

## Santa Jim, Second Turn.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of Doylemas, my gov'nor gave to me -- 5 gol-den schools.

4 billion dollars, 3 billion dollars, 2 billion more and an ostrich in an oak tree. Yes, an ostrich. You say, boosting school spending is All-American. It's for the kids, you say. Surely, you say, that bird wearing the stars and bars is an eagle, a majestic bald eagle, the symbol of America.

Wrong, and stop calling me Shirley.

The white plumage around its head is artificial, the fearsome hook beak is brass and the brown wings were painted. The flag draped across its shoulders is gratuitous. But that is no eagle. It is an ostrich, the eagle refused to pose.

Budget time is upon us and Santa Jim is up on the rooftop of your neighborhood school with bag full of proposals for his WEAC teacher buddies: bombs to blow up the Qualified Economic Offer and blast the lid off the revenue cap by 1 percent, if they need to, and expand the SAGE program for smaller K-3 class sizes.

Nothing but the best for our kids, right? Sounds like a 1970 dog food commercial. "It's for the kids" rings hollow these days. Most problems are beyond schools' sphere of influence. Teachers' contracts say "in loco parenti," but they do not act as parents, they cannot act as parents. They are not the parent.

Teachers have kids about 8 hours a day, 180 days a year. That is not a parent. Kids will defer to their real parents, at home or on call 24/7/365. Teachers cannot turn around a rough home life, though parents can turn around a rough academic life.

Parents are the real power in education. So, while Santa Jim is looking to stuff money in school system stockings, what is he doing to put money in parents' stockings? He's pulling cash out of parents' stockings to fill district stockings. And he'll 'work very hard,' as politicians say, to meet the state's commitment to two-thirds funding. More of *our* money.

Parents, taxpayers invest close to \$10,000 per year per kid. Do the math; for a class of 25, that's \$250,000. If 80% goes to wages, salaries and benefits. Where did the remaining \$50,000 go? The kids? Things that make me wonder.

WEAC will use Santa Jim's après election largess to move items such as additional security out from under the cap. It's a pure and permanent tax boost. Draped in the flag, they are throwing *our* money at education.

Many lawmakers have proposed a financial education mandate. Teaching our youth to balance a checkbook, get some grasp of the Law of 72, or learn the basic of credit cards and their abuse. Then we could teach them Public School Funding 101, and they would laugh at us like we're lemmings.

Santa Jim needs to leave alone the wobbly three-legged stool. Over the years, as the cash cow has shrunk, the legs have been planed to reach taxpayers' teats whose backs are bent from the load. We need to toss the stool and find a smarter way to fund education. But WEAC woodworkers like tinkering with the stool.

Send Santa Jim a letter. Christmas is over, and he should hearken back to his words of the first turn. 'taxes in Wisconsin are high enough', right Jimbo. We don't need golden schools. We need secure parents who aren't so busy earning their tax money to help their kids with homework.

*Richard Parins* - President

## The State Could Practice What it Preaches. *Information About You Is For Sale.*

The Wisconsin Dept. of Revenue was recently embarrassed and then quite apologetic when 171,000 state income tax forms were mailed out with the recipients Social Security number showing on the envelope. The DOR even agreed to pay for a credit monitoring service for those affected (at a taxpayer cost of as much as \$4 Million.)

Their fear was that someone going through your mail would make note of your number for identity theft purposes.

Even though you are required to furnish your Social Security # for every source of income you may have for income tax purposes, it is your responsibility to guard against fraudulent use. The same holds true with your drivers license which contains personal information, and for that matter any other information such as fishing or hunting license information, property owned, residence, age, or whatever which could allow a third party to profile you for their own purpose.

We always believed the right to privacy as one of our guarantees of freedom, assuming of course that you obey the law, pay your taxes, and keep your licenses and permits current. Recently identity theft has become an industry of its own, with skilled forgers able to transfer small bits of information to their advantage. While protecting your personal information is your responsibility, you assume a trust with whoever you share it. Unfortunately this is most difficult in the computer age.

Problem is, if vital information is not hacked off of someone's computer or disclosed through carelessness, the State of Wisconsin will just plain sell it to anyone for a price. These are the same people who tout their "no-call list" for the privacy it provides. We realize this practice has been going on for years, but is it really a necessary government function?

