

July Meeting Notes

Congressional Candidates Speak to BCTA

Mike Gallagher, candidate for the Eighth Congressional District seat, spoke about his background and principles. He grew up in Green Bay, where his father, grandfather, uncle and sister were obstetricians, delivering over 20,000 babies. About 20 years ago, the family opened a family business, Gallagher's Pizza, where he worked while he was growing up. Immediately after graduating from college, he joined the United States Marine Corps. He served two combat deployments in Iraq as an intelligence team leader. Following that, he spent three years working in the intelligence community in Washington D.C. and served as a lead staffer for the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mike explained that he sees his role as a congressman not to bring plunder back to Wisconsin, but to carry Wisconsin values to Washington D.C. He has a PhD and two Masters Degrees in International Relations.

Mike believes that border control is a national security issue. We need to control our southern border to control drug traffic as well as stopping the inflow of hostile enemy agents. In the Middle East,

we need to form a coalition with Middle Eastern nations to destroy ISIS.

Terry McNulty, also a candidate for the Eighth Congressional District seat, presented his qualifications and commented on issues facing our nation. He retired from the U.S. Army Reserve as a First Sergeant. He served in Desert Storm. He has been operating his own small business for 18 years. He is presently serving as President of the Village of Gibraltar, where he has real experience balancing budgets. He noted that the Village of Gibraltar is one of the two Door County municipalities that lowered property taxes last year. He is concerned about the costs of illegal immigration on municipalities and school districts.

Terry's main issues are: national security, balancing the federal budget, tax reform (simplification), term limits, and benefit reform.

Paul Zeller, Brown County Treasurer, announced that the Wisconsin legislature has enacted a five day grace period for property tax payments, so the second installment of property taxes has a final due date of August 5.

Dave Nelson – Secretary

August Meeting Notes

State Senate Candidate Speaks to BCTA

Eric Wimberger, candidate for the 30th State Senate District seat, presented his background and his thoughts about key issues in this race. He is challenging a 16 year incumbent for this seat. The 30th State Senate District stretches from Ashwaubenon and West Green Bay north to the Marinette area. Eric was born and raised in the Green Bay area. He attended Saint Cloud State University where he was a leader in student government. He was president of the student body. He earned a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice at Saint Cloud State. After graduation, he drove a long haul semi-truck for Schneider National to earn money for law school. He logged more than 120,000 safe miles before enrolling in the Marquette University Law School.

Graduating from Marquette University Law School with a Juris Doctor degree, Eric joined the United States Marine Corps, serving as a commissioned officer in the Judge Advocate General Corps, expanding his legal skills. He gained experience as Senior De-

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fense Counsel and Senior Legal Assistance Officer at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan. He served in Washington D.C. as Attorney Adviser for the Department of the Navy Physical Evaluation Board. He was honorably discharged from the US Marine Corps as a Captain. Returning home in 2010, he opened his own private practice law office.

Eric believes in smaller government and reasonable taxes with the understanding that there is a need for government and a place for it. He stated that the cost of education and student loans are likely to be important issues in this race. He explained that students need to evaluate the potential earnings from a college degree before taking out massive loans to finance their education. This is a matter of personal responsibility. While there is great concern over the rising costs of higher education, there is virtually no effort being made to get a clear eyed understanding of the factors contributing to the increase of educational costs. Redundancy of programs needs to be focused upon. Road construction and maintenance costs are important issues as well.

Dave Nelson – Secretary

Things That Make Us Wonder

The United States of America has long had a reputation of being a country where any citizen could become President if he/ she made up their mind to do so. Perhaps that theory is being proven as fact as some of our recent and/or wannabe Presidents have not really possessed the leadership, wisdom, and inspirational qualities the job requires and to excite the enthusiasm of the majority of citizens,

Not that this is a bad thing. At least we still supposedly have a choice. However, in the age of mass media, daily polls telling us what to think and accept as the truth, and large sums of money from unnamed special interests to pay for advertising with the intent of disgracing ones opponent rather than honestly disclosing your own agenda has tarnished the system and dignity of the office,

Choosing between who you like and trust the least or who you dislike the most is not the way to elect the President of The United States - Democrat or Republican.

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While gun control advocates continue their campaign against firearm ownership, we seem to allow the menace of drugs in our society to be of much less concern. This despite statistics indicating about twice as many people die from drug abuse and overdose as gunshot injuries in the country each year.

Also, a good number of gun deaths can be attributed to the drug trade,

along with the crimes committed just to make money to buy the stuff. There is big, big money involved which likely escapes the legal economy or detection by enforcement officials.

