

## How much is enough?

I heard this story on business news the other night: novelists Kurt Vonnegut and Joseph Heller were at a party thrown by a Wall Street billionaire. They are sipping their wine, looking at the Monet over the fireplace, and Vonnegut says to Heller, "Joe, how does it make you feel to know that our host only yesterday may have made more money than your novel 'Catch-22' has earned in its entire history?" And Heller says, "But I've got something he can never have." And Vonnegut says, "What on earth could that be, Joe?" To which Heller says, "The knowledge that I've got enough."

God rest these souls, fine scribes both, worthy of every laugh and sigh they engender. Requiescat in pace, and oh, oh, how I love to stroll the Impressionist galleries of the Chicago Art Institute, Le Louvre, a goal.

But I would, if I could, bring back Joe Heller, and make him county executive or county board chair. And if I could bring him back, I'd clone him, and set him on the city council and school board both. Those legislative bodies suffer a scarcity, a paucity, a dearth of folks who get what 'enough' means. What a stretch the notion of "pitching in" that experience of World War II generations past, would present these elective mandarins.

It afflicts us all, this ignorance of 'enough.' I know not a soul who doesn't want more of something, be it book-bound Oliver Twist eternally begging, ---"Please, sir, may I have some more?" --- or legendary Warren Buffet hunting for the next billion so he can pay the higher taxes, pleading of Congress -- "I think we need to ... take a little more out of the hides of guys like me." PULLEEZE!

I'd like more fiscal hawks in charge of government. Note: Real fiscal hawks would not be willing to stand for office, too much BS in politics, too many tics in politics. This is a real scarcity in commodity; however, as many, I decline to put my neck on the line again. My 1990's school board and Twenty-aught County Supervisor elective forays years back, lent confirmation for the sacrosanct condition of incumbency. Some example I have set, sheesh!

Maybe I'm tilting at windmills, but if we could get just one, just one, board member to say, "We've got enough," and vote NO for any increase. Even if it were a compulsion, a reflex, like laughter, someone who just says "NO!" then maybe, maybe, it would catch on.

I'm tired. You're tired. We're all tired of the ever-rising tax bill, the ever-stifling gridlock. When has it last gone down, when has something truly meaningful and transforming last been done? And every time it goes up, we say we've had enough, yet we re-elect another board that raise the bill again, knowing the historical veracity of our "enough."

Where is your wall? I've reached mine. The next board member, council member, state rep or senator who votes for any tax increase, it could be my best friend, but I am voting them out. I'll waste a vote on a write-in, if I have to, but that person will not get my vote. And if they vote NO, well, send their campaign \$20 and wear their t-shirt to work. I urge you to do the same.

Carrot and stick; it works for horses. Maybe we can disprove the old axiom, maybe there are more horses than horses' asses, but that wholly depends whether you think being half-assed is worse than having no cheeks at all. What have we got to lose?

*Richard Parins, President*

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

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## A Less than Neighborly Neighbor...

How would your local government handle an adjacent private (tribal) government intent on acquiring your land base, and overpowering the government you elect? How comfortable would you be if a co-located tribal government whose enrolled residents are few, were ramping up its law enforcement, public safety and new judicial systems to co-mingle or overwhelm the same systems of the government you elect?

And how about this same neighboring tribal government sending paid staff for years to attend every single public meeting, and next day sending staff into the local government demanding every available public record, to then assign additional tribal staff to strategize tactics to obstruct the projects and services your local government tries to provide its residents?

The Village of Hobart (pop. 5,600) is located in Brown County, WI, adjacent to the City of Green Bay. The Village is a high quality "bedroom community" with very little commercial activity. Residents have invested in home property in good faith assuming property taxes and municipal services would be comparable to other locations. Their local general-purpose government employs 15 full-time employees governed by a 5-member Board of Trustees with a meager 3.7 million dollar annual budget with the duty to protect the general welfare and public safety of a 33-square mile municipality.

The Village is co-located within the historical boundaries of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin (OTI). The tribe's annual operating budget is 527 million dollars, including its casinos and other profit centers such as the 7-Generations Corporation. The OTI is one of the largest employers in Brown County, and perhaps the State of Wisconsin.

Federal law permits Indian tribes to purchase non-tribal land at their discretion and place it in trust exempt from local property taxes. Over recent years, the OTI has accomplished an aggressive land acquisition program, acquiring 32% of the Village's taxable property. Currently 11% of land in Hobart has been placed into federal trust and removed from the tax rolls. The remaining tribally owned fee land is also packaged for placement into federal trust.