A recent article in the Wisconsin State Journal examines the extent of the practice. There are several state agencies involved responsible for maintaining numerous databases of interest to third parties. Apparently each agency makes its own rules as to what to make available and to whom.

For example, the Dept. of Transportation makes available their list of 3 million drivers license records. This is useful to insurance companies. However, they also sell vehicle information to auto dealers, which lets them know what kind of car you drive. The Dept. of Natural Resources has 272 lists of hunters, fisherman, boaters and others which they license for sale. The state elections board will sell you the lists including addresses and voting records of registered voters. This information can be useful in mapping out an election campaign. For starters, a lot can be determined from your ZIP code, street address and the year and make of car you drive.

Various state licensing agencies who regulate professional occupations will sell the lists they maintain. Although all of the agencies involved claim they do not disclose Social Security numbers it may be difficult for them to determine what is private or sensitive information. They also claim that requests for information are carefully screened. However, once lists are sold the state has no control over their use.

The sale of mailing lists is a big business nationally,

and those offering them for sale will buy, borrow, or steal to obtain information. Once you subscribe to a magazine, order something through the mail, or even make an inquiry about a product you can expect to receive a lot of advertising mail from numerous sources. Mailing lists are sold and fine tuned by interests, economic and educational background, residence location and a thousand other criteria.

Now the state may defend this business saying they are legally obligated to make such information public. This may be true but somewhere there is a conflict between our elected officials, the right to privacy and our privacy laws.

Next they will say that selling this information is a source of additional revenue to help balance the state budget. At best this is a big lie. We certainly acknowledge that it is a function of state government to collect and maintain information as relates to the function of each department.

However – to what extent is it necessary for state employees to spend time and money organizing and sorting lists for the purpose of selling them for private use? For example, the DNR only received \$39,910 last year for 272 sales of lists.

My guess, and it is only a guess that if the sales of these lists were curtailed, and the time and personnel involved in their preparation were doing something more imperative the state could possibly save some money.

More troubling is the federal government's mandate to all states requiring that all drivers license, birth and death records be computerized for a national data base. First the cost to Wisconsin of \$45 Million seems rather high. If it will cost that much more to satisfy Washington, how much is it costing the state already? The federal government has had several recent security leaks making us wonder what they will do with all that information and how safe it will be.

One last thought. While the state claims Social Security numbers are kept confidential, they still appear on every fishing and hunting license, and interest or income producing document you receive. It is the one unique identification number that all American citizens have. We hear of cases that numbers or names are altered for purposes of false identification, to obtain employment and prove citizenship. If our government thinks they can handle a national database with all of our drivers license and birth records they should clean up the Social Security records first. It shouldn't be difficult.

All of your working life, a record of wages paid and FICA tax withheld is furnished. This is important as when you retire these numbers determine your benefits. It is inconceivable that earnings submitted with a name other than that registered does not cause an alarm. All earned income paid is reported to the Social Security Administration prior to the IRS and they should be able to detect discrepancies, including non-citizens with altered identifications.

**Jim Frink - BCTA**

"Ninety percent of the politicians five the other ten percent a bad reputation.: , , Henry Kissinger

"In politics, absurdity is not a handicap."  
. . . Napoleon Bonaparte

## BCTA Referendum Position.

The BCTA has looked carefully in person and in print the opposing positions for the 5<sup>th</sup> High School Referendum. Given the enormous fiscal, economic and social implications this measure presents, our directors have concluded that certain realities are in play.

Superintendent Dan Nerad has said on numerous occasions the District's desire for a consensus of approval from the Green Bay area community. A vote taken on a February primary with historically low turnout, when small numbers of voters dominate such an important undertaking is irresponsible.

After reviewing numbers and estimates provided by each position, it appears that omission and incomplete facts regarding the districts student count and actual tax rate costs provided by the District leave much to be desired.

The members of the BCTA have expressed these concerns to the District on numerous occasions. Since no consideration of these concerns has been demonstrated by the District, our conviction that this referendum is not a proper course to undertake at this time is paramount.

Brown County Taxpayers Association.

*Richard Parins*, President.

## 2007 Taxpayer Survey.

Enclosed with this *TAX TIMES* is our 2007 Taxpayer Survey. We have always enjoyed a good response to this annual questionnaire, and would like a 100% response from our members and other readers.

Our committee put a lot of careful thought into the questions and tried to focus on current issues or potential issues as much as possible. There are a lot of taxpayer issues to consider, and the problem was what to include.

