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# ◆ The TAX TIMES ◆

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Volume 17, Issue 5

Newsletter of the Brown County Taxpayers Association

May, 2002

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## SOME TAX THOUGHTS

I was reading one of our State Representatives notes the other day when they mentioned the sales tax in Florida and how much less taxes a person would pay if they lived in Florida. I thought I would do a comparison of Florida to Wisconsin for individual taxes. Individual taxes include sales taxes, property taxes and income taxes.

Florida has a 6% sales tax and counties may add ½%, 1%, or 1.5% as each county determines. Wisconsin has a 5% sales tax and counties have an option to add ½%. Some counties around Milwaukee also have a .1% sales tax in addition. Brown County has a ½% tax for the football district. Both states exempt medicine and food from the sales tax. Money spent on taxable items of \$25,000 a year would cost \$500 more in Florida.

For property taxes I had to do a comparison on home values and the taxes on the home. I used my house in Green Bay compared to my sister-in-laws' home in The Villages in Florida. We have comparable homes and I pay \$1200 more in property taxes each year. She pays \$12/month for trash pickup twice a week. This would bring the difference to about \$1050 a year.

The big difference is in income tax. Wisconsin quickly reaches 6.5% on income while Florida has no income tax. Many people say the Florida intangible tax will offset the income tax. The intangible tax is on securities owned by the resident and included stocks and bonds, etc. The intangible tax rate is \$1 for each \$1000 of securities with a \$400,00 exemption for people filing joint returns. For one million dollars in securities the tax would be six hundred dollars. Exempted are funds in qualified retirement accounts like IRA's and 401k's.

I did a quick analysis and realized that I am spending about \$750/month for the privilege to live in Wisconsin. This brings me to the next thought about tax cuts and general thoughts different people have on these cuts. Let me relate this in the form of a story.

I was having lunch with a friend last week and the conversation turned to the government's recent round of tax cuts. "I'm opposed to those tax cuts," the retired college instructor declared, "because they benefit the rich". "The rich get much more money back than ordinary taxpayers like you and I and that's not fair." "But the rich pay more in the first place," I argued, "so it stands to reason that they'd get more money back." I could tell that my friend was unimpressed by this meager argument. Even college instructors are a prisoner of the myth that the "rich" somehow get a free ride. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Lets put the tax cuts in terms everyone can understand. Suppose that everyday 10 men go to dinner and the bill comes to \$100. If it was paid the way we pay taxes, the first four men would pay nothing; the fifth would pay \$1; the sixth would pay \$3; the seventh \$7; the eighth \$12; the ninth \$18; and the tenth (richest man) would pay \$59.

The 10 men ate dinner in the restaurant every day and seemed quite content with the arrangement until the owner threw them a curve. Since you are all such good customers, he said, "I'm going to reduce the cost of your meal by \$20." The first four eat free and are not affected. If the \$20 is split 6 ways for a savings of \$3.33 each then man 5 and man 6 are paid to eat. The restaurant owner suggests it would be fair to reduce each mans bill by the same percentage they were using to pay for the meal. The fifth man now pays nothing. The sixth man would pay \$2 and the seventh man would pay \$5. The eighth man would now pay \$9 and the ninth man would pay \$12 and the richest man would pay \$52 instead of \$59. Outside the restaurant the men start to compare their savings. "I only got one dollar of the savings and he got seven dollars," said the sixth man. "Yeah, that's right," exclaimed the fifth man, "I only saved a dollar too. It's unfair that he got seven times more than me." "That's true," shouted the seventh man, "why should he get seven dollars back and I only got two dollars. The wealthy get all the breaks." "Wait a minute," yelled the first four men in unison, "We didn't get anything at all. The system exploits the poor." The nine men surrounded the tenth and beat him up. The next night he didn't show up for dinner, so the nine sat down and ate without him. But when it came time to pay the bill they were \$44 short. That is how the tax system works. The people who pay the most taxes get the most benefit for a tax reduction. Tax them too much and they may not show up at the dinner table anymore.