The issue for the Village of Hobart relying upon property tax revenue is to find alternative sources of revenue to sustain the Village's municipal services. The first strategy determined was the formation of a 490-acre business-industrial park in 2001. The Village expended over 3 million dollars for roads and infrastructure. The tribe's response to this Village effort was to quietly purchase more than 75% of the land within this park. Whenever land subject to property tax is removed from tax rolls, it means that remaining property must make up the difference in valuation. Municipal expenses will remain the same regardless.

The tribe informed the Village that it would not develop the land it acquired within the new Industrial park. This was a blow to a substantial effort expended by the Village. In January 2003 the Village filed an action for declaratory relief in state court to resolve the jurisdictional dispute.

As a next alternative, the Village invested 6 million dollars to acquire 300 acres to create a commercial area along Highway 29 that is its northern boundary. The Village has fewer than 30 businesses and no downtown core, so a Village commercial center would greatly assist consumer and professional needs of its residents as well

as offset continuous erosion of property tax from tribal acquisitions.

About the time the ink dried on the acquired Village property, the tribe purchased for over 3.1 million dollars, a 17-acre, L-shaped unbuildable "strip parcel" that blocked the Village's ability to bring infrastructure to the 300 acres they had just acquired. The tribe paid 15 to 18 times the actual market value of an acre of farmland for this narrow, L-shaped strip of land. Since the "spite strip" was fee land the Village determined to pursue easements and condemnation to get its sewer line across the 60-foot strip to its 300-acre investment.

In response to the Village's action, in December 2006 the tribe filed suit against the Village in Federal District Court, even as the State Court action was unresolved and subsequently stayed, pending the federal court decision.

In a March 1, 2008 meeting with Carl Artman at BIA headquarters in Washington, D.C., Artman, then Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Indian Affairs informed the Hobart Village Administrator and Public Policy Director of Focus On The Family that "IGRA (the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988) is not just about gambling; it's not just about commercial; it's about governmental jurisdiction." There is no better illustration of Mr. Artman's statement than the aggressive and incessant actions of his own tribe in which he is a member, the Oneida Tribe of Indians' against the Village of Hobart.

On March 28, 2008 Judge William Griesbach ruled in *Oneida Tribe of Indians v. Village of Hobart* (Case. No. 06-C-1302) in the Eastern District of Federal Court, the following:

*"...I conclude that fee land within the original boundaries of the Tribe's reservation which was allotted pursuant to federal law, transferred to third parties, and subsequently acquired by the Tribe in fee simple on the open market, is subject to the Village's power of eminent domain. In addition I conclude that the land is subject to special assessments levied against the property for improvements that specially benefit it. ... The clerk is directed to enter final judgment in the favor of the Village setting forth the court's determination that the Village of Hobart has condemnation, special assessment and taxation authority over lands purchased in fee by the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, in accordance with Wisconsin law, unless and until the Tribe's application to place such land in trust pursuant to 25 U.S.C. § 465 is granted."*

Judge Griesbach's ruling was not appealed by the Oneida Tribe of Indians. The Village and the tribe now have clarification that the tribal government controls its trust land, and fee land within the municipal boundary is under the regulatory authority of the Village, including fee land owned by the tribal government or individual tribal members. This does not stop the tribe's land acquisition campaign to overtake and economically undermine the local general-purpose government. It does, however, provide some temporary relief that allows the Village to find alternative sources of revenue to sustain itself in the future, and to defend itself against ongoing opposition and obstruction from its neighbor.

To its credit, and in spite of substantial litigation expenses, the Village of Hobart has managed its municipal budget over the years in a manner that qualifies the Village for the unusual status of a Standard and Poors A+ rating. The elected Board of Trustees and small but dedicated and enduring staff at the Village deserve high accolades for using limited resources strategically to defend against the OTI's enormous funds and political clout that places public services and quality of life in a wonderful community, always in its crosshairs.

**Elaine Willman - Administrator, Village of Hobart, WI**

## Just Send It All In.

Wisconsin Way, a new organization with the catchy name, is coming to a city near you to talk about our high property taxes. They say they are asking all of us what we think about services funded by property taxes. Like many organizations they have a stated agenda and a hidden agenda.

