

# Count Your Riches

*By Dennis Knight*

The dollar is a poor way to measure true wealth. I think of the counting room of a billionaire, there for him to riffle through stacks of stocks, bonds and greenbacks, but is he enriched or enslaved? Is he secure in wealth, or insecure in a mirage? And then I think of the times I have found a twenty-dollar bill in the pocket of my blue jeans, and I feel rich. I might blow it on a movie or a book or a nice steak from the butcher shop, but it isn't going in the bank.

We are richest when we observe and engage in treasures that can't be hidden in a safety deposit box or converted to some form of barter to be deposited, invested, accounted for, or worried about. What's more, these gifts come to us tax free. We need a way to keep score of life's riches, and so I propose we henceforth count them in terms of the "rallod", a new unit of currency represented not by a dollar sign but by a smiley-face (☺).

As I ponder this measurement to tabulate the joys of living, I sit at my window on a Sunday morning assessing the snowiest day of the year. I have evaluated the storm for beauty and benefits, adjusted for nuisance and inconvenience, and award myself five thousand rallods (☺5,000) . And for braving its soft fury on the trail I award myself another ten thousand. A lady on snowshoes just trundled by, and that vision is worth a thousand. If this was a workday and the office declared a snow day, I'd give myself ten thousand more. You will notice you earn rather than pay for enjoying life, and inflation is not a problem.

Although it's winter today, my new economic model is really all about stopping to smell the roses, and to that pleasure I think we may assign a value by calculating a hundred rallods for each blossom on the bush, and an extra fifty for every whiff you take. If you are enterprising, you may sniff your way through the neighborhood garden center and come out the other end a millionaire. Then go home, cut the lawn, lie on it, inhale the new-mown fragrance, have a beer and give yourself a ten percent bonus.

My counting system is self-administered and you won't need a CPA. Heck, you won't even need a wallet. You may accumulate rallods however you like and wallow in them like Scrooge McDuck, go out and earn some more, and fall asleep counting them. You should, of course, deduct for brief, unpleasant moments. For instance, driving past a feedlot in the country would cost you a thousand rallods, but you may recoup the loss by going straight to the Dairy Queen.

I hope this summarizes my plan well and that all of you will adopt it as your own. Now go and gather ye rallods while ye may.