It looks like I will be eating more meals in Florida over the next few years.

*Frank Bennett, President*

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**The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION**  
**Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government**

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## THE WISCONSIN STATE AIR FORCE.

### Are there ways to save the taxpayers money!

Since the end of World War II, the use of private airplanes for personal and business use has expanded rapidly. However, since the number of individuals and other entities able to afford this luxury is still rather limited, they are often prestige symbols for the wealthy, or used by corporations to fly their ex-

ecutives here and there for official business and perhaps a tax deduction in the process. Private aircraft are also used for commercial purposes such as air ambulances and charter, police and rescue, and countless others. They have become a way of modern life.

No doubt there are many examples where the rather high cost of this luxury can be justified and that is up to those paying the bill or the IRS determining the deductibility of the expense to approve.

However, when this becomes an expense, a rather large expense at that, passed on to taxpayers who have little to say about it, their should be cause for alarm. Especially when it is the already overburdened taxpayers of the State of Wisconsin who are paying the bill.

The table at the left lists all of aircraft currently owned by the State of Wisconsin along with their original costs, annual overhead charges, total flight hours during 2001, and the average hours and hourly cost for overhead based on numbers provided by the state.

We acknowledge that the state is a huge and complex organization with many responsibilities to its citizens. We have long accepted the fact that state owned airplanes are used to patrol our highways, protect and monitor our wildlife and other resources, and transport our busy officials to important functions that they must attend. Our 56,000 sq. miles is a lot of territory to cover by other means.

How much is enough, however? A list provided by the states Air Services Division reveals that at present, there are 30 aircraft owned and operated at taxpayer expense by the State of Wisconsin. Of these 30 planes, 16 are assigned to the DNR, 8 to the Dept. of Transportation, and 6 to the Dept. of Administration.

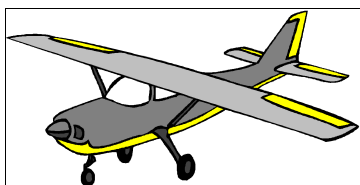
We do not dispute the necessity of the existence of an air fleet, and are sure that our elected officials would be able to justify the expense every time a plane leaves the ground. ***Actually, the biggest expense seems to be that they don't leave the ground!*** Based on the information provided us, it appears the expense to taxpayers far exceeds the value received.

For example, of the 16 planes assigned to the DNR, they are charged a total of \$401,849 per year by the Dept. of Air Services for overhead expenses. This amount does not include fuel, pilots or storage. *Each of these planes average less*

than 200 hours use per year, or 3.8 hours per week. With an average overhead cost of \$138 per flight hour, plus pilots, fuel and storage, even this limited use is rather expensive. All of the DNR planes are over 20 years old, and due to the low original cost indicated, were possibly purchased used by state. With several of them, the annual cost of upkeep exceeds their original purchase price. It would seem that considerable savings could be realized if somehow more hours were flown on fewer planes and some of the older planes disposed of.

The numbers are basically the same with the 8 planes assigned to the Dept. of Transportation. Each plane is used only an average of 4.1 hours per week, but each hour costs an average of \$129.00 plus fuel and pilot.

The real expense, however is run up by the Dept. of Administration and their current fleet of six aircraft. These planes are also used by the UW system.. For example, during 2001, they took delivery of 3 new 9-passenger turbo jets at a cost of \$3,099,333. each. The total overhead of these 6 planes during 2001 was \$1.5 million, plus another \$750,000 for pilots and benefits. Pilot expense amounts to \$425 for each hour flown. There are commercial airlines serving smaller cities with similar fleets of aircraft that operate more efficiently.



It is not a matter of whether these numbers compare favorably with private or corporate owned aircraft but whether it is a proper expense to pass on to the taxpayers. Especially at a time when the state budget is drastically overextended and difficult cuts are being proposed.

To have 3 identical \$3 million aircraft available for 4-5 hours use each week seems unnecessarily extravagant, and poses a poor example for other units of government being pressed to control their spending habits. No doubt the decision to make this investment was made after due consideration, and under better economic circumstances. None the less it represents arrogant use of taxpayer dollars. One option would certainly be to cut down the size of the fleet to get rid of some of the older planes and get more use from the other. This could bring the overhead cost per hour down considerably. Sen. Welch has suggested that planes could be leased or rented at less cost to the taxpayer, and this is certainly an option that should be explored. There should be plenty of less expensive options available for counting deer, planning highways, or ferrying the Governor and his aides to speaking engagements. Madison has good commercial service, and perhaps more UW and state officials could get off of their pedestals and fly coach with the rest of us once in a while.

We realize this is but a small item in the State budget, but it seems to indicate the way government has grown out of proportion to its purpose during the past few years. Expense items are added with little consideration to present and future costs, or to their effectiveness in serving the citizens who are being represented. How many employees have state owned vehicles at their disposal? When one sees all of the new state office buildings that have been built in Madison during the past few years, you wonder what everyone is doing for us that is so important. Do we need all of the departments and bureaus and divisions that have been created? Are we getting what we are paying for? There should be a lot of opportunities to save some money without cutting necessary services.

Jim Frink and Jim Smith - BCTA

## The Arkansas “TAX ME MORE FUND”. Would It Work In Wisconsin?

Wisconsin is not alone with revenue shortfalls created by reckless spending complicated by a sluggish economy. In fact, several states have problems even greater than ours, and are all being dealt with individually as circumstances permit.

Despite Wisconsin’s dubious reputation as being the third highest taxed state in the nation, there is very little coming from Madison to truly remedy the situation. We are still being fed the results of “polls” by the media claiming that our citizens have a willingness to accept even higher taxes to finance “quality of life” items. Considerable coverage is given to problems created by the lack of funding to government units, much of it imaginary, while little concern is shown for the taxpayers who have other problems to cope with.

Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas had a different idea. Last December, he created a “Tax Me More Fund”, to allow those who felt that higher taxes were necessary to provide state services could make voluntary contributions payable to the State of Arkansas. The idea was that those who believe that higher taxes were in order to pay for existing and proposed programs could “open their wallets” for the sake of the “vital” programs they held dear.

At last report, a total of \$1,900 had been raised, which indicates Arkansas residents believe they are already taxed enough. At least that will probably go farther in Arkansas than it would in Wisconsin as their tax rates are somewhat less.

While we don’t advocate moving to Arkansas as a place to live because their taxes are lower, several demographic comparisons compare fairly well with other parts of the country. It is becoming more popular as a place to retire to.

In 2000, Wisconsin residents spent 13.02% of their income on state and local taxes, while Arkansas residents paid only 10.3%. In other words, in Arkansas you get to spend about \$2.70 more of every \$100 you earn as you want.

JF

“I went through three years of budget surplus, and that was difficult because every special interest group wanted that money.” . . . Jesse Ventura

“Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies.”

. . . Groucho Marx

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**www.BCTaxpayers.Org**

## DFI Sets Example For State Government.

Why is it so hard to reduce state spending? Here's one reason: every single spending item is backed by an interest group. Try to reduce or eliminate the spending item, and that interest group will do whatever they can to oppose you.

Once a program exists, it becomes an entitlement. Try to cut or end that program, and you're taking something away from somebody, even if it's just a job in the bureaucracy. Trying to take something away is a weak position to be in. It's easier to defend the spending than to defend the reduction.

The same can be said for government agencies. Government agencies are staffed with people whose careers center around that agency's purpose. Naturally, these people believe that their work is important. They also make their livelihoods at it. When spending reductions come around, that can get in the way. It's the agency's employees who understand that agency the best, and who would best know where reductions could be made. But they come to believe that reductions in their area would hurt, more than they would help.

