

## Only Four Months Away . . .

Tom Sladek, BCTA Treasurer

There is much at stake in this November's federal mid-term elections. The direction of our national government has clearly changed over the last 18 months and the minority party has not been shy about their "resistance" to that direction.

This is not to say that the party in power is humming along and doing everything well. The last time I wrote the cover for the Tax Times (September), I wrote about the challenge congressional leaders were facing to deliver on the 2016 campaign promises of ending Obamacare and delivering tax reform. The tax reform has been delivered, but Obamacare endures. There have been other significant gains, such as elimination of countless burdensome and expensive regulations, but those were executive-driven, not congressional. Favorable actions related to immigration and judicial appointments, also, have been driven by the Administration with little (if any) congressional support.

So, what will happen in November? Will voters be satisfied with significant tax relief and its boosting effect on the economy, and impressed enough with the administrative initiatives to maintain the current congressional majority? Or, will the House or Senate

undergo a power shift leading to national direction changes?

If the economy continues to grow robustly and consumer confidence remains high, the majority party likely will maintain its control of Congress. However a stumble of economic indicators may be enough for challengers to create a sense of doubt and blame, leading to post-election people with a different philosophy at the controls.

Take a few moments to recall how you felt during the 2008 – 2016 years. Do you want to go back there? I don't.

Also, think about what we're repeatedly seeing from the "resistance" movement. Vicious uncivil public harassment of administration officials. Vulgar in-your-face characterizations of the President and his family members. Campus threats and violence directed at those who speak for conservative principles and policy. Who believes the people engaging in these things should be awarded greater influence over our nation's policies? I don't.

Let's resolve now to keep the control in the hands of the adults in the room. Stay (or get) active. Stay (or get) informed. Use these upcoming elections to make a clear statement that we are not going back.

*Tom*

## Call to Action:

Dear Fellow Member:

July 2018

As our BCTA Vice-President Rod Goldhahn wrote in the last issue of the "Tax Times", I'm making a request for your consideration at this time.

You've likely heard of your BCTA in one or more of various news outlets over the last couple of years. As you know, we're a non-partisan, all-volunteer, watchdog organization founded over 30 years ago to advocate for the interests of Brown County taxpayers. Our public exposure

has invariably been had with regards to a taxation issue of one kind or another, visited upon the taxpayer by one taxing entity or another. We have been described as performing a great service to the community. We continue to be amazed at, and challenged by, the poor decision-making, flawed processes, and lack of control which governments apply to the spending of the public's money. A few years ago, a handful of us stuck our nose in Brown County's attempt to award a contract for a new emergency radio system without seeking adequate competition and competing proposals. Our efforts resulted in saving taxpayers five

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**The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION**  
*In our 33<sup>rd</sup> Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.*

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million dollars on the project. Over the years, other BCTA efforts have included opposition to aggressive public school districts' referenda and continued resistance to politicians' persistent agenda for a Brown County sales tax. As you also know, and as was stated previously, we are all volunteers. We have talented and determined members who can dig into spending and taxing issues, bring them into the public view, and advocate for the taxpayers. Brown County is unlike most of its other 71 sister counties in that there is a "BCTA" at all! And, who else within this community itself is providing this watchdog function?

The BCTA is served by four committees within it, structured on four different levels of taxation: **National; State; County & Local;** and **Schools**. These committees are staffed by BCTA members who want to use their experience and skills to make a difference and who feel strongly about particular issues. Work on these committees consists of identifying issues, formulating public pol-

icy through research, and development and discussion of alternatives. These committees are viewed as being our "rapid action teams". They meet on an "as needed" basis but are always "at the ready". The BCTA needs more individuals who qualify and who are willing to serve on these committees. As Rod stated in the May-June issue of this newsletter, you don't need to be comfortable speaking in front of groups or authoring position statements; we can work around that. But we do want members who can share the load in getting information out to the rest of our organization as well as to the community. If you KNOW – or even THINK - you'd be interested, please contact me. As Rod also wrote, we're in this together!