The trend seems to be towards modifying our drug and substance abuse laws with political blessings, including legalization of marijuana use. We note that many of President Obama's executive pardons of felons were for those convicted of drug related charges. Unfortunately our prisons and courts can't handle them all.

Maybe the deaths of high-profile celebrities who are then treated as heroes and the reputation of the Hollywood crowds lifestyle is part of the problem.

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Inflation and the high cost of living have combined to reduce the purchasing power of many to poverty levels. A big problem in search of an answer. The administrations solutions, while no doubt popular to lower paid workers include raising the minimum wage to \$15.00/hr., and expanding the threshold for paying overtime. Two popular proposals with workers but guaranteed to make bad things including unemployment and inflation worse.

We can agree that every worker should be paid fairly for the work they do. However is it the governments or the employers job to determine what a job is worth? Uncle Sam and the states already establish working conditions and safety rules, forcing private employers to cope with onerous regulations that force them to reduce overhead to remain competitive or move jobs overseas.

In other words, It should be up to the employer to keep his workforce content, and up to employees to qualify themselves for what they want to do in life. If an employer doesn't pay enough, they will suffer the conse-

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Articles and views appearing in the "TAX TIMES" do not necessarily represent the official position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association. We want to encourage discussion and input on current issues of taxpayer interest and invite your comments or articles suitable for future "TAX TIMEES." Please send them to the BCTA, P.O. Box 684, Green Bay, WI 54305-0684 or email BCTaxTimes@gmail.com

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quences. There is no shortages of educational opportunities available offering training to better paying jobs.

The first minimum wage was established in 1938 at .25 cents per hour. Since than it has risen to \$7.25 although several states are already higher. Proposals to raise it to \$15.00 would more than double some workers pay, and equate to 6000% in about 75 years. Questions would be, is this the limit, and just where are we going from here? Different parts of the country have different costs and standards of living and people accept that.

Any employer will tell you that some employees are worth a lot more than others, and being forced to give non-producers mandated increases will only be counterproductive. The same with recently enacted overtime rules. Many workers prefer a salary over an hourly wage as it gives them more flexibility and responsibility. Many employers such as retail fields seem to prefer to limit hours worked to 40 or less and hire additional help rather than paying overtime. While civil service and government employees seem able to work overtime rules to the limit to their advantage at the expense of taxpayers, private industry must concern itself with the welfare of its hard working employees and still make a profit. The net result could be fewer people employed but even fewer benefiting from overtime. Another well intended but bad idea.

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Two items prominent lately in the local news. One concerns what to do with the \$17 Million or so being returned from overcharges on the Lambeau Field .5% sales tax deal. Citizens have submitted a long list of ideas including a baseball stadium, an outdoor Olympic size swimming

pool, and other recreational projects: plus many other good ideas and items taxpayers would or could pay for otherwise with increased taxes.

In the meantime we are reading of the need for a new police headquarters, an addition to the county jail, lead pipe replacement, repairs to schools, and a "wheel tax" to raise money for road repairs. Unfortunately the money being returned by the Packers would not go far against all of these projects but we will all end up paying for them. The idea of returning the money to taxpayers keeps getting rejected, and if the funds were simply transferred to municipal bank accounts it would be lost in the shuffle. The fact remains that whatever happens, Joe Taxpayer still pays for it.

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The Wis. Dept. of Transportation has a long shopping list of projects to do, but is a little short of cash with which to proceed. While highway improvements and maintenance are high on the list of taxpayer expectations, the costs of land acquisitions and construction keeps rising in excess of available revenue. The Federal Highway System is facing the same problems.

Wisconsin's gasoline tax and registration fees are already among the highest, but will be an obvious target as people expect better roads.

Why highways are so expensive is obvious when winding through the orange barrels on I-41 on Green Bays west side. This project has been ongoing for at least 4 years and no doubt consumes a large part of the DOT state budget. We have probably forgotten what it was like before they started, but realize improvements were needed and am sure will appreciate it when complete.

Back to costs: We have seen nothing in the news as to whether this project, is below, on, or grossly above the budget established when it

began. The public should know and maybe would have a better understanding of what the DOT is doing or just handing out blank checks.

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The proposal to add two additional floors to the Cherry St. parking ramp for apartment development is interesting to say the least. There would have to be modifications made to the structure for access and utilities to accommodate the future residents along with a loss of some future parking revenue. We should also assume the developers plan on proceeding without the use of taxpayer money.

Otherwise, it could be a great way to enhance the downtown area, with the thought that there are two other parking ramps and a lot of low buildings available for improvement. Any suggestions on how to bring back some of the retail business that used to make the downtown area the destination of choice?

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The "Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995," was enacted with all good intentions of simplifying and streamlining life for the government and its constituents, while saving some money and perhaps a few precious trees along the way. Like much of what happens in Washington, It was soon forgotten about.

Examples are the IRS tax forms which seem to become more complex each year while the IRS wonders why they have a non-compliance problem. The classic example of a paper waster is ObamaCare which at last count had 10,535 page plus a few thousand more pages of explanation to help understand it. The paperwork load dumped on the medical, banking, and security industries in recent years is also an absurdity.

While ObamaCare may have been imposed to help the more unfortunate among us, are they expected to understand it or the options available? How

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many Congressmen have actually read it or comprehend all of the invasive clauses hidden in the fine print?

Anyone who has dealt with a health care provider, investment broker, automobile dealer, or banker to name a few may wonder why there is so much paperwork involved. These are often not the fault of the vender but mandated by some government agency that has sole function is writing regulations and overseeing compliance. In many cases, particularly health care, there is considerable cost passed on to the customer.

The concern is that government could actually reduce paperwork and expense for themselves and the public by being more efficient. Are we correct in assuming that far too many public employees are engaged in crafting new regulations and qualifying people for subsidies. Much of the current campaign blabber we hear from some candidates would only make things worse.

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Several states have passed or are considering resolutions asking Congress for an amendment to Article V of the Constitution allowing states veto power over Federal legislation which could effect them. This is the provision that enforces all Federal Laws across the land regardless of how stupid or unenforceable they may be.

The reason being that basically some laws that are enacted don't apply equally apply to all states. Sounds like a good idea but might take a while.

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While the IRS is probably at the bottom of the list of most peoples favorite government agencies, they do have an important mission which is to try and raise money for Congress to spend. While they are supposed to keep their activities and records confidential, there are "leaks" of information at times. For example, deductions made to non-profits can have political implications and provide useful information to political oppo-

nents

Aside from political mischief, there are many useful things they could do if allowed. The words Income, expense, and deductions are fairly well defined by the tax code and instructions, Understating what is income, or overstating expenses is considered a serious crime for tax purposes, and in many cases can go beyond the bounds of confidentiality, A lot can be learned from examining ones income tax return besides their income. Does their lifestyle expenses match their example?

We certainly are not advocating more IRS harassment as 98% of us are completely honest and timely with our tax returns but what about all the drug dealers and others who take from the economy without paying their share? Look what happened to Al Capone back in 1931 ?

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It may be premature to draw any conclusion from the United Kingdoms exit from the European Union. The negative immediate effect on the worlds stock markets turned out to be short lived.

Daily news items often cause up and down spikes, and we respect the decision of the UK voters so will hope this plays out for the best.

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Recall that one of the first initiatives of the Bill Clinton Administration was to put Mrs. Clinton in charge of revising the national health care system.

She assembled an army of experts who began by assembling a list of all the items which such a plan should cover, for whom, and what should be paid for each procedure or condition. It seems that insurance companies and medical providers were left out of the proceedings, which came to be known as "Hillarycare." By the time they were ready to put a cost to their plan people were no longer interested and it was soon forgotten.

ObamaCare was different to the extent that while the need for available healthcare for all citizens was ac-

knowledged, it was expensive, cumbersome, and imposed without due thought to its ultimate cost or consequences.

A number of major insurance carriers have withdrawn their support, while we have seen nothing publicized as to effect of both Medicare and ObamaCare on the National Debt but the evidence is that it's considerable.

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The progressive playbook for fixing the economy seems very simple and straight forward.

First, raise the federal income taxes on the rich, more specifically highly paid executives and entrepreneurs considerably so they pay their "fair share." The top 1 % of the nations taxpayers already pay over 35% of the nations income taxes and the top 5% pay over 53% but this group is probably capable of raising the prices of whatever they do for a living to pay even more.

They then propose this cash windfall be used to hire people for "good paying jobs" at government expense repairing and updating all the nations highways and bridges which are rapidly deteriorating. All the money left over would be applied against the National Debt. Just like that! What could possibly go wrong with such a brilliant idea?

Things are different than in the 1930,s when FDR employed millions for the WPA to build dams, highways and public buildings. Unemployment then was at 25% and .25 cents per hour was a standard wage. The National Debt was nineteen trillion dollars less than it is today. Even with today's economy, taxing the "rich" at 100% would n't even begin to pay for this scheme. The IRS can tell you that. We do need bridges, highways, and a lot of other things, but we also need responsible people in government to manage our spending. Using a carrot on a stick approach hinting at jobs for all paying construction wages at the expense of taxing the rich and imposing more govern-

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ment is the wrong message for the economy, the country, and a guaranteed plan for disaster.

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Job loss through domestic production being farmed out to overseas producers and foreign imports in general are blamed for much of our job loss in recent years.

While this is no doubt true to a large extent, perhaps we also have ourselves to blame. For years, many of our quality manufacturers were accepted worldwide as the best. As a former owner of a business selling tools and fasteners I know this to be true. We bought directly from domestic manufacturers while refusing to handle products not knowingly made in the USA because we knew that's what our customers wanted.

Go to most any store, and you will find products once proudly made in Wisconsin with "made in China" labels. While there are many reasons (excuses) for this, the net result is the loss of jobs and the flow of income out of the country. Just as important is the loss of American know-how and methods of doing business.

Perhaps the best answer is to look for and honor the "Made in U.S.A." label whenever possible and let vendors know what your feelings are on the subject.

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Those opposed to showing a photo ID when exercising the privilege of voting don't give up easily. We admit it is time consuming, but is probably the best method yet to preserve the integrity of our election system.

We have sufficient examples of fraudulent voting practices ineligible persons attempting to vote right here in Wisconsin without protection for our legal citizens.

The State Elections Board reported only a 12% turnout for the August 2, primary at which a photo ID was not

required. Apparently the other 88% of those eligible were able to come up with other excuses for not voting.

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Article III, of U.S. Constitution gives the Supreme Court authority over other courts and the interpretation of laws and legal matters as they arise and according to the Constitution. Justices are appointed for a lifetime term by the existing President subject to approval by Congress.

In more recent years, with partisan politics and political parties drifting further apart with their platform beliefs and base of support, the Supreme Court seems more political than constitutional, and this will be a factor of concern in the coming Presidential election,

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The choice between a headache or an upset stomach can be a tough call, but that seems to be what the 2016 Presidential race is boiling down to.

We realize that different things are important to each of us, our pocketbooks and our welfare and we may expect and hope for different things from the outcome of the election. However, is what we want necessarily what is best for, the security, welfare, and economy of the country? Sometimes it's a tough call.

So far the Presidential race seems to be concentrating on the honesty and personality of the candidates over their leadership and decision making abilities. There are a lot of qualities to look for in the leader of the free world, and often referred to as "The most powerful person on earth." How history books will treat the winner remains to be seen.

It would appear there is something wrong with the system that has given us two candidates so different from each other and so disliked by their opposition. Have we ever witnessed so much reporting from the media of daily polls, contributions, and public appearances?

While we can't question the accuracy of polls, they can be used influence the undecided. They seldom disclose details of how, where, or who was

polled. A straw vote indicates which way a handful of straw goes if thrown into the wind and sometimes little else.

While gross contribution figures to the candidate can indicate popularity, it is no secret that large donors expect something in return for their contributions. Either legislation favorable to their cause, key appointments from the administration, or an opportunity to dip into federal funds with their business Interests but not necessarily that of the country as a whole.

In any event, we will be glad when the election is over and are sure you will be also.

As usual, lots if things to wonder about.

"Things That Make Us Wonder," consists of taxpayer related thoughts that occur to us from daily news events. We use reliable, published information and statistics, Some items are unimportant and probably not worth commenting about while others could easily be expanded to full length feature articles worthy of future study and action to protect our interests as taxpayers. We try to cover a wide variety of subjects in limited space and perhaps put a different spin on items from what you read in the papers or see on TV. We acknowledge that our perspective on some items in this column may be contrary to some of our readers. However, one of our purposes is to encourage debate, as we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments or suggestions are welcome for inclusion in future "TAX TIMES."

Jim Frink - BCTA

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." . . .
Thomas Edison

The TAX TIMES

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**Things That Make Us Wonder
and more**

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

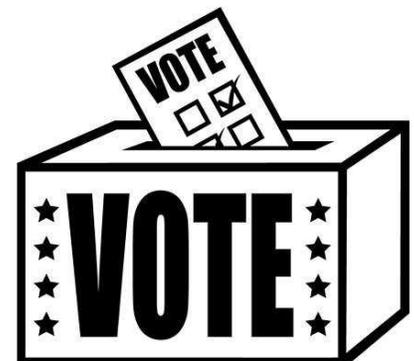
- Thursday - September 15, 2016. BCTA Monthly Meeting.**
12:00 Noon. Doug's Take 5
Guest Speaker - Sheriff John Gossage
- Thursday - October 20, 2016. BCTA Monthly Meeting.**
12:00 Noon. Doug's Take 5
- Tuesday November 8, 2016 Presidential Election - Please Vote**

BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at Doug's Take 5, 3600 Riverside Drive, Allouez.

Meetings are open to the public. BCTA Members, their guests and other interested parties are cordially invited to attend and participate in our open discussions.

COST: \$9.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

Sept - Oct 2016



**SUPPORT THE BCTA
New Members are
Always Welcome.
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