currently battling President Obama over whether or not to hike taxes on the top 2 percent of earners in the negotiations over the so-called "fiscal cliff."

After Coulter started to say that Republicans should concede on taxes on the very rich, Hannity wondered why the House didn't just pass a bill extending the Bush tax cuts for everyone.

"OK fine, let's do that, but in the end, at some point, if the Bush tax cuts are repealed and everyone's taxes go up, I promise you Republicans will get blamed for it," she said. "It doesn't mean you cave on everything, but there are some things Republicans do that feed into what the media is telling America about Republicans."

"So are you saying that, for PR purposes, that they should give in to Obama on the tax rate?" Hannity asked.

"Not exactly, I--" Coulter said, before stopping herself and saying, "Well, yeah, I guess I am."

"You're saying capitulate to Obama?" Hannity stammered. "We don't have a revenue problem, Ann."

"We lost the election, Sean!" Coulter replied.

Other right-wing pundits, such as Bill Kristol, have echoed Coulter's argument. Kristol famously said that it wouldn't "kill the country" if taxes on millionaires went up.

20121206-12	23:55	SteveB	"Offshore Tax Haven Money Could Save Us from the Fiscal Cliff"

"Offshore Tax Haven Money Could Save Us from the Fiscal Cliff" by Erika Eichelberger, *Mother Jones*

Dec. 6, 2012, (http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2012/12/offshore-tax-havens-fiscal-cliff)

(lweissman/Shutterstock)

Offshore tax havens—like the ones Mitt Romney has relied on—screw the federal treasury out of some $150 billion a year, but as Congress and the president haggle over where to scrimp and save, there's been nary a mention of this potential deficit-busting gold mine. Today, the consumer group USPIRG released a report detailing what we could do with all that cash.

At least 83 of the top 100 publicly traded corporations in America shield large chunks of their income from taxes by keeping it overseas, according to the Government Accountability Office. In fact, according to the USPIRG report, 30 of the nation's biggest, richest companies actually profited off the tax code between 2008 and 2010, by avoiding taxes and getting tax refunds from the government. USPIRG notes that one of the techniques Google used to save $3.1 billion over that time period is called "double Irish," and involves two Irish subsidiaries and one in the tax haven Bermuda.

Minus all that revenue, Congress is looking to American taxpayers to pick up the deficit tab by raising Medicare co-payments and cutting food stamps and such.

Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, weighed in on the report, saying, "Closing corporate tax loopholes should be part of the conversation about how to avoid the fiscal cliff... Congress has to choose whether it will protect offshore corporate loopholes that enable many multinationals to pay little or no tax, or close them to address our deficit problem and to fund national defense, education, health care, and other critical needs."

The $150 billion could either wipe out the fiscal cliff spending cuts for 2013, according to the report, or generate over a third of the debt reduction goal of $4 trillion over 10 years. Here are some of the other fun things the report says $150 billion could buy us:

- **Job creation:** Loan guarantees for half a million small businesses.
- **Student aid:** Pell grants for 10 million students every year for four years.
- **Green energy:** Thirty years of tax incentives for the production of renewable energy production.
- **21st century Transportation:** The construction of 15 commuter rail lines, 50 light rail transit lines, and over 800 bus rapid transit lines.
- **Healthcare:** Three times the current funding for domestic violence and sexual abuse programs over 50 years.

20121206-03	11:12	Art	Re: "UN Disability Treaty Rejected by Senate" (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #285)

A paranoid rejection of anything not originated in a self serving, science denying, Christian church in mid AMERICA?

20121206-04	11:21	Pam	Re: "UN Disability Treaty Rejected by Senate" (reply to SteveG, FotM Newsletter #285 & Art, above)

Alan Simpson was on the "Daily Show" last night--he's a funny guy--bashing the teabaggers and blaming them for everything. He said no one trusts anyone, not even people in the same party. Everyone is looking over his shoulder for the guy behind him with a shiv. These Republicans will NEVER vote for anything, no matter how good for the country and the world it might be. They would rather see complete doom and destruction than give an inch on when the dinosaurs lived. They all need a stiff dose of Jonathan Swift--and a kick in the pants. They make me sick.

20121206-01	06:45	SteveB	Where's the Beef (or Seafood or Poultry)? (to Ben, after receiving no Apple lunch photo/description for two days)

OK, here it is…

You get my 800+ readers all salivating about that iFood you eat for (usually) lunch…

They start to expect to see that "column" in every issue of the *FotM Newsletter*…

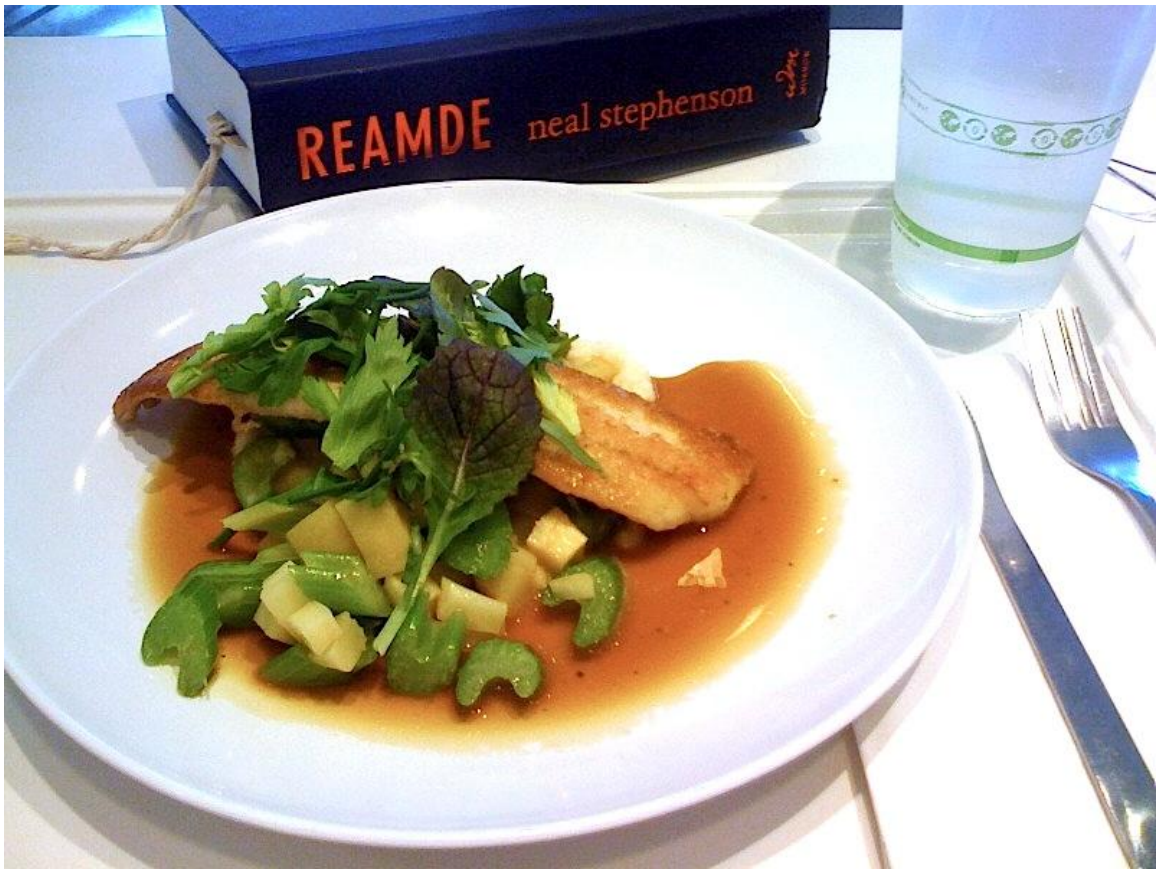
Then you pull the wool out from under their eyes and start skipping meals or what?

I've already started receiving death threats from the far right…this isn't some kind of diet, is it?

Anyway, *salud* to you, my friend.

20121206-05	13:00	Ben	Photo: Yesterday's Seafood Lunch at Apple

Yesterday's lunch, pan-roasted flounder, with sauteed celery, parsnip. and rutabaga over a creamy celeriac puree with a lovely and aromatic cider reduction, was just the kind of dish I want to find often at Caffe Macs. Chef Kelli chose a marvelous complement of vegetable preparations to accompany the delicately flavored fresh flounder, which had a delicious crispy pellicle that provided a beautiful golden glaze of the titanium-white flounder flesh. It's becoming quite evident that I am not the only one who goes gaga over a really fine fish-and-vegetables plate, as the Bistro line jammed up a minute after the line opened, and remained flooded with supplicants all the time I was in the cafeteria. There were a LOT of flounder-eaters about yesterday!



Pan-Roasted Flounder with Sauteed Celery, Parsnip, and Rutabaga

20121206-08	15:10	Ben	Photo: Today's Seafood Lunch at Apple

Today, it was off to the Pasta Line on the opening bell. I had about eight folks ahead of me, drawn by the siren's call of fresh tuna filets... atop Chef Patricia's perfect polenta. My thick, luxurious albacore filet was delicious, if a bit more done than I prefer, still very moist, very flavorful, and (for the benefit of fish skeptics, but no surprise to me) completely un-fishy (as any very fresh fish must be, with the possible exception of certain members of the mackerel family). Delicious, lightly crusty, fork-flakable, scrumptious albacore... Chef Patricia's remarkable polenta includes a stiff dose of a sharp Italian cheese, giving rich flavor to this rather bland-to-the-eye pasta of which I have become a fan in recent months. Half a dozen sturdy spears of roasted asparagus, crunchy, properly slightly charred added a richly flavored vegetable to the dish, which was garnished with something I haven't had before, caponata. I correctly identified firm pieces of nicely roasted eggplant, golden raisins, capers, and tomatoes, and learned afterward that onions were present, as well; this cubed stuff (apart from the capers and raisons, of course!) reminded me of vera cruz from the Mexican venue, but has much broader flavor band: over a mild fish, it was an absolutely delicious accent. Yum!

Seared Albacore Filet of Chef Patricia's Perfect Polenta

20121206-06	13:15	SteveB	"Will Obama Beat Back a 'Nuclear' Attack by the Big Banks?"

"Will Obama Beat Back a 'Nuclear' Attack by the Big Banks?" by Erika Eichelberger, *Mother Jones*

Dec. 6, 2012, (http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/11/financial-reform-dodd-frank-volker-rule-obama)

(Financial regulators are scrambling to finalize the Volcker rule—and Wall Street has mounted a full-on blitz to defang it.)

(Sergey Nivens & pterwort/Shutterstock)

Wild bets by taxpayer-insured banks helped put the US economy in the toilet four years ago. With financial regulators scrambling post-election to finalize long overdue rules for Wall Street, banks have intensified their war on regulation. In particular, the financial industry is lobbying like mad to add key loopholes to the Volcker rule, a provision of the sweeping 2010 Dodd-Frank financial reform act that is supposed to restrict high-risk speculation by commercial banks.

During the campaign, Mitt Romney vowed to repeal Dodd-Frank, and regulatory agencies were waiting to finish crafting the details of the Volcker rule. Whether that rule will emerge as Congress intended, or as a watered-down half-measure, is what's at stake in the current battle between reformers and industry.

Though regulators, under intense pressure from industry, have been dragging their feet on finalizing its exact parameters of the rule, the need for it was reinforced as recently as May, when JPMorgan Chase lost $2 billion on a monster credit derivatives trade.

At issue are several provisions that would allow lucrative exemptions to the rule's ban on proprietary trading (that is, when a firm trades for its own benefit). Bart Chilton, a commissioner on the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, one of the regulatory agencies charged with writing the regulations, says one of the most important sections is the one that permits banks to engage in some trading to hedge against risk. Chilton says that depending on how the definition of "hedging" is drawn up, banks could rely on this provision to make speculative and dangerous bets. "We would say, 'Bad banks!'" he notes. "And [the banks] would just say, 'No! We're just hedging!'" Chilton says if "we don't get it right," this could be a giant loophole. "The largest speculators on the planet want a loophole they can drive a large truck through," he says. "It would make the entire Volcker rule ineffectual."

Professor Michael Greenberger, a law professor at the University of Maryland who previously worked at the CFTC, agrees that if the definition of hedging isn't watertight, banks could claim that almost any investment is a hedge against risk.

Chilton and Greenberg point out that another problematic provision concerns "market-making," which is when banks hold inventories of stocks and bonds to meet customer demand. Depending on how the rules define market-

making, Greenberger says, this provision could allow banks to "go out and create the very kinds of trades you don't want banks doing on a proprietary basis." This would "eat away" the entire Volcker rule, he says.

Semantics are worth a lot here. According to Better Markets, a financial reform advocacy organization, proprietary trading represents tens of billions of dollars annually to the biggest banks. It's "the biggest pot of gold for Wall Street," says Dennis Kelleher, president and CEO of the group. As a recent report by Standard & Poor's notes, a stiff Volcker rule would cut $10 billion in combined profits for the eight largest banks.

So it's not surprising that the finance industry is fiercely attacking the rule. "It's relentless, nonstop, day and night lobbying," says Kelleher. "It is absolute total nuclear war that Wall Street is engaged in here."

Chilton feels the pressure up close. "They're not kidding around," he says. "These guys are not a couple of guys out in the countryside. They're the most powerful banks in universe."

Anna Pinedo, a partner at the law firm Morrison Foerster, who advises financial institutions on regulatory issues, says that banks' interest in clarifying the rule is technical. They just want to know "which activities are covered and which are not covered." Others are more dire. Next week, the House Financial Services will hold a hearing on the status of the rule's implementation, at which "[w]itnesses from the private sector will speak to the destructive effects the Volcker Rule will have on businesses seeking access to the capital markets and on individual investors." The American Bankers Association, in a September letter to Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-Ala.), the chair of the House Financial Services Committee, advocated repealing the Volcker section of Dodd-Frank. The industry group claimed the rule would do "harm to credit availability and market liquidity," "impair traditional banking services," and "impose costs on banks." The Association complained that the "scope of activities was far too…complicated."

Paul Volcker would agree. Last year, in his first public comments on his namesake proposal, "I'd write a much simpler [Volcker rule]. I'd love to see a four-page bill that bans proprietary trading."

That's not going to happen, with multiple provisions of the Volcker rule still up in the air at various agencies, according to Chilton. Reformers, though, hope that it gets set in stone soon. Senators Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), the authors of the Volcker section of Dodd-Frank, recently sent regulators a letter telling them to hurry it up.

Greenberg says whether the final rule favors consumers or banks may hinge on Obama's appointments for Treasury secretary, and chairmen of the CFTC and Securities and Exchange Commission. (Bloomberg called the president's recent SEC chair appointment, Elisse Walter, a "Wall Street lapdog.") Greenberg notes that for the Volcker rule, and Dodd-Frank as a whole to work, the Obama administration will have to be more aggressive this term. "We will need support from the President and Secretary of the Treasury to ensure the rules are properly implemented." That is, after the nuclear war is over.

20121206-07	13:50	SteveB	"America's 'Actually Existing' Worker-Owned Capitalism"

"America's 'Actually Existing' Worker-Owned Capitalism" by Moira Herbst, *The Guardian*

Dec. 4, 2012, (http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/dec/04/america-actually-existing-worker-owned-capitalism)

(Little-known fact: about one in ten US workers has ownership in the company they work for. It's a growing trend because it works.)

Owner Joe Lueken in the aisles at the Lueken's Village Foods store in Minnesota. Lueken, soon to retire, is selling the business to his 400 employees. Photograph: David Joles/AP

Last week, retiring Minnesota grocery chain owner Joe Lueken did something unusual: he gave his business to his 400 employees. The story received widespread attention as a heartwarming, It's A Wonderful Life-esque act of beneficence.