I'm speaking in generalizations here, of course. There are exceptions, notably in the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. Last year, DFI's directors decided to try something new. They made it possible to create a limited liability company (an LLC) over the Internet, instead of through the mail, or in person. Wisconsin is the first state in the nation to allow online creation of an LLC.

An LLC is one of two basic kinds of businesses - the other is a domestic corporation. Domestic corporations have stockholders, controlling boards, things like that. An LLC doesn't have those - Mom and Pop grocery stores, for example.

Wisconsin averages between 10,000 and 12,000 new LLCs every year. Last year, about 85% of those were created online, rather than through the old methods of filling out forms and making phone calls.

That means less paperwork, less time spent processing paperwork, less money spent on man-hours, postage, overtime. It's also cheaper and easier for the entrepreneur - as a result, Wisconsin will be a little more attractive to new businesses.

DFI didn't ask for extra money to create their website. Instead, they did it on the money they already had. They could do that, because they knew the site would pay for itself, eventually, and it has. Since the site went online and began processing applications, DFI has been able to eliminate five limited term employees, and has reduced overtime pay by between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

One could argue that that's a drop in the bucket, compared to the billions Wisconsin spends every year, and one would be right. It's the attitude at DFI that gets my attention.

Interest groups never say their program can do with less. Government agencies never say they can do with less. But that's just what DFI did. They voluntarily reduced their expenditures, for the sake of fiscal responsibility, and for the sake of making life easier for the people they're supposed to serve. A lot of other government agencies - state, local, and federal - could learn a little something from that.

**State Representative Frank G. Lasee**

## April Meeting Notes.

Monthly meeting April 18, at the "Glory Years."

State Representative Frank Lasee presented his outlook for the state's budget problem, a deficit of \$1.1 billion. He does not support using \$700 million of tobacco settlement as a one time fix. He anticipates a \$2 billion problem in the next budget if real state spending issues are not addressed. He explained that the proposed early retirement program for state employees is just a gimmick, saving \$60 million in the short run, but costing \$400 million later. A lame duck budget session after the November election is a possibility.

The University System's low tuition, its reciprocity deficit with surrounding states, and its extensive number of campuses will need careful examination, he believes. In addition, state land purchases require additional scrutiny. Currently, all bonding is aggregated, so the debt service of individual projects is not identified.

Copies of a report, "**50 STATE COMPARISONS**", just published by *Taxpayers Network, Inc. (TNI)* were distributed. This TNI report, based upon data from the Tax Foundation, compares taxation, economic, demographic, government, and education statistics from the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The report confirms Wisconsin's No. 3 ranking in the U.S. for state and local taxes as a percent of income for 2001. Comparing the wealth friendliness of states, Wisconsin ranked 47th for families and 50th for retired people, which helps explain why senior citizens often move to tax friendlier states in the South. Wisconsin's 27.3 cents per gallon gasoline tax is the second highest in the country.

Wisconsin ranked 10th from the top in public school spending per pupil, \$7,886 per pupil in 1999-2001, \$1,259 above the national average of \$6,627. Illinois ranked 26th at \$6,149 per pupil. This is very interesting as the average pay for public school teachers in Illinois was \$46,486 compared to \$41,153 for Wisconsin teachers. Illinois public schools appear to operate with substantially less overhead.

The mystery of Wisconsin's often-touted high performance in the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) was explained by the statistics for the top four states for 1999-2000:

Obviously, the fewer (and better) students that are tested, the better that particular state will look. Interestingly, with its much lower costs per pupil, Illinois ranked 6th while testing 12 percent of its graduates.

On the positive side, the report shows Wisconsin has the lowest rates for homeowners insurance in the U.S., and are among the lowest 10 states for personal auto insurance.