Three of the four organizations are heavily supported by property tax payers, Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), the state's teachers' union, Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA), represents our 72 counties, and Wisconsin Transportation Builder's Association (WTBA), represents road builders, have joined the Wisconsin Realtors Association (WRA) and a hired public relations firm to find "a fair and equitable way to maintain the quality of life in Wisconsin." Translation: how do we get more money to spend—and get this additional money from sources other than property taxpayers?

Wisconsin Way is sponsoring public meetings across the state, to engage Wisconsin citizens in a "constructive, solution-oriented conversation about what we can do to make Wisconsin taxes fairer and reduce the property tax burden without sacrificing the quality of public services that have made Wisconsin a special place to live and work." 'Fairer' is a code word for someone else should pay more taxes, so I can pay less tax.

WEAC, WCA, and WTBA are unlikely to concede that our tax burden is too high. The Realtor's Association has joined this alliance because property taxes affect the affordability of owning our own homes. (Hopefully, the Realtor's Association hasn't made a deal with the tax-spending devil.) Tax spenders have a strong interest in keeping the flow of tax dollars growing...and little incentive to reduce the costs of services or increase productivity as long as the flow of dollars grows fast enough. One way or another, we will pay, whether from our property tax pocket, our sales tax pocket, our income tax pocket, or our business tax pocket (they just build it into the cost of their product or service) or some brand new tax.

While you may want to attend one of their meetings I bet controlling spending won't be on their agenda. Let me know if I am wrong. My prediction is that their final report, after holding meetings all over the state, will conclude that shifting taxes, probably to the sales tax, some new tax or maybe businesses, is the way to go. This group of spenders (Realtors respectfully excepted) has no real interest in allowing only so much growth in tax and spending.

WEAC, WCA and WTBA were all strident opponents of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights that I introduced in this and previous sessions. This Bill of Rights will allow spending growth of inflation plus population growth or new building growth, unless a majority of voters allow more by referendum. Currently school districts have allowable spending growth limits—that is why we get to vote on new schools and large school spending increases. The polls come back, time and again, with over 70% approval ratings of the voters.

Three out of four of these organizations want to grow spending faster than our paychecks grow. Educating our kids, having good roads and county government services are important. How much and how fast the cost of these services grow is a question we should ask the bill payers, the voters.

It will be interesting to watch this alliance and their sessions unfold. A couple of years ago, the Governor convened a Blue Ribbon Committee to look into this funding issue on behalf of schools. This group floated an increase in the sales tax to reduce our property taxes. Sixty per cent disapproved of this scheme because they understood that this was just another way to extract more money from us taxpayers.

Rather than finding new ways to fund these services, at ever increasing levels, we need to find ways to control the growth of spending and increase the efficient use of current money. Ways for the private sector to grow faster than the government sector. This is the only way, you and I can keep more of our paychecks, instead of less.

It will be interesting to see what they come up with and whether my predictions are correct.

Rep. Frank G. Lasee

## National Debt Update.

Of all the problems facing the next President of the United States, one that has been ignored so far in the campaign is what to do about the National Debt. Like it will go away by itself.

As of August 1, 2008, the debt had grown to **\$9,591,100,618,661.27**. That's an increase of about **196 Billion** since we last reported the first of June.

If we all returned our refund checks, the per capita national debt would still increase by about \$1,640.00. Figure that one out.

In the meantime, our generous and well meaning Congress keeps coming up with more good ideas like another rebate to cover the high cost of gasoline for "working" families. Bailing out people unable to pay their mortgages. Increased unemployment benefits, and just about every government handout you can imagine. This is an election year.

Congress has been unable to make hard choices regarding spending. It is creating a dangerous situation. Oil producing nations, plus China now hold about half of the U.S. outstanding debt. This largely due to the balance of trade and our dependence on foreign oil through the years.

Also, the national debt is the total of money borrowed but not repaid through the years, and does not include liabilities for Social Security, etc. **JF**

"You can fool some of the people all of the time, and those are the people you need to concentrate on."

. . . Robert Strauss

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## Can Congress Solve The Energy Problem?

The sudden and dramatic increase in the price of energy brings to mind an old story about the man consulting with his doctor. The doctor told him he had both good and bad news to give him.

When asked for the good news the doctor told the man he only had about four months to live. Although in a state of shock, the patient asked him what the bad news was. The doctor replied, "I forgot to tell you that when you were in for your last checkup two months ago."

That is similar to what is happening to the world's energy supply. We have known for years that increased world usage and dwindling reserves were going to cross paths and create problems. Perhaps that time has arrived, further complicated by political pressures and complex market manipulating beyond our control. Prices of most everything we buy or use have risen dramatically as a result. It also shows the potential of becoming a huge taxpayer problem at all levels.

Since this is an election year politicians are exploiting the situation to their advantage. Unless hot air is the answer is the answer Congress is happier with debating the problem than finding a solution. It would seem more appropriate to work together sorting out the facts so as to work out mutually acceptable and workable solutions rather than trying to blame the other guy. We're talking about our future.

There seems to be a mentality among us that petroleum reserves are infinite and there for the taking. Our leaders talk of increasing domestic production to become independent of foreign sources. Gov. Doyle talks of making Wisconsin the Saudi Arabia of the Midwest by subsidizing ethanol production from the same corn that formerly fed our livestock and is used as a by-product in many of our grocery items.

It has been left up to Congress and the President to take responsibility. So far the best we have seen is a resolution by representative Kagen to send a team of lawyers out to sue OPEC over the price of crude oil and pictures of President Bush shaking hands with Saudi leaders. Unfortunately the problem will not go away by itself.

During the 1940's we were told that known petroleum reserves were sufficient to last another 30-40 years. Even

though world usage since that era increased much faster than anticipated, new oil discoveries and technology have kept known reserves at a reasonable level.

This is no longer the case. Although estimates vary, experts claim that about 65-70% of the worlds oil supply has already been depleted. In the meantime we have built an economy entirely dependent on the extravagant use of gas and oil, with very few feasible alternatives. The numbers are rather staggering.

The U.S. Government's Energy Information Administration estimates remaining world oil reserves at about 1.3 trillion barrels, give or take a few billion. Much of this is becoming more difficult to extract and most of it is controlled by governments not necessarily sympathetic with our problems and NASCAR inspired way of life.

Of the total reserves, only about 2% is in the United States, and about 5% in the U.S., Canada and Mexico combined.. This includes all proven reserves whether developed or not. The CIA estimates present world usage at about **82-85 million barrels per day.** Assuming these numbers remained constant and every known drop of oil could be extracted from the ground this could last about 30 years. Great! What happens after that?

The United States currently consumes about 25% of the worlds daily usage. Most of this is imported, but we are also depleting our own reserves much faster than most other countries. Not a good situation..

How much oil is the world consuming each day? Imagine every person at a packed Lambeau Field, including players, workers, and the band, plus full houses at the Resch Center and Brown County Arena which should be about 84,000 people. Line everybody up 2 feet apart which would make a line along highway 41 to the other side of Appleton someplace.

While it might take a little space, behind each person stack exactly 1,000 42-gallon barrels of oil, and you get an idea of the problem, ( $84,000 \times 1,000 = 84,000,000.$ ) and you get an idea of how much energy the world uses **each and every day.** In the U.S. in amounts to about 3 gallons per capita.

While our leaders talk about renewable resources and drilling for oil someplace else here to become independent. it would take a massive amount of ethanol or bio-diesel to make much difference.

What to do? It appears that next years Congress may have to tackle the problem, after they get done running for re-election and blaming their opponents for causing the problem in the first place.

Remember it was Congress who set the standards of vehicle MPG fuel usage that exempted trucks and SUVs. Now they tell us that yes, we should develop more energy but since it would take too long we should do something else which they will think of after the election. They may also have to reconsider certain environmental restrictions and learn to cooperate rather than fight with oil companies and industry. First they have to learn to agree with themselves as our existence as a country may be at stake.

Some of the "solutions" up for consideration include using are strategic reserve to show our independence and cut pump prices. This would be absolutely crazy as the reserve is also necessary for national defense and wouldn't last that long anyway.

Next we hear of more drilling and developing our own resources. Even the proven reserves we have offshore and in Alaska would not last too many years if our foreign imports were reduced. A large portion of our reserves is in the form of oil sands and shale which will require unproven extraction methods. We just plain use too much! We definitely agree that our resources should be developed and utilized, but certainly not depleted at a rate that does not compromise our children's future.

While we are all concerned with conserving the environment. It seems though that some environmental concerns have taken precedent over conservation of basic resources. Examples of some of the other "feel good" ideas being touted include ethanol made from corn or other crops.

While this cannot be written off completely, the results so far have been a product that depends heavily on other energy sources to produce, diverting corn to ethanol production has created shortages used for animal feed, plus raising the price of many other food staples. Recent floods and other weather problems can cause supply problems. A recently identified "dead spot" in the Gulf of Mexico the size of Massachusetts has been blamed on excessive fertilizer used to produce more corn for ethanol production being washed down the Mississippi River.

Electric cars are a possibility but electricity also takes energy to generate. In

addition to transportation, fuel oil is also used for heat and generate much of the countries electricity. In addition our electric generating capacity is also at full capacity. Here again we have problems. Environmentalists oppose coal plants because they are considered dirty. Nuclear plants are too dangerous. Hydro power is nice because it is self sufficient, but takes too much real estate and interferes with wildlife. Coal and natural gas are also non-renewable and in limited supply. Some states have already mandated the use of energy saving fluorescent light bulbs. This can be difficult to explain when other people use air conditioners cooling a 14-room house to 68 degrees or recharge their electric automobiles.

Other suggested replacements for oil also have roadblock problems, often related to environmental concerns. Wind turbines have some promise, but neighbors complain about the noise. There have been reports of hundreds of thousands of migrating birds being killed when they fly into the towers at night. Not good.

Solar panels, thermal heat, bio-diesel and who knows what have been suggested as energy sources but have yet to be proven as being practical.

One of the more promising sources of energy has been hydrogen. Our most abundant element. Properly formulated it can be used in place of gasoline. One problem is that what we use now is being extracted from natural gas which is also in limited supply. And storage and handling details have yet to be perfected. It would be nice if someone could develop a method of extracting hydrogen from water right in the same power plant that would use it to generate electricity. There are many possibilities.

Other sources include a form of algae which can be refined into fuel. We see solar panels here and there but they won't make airplanes fly. Someone even claims to have developed energy from chemicals found in the air but that also will probably take a little work. Unfortunately nothing works as well as gasoline and fuel oil.

What should Congress with all its wisdom do? Playing games with big oil and OPEC is not the answer. What it takes is a massive cooperative scientific effort to analyze the problem, sort out the facts, consider all ideas good or bad, promote research and development and come up solutions.

It should be approached on a non-partisan basis and include scientists, oil and transportation experts, financial, agricultural and manufacturing experts and even environmental concerns. This approach worked during WWII to develop the atomic bomb and after the war to put a man on the moon.

As mentioned before this has the potential for creating huge taxpayer problems. We will get our first shock this fall as next years local and school budgets are prepared and announced.

The cost of heating public buildings was a big item last year and will no doubt be higher this year. The cost of gas for school buses will have to be addressed, along with fuel for snow plows, police cars, fire trucks and garbage collection. The cost of and funds for highway construction are already a big state problem and operating construction equipment and the cost of asphalt will be enormous. Remember the costs of labor and benefits also are going up.

People are already facing hardships due to the cost of energy, and we can be sure our politicians in an election year will be anxious to help those in need with more of our money. We already subsidize heating and food costs for those making less than a certain amount.

Whatever the future holds, it is obvious that some changes in our consumption habits will occur. As alternate energy sources are developed, equipment that can use it will have to be adopted and put on line. Large consumers such as automobiles, trucks, power plants and airlines will have to make changes.

It is important that our focus be on the future as well as the present. It is obvious that despite what we are being told by some of our candidates, it will still take longer to develop new energy sources than to stretch out what we presently have available. A lot longer. Development of resources plus conservation should take precedence over politics and greed.

Jim Frink – BCTA

## Energy Independence, and Rational Thought.

Several years ago I was involved in some oil well operations in Southern Illinois, and can personally attest to the great advances made in oil exploration and pumping operations since that time. Unfortunately it seems there is a gross lack of intelligence about the subject of oil reserves and production.

We hear a lot about ANWR (*Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*) and oil reserves, but I doubt most people know what it is except for a lot of political rhetoric. The reserve was created by Congress in 1960, and expanded in 1980-83 to its present size of 30,625 sq. miles. This is an area about half of the size of Wisconsin. The state of Alaska is over 10 times the size of Wisconsin, so we are talking about 5% of the State of Alaska.

Congress has designated the southern part to be a refuge with no drilling to be allowed. The middle portion to be retained as a "wilderness," and the northern portion which is about 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle consisting of 1.5 million acres, or 8% of the total was designated for "oil and gas." This area was called 10-2 or 1002.

Extensive geologic measuring was done in the 1980's and determined that reserves of at least a billion barