

LETTER TO LUCY

Dear Lucy:

Communicating by letter is infinitely more rewarding than attempting to carry on coherent conversations when we're face-to-face because there are always people coming and going and we're constantly interrupted. Letters transmit information more succinctly than conversations, especially when more than four people are involved. Whenever a rational train of thought is interrupted by someone who hasn't really thought about a subject, it's necessary to start practically from Genesis to get that individual up to speed. A tremendous amount of time is lost. Probably this is the reason books were invented.

As you know, I've never enjoyed parties or being in groups of larger than five or six at a time. Most social gatherings generate much noise, but the information-transfer factor is roughly equivalent to that of a dog kennel. (Yap, yap, yap!)

Another thing I don't like much about social gatherings is that people get all dressed up, look each other over, and then talk about sex. They don't do it directly, of course; oh, no. But they do it, just the same. "How are your children?" or "I see she's pregnant," or "Are they getting married?" or "They're getting divorced." (Reaction to comments like these depends on your perspective; it's all sex to me. You'll say I'm a dirty old man.)

Then, after discussing the most intimate things in their own and other people's lives,

they get upset about pornography or Gay Rights. There's a degree of inconsistency to which so-called nice people appear blind. In today's world, surely there are enough subjects of conversation or topics for discussion so that it's not necessary to go into our sex lives.

Let's talk about taxes, for instance; what annoys me most about federal taxes is the cut the government takes on what it calls unearned income. I was working, going to school, or in the service for forty-odd years until I took early retirement; the money saved during that time now generates "unearned income". I paid taxes on that money when I earned it. Now they come along and tax the income that money earns.

They also tax my pension. For twenty-four years my employment agreement included the fringe benefit of a pension to be paid me upon my retirement. The pension coming to me now was earned during those years I worked; 'unearned' is a misnomer.

Although payment was deferred until now, in the interim the corporation had the use of my money, interest free, incidentally. Not only does the government inflict this injury upon me, its own profligacy has eroded my purchasing power to the point that these pension dollars, earned while I worked but received currently, will buy considerably less than half what it would have purchased if I'd gotten it when I earned it. Further, it would have been taxed at a lower rate in

those years, since tax rates have constantly risen.

Adding insult to grievous injury, of course, is the way my money is spent once the government takes it from me. It goes to increase the salaries, staff, and living standards of politicians in whose elections I had no part whatsoever and who have no interest whatsoever in my wishes or opinions. Although I vote consistently in every election, hundreds of politicians whose names do not appear on my ballot are being elected. It makes a travesty of Democracy.

My money is also spent to fund programs to which I am violently opposed; worse, very little of it is spent for programs I'd like to see supported. We're like sheep being herded into the fold every spring for our annual shearing. No, not to be slaughtered; our elected officials aren't so stupid they'd kill us off. That would reduce their take.

Were it possible to introduce and discuss at a social function subjects such as this, such get-togethers wouldn't be so distasteful. But nobody welcomes this sort of conversation at a cocktail party; you're supposed to make small-talk and have Fun at cocktail parties.

I've been looking over the information you sent me about income taxes in Massachusetts and will comment on that another time. Try to keep cool.

Love,
OLIVER