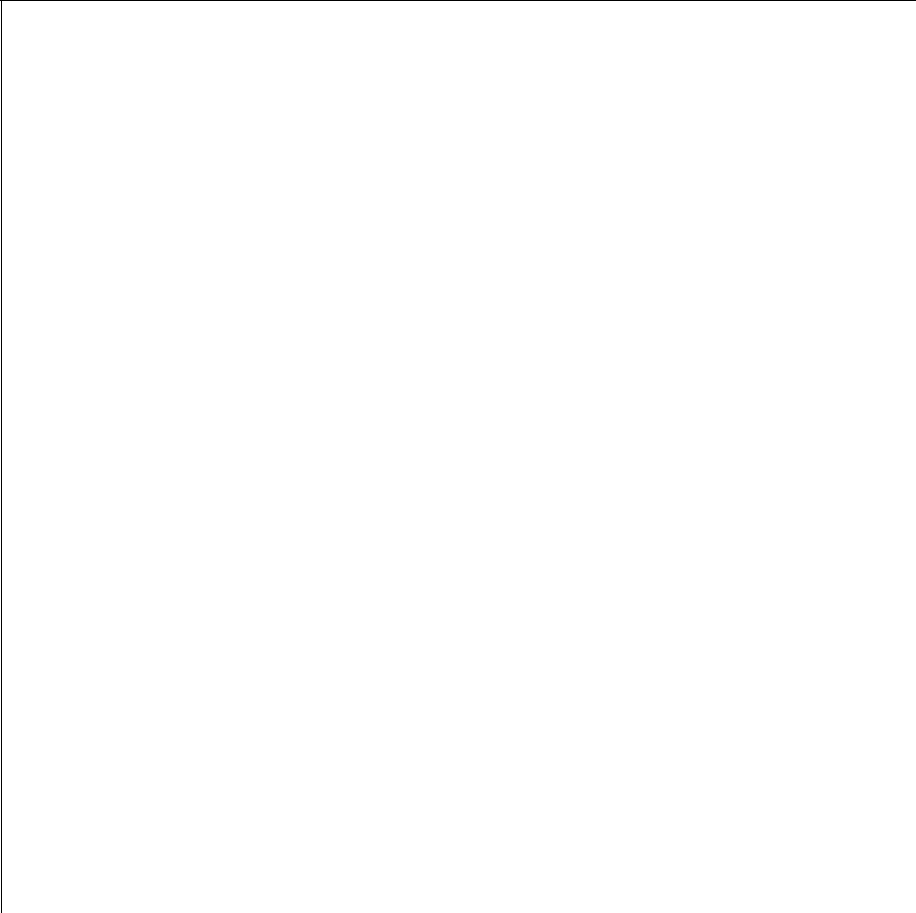
Copies of this report are available from TNI, <http://TaxpayersNetwork.org>. The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2002, at the Glory Years. Details on the back page of this **TAX TIMES**.

**Dave Nelson – Secretary**

Rank	STATE	% of graduates taking exam.
1	N. Dakota	4%
2	Iowa	5%
3	Wisconsin	7%
4	Minnesota	9%

### How Much Do You Pay In Taxes And Where Does It Go?

The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance recently reported that of every \$100.00 in wages earned by Wisconsin workers in 2001, \$37.20 went for payment of taxes. Obviously some paid more and some less due to income brackets and applicable deductions. This represents an increase of \$1.80 per hundred from 1999 when the average taxes paid were \$35.40 per \$100.00 of income.



The study reported that average personal income in the state rose 5.3% from 2000 to 2001, which was somewhat faster than the increase in taxes during that period. However, increased taxes means that less of your earnings increase is available for other necessities and discretionary items.

In addition, the price of many items that we buy has increased at a greater rate than overall inflation during recent years. Examples are gasoline and energy, attending Packer games and housing. Local taxes have grown faster than state and federal taxes, averaging 8.1% increase the past 10 years.



"A tax loophole is something that benefits the other guy. If it benefits you, it is tax reform." . . . **Russell B. Long**  
"We hang all the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office."  
. . . **Aesop**

### MARCH MEETING MINUTES.

Monthly BCTA meeting March 21, 2002 at the Glory Years. VP Richard Parins reported on a recent legislative conference he attended which discussed the states budget problem. It was noted the deficit could double in the next budget cycle unless adjustments are made.