But Lueken's decision was no one-off Christmas fairytale. In fact, Bob Moore, owner of Oregon-based cereal producer Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods, did exactly the same thing two years ago.

Their actions reflect the under-the-radar but growing trend of worker ownership in the United States. The surprising truth is that there are thousands of successful, majority worker-owned businesses in the United States. We're not just talking small-scale hippie co-ops: the largest majority employee-owned business is Florida-based Publix Super Markets, a $27bn company that employs 152,000 people. That's more workers than Costco (COST) and Whole Foods (WFM) combined.

At a time of high unemployment, soaring corporate profits and diminishing job quality, employee ownership offers an appealing, viable alternative to mainstream corporate capitalism. It's a way for workers to own "the means of production" without overthrowing the system – and without asking a gridlocked Congress to create a jobs program.

Far from some communist ideal, employee ownership is an all-American third way that both left and right can embrace. Worker advocates can applaud the model's more democratic structure, while free marketeers can admire its entrepreneurial spirit.

Workers who directly reap the fruits of their labor – rather than toil for higher returns for anonymous investors – are more motivated, productive, and creative. According to a study by Harvard and Rutgers researchers, companies with substantial employee ownership often outperform those without, because of lower staff turnover and stronger trust relationships at work.

Fortunately, the idea is catching on. Since 1975, the number of companies with partial employee ownership in the US has grown from 1,600 to more than 10,000 – about 10% of the American workforce. We sorely need these alternatives. For a nation fixated on the idea of individual liberty, Americans have a remarkable tolerance for undemocratic, top-down leadership at our workplaces, where, after all, we spend most of our waking hours.

In recent decades, the playing field between employers and employees – that is, between capital and labor – has become severely warped. Especially at the lower end of the skills spectrum, workers often face a lack of respect by management, erratic schedules, and punishment for trying to form a union. The vast majority of American workers are "at-will" – meaning, you can be fired for any reason. Perhaps your performance has lagged, or perhaps the boss doesn't like your new shoes.

If more enterprises were employee-owned, fewer workers would face this daily exploitation. Labor's share of the national income – now at its lowest point in recorded history – would rise. The ratio of average of CEO pay to worker pay (currently, an astounding 380:1) would shrink. Inequality, which harms society and hampers economic growth, would lessen.

Here's why. In publicly-traded corporations, the board of directors – nominated by a tiny number of outside investors – decides who runs the show and how profits are distributed. In employee-owned companies, workers themselves are the shareholders. Because stock does not trade publicly, the business is insulated from the pressures of the stock market and its obsession with short-term profit. Instead, the worker-owners can focus on long-term growth, sustainability, and fairness.

Part of that focus is executive pay. The base salary of the CEO of Publix, for example, was about $810,000 last year, far lower than than that of his grocery chain CEO counterparts. Publix isn't a slave to Wall Street's tendency to set bloated executive pay packages on expectations that share prices will magically balloon under new leadership.

Another focus is creating and maintaining good jobs for the long haul. While publicly-traded firms slash workers in a downturn, for example, an employee-owned company might choose to cut hours or pay for everyone to avoid layoffs.

To be sure, employee ownership is no panacea. Publix, for example, has faced employment lawsuits, including one over overtime pay. That's why proponents call for workplaces to be not only employee-owned, but also employee-directed. This is a more robustly democratic model in which workers become the board of directors of a company, making all decisions about what it produces how the spoils are distributed. Economist Richard Wolff details these kinds of models in his book, Democracy at Work: he often cites Mondragon, a successful Spanish conglomerate, as an example.

And then, there are the worker-owned John Lewis department stores in Britain, a $13bn-plus business. The company grows at a faster rate than competitors as it defies the low-wage retail business model, and offers workers solid compensation and pensions. The company's purpose, according to its constitution, is "the happiness of all its members, through their worthwhile and satisfying employment in a successful business". Sounds utopian…but it's happening every day.