The results are important to us as an organization. For one thing it will help us prioritize issues that are important to taxpayers. Where we should focus our attention. In some cases we are simply reinforcing our present stand but are seeking a percentage of consensus.

It appears that in the years to come there will be dramatically increased demands on taxpayer supported services. We thank you for your support.

The Survey shouldn't take more than 10 minutes of your time to complete and submit. Please return it to us by Friday, Feb. 23, and we will be able to compile and include the results in the March issue of the *TAX TIMES*.

*Thank you.*

"If God had wanted us to vote, he would have given us candidates."

. . . Jay Leno

"Politics is perhaps the only profession in which no professional experience is thought necessary"

. . . Robert Louis Stevenson

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.

## Unfunded Liability for State Pension Funds Estimated at \$17.4 Billion.

A report by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute estimates that the cost of pensions and health benefits for retired state and municipal workers to be about \$17.4 Billion in excess of has been set aside. This is regarded as a liability due from taxpayers.

It is suggested that in the future tax increases and service cuts will be necessary to meet this debt. Considering the state already has a \$1.6 Billion budget shortage this may be a reality.

While our politicians may claim more money is needed for education, new highways, and healthcare the fact may be we will all be digging into our pocketbooks to pay retirement benefits to retired state employees.

## National Debt Update.

At the end of January, the U.S. National debt was **\$8,687,998,660,597.**, or rounded off to a "little more" than 8.6 Trillion. This is an increase of about \$300 in just one last month for every resident of the country, bringing the total we owe to \$28,570.64 each.

Apparently the much heralded first 100 hours of the new Congress did not regard this as a problem.

Like the TV ad for Capital One asks, "*What's in your wallet?*"

"Get all the fools on your side and you can get elected to anything."

. . . Frank Davis

"Unquestionably there is progress. The average American now pays out twice as much in taxes as he formally got in wages."

. . . H. L. Menken

## **Green Bay School Referendum Facts and Figures.**

On Tuesday, February 20, the primary election date, there will be two binding referendum questions sponsored by the Green Bay Area School District. Question #1 requests \$69 Million in bonding for construction of a 5th High School plus other projects while Question #2 requests additional funding for operational costs. Below are reasons for the projects as presented by the School District and reasons to oppose as presented by the Responsible School Decisions committee.

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The following resolution was passed unanimously by the BCTA Board of Directors on Thursday, January 18, 2007:

**Resolution in Opposition to 5<sup>th</sup> High School Referendum.**

*Whereas, the Green Bay Area School District is proposing the largest referendum in its history for the construction of a fifth high school, and*

*Whereas, this proposal has enormous impact upon the District's property taxpayers, and*

*Whereas, the Brown County Taxpayers Association has listened carefully and directly to the positions of both the District superintendent and the leading opponent of the referendum, and*

*Whereas, the Association, believing that a broad community consensus is vital on a decision of this magnitude, formally requested that the District not hold the referendum at the February primary, and*

*Whereas, the District did not heed the Association's request and has chosen to go forward with the referendum at the low-voter-turnout primary, and*

*Whereas, the majority of the Association's directors finds the growth projections of the referendum's opponent to be more credible than the growth projections of the District,*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the Brown County Taxpayers Association stands in opposition to the Green Bay Area School District's proposed fifth high school project and advocates the rejection of the referendum on February 20, 2007.*

Tuesday, February 20, 2007.

Be Sure To

**VOTE !**

#1 – Primary for Brown County Executive.

#2 – Primary for Local Elected Offices.

#3 – Binding Referendum for  
\$60,000,000 5th High School for  
Green Bay School District.

*Your Vote Does Count!*

### We Need your E-Mail addresses.

The BCTA is attempting to create a file of member E-Mail addresses use in sending special taxpayer alerts, meeting notices and other items of taxpayer interest. Since the *TAX TIMES* is only published once a month we would like a better communication with our membership when needed.

While we already have many of your E-Mail addresses in our file from membership renewals, etc., we find that many are obsolete or otherwise unusable. Also, E-Mail is now more commonly used than previously.

We are asking that all members with an E-Mail address simply send a message to us at [BCTA@Execpc.com](mailto:BCTA@Execpc.com). Also include just your name for identification.

Please be assured that our membership list and address base is held in strict confidence for BCTA use only.

Thank you.

“ A man always has two reasons for doing anything: a good reason and the real reason.” . . . **J. P. Morgan**

“Alexander Hamilton started the U. S. Treasury with nothing. And that was the closest our country has ever been to being even.” . . . **Will Rogers**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**  
**www.BCTAxpayers.Org**  
**Email, BCTA@ExecPc.Com**

### School budget Lite?

We've all seen those ads for "fat-free" this or "sugar-free" that. The products sound good and right but the small print often reveals loads of calories and salt or sugar or additives or whatever.

The same temptation is echoed in legislation proposed by Rep. Spencer Black. The bill calls for an exception to current school budget caps for "security spending" - expenditures that, it can be argued, sound "good and right."

Security spending came to light when the Green Bay School Board passed a package of security measures with a total price tag of \$219K. Superintendent Nerad said cuts might have to be made - balancing the need for safety, with spending for textbooks and teachers. News reports said Nerad would certainly support - and was hoping for - the introduction of Rep. Black's school security legislation. With the budget cap exemption, Nerad wouldn't have to worry about making 'cuts' so as to be able to fund the security package.

So often, arguments for more school spending are based on "It's for the kids."

Last October, not a month after a Green Bay school shooting was averted, Rep. Black's press release stated "Parents are increasingly worried about the safety of their children when they send them off to school....We must do all we reasonably can to provide kids with a safe place to learn and teachers with a safe place to teach."

Rep. Black goes on to state "The current school spending caps can discourage school districts from taking measures needed to reduce crime and violence in schools. This proposal will let local school boards take the steps that they feel are necessary to keep our schools safe."

Yes, yes, yes. Our kids are important. It's very important as well, that on average, Wisconsin schools spend over \$10,500 per year per student.

Now we are told we will be asked to exempt more and more costs from the current school revenue caps, allowing school costs to rise higher, faster. This budgetary slight of hand would allow for both new spending and cost shifting.

What's the right amount to spend on education? How high is too high? Listen for new school programs, the school security exemption proposal and other revenue-raisers to pay for the new programs, during Governor Doyle's State of the State speech.

Madison School Board president Johnny Winston Jr. recently commended Senator Olsen's school funding study panel for "looking critically at public education and how to fund it." Good. And for those that believe Wisconsin faces a public education crisis, we must also look at the results we get from public education. Listen for what will be required in the way of "results" in the State of the State.

Senator Olsen said of the reception the panel's recommendations might receive: "If there is silence from the educational community, this thing is pretty well dead." Now what about hearing from Wisconsin taxpayers?

**Jo Egelhoff, [FoxPolitics.net](http://FoxPolitics.net)**

(Sign up for free daily E-Mail news summary at [News@FoxPolitics.net](mailto:News@FoxPolitics.net).)

## Smoke and Mirror-Style Accounting in Madison.

If you lived in the state of Wisconsin during the 2006 election cycle, chances are you saw an ad with Governor Doyle telling you how he eliminated Wisconsin's \$3.2 million dollar budget deficit. Touting his fiscally conservative credentials helped get the Governor re-elected.

What if it turned out that the Governor was using accounting tricks to eliminate the deficit? Would the voters still be so eager to put him back in office for another four years? He isn't the first governor to add to our budget deficit while claiming there is no budget deficit.

It turns out the Governor is using the state's way of balancing the books to make his deficit-cutting claim. If he used the same accounting principles businesses are required to use, Wisconsin would have a \$2.15 billion general fund deficit.

Newly released financial statements show the state of Wisconsin closed its 2005-06 fiscal year with a \$2.15 billion general fund deficit, according to the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX). This is \$8 million more than in 2004-05 and \$231 million more than in 2003-04. That \$2.15 billion deficit was 12.6% of the \$17 billion in general fund spending officially reported for fiscal year 2005-06.

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) was released in December. Unlike state budgets enacted by the Governor and Legislature, the CAFR follows generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) prescribed by the nation's Governmental Accounting Standards Board.

GAAP is required of all publicly-traded companies. All certified accountants must use GAAP. The federal government requires it for its internal auditing and most states and local government entities are moving towards GAAP. What about Wisconsin? Why does the budget not reflect the actual state of our financial health according to the principles that any CPA would use if doing your books?

If a private company cooked their books the way that the State of Wisconsin does, someone would be in jail.

A more responsible approach is using GAAP for all state accounting. This is one of my legislative priorities and I will be introducing a bill to require GAAP standards for state government over the next five budget cycles. We should eat this 2.15 billion dollar elephant one biennial budget at a time (\$430 million in each budget cycle). It would be great if this was included in the budget being proposed by the Governor next month. But with the state agencies asking for increases in spending and the Governor is proposing new taxpayer-funded health care programs (when we are not funding the existing programs as well as we should), it seems unlikely that the Governor will be leading the charge for more responsible budgeting. After all, who is demanding a change?

Why do the Governor and the Legislature cook the state's books to spend more and do more than they are willing to tax all of us for? Because they can and makes them feel well-liked.

Until we get a clearer picture of Wisconsin's financial health, taxpayers will never know whether to believe their elected officials when they throw around claims to have balanced budgets and eliminated deficits.

**Rep. Frank G. Lasee.**

## January Meeting Notes. *BCTA Approves Resolution Opposing Referendum.*

Regular monthly meeting held January 18, 2007 at Titledown Brewing.

Most of the meeting was a discussion of the Green Bay School District's February 20<sup>th</sup> referendum for a fifth Green Bay high school. The \$65 million project is the largest school construction referendum in the district's history. Great disappointment was expressed that the referendum is being held on the date of the spring primary election, traditionally the lowest turnout election of the year, by far. Scheduling the referendum for the lowest turnout election of the year flies in the face of the District's much ballyhooed pronouncements that this referendum is about showing support from all the citizens in the district.

The fundamental need for the fifth high school is being seriously challenged by its opponents who point to the 2005-2006 enrollment growth of only 42 students contrasted to the 354 student increase projected by the study used to justify the new high school. The validity of the study supporting the new construction has been further eroded by the reduction in enrollment documented by the first actual count of students for the 2006-2007 school year. This leaves the district more than 600 students below the projected numbers the "need" for the new high school is based upon.

Numerous other concerns about the fifth high school proposal were voiced: The second resolution question to exceed spending limits for \$2.5 million annually to operate the new high school reflects the additional overhead costs that come with operating a fifth high school. The 10 cents per \$1,000 figure being cited as the tax impact of the referendum is the tip of the iceberg. It ignores the 37 cents per \$1,000 tax reduction property owners will receive from debt that is being retired. Therefore, the true impact of the referendum is 47 cents per \$1,000. Over the life of the financing for the new high school, the total tax effect averages about 83 cents per \$1,000 or \$83 annually for a \$100,000 home.

A resolution opposing the Green Bay Area School District's proposed fifth high school project and advocating the rejection of the referendum on February 20, 2007 was unanimously approved.

Nomination and election of directors for three year terms was held. Elected or re-elected were Rich Carlstedt, Dave Dillenburg, Dick English, Rod Goldhahn, Otto Junkerman, Pat Kenny, George Parker and Beverly VanDeurzen.

Jo Eglehoff, who produces the [FoxPolitics.net](http://FoxPolitics.net) website and daily e-mail, encouraged BCTA members to send their observations and opinions about taxpayer issues to her.

The next regular BCTA meeting is scheduled for Feb. 15, at Titledown Brewing.

**Dave Nelson-Secretary**

## Things That Make Us Wonder.

So far this winter has been unusually mild without much snow to be removed.

It will be interesting to see how money which was set aside for this purpose in our municipal, county and state budgets will be used and what provisions will be made for next year.

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One of the first agenda items of our new Congress was the introduction of legislation to lower federal income taxes for "middle class working people" while raising taxes on the "rich." Rich in this case referring to those with earned income in excess of \$600,000.

The National Taxpayers Union reports that only 1% of the population earns over \$350,000 annually, so this will probably only apply to entertainers, athletes, professional people and successful businessmen.

In 2004, the top 50% or wage-earners, or those earning in excess of \$30,122 annually paid 96,70% of income taxes while the bottom 50% paid 3.70%. The top 1% paid 36.89% or more than a third of the countries income tax burden .

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Southeastern Wisconsin in particular has been experience considerable residential growth from affluent families working in Northern Illinois but living in Wisconsin. While these people are not employed in our state, they contribute considerably in the form of property taxes and state income taxes which follow your state of residency.

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The federal government has mandated that all states uniformly computerize their birth, death and drivers license records for inclusion in a national database to control terrorism.

