

## Hoping for a vegetarian government.

Bacon and eggs weather is here. After walking the dog on a frosty morning, there is nothing like the smell of eggs and bacon in the frying pan. But oh, sweet piggie, why do you smell so bad in the state budget?

I am still wiggling out about it. After the Senate Dems backed the Assembly GOP into a wall and made them eat Porky the Wonder Budget, they fired their leader, Sen. Judy Robson, because she didn't make them eat more.

Robson was masterful, cramming their budget full of execrable measures like the oil and hospital taxes, and their [Un]Healthy Wisconsin universal government care, then calling on the Assembly to meet them halfway. What a brilliantly disingenuous bargaining posture: propose the outrageous, then blame the uncompromising Assembly for not accepting the merely ludicrous.

The Assembly complained, but not loudly and firmly. Suppose their budget had called for eliminating the corporate income tax and paying for it by cutting state agencies across the board, then expected the Senate to meet them halfway. Robson would have screamed louder than the union hacks at our recent anti-tax rally at the Capitol.

After holding out for 115 days and nearly accepting the hospital tax, leaders got together with Diamond Jim and emerged with a budget accord that spent more and boosted the deficit more than even the Guv's original budget - to \$892 million! And they rushed it to the floor for a vote, which succeeded surprisingly easily, lacking the Fiscal Bureau analysis which emerged the next day.

And, oh, the wafting bacon aroma! From the \$4 million soybean press in Evansville to the \$35,000 windsled to take school kids across Lake Superior from Madeline Island. \$73 million worth of bacon in our area alone. "Good for us all," declared Ashland Sen. Bob Jauch.

"Every time a budget vote is rushed in this manner, it's because (leaders) are trying to hide the warts. Makes you wonder just how much pork and favors has been offered to garner yes votes," said straight-talking GOP Rep. Steve Nass.

Then there was this unique slice of bacon. Stevens Point Democrat, Sen. Julie Lassa, bragged on a \$375,000 state economic development grant given to communities in her district to replace the amount of their local levy for economic development activities. "The money (these communities) would have used for economic development can be shifted to property tax savings," Lassa said.

True. But Lassa's penny tax cut sets precedent that will puncture any virtue the state grants had. They are supposed to be given to private companies to pursue growth and job creation. This is just another case of segregated funds being transferred to general purpose revenue, like the \$200 million Patients Comp Fund transfer that doctors are suing to stop. There are no strings. Lassa's pork may not drop taxes a cent or create any jobs. It will merely reduce a tax increase. And how much did the state keep for a processing fee? They take our taxes only to give them back to us?! Ain't America great?!

And then Diamond Jim used Frankenstein's veto to rob the GOP of its one victory - the 2% property tax levy cap was metamorphosed into a 3.86% levy cap. And -- Trick or Treat! -- tech colleges got a pass from the levy limit. Happy Halloween!

This farce led a Madison columnist to note, "in the end, our leaders from both political parties basically wasted all summer and fall daring the other side to blink, which led us right back to where we already were."

I need a couple shots of free booze down at the grocery. But Diamond Jim vetoed that too.

"The Rolls Royce of rashers." That's what the late, great R.W. Apple wrote in the New York Times, praising Neuske's bacon, from Wittenberg, Wisconsin. God bless those sweet little piggies.

It stinks to have the Rolls Royce of budgets.

BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION.

*Richard Parins* - President

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

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## October Meeting Notes.

### *Judge Kelley Addresses BCTA.*

Monthly BCTA meeting October 18, 2007 at Tiletown Brewing. Brown County Circuit Court Judge Kendall Kelley shared his thoughts about budgets and the court system. He began by explaining that the courts are a branch of government, not an agency. The State of Wisconsin pays the salaries of circuit court judges and contributes to courthouse expenses. Local taxpayer funding is for essential support of the court system.

Judge Kelley feels Brown County provides good support for the judicial system. The circuit court judges have different opinions about increasing security at the courthouse, which would be costly. At a minimum, he anticipates increased security for the family courts, where cases tend to be emotional.

A movement for taxpayers to provide attorneys to represent indigent persons in civil cases in addition to criminal cases is anticipated by Judge Kelley. Family law hearings may increase with free attorneys. Pro Se litigation is more difficult, without attorneys.

Responding to questions about the costs of incarceration, Judge Kelley explained that while courts impose jail sentences, the sheriff decides who can be released with electronic monitoring and when they are released. Judges have no authority over electronic monitoring decisions. Judges must impose sentences in accordance with the law. Jail capacity is not a consideration in sentencing. Illegal aliens can be deported if they are convicted of a felony crime.

Judge Kelley noted that budget tradeoffs are problematic. Competing needs are not often equal, so priorities must be established. Citizens need transparent access to government budgets so they can see decision making priorities.

Richard Parins recounted the highlights of the Americans for Prosperity rally in Madison on October 17. He noted that government employees present to counter the rally were belligerent and abusive.

Rich Carlstedt gave an update for the Green Bay School District's Enrollment Management Task Force. The Task Force has agreed to use five-year averages for enrollment projections. The next issue to be addressed is classroom capacity.

Discussing the state budget impasse, State Representative Frank Lasee stated that Governor Doyle is creating a false crisis with his antics about shutting down the state government if the budget is not passed very soon. Representative Lasee explained that we are dealing with a two-year budget, so the state won't really run out of money until the last quarter of the two-year budget period. State Representative Karl Van Roy explained that we have enough revenue for existing programs. The tax increases are for new spending.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 15, at Tiletown Brewing, and the speaker will be WTAQ radio host Jerry Bader. Details on the last page of this *TAX TIMES*.

**Dave Nelson – Secretary**

## Jerry Bader to Address November Meeting.

WTAQ radio talk show host Jerry Bader will speak at the November BCTA monthly meeting. This will be at 12:00 noon on Thursday, November 15. All interested parties are invited to attend. Details on the back page of this *TAX TIMES*.

## National Debt Update.

As of the end of October, the official U. S. National Debt was **\$9,065,834,087,396.73**. We use the term official because this is what the government tells us. They still haven't acknowledge that Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the War in Iraq and a bunch of other stuff like interest on the debt are costing more than we can afford.

Also, this is the first time the debt has exceeded **NINE TRILLION** and the first time a trillion mark was passed without passing a resolution allowing it. They don't even bother any more. Another item, this debt represents \$29,811.11 for each American citizen. There is also a debt of about \$5,000 in state and local debt for each Wisconsin resident which will not likely go away by itself.

JF

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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## Public Employee Benefits Exceed Those in Private Industry.

State and local employee benefits as a % of total compensation by state in 2006. (From WISTAX)  
*Top 10, Bottom 10, and neighboring states.*

State/Local Employees		Private Employees	
Rank/State	% Comp.	Rank/State	% Comp.

"If we were to design a system for electing a President, I don't think we could do worse. It's terrible."

. . . Gov. Edward G. Rendell