*Rich*

~~~~~  
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## MARCH MEETING NOTES

### Architect Questions Location of New Exposition Hall

Ben Schenkelberg, an experienced Green Bay architect, spoke about the replacement of the Brown County Veterans Memorial Arena, challenging present plans to tear down the arena and construct a larger facility on the same site. Due to the shallowness of media reporting, he is concerned that the general public is not well informed about what is going on with the replacement of the Brown County Arena.

Mr. Schenkelberg local work includes designing the Door County Maritime Museum, and nine exhibits at the NEW Zoo. He also has an office in Springfield Massachusetts, where he designed the NBA Hall of Fame Museum. He has designed fourteen courthouses in Massachusetts and five jails in Wisconsin. He has designed over 300 public and private schools and numerous city and town halls and fire stations.

Mr. Schenkelberg explained that, in his analysis, the present arena site is too small to support a new exposition center, Shopko Hall, and the Resch Center. The Veterans Memorial Arena should be demolished and

replaced by a high-end parking lot, which could generate \$800,000 of annual revenue.

Mr. Schenkelberg believes that the Brown County Fairgrounds is a much better location for the new exposition center. The county owns 38 acres there, which allows plenty of space for parking. The waterfront access is a unique advantage, not available to any of the other exposition centers in the Fox River Valley. The waterfront would be an unmatched attraction for boat shows, fishing contests, and similar events. With the Fox River cleanup, the riverfront access is becoming much more valuable. It also presents a beautiful view of the river for the new facility

He noted that another advantage of the fairgrounds site is that it will avoid construction shutdowns around the site of the arena and Shopko Hall during construction of the new facility. After the new exposition center becomes operational, demolition of the old arena can take place. Adequate space would remain for continuation of the Brown County Fair.

**Dave Nelson - Secretary**

## APRIL MEETING NOTES

### Candidates Speak to the BCTA

Tom Sieber, candidate for District 88 of the Wisconsin State Assembly and presently serving on the Brown County Board, spoke about County and state issues. He has represented District One (on the far east side of Green Bay) on the Brown County Board for the last six years.

Mr. Sieber stated that he understands that the Brown County jail is overcrowded, but he believes that options to reduce the jail population should be given serious consideration before committing to construction of another pod for the county jail. He said that only 20 percent of the jail occupants are serving sentences. The remainder are moving through the judicial system. Speeding up the judicial process would reduce pretrial and presentencing confinement time, which could have significant effects upon the jail population. He explained that there are few incentives for elected officials in the judicial system to speed up the judicial process. He noted that Dane County was able to delay its jail expansion about a decade by implementing measures to speed up its judicial process and thereby reduce its jail population.

He stated that he believes the Brown County sales tax should not have been enacted without a referendum to allow taxpayers to express their opinions to the County Board. He stated that he made a motion for a referendum on the county sales tax. His motion failed.

On State issues, he is not a supporter of Act 10. He believes that government employees need the workplace protection of a strong union. His wife is a teacher in the Green Bay school system. He stated that he thinks that the benefits of Act 10 could have been realized through the bargaining process.

Green Bay mayoral candidate Nick Mortensen shared his thoughts on improving operations of the City of Green Bay. He stated that the City has 38 computer systems, none of which interact well with the others. He believes that substantial efficiencies could be gained and significant savings realized through integrating the City's computer systems. He noted that his family's business expanded successfully to multiple locations using an efficient, integrated computer system. He believes that the City could benefit from following the Smart City concept.

Dave Nelson - Secretary

## Things That Make Us Wonder

There is no doubt the entire population of many countries would move in to keep you and me company if we would put up big "Welcome" signs, at our borders. Virtually all countries of the world have limits and restrictions on immigration and there is no reason for the United States to constantly be an exception.

This is a problem that costs all of us billions of dollars annually, and presently has become more of a political issue. Yes, most of us are the descendants of immigrants, and in recent years we have allowed large numbers of refugee immi-

grants, but this was usually allowed in a more orderly fashion. We certainly agree that separating family members is uncalled for, and probably unnecessary. This is the kind of stuff that gives us a bad name all over. Have all the facts been presented by the press?

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The popular Roseanne Barr TV show was recently cancelled by her network because it was determined remarks she made were not politically correct and might offend some of their viewers. This was their decision, and although it is not law, we have all learned to live within the confines of political correctness.

However, what really seems to be offensive is the same networks who don't want to offend anybody

feature talk show hosts who do nothing but strongly criticize and make jokes of the President of the United States during the entire length of their monologue. The same goes for much of the printed press.

The first amendment gives us our greatest freedom, but it doesn't mandate what we shouldn't say. That's a matter of decency, common sense, and respect.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Bureau of Veteran Affairs has 350,000 employees for its 1,200+ hospitals, clinics, and other services, to care for our 9 million veterans. The problem is they claim to be understaffed, and there are of-

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ten long delays for patients to see one of their 20,000 physicians.

This sounds like a very typical government agency.

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Tariffs have probably been around since long before the Boston Tea Party, and we all know how that ended. Claiming other nations were taking unfair advantage of our industries, Pres. Trump started out by increasing tariffs on steel and aluminum products, which he claimed were cutting into U.S. production. All hell has broken loose in the meantime with no clear winners other than perhaps China.

Historically, tariffs are initiated to even the balance of trade, to protect natural resources, to protect jobs and the list goes on with individual cases. While most countries probably use tariffs to some extent to protect their interests, things really took off as other nations imposed tariffs of their own to punish the U.S., and it is starting to hurt.

As a result automobiles, both imported and domestic, may cost more along with a long list of imported and domestic products. Inflation caused as a result could result with a few winners, but lots and lots of losers. It is even starting to impact the stock market.

