

Please join the BCTA, the NEW Patriots,
and the Republican Party of Brown County as we present:

TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

Monday March 23, 6:30pm-8:00pm

De Pere Kress Library

333 N Broadway, De Pere

Whether you are a government official subject to open record and open meeting laws, a citizen wanting to know how to seek records, or just want to understand more about transparency in government, this presentation should be very useful to you.

Our presenter for the evening is Tom Kamenick. Tom is the President and Founder of the Wisconsin Transparency Project, a law firm dedicated to strict enforcement of the state's Open Records and Open Meetings laws. Prior to founding WTP, he was Deputy Counsel and Litigation Manager at the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, a non-profit law firm and think tank dedicated to the rule of law, individual liberty, constitutional government, and a robust civil society.

Tom holds a J.D., magna cum laude, from Marquette Law School and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music Education, high honors, from UW-Milwaukee. Prior to joining WILL at its founding in 2011, he spent a year as a law clerk for former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Michael Gableman, worked as a Tax Consultant at Reinhart Boerner van Deuren, and served as research assistant to the Dean of Marquette Law School, Joseph Kearney. He also is an adjunct faculty member at Wisconsin Lutheran College, teaching undergraduate business law.

Transparency in government is a passion for Tom, so it is not surprising he is a very energetic and engaging speaker. As time allows, he will also take questions from the audience. We hope you will join us for this very informative evening!

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 35th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

JANUARY MEETING NOTES

Bret Healy, President of the MacIver Institute, spoke about the Wisconsin state budget. The MacIver Institute for Public Policy is a Wisconsin-based think tank that promotes free markets, individual freedom, personal responsibility, and limited government.

He began with a basic overview of the state budget. It is by far the most important document that passes in the Wisconsin Legislature every two years. It is the only bill that has to pass. The process sometimes gets a little chaotic and things move quickly.

Governor Walker's last budget was \$76 billion. Now we're at \$83 billion. It's more than enough and we should never have a question about needing more resources and higher taxes. It should always be about priorities and how we can better spend the money.

Mr. Healy did a review of Governor Evers' budget compared to Walker's last budget. Under Governor Walker's last budget, we had \$771 million in bonding. Governor Evers proposed \$2.4 billion of bonding. Governor Walker's last budget was around \$76 billion. Governor Evers proposed \$86

billion and the Republicans settled on an \$83.6 billion.

He questioned the idea that somehow, we're not spending enough on education. How much money is going out and going up forever, from referendums and all the local decisions? Layer on that the savings from Act 10. The school districts aren't spending as much for health insurance and that money is free to be spent elsewhere.

Our K-12 education population had been headed down for a while, but now it's relatively flat. So, we're spending all this additional money on the same number of students or even fewer, depending on your school district. So it's not that we have more kids coming through the system, therefore we need more money. It's just that they're spending more money on the same number of kids. How much of education funding actually gets to the classroom (54 percent in Wisconsin at present)? Maybe we could determine a set percentage that has to go to the classroom, 70 percent or so.

There are still opportunities out there for all levels of government. Mr. Healy also commented on healthcare funding, transportation funding, and noncompetitive bidding.

Dave Nelson - Secretary

Things That Make Us Wonder

One of the things that make our country truly great is the First Amendment to our constitution, commonly referred to as the right to free speech. Even more important is the Constitution itself, which among many other things lay out the requirements and procedures for the people to elect the President and others who will represent us.

The job of U.S. President is likely the most demanding in the whole world. He (she) has literally dozens of critical decisions to make daily

and must depend on people he knows and trusts to help him as any consequences will fall directly on his shoulders.

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The expression, "Dog and pony show" is very well described on the internet as: "a highly promoted, often over-staged performance, presentation or event designed to convince someone for political or commercial ends."

Check it out. Could there be a better description of the recent high-profile attempt to impeach the President? Unfortunately, much of the intended damage has been done. Where we once had a Con-

gress and a Senate which could discuss proposed legislation based on its merits to the people and country as a whole is now controlled strictly along party lines. Witness, the audience reaction at the recent "State of the Union," address by the President.

While on the subject, has anyone put a pencil to what the impeachment affair cost the government? All of Congress was involved, plus the Supreme Court and a bunch of other people and their expenses. Second thought: Maybe better they weren't in session.

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FEBRUARY MEETING NOTES

Brown County Supervisor Bernie Erickson spoke to the meeting. After 16 years on the County Board, he decided not to run for reelection.

Bernie explained that he was the first individual to formally propose the boat ramp at the former Eagles Nest site. He first proposed purchasing the Eagles Nest property in July 2018, almost two years ago. As he looked at boat ramps with the county park director, they identified some real problems. First, the Suamico boat ramp is very difficult to park in. They tried several times to work with the DNR to expand this facility, but it just went nowhere. Bayshore is pretty nice, but there is limited parking there, too. They have some plans. It needs a new break wall, though. Part of the parking lot washed out in one of the practically a hundred-year storms this year, so that must be taken care of. If you really look along the whole west shore and the whole east shore, the Eagles Nest is basically the last piece of property that can be made into a boat launch.

When you go to the launch itself, it will only handle up to 20, 21, maybe 22-foot boats. You'd have four to six launches were you back in and recover, and then you go.

That unsightly building will be gone. The parking lot will be redone. It will also have a kayak launch. People will be able to go there and slide their kayaks in.

It's also going to be a facility for people that don't have boats. If you have a child or a grandchild and you want to go fishing, you'll be able to go out there and fish off the break walls.

Right now, if you're in that location and a storm builds, you've got seven miles to Bayshore or seven miles to Green Bay Metro. A safe harbor at this site would be extremely valuable.

Bernie spoke with Green Bay Mayor Eric Genrich and learned that it's already in the City's master plan that the Eagles Nest facility should become a boat launch.

They have already had one secure grant. They are looking for the second one that very, very possibly could happen this week, early next week, and they're hoping this week that will secure all the money for the purchase. Setting aside the social considerations, the recreational considerations, and all the other things just tax-wise, the only cost that this project represents to local taxpayers would be just the lost opportunity or property tax on that site from the McDonalds.

Dave Nelson - Secretary

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The late-night TV comic/hosts are having a field day picking on and ridiculing Pres. Trump for a few laughs. As if they were better qualified to run the country.

They remind one of William Joyce, an English Citizen, who made propaganda broadcasts against the British from Nazi Germany during WWII, using the name Lord Haw-Haw. He was captured in Germany towards the end of the war and later hung by the British as being a traitor. Good riddance.

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Now that Pres. Trump has this impeachment thing out of the way for a while, he may have a new problem. People want to see his

income tax returns. Assuming he knew this might be a problem when he ran for office he should have been and likely was well prepared.

The IRS normally does not make returns public: regardless of circumstance or whoever is involved. In a case such as this, the IRS would have to be satisfied that all taxable income is reported and that any deductions or business expenses are current and in order. Obviously with all the things that Trump has going this would involve ferreting through several truckloads of paper but the IRS is used to this and I am sure they would be satisfied.

What probably really complicates the work of the IRS, tax preparers, and citizens trying to comply with income tax laws is the Federal Tax Code Itself. At last

count, it was over 70,000 pages long and badly in need of revision. It is full of loopholes and special clauses inserted for this good reason or that at the time but which no longer apply.

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Chicken and pork are staples of the Chinese diet, and we know they have a lot of mouths to feed. These products are produced in quantity in Wisconsin and other midwestern states, and we are always looking for new markets. Since the country has been looking for more income to balance trade, wouldn't this be a possibility? Might take some selling on our part, but maybe China could also be interested in some Wisconsin cheese which could help our dairy industry also.

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A few years ago, an estimate was published indicating that about 25% of area residents resided in apartments rather than a private residence. We note in recent years many new apartments with more on the drawing boards. Not that this is a bad thing, as apartments can accommodate more residents on less land, but what makes us wonder the basic reasons for committing to an apartment over homeownership?

The answers could at least be helpful to future planners.

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The results of this year's Federal Census will be interesting although there will be plenty of reasons to question its accuracy, or for that matter, usefulness. We seem to have no idea of how many illegal aliens roam our streets and doubt if the census takers will identify many. Racial, religious, nationality, political, and a whole bunch of other demographic questions are taboo for census takers to even think about so users likely have to use a SWAG method to get answers.

Trouble is, an accurate census is too important to take lightly. State and Federal funding, Congressional

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for Details.**

and state voting districts, are just a couple of things depending on accurate numbers.

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The high cost of health care, and of obtaining a higher education are two of the top hot campaign topics for this year's Presidential candidates. Both can be big-time budget breakers but sound good to Joe Six-Pack.

Health care and insurance costs have risen dramatically in the past few years. There is no argument as to availability or capability, but here is one observation. The government basically has realized that this was a problem that wouldn't go away, so they passed partial plans through the years.

Medicare and Obamacare come to mind but there were no doubt others. Just like any time Federal money is dumped on the scene, insiders manage to profit. The price of prescription drugs goes up, clinics and hospitals go on a building spree and buy a lot of fancy equipment, and the cost to consumers still remains a budget buster.

