

# Incentive Tax League of Pennsylvania

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To: all active Georists,  
re: effective personal communications

Fellow Georist:

I am writing this because I want us to be successful with everything we try to do. It saddens me to see so many people working so hard for such a worthy cause and to see so little return and so little gratification.

I have been involved in the land tax movement for about six years. Before that I had been involved in a number other of causes with a number of organizations. Some of them have been successful in getting public support and some have not.

Many of these were typical liberal causes based on nice sentiments but with no real understanding of how the world operates.

But, in spite of this fundamental handicap, many of these organizations have been far more successful than we have. It is frustrating for all of us to struggle with something so clear and basic while we see powerful movements built around superficial proposals and based on illogical premises.

This frustration preys on the minds of most serious Georists. It creates a feeling of desperation and makes it difficult to work and develop in a healthy atmosphere. Instead, we (myself no less than others) do things that distract us from working and developing--things like lamenting what we don't have or focusing on what we see as faults in others.

My point is that we can make great strides without any of the windfalls, and in spite of all our mistakes, if we can only learn to trust ourselves and work together. There is, I believe, too much separation between projects, between individuals and between organizations for us to be as effective as we want to be.

One reason for this may be that we have dedicated most of our energies into promoting the cause itself, and put too little energy into developing our own talents, skills and internal organization.

What I am proposing, therefore, is that we focus more on organization, so that we can make maximum advantage of individual contributions, and so individuals can get more support from each other. I am not talking about hierarchical structures. I am talking about skills to develop teamwork.

I have been studying different books on recruiting, organizing and fundraising. One of the best statements on why people support an organization is in an excellent book called *Designs for Fundraising*. It sums up the basic motivation of a potential supporter.

"A person wants to feel like a worthwhile member of a worthwhile group."

This statement leads us to two questions: do we make members feel worthwhile and do we make the group appear to be worthwhile?

Most of our energy has gone into showing that our cause is worthwhile. But while people agree with causes, they support groups. With all the energy we have put into perfecting Georgism and showing why it is a great cause, how much energy have we put into perfecting our organizations and showing why they are great organizations?

And how effectively do we make members feel appreciated? In my conversations with other Georgists I get the impression that even many of the staff and board members feel unappreciated.

For a member to feel appreciated and worthwhile, his contribution must be acknowledged and used.

Acknowledging and using financial contributions is relatively easy. But it is harder to do well with the personal contributions of people who are closely involved in the movement. This is where good personal communication skills and good organizing skills become extremely important.

Effective personal communication is an essential element for making our relationships dynamic. If the sender cannot formulate a clear, heart-felt message, then the listener must be able to probe until he can interpret the true concerns of the sender. If this does not happen, true personal communication does not take place, and people cannot know what is appreciated and why, or what is not appreciated and why.

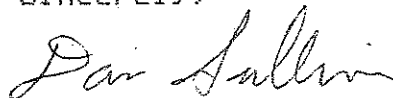
In January, I took what I think was an excellent course in personal communication called Leadership Effectiveness Training. I had read the book several times, and I thought I knew what I was doing already, but I wanted to be able to teach others. I learned, however, that knowing what effective communication consists of is in no way the same as knowing how to communicate. Like learning to play an instrument, this takes a combination of training and practice. I have been working on my skills since then, although I certainly haven't mastered them.

I would like to share those skills those skills with any Georsists that will appreciate and make use of them. I would also like to work on helping Georsists benefit from each other's talents and contributions more, and to develop networks and procedures for having more successful operations through teamwork.

It is with this in mind that I have asked to make a presentation at one of the Wednesday workshops. I would also like to talk to Georsists one-to-one during the conference in hope that we can learn more about one another.

After all, we deserve the best we have to offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dan Sullivan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dan Sullivan