After discussion, the directors approved a resolution commending the Brown County supervisors who voted against approval of the 2002 county budget which included several new spending initiatives.

Jim Frink presented key findings of the 2002 BCTA membership survey.

**#1 – Water supply:** 66 percent of the respondents felt that the city and suburbs should cooperate to build a new pipeline, sharing their facilities with a management concept similar to that used by the Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District.

**#2 – Wisconsin’s \$1.1 billion budget shortfall:** 74% agreed with the statement, “Across the board spending cuts, including school aids and shared revenues, should be made in order to balance the budget.” There was no support for tax increases as an option

**#3 - Public funding of political campaigns:** Opposed by 93.1%.

**#4 - A .5% sales tax for county purposes in addition to the Lambeau Field Tax.** Opposed by 97.3% of respondents.

The poll also indicated that more research and thought should go into the dredging of the Fox River and construction of the proposed Brown County Mental Health Center. Respondents indicated that more public money could be spent on items such as the water supply , infrastructure, police and fire protection

Several members aired grave concerns about the number of new employees Brown County has hired, and raises for existing employees which represent a commitment to substantial future spending.

The directors agree that there are no objections to any candidates using information from BCTA publications. This information is developed to enlighten all county citizens as well as BCTA members. Therefore, there can be no objection to candidates for public office disseminating this information.

**Dave Nelson – Secretary**

## THINGS THAT MAKE US WONDER.

The Post Office is ready to impose another large price increase. A whopping 3 cents per letter. Their justification is the poor economy, competition from other sources, and added costs due to 9/11. The increase should bring in more than they claim they're losing, but they will probably take care of that in a hurry. Unfortunately the cost of postage is a big factor for many businesses, and this will be passed on to customers. What have other business establishments been forced to do when business drops? Imagine what would happen to the cost of living if every employer used the same philosophy as the Postal Dept.?

The DNR has delayed replacing the Allouez Ave. bridge over the East River until July rather than April as originally scheduled. This will also postpone the inconvenience users will endure during reconstruction. The reason given was that April work would disrupt the hatching of "Red Sucker" eggs. Aren't these the same fish that the DNR has to get rid of from time to time because they cause other problems. Wouldn't it be ironic to find these same suckers are what is responsible for the destruction of the Yellow Perch in the Bay? Meanwhile, the DOT is spending \$70-80 thousand to protect endangered snails from being run over on their highway 57 project - Escargot anyone?

One suggestion we heard for the DePere bridge dilemma would be to charge a toll on the present bridge. It is likely no one would want to pay it and go miles out of their way to avoid it. It could then be determined that a new bridge is not necessary at all.

While on the subject of bridges, whether spending a half million taxpayer dollars and closing the Walnut St. bridge to 15,000 cars a day for 6 weeks to accommodate the Fox River trail is probably a question of whether or not you utilize the trail. It has received a lot of use and when completed should make the riverfront more attractive. About 20 years there was a survey to determine the

needs of the city and improving the appearance of the riverfront came in first so this is a positive but expensive step in that direction.

The Packers were thinking about retaining a consulting firm to figure out how to sell more license plates to "save the taxpayers money" on Lambeau Field. Wow! It seems the Packers have already maximized every possible source of income for their project including their 1997 stock sale, exorbitant seat license fees, \$9 million gift from the state, and county sales tax so that everyone pays for the balance. Already there are more special plates available in Wisconsin than other states and you can only buy one for your car at a time. It is questionable if sales of all of the vanity plates together equal the standard version which many people already consider overpriced.

It is ironic that the last thing that President Bush did before leaving on a political fund raising campaign was to sign the campaign "Finance Reform" bill. While it would seem that our president and other elected officials should always have more pressing and responsible things to do than promote partisan politics, we wonder what changes will actually take place. Like most legislation, it appears the bill the president signed is full of little clauses that could actually make the playing field less level than it is, and take more responsibility away from the citizens in being able to choose the people who represent them. We will have to wait and see.

If indeed campaign finance reform becomes an accepted reality, it will be interesting to find how million dollar state senate campaigns and the like will be financed. Using public money for this purpose is unacceptable. For years we have been seeing a lack of qualified candidates for public office, and this is probably somewhat due to expense involved in return for the meager rewards of the job. One fear is that opposing candidates will spend more time scrutinizing their opponents finance sources than promoting their own

qualifications for the job. Even the media which has criticized our present representatives for not supporting current reform legislation admits that present proposals are not perfect, and there is no question that any loopholes will be quickly exploited. We congratulate Rep. Green and others who feel that better legislation should be drafted before signing on.

While still on the Campaign Finance subject, "Newsweek" magazine reported that Mike Bloomberg spent \$69 million of his own money to be elected mayor of New York. This equated to \$69 per vote and there were no other significant contributions. Could reform allow this and still keep everyone on a level playing field?

The 2002 spring election is now history, and local and county governments move on. The spring election is most important for taxpayers to show their disapproval or agreement for the way our local municipalities, county and schools are managed. This election covered the three factors which compose most of your property tax bills, and that is the item that people complain about most. It was most disappointing that even with the DePere Bridge referendum, only about 17% of the eligible voters in the county bothered to vote. The poor turnout makes the voters the "weakest link" in our system. No doubt this poor turnout helped some of the incumbents to keep their seats, and in some cases contributed to their downfall. Live with it. If you didn't vote, don't complain about the results.

While on the subject of elections, it is certainly a reflection of apathy when only 7 of the 26 Brown County supervisory districts even required a primary. Perhaps open scrutiny of your personal life and actions or special interest groups who seem able to have their puppets placed in office discourages qualified candidates from coming forward. Even a town election takes effort and costs money. Let's hope that new campaign finance laws don't make a bad situation even worse in the future.

The Milwaukee Brewers have been off to a poor start this year both on ~~the field and in the stands.~~ How soon before they need another new stadium to turn things around?

Through a little gimmick called "indexing", the state is able to increase the price of gasoline each year without the inconvenience if obtaining legislative or the governors approval. This is supposed to be based on inflation, and this year it went up another cent on April 1, which means that we have about the highest gas tax in the nation. One bright spot, however, is that our money hungry state government has never enacted "indexing" on our sales or income taxes. How is it that each year we pay more but seem to receive less for the taxes we pay?

It is hard to believe one solution our state representatives were able to come up with to solve the state budget was to allow a "eligible" state employees to take "early retirement" as early as age 48. This apparently would include generous taxpayer supported retirement pay and top of the line insurance benefits. Benefits that the average taxpayer paying the bill can only dream about. Reducing the state payroll would probably be the first thing to do in reducing the budget, but it seems the scheme here is to replace these retired workers with new ones. This will create another level of worker receiving insurance benefits and retirement benefits when they retire. And on and on. This sounds like another one of those deals that got us into this mess in the first place and will require a lot of explaining to make sense.

Interesting that the former chancellor of UWGB lost his new job in Maryland due to extravagant spending of ~~the schools money.~~ Apparently he had the same problem while in Green Bay but it was kept secret from public discussion. It is difficult to understand how anyone who is given public trust can have so little respect for money and be allowed to get away with it. Isn't there a board of regents and a budget responsible for what goes on? We would like to think this is the exception rather than the rule but sometimes wonder. It should make no

difference if money for higher education comes from tuition fees, taxpayers, or rich alumni. It all goes for the same purpose, and with the University system making the biggest claim for more taxpayer dollars in our state, it would seem that a much higher level of accounting would be in order. Agree?

No doubt the Packers considered all aspects of the Levy Restaurant bid to cater at Lambeau Field. There will be more going on than previous, and the fans in the stands as well as the luxury boxes will benefit. While PMI was probably criticized mostly for the lack of disclosure of their profit and loss records while operating in taxpayer supported facilities, they deserve a lot of credit for the success of events held at Lambeau Field, the Arena and other venues in which they participated. We must remember that sharply increased revenue from concessions is one of the reasons for the Lambeau Field renovation, and we hope that not too much of it will be heading for Chicago rather than staying in Green Bay to pay salaries and bonuses.

Although not really a taxpayer issue except for law enforcement costs, there has been a lot of comment lately about how rude people have become. Usually no one would deliberately cut in front of someone waiting in line for a checkout but this is no problem when they are driving their cars 70 miles per hour and decide to occupy the space you leave behind the car in front of you for safety purposes. In many cases this is simply not respecting the rights of others by pushing them around, and sometimes (often) we get the impression government is doing the same thing to us. Laws and privilege given to one group often take certain acknowledged freedoms from others. In the meantime, our tax bill keeps going higher and higher. Agree or disagree there is a lot to wonder about. JF

## Legislature Avoiding Their Responsibility.

The Badger Budget has been Enron-ed. Back room, closed-door decisions and inside trading of favors is leading to a shredding of public confidence, and an evasion of legislative responsibility. If a private company behaved like this stockholders and media would scream. Outrageous?, - this is what happened at Enron! This is how the budget for the state of Wisconsin is put together.

Is this what Senator Gary George means when he says citizens are being Enron-ed? Only an expert could make that analogy. But experts exist in both bodies of State Government; just witness what got us here.

The budget process is flawed, and no plan to correct the cause of overspending is being proposed. Governor McCallum, at a minimum deserves credit for saying "We are in debt and need to cut spending.?" The Senate and Assembly avoid the difficult solutions with their proposals. A close reading also suggests the prerequisite porking common to legislation is part of the deal. It is naïve of me to suggest that some common sense could be employed at the expense of a legislators political capital? Let me presume personal integrity and common sense should be paramount. Responsibility always carries a price. If they are unwilling to risk their political fortunes for the best interests of the state we need to throw them out in November.

Term limits are only your vote shy of implementation.

Richard Parins - BCTA

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 TIMES." Please send them to the BCTA, P. O. Box 684, Green Bay, WI 54305-0684, or call Jim Frink at 336-6410. E-Mail Frink@ExecPC.Com.

**BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule. (Mark Your Calendars)**

**Thursday – May 16, 2002, BCTA Monthly Meeting.**

GLORY YEARS, 347 S. Washington St. 12:00 Noon.  
Open discussion of present status of negotiations  
between City of Green Bay and Central Brown County  
Water Authority, State Budget Update,

**Thursday – June 20, 2002, BCTA Monthly Meeting.**

GLORY YEARS, 347 S. Washington St. 12:00 Noon.  
Program to be announced.

**Thursday – July 18, 2002, BCTA Monthly Meeting.**

GLORY YEARS, 347 S. Washington St. 12:00 Noon.  
Program to be announced.

**All members of the Brown County Taxpayers Association,  
Their guests, and other interested parties are cordially invited  
to attend and participate in our open meetings.**

**Cost - \$6.50, payable at meeting – Includes lunch, tax & tip.**

Phone **336-6410** or **399-0768** for information or to leave message.



May,  
2002

“I don't know the key to success, but  
the key to failure is trying to please  
everybody.” . . . **Bill Cosby**

“Too bad all the people who know  
how to run the country are busy driv-  
ing taxicabs and cutting hair.”  
. . . **George Burns**

“If you ever injected truth into  
politics, you have no politics.”  
. . . **Will Rogers**

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**Some Tax Thoughts.**

**The Wisconsin State Air Force.**

**The Arkansas “Tax Me More Fund.”**

**DFI Sets Example for State Government.**

**How Much Do You Spend For Taxes?**

**Things That Make Us Wonder.**

**Legislature Avoiding Responsibility.**

and more.