This all goes to prove that when government money is made available for any purpose whatsoever, the cost always rises dramatically as costs and the number of recipients lining up for the gravy increases, adding to the original estimated cost.

This analysis isn't necessarily all bad because most people realize that health care and the people who provide it are qualified professionals. The question might be: Do we

want to pay for our own medical care, or pay a lot more in taxes for the government to do the job for us.

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Other popular proposals being touted by some of the more reality-challenged candidates include forgiving student loan debt and free college tuition for all. Correct us if we are wrong but isn't the student loan program one of the most abused, adding about a trillion bucks to the National Debt, with limited tangible results?

In 1955 the minimum wage was still \$.75 per hour, and it took until 2004 to reach \$7.25/hr. where it still stands. There is talk of raising it to \$15.00 and even \$22.00/hr. which some employers have done on their own. We will be the first to admit that \$7.25 or even \$15.00 doesn't buy much today, and there are many places to point fingers. We question whether mandating a higher wage as proposed is the answer. Certainly not the elderly living on a fixed income for one. The ultra-rich would continue doing their thing and we all would wonder where we are headed budget-wise.

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This will be a crucial Presidential election year, with a number and variety of Democrat wannabees anxious to move into the White House. Witness the recent candidate debates which have been more of shouting matches than a display of leadership ability.

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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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While President Trump is accused of stretching the facts at times, the wonderful things we are promised if elected by some of the candidates during the debates may prove to be unrealistic. Funny that one ever mentioned the National Debt. The “truth-0-meter” must not apply during elections.

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Excuse me if I’m wrong, but didn’t the FCC or a similar authority a few years ago, mandate that political commercials either for or against a candidate or cause carry a readable disclosure so that viewers would

know who was trying to influence them.

If so, they neglected to include provisions for enforcement. All of the TV commercials I have seen so far have been followed by a jumble of unreadable gibberish that is supposed to be a disclosure.

Particularly disturbing is the one with the young farmer who says he won’t vote for Trump this election. The commercial needs more explanation.

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As usual, plenty 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 not worth commenting about while others could be expanded to full-length feature articles and study to protect our interests as taxpayers. We try to cover a wide variety of subjects in limited space and sometimes will put a different spin on a subject than you read in the papers or see on TV. We acknowledge the views we present may be contrary to that of some of our readers. One of our purposes is to encourage discussion and debate and we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments and suggestions are welcome.

Jim Frink - BCTA

How are our students doing?

The Wisconsin Department of Education provides a report on the number of freshman students that are attending UW Schools Fall of 2018. They are counted by the High School

they graduated from and whether they require remedial Math or English. The MacIver Institute did an in depth report on this topic recently. The following table includes some of the local results. Report available at the www.maciverinstitute.com/

High School Name	New Freshman	Math Rem	Math Rem %	English Rem	English Rem %
Ashwaubenon High School	82	7	8.5%	*	*
De Pere High School	126	20	15.9%	*	*
Greenbay East High School	45	17	37.8%	9	20.0%
Notre Dame Academy	57	11	19.3%	*	*
Preble High School	139	21	15.1%	13	9.4%
Southwest High School	74	15	20.3%	*	*
Bay Port High School	154	9	5.8%	*	*
Pulaski Community High School	80	9	11.3%	*	*
West De Pere High School	74	10	13.5%	*	*

Table 1

Source: WI.edu Fall 2018 Legislated-Remedial-Course-Report.pdf

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 \$12 (including tip.) Lunch is at 12:00 noon with monthly speakers presenting.

The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association
P. O. Box 684
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Feb Meeting Notes

Things That Make Us Wonder
and more

Meeting Location

The Village Grille, Allouez

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - **Mar 19, 2020** BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez

Monday - **Mar 23, 2020** De Pere Kress Library 6:30pm
Transparency in Government Presentation

Tuesday - **Apr 7, 2020** Spring Election - Go Vote

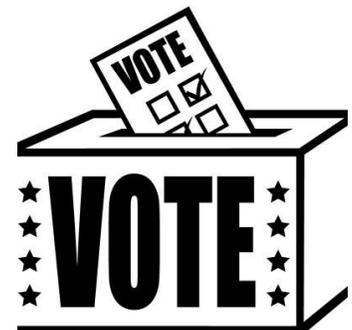
Thursday - **Apr 16, 2020** BCTA Monthly Meeting.
12:00 at The Village Grille, Allouez

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: \$12.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

Mar - Apr 2020



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