Another example is Der Spiegel, the leading German consumer magazine, which is part-owned and managed by its employees. As print media collapses elsewhere, Spiegel is still going strong. When I did a fellowship there, a writer told me he and his colleagues skimp on travel expenses because they know it's their bottom line, too.

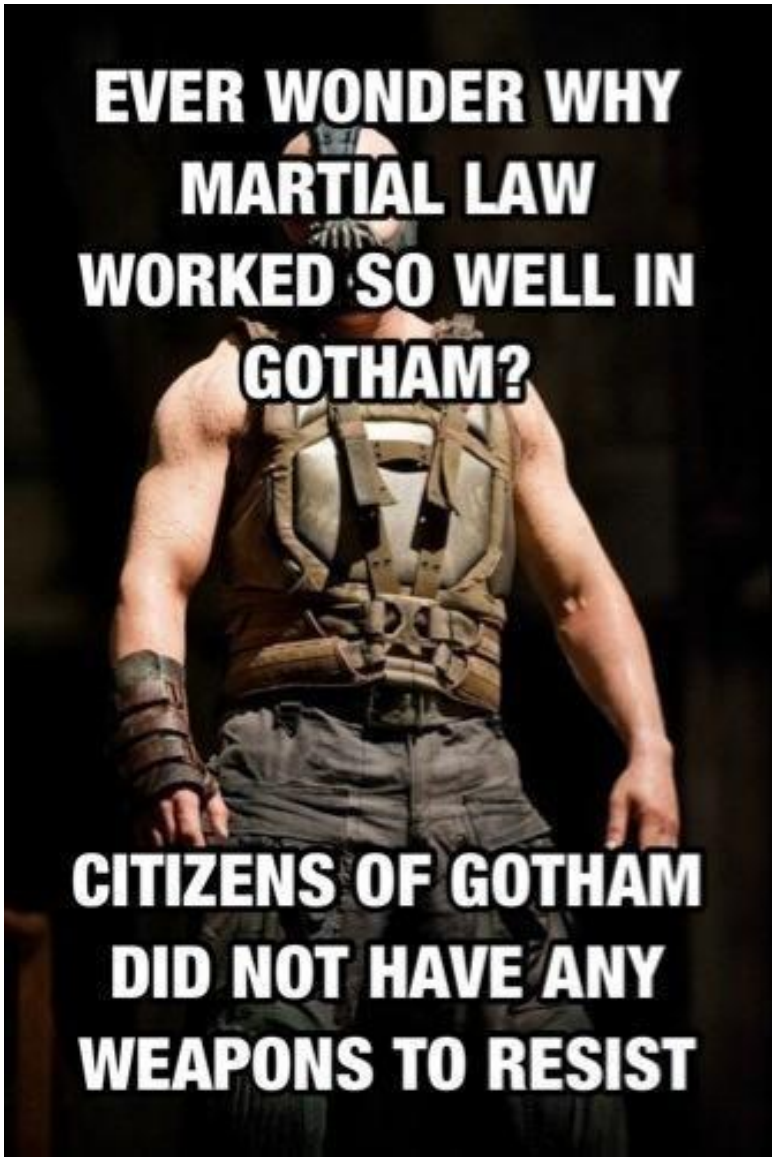
Academic studies show they're not alone. When you and your colleagues own the place, you're not going to steal a stapler or pad your hours. Trust and workplace ethics: isn't that what all those company retreats and office birthday celebrations have failed to accomplish?

20121206-09	21:38	Ann	Video: "How To Wrap a Cat for Christmas"

A happy little video for cat lovers…

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jm3dm5J5r0A.

20121206-10	22:42	Tom	Graphic: Something about Martial Law…



20121206-13	23:57	SteveG	Cartoon: Grover the Grinch

20121206-14	23:58	Marci	Cool Photos #23 ('Yarn Bombing' in Germany)

20121206-15	23:59	SteveB	Photo: Sunrise over Hamilton Island

http://www.donteverlookback.com/2012/08/photo-friday-58-hamilton-island-sunrise/

—Friends of the Middle,
Steven W. Baker (SteveB), Editor/Moderator

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