It would be nice if all the trading nations of the world would sit down, sort things out, and start discussing tariffs all over.

\* \* \* \* \*

The cordial meeting last month between Pres. Trump and Kim Jong-un came as a bit of a surprise, but it did seem positive. It would be nice if his country takes its place trading and communicating with the other nations of the world. The North Korean people and the rest of the world have a lot to gain.

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We read in one of our magazines of a software that can change the facial expression, and even the voice pattern of a person. This technique has been used in Hollywood for years, and more recently is appearing in the professionally produced TV political ads. The object is to make ones opponent appear as an evil ogre who can't be trusted in public office. We saw examples of this in the recent spring elections. We can't wait to see what the hucksters will entertain us with this fall.

It seems at one time political ads, were supposed to include the sponsors name in readable type at the bottom, and the candidate was supposed to make a statement giving his approval. What happened?

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Bi-par-ti-san an adjective described as relating to, or involving members of two parties, marked by or involving cooperation, agreement, and compromise between two major political parties. This term is now largely obsolete; See Par-ti-san a noun described as a firm adherent to a party, faction, cause or person; especially one exhibiting blind, prejudiced, and unreasoning

allegiance.

Maybe it just seems that way, but not too many years ago, no matter which party controlled Congress or the White House, legislation could be introduced, debated, and passed based on its merits and what was good for the nation as a whole. It was called something like "Bipartisan support".

Now we have the major parties battling for an even slight majority in either house of Congress so they can ram through legislation of their parties choosing. Not that this is bad, but it cancels out cooperation, and in many cases, meaningful accomplishment.

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It is reported that nationally, health care costs rose from \$147 per person in 1960 to \$10,348 in 2016: an increase of over 7000% in only 56 years. There are a lot of reasons for this, and probably a few that could be corrected if we wanted to truly make health care more affordable.

Examples, health insurance offered by employers was a luxury not offered by all employers in 1961, It only cost a few dollars monthly but healthcare costs were also much lower at the time. Insurance costs began to rise rapidly about 2000, along with hospital costs (and improvements in medicine), and government started mandating tons of paper work to protect patient rights and inform them of procedures

As the cost of medical care, facilities, and insurance kept increasing, there has been very little to keep providers, pharmaceuticals, and anyone else involved from charging more as long as insurance

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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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or the government paid the bill. It's an endless circle.

Blaming the high cost of health insurance is not going to solve the problem any more than Medicare, Medicaid, or the Affordable Care Act, (*Obamacare*). They are all part of the equation towards National Bankruptcy. Obamacare was imposed rather clandestinely, and it appears it was intended more for government control more than affordability.

A possible solution might be to set Obamacare aside, prepare a study group with equal numbers of the country's best insurance and hospital executives, physicians representing various fields, pharmaceutical manufacturers, economists, bankers, and even a couple of politicians from each party and lock up until they had a plan that made sense.

It is obvious some of these people weren't present when Obamacare was hatched. That's my take and wish there were better answers.

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The Green Bay City Council had approved a \$20.00 annual wheel tax for street repairs pending final approval. What next?

\* \* \* \* \*

While it may well turn out that some Russian spy was able to secretly stuff 30 million votes for

Trump in red state ballot boxes during the last Presidential election, we are getting a little tired of blaming them for the results: It's over! Our relationship with Russia is always a bit touchy, but we shouldn't keep going out of our way to irritate each other. Right?

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President Obama may have to hold off on the groundbreaking ceremony at his new \$375 Million Presidential Library for a while, It seems the sight he had picked, near Lake Michigan and the U. of Chicago in Jackson Park, on Chicago's south side didn't sit too well with area residents. A group of professors from the U. of Chicago, and other civic leaders, even though they had been big Obama supporters, were not at all pleased with the proposed siting of the library, the disruption to the park area, and the additional cost to the money short City of Chicago. The group filed a lawsuit in Federal Court to prohibit building the structure on Public Parkland, which already was protected by city laws.

The city would be asked to give up at least 38 acres of prime parkland for parking and infrastructure work including relocation of several main thoroughfares at cost of at least \$175 million. The plan also includes abandoning two popular public golf courses in the park and creating a professional course designed by Tiger Woods.

It was pointed out that there were several other suitable sites in Chicagoland that could accommodate the attraction at far less cost.

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As usual, lots of 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

## Monthly Meetings @ The Village Grille

Monthly meetings are held at **The Village Grille**, corner of Hoffman and East River Drive, Allouez. The location has no stairs or steps, convenient parking, and a room to better accommodate speakers and conversation. There will be three selections from which to choose lunch - each one will be priced at \$10 (including tip.) Lunch is at 12:00 noon with monthly speakers presenting.

# The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association  
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## Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

## BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - July 19, 2018 BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez  
Speaker - Bob Srenaski, BC Jail Presentation  
John Muir, WTAQ

Tuesday Aug 14, 2018 Fall Primary - Go Vote

Thursday - Aug 16, 2018 BCTA Monthly Meeting.  
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez  
Speaker - John Macco, WI Assembly

BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at , at The Village Grille, 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: \$10.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.  
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

July - Aug 2018



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[www.BCTAxpayers.Org](http://www.BCTAxpayers.Org)  
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