This was an "unfunded" mandate estimated to cost the State of Wisconsin \$21.3 Million for the birth records and another \$24.3M for the drivers licenses with additional upkeep expense.

While this may be a good idea it could also be another expensive, unused database that unauthorized parties can access to obtain personal and sensitive

information.

Considering the federal government can't even keep our Social Security numbers straight just who will be responsible for this system? See the article, "The State Could Practice What It Preaches" in this TAX TIMES.

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Work is rapidly proceeding on a 580,000 sq. ft. visitor center located somewhere beneath the nation's capitol building in Washington. It was supposed to be finished in 2005 but now it looks like 2008 at the earliest. The estimated cost has also gone from \$285 Million to \$600 Mil. One congressman defended the cost by saying "it was being built for the people." He forgot to mention it is also being paid for by the people,

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A group called the "National Alliance to End Homelessness," claims there are 744,313 homeless people living in the United States to care for.

We realize it's a problem even here in Green Bay, but a mystery how they came up with the exact number. Their rate for Wisconsin was .12 which equates to .8333 homeless persons per thousand. The worst rate was in Washington D.C. with a rate of 10 per thousand. While there are different criteria for determining homelessness, we acknowledge that it is a problem that will not go away by itself. Now what about the 10-15 Million illegal aliens we have in the country?

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The high cost of feed for dairy cattle may not be the only adverse side effect from increased corn prices due to the demand for ethanol production.

It has been reported the price of Mexican tortillas which are made from corn has increased by a third in less than a month for the same reason.

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A resolution has been proposed in the Legislature requiring our public schools to include teaching Hmong culture as part of their curriculum. This to help them to better integrate and diversify our society.

One problem may be that there are a number of conflicting cultures

present including but not limited to Native Americans, Hispanics, Orientals, Black Americans, and Muslims.

We acknowledge that each has enriched and contributed to our society in some unique way with their culture. The question may be though would it be more advantageous to put greater emphases on our own history, culture, and acceptance of diverse backgrounds.

\* \* \* \* \*

Security at our schools is a serious matter and it is unfortunate that present circumstances have made this a necessity and concern.

Nonetheless it will be interesting how 1,500-2,000 high school students will all manage to remember their picture ID's, and properly display them in the wintertime when they are all wearing their heavy winter coats and entering their schools through one central location.

\* \* \* \* \*

Recent lower gas prices seem to have made some people believe they will last forever. Remember just five years ago you could still buy gas for \$1.00 a gallon. One big fear is some politician will think a big tax increase is in order because we are used to paying more for gas. They will say it is to discourage consumption and conserve resources. Like cigarette taxes have cut smoking.

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With the cost of healthcare and insurance going nowhere but up, there is at one provider trying to save patients some money.

Smartchoice MRI of Mequon with facilities in Milwaukee has begun offering MRI's to all customers at a flat charge of \$600, which includes interpretation of the results by trained radiologists. This flat fee applies to any type of MRI, some of which would normally cost up to \$3,000. Smartchoice accepts self-insured patients and those with insurance but not Medicare.

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At last report the Wisconsin Legislature and Senate were still working on an ethics-reform package. So far they have agreed to combine the State Ethics and Elections Boards into a Government Accountability Board consisting of six



former judges. Their present concern seems to be that the new board may be unconstitutional so have added a provision to revert to the old boards if this is the case. Hopefully they will have something agreeable prior to the 2008 Congressional and Presidential election.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of our members came up with the suggestion that in order to eliminate negative political campaign ads we should consider prohibiting showing the name, picture, or reference of ones opponent in any publication, radio or TV advertising. Violations would require the payment of a sum equal to the cost of the offending ad to the opponent. Biggest problem might be for some candidates to think of something positive to say about themselves.

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Someone sent me an E-Mail pointing out that 5 million seniors who are eligible for the Part D Medicare drug plan have let the signing period pass and are therefore not eligible for benefits at this time. In the meantime, 12 million illegal aliens are receiving support monies, education, avoid income taxes, etc.

The gist of the story is that we are taking better care of the illegal aliens than our own senior citizens.

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Raising the minimum wage was one of the first priorities of the new Congress. The question is who will it help? In 2005 only 2.5% of the U.S. earned the minimum wage, and this is unlikely to be of help to those that are unemployed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Candidates are lining up for a run at the Presidency in 2008, and the media is covering giving their favorites plenty of free publicity. Unfortunately the primaries can become popularity rather than qualification contests picking a winner even before the party national conventions are held. Whatever happened to the smoke filled rooms where some of our great Presidents of the past were selected by their parties?

\* \* \* \* \*

Recall a few years ago when Highway #57 north of Green Bay was under construction, work was held up and special barricades had to be built because

a rare species of snails was found to be migrating in the vicinity.

We were just wondering how the snails are doing now that the highway is completed and the barricades have been removed.

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The Federal Govt. has provided a million dollar grant, to be matched by a million and a half of private money to purchase 139 acres of "fragile" shoreline and wetland in Door County.

While we realize preservation of rapidly disappearing natural and environmental resources is important, paying \$17,985 an acre for wetlands that are already protected from development seems rather expensive.

There are thousand of acres of privately owned wetland in Wisconsin. It probably all has some unique value worth preserving. Most of it has had minimal real estate value as it is not suitable for farming, buildings, or for that matter hunting or recreation. Let's hope speculators don't start buying it up with the thought of making a big profit a few years down the line when they sell it to the state to preserve it.

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In the last 25 years the Wisconsin cigarette tax has increased from .16 per pack to .77 cents. If the proposed \$1.25 increase is approved, it would equate to a 1262% increase in 25 years. At this rate in another 25 years the tax will be \$25.50 per pack.

If only 10% of the population were still smoking at that time the state could still make about \$7.5 Billion per.

\* \* \* \* \*

An recent article in the *Capitol Times* exposes the use of professional telemarketing firms to solicit funds for various legitimate charities such as law enforcement benevolent organizations. While these callers meet the requirements to ignore the "No call list", one should know that as much as 80% or \$20 of your \$25 donation goes to the telemarketer. It is legal because your check is payable to the charity who then pays the agent.

We would consider this a taxpayer issue because contributions made

to such charities as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and a thousand other worthwhile groups supports their causes with private donations rather than government handouts.

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Gov. Doyle is proposing a new state agency to be called the "Dept. of Children and Families." It will combine several existing departments. It sounds like a good idea assuming some agencies could be eliminated and their services consolidated. That's not always the way things seem to work in Madison.

As usual, lots of things to wonder about.

Jim Frink

*"Things That Make Us Wonder" consists of thoughts that occur to us, mostly taxpayer related in some way, that come to mind during the days news events. Some are relatively unimportant and probably not worth commenting about. Others could easily be expanded to full length feature articles worthy of further study and action to protect our interests as taxpayers. We try to cover a wide variety of subjects in a limited space and put a different spin on items from what you read in the papers or see on TV. We acknowledge that our perspective of some issues in this column may be contrary to that of some our readers. However, one of our purposes is to encourage debate, as we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments are always welcome as well as suggestions for items to include in this section of the "TAX TIMES."*

"Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome." . . . Samuel Johnson

"A liberal is someone who feels a great debt to his fellow man, which debt he proposes to pay off with your money." . . . G. Gordon Liddy

":Think of how much the national debt would be if not for unkept political promises." . . . Doug Larsen

"The world of politics is always twenty years behind the world of thought." . . . John Jay Chapman

# The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association  
P. O. Box 684  
Green Bay, WI 54305-0684

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## The TAX TIMES - February, 2007

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

Thursday – February 15, 2007. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon  
TITLETOWN BREWING Co., 2d Floor Meeting Room.  
Speaker – Discussion of Current Taxpayer Interests.

Tuesday - February 20, 2007. Primary Election Day.  
County Executive, Local Offices  
Referendum for \$69,000,000 5th Green Bay High School.  
It is Important that you VOTE!

Thursday – March 15, 2007. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon  
Program to be announced.

Thursday – April 19, 2007. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon  
Program to be announced.

Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at the Tiletown Brewing Co., 200 Dousman St.

### **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: \$7.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.  
Call Jim Frink – 336-6410 for information or to leave message.



## February,



## 2007

"I am entirely persuaded that the American public is more reasonable, restrained and mature than most of the broadcast industry's planners believe"

. . . Edward R. Murrow

"There is no such thing as a non-political speech by a politician."

. . . Richard Nixon

### **SUPPORT THE BCTA**

**New Members are Always Welcome. Call 336-6410**  
**Write us at P. O. Box 684**  
**or visit our website**

**[www.BCTaxpayers.Org](http://www.BCTaxpayers.Org)**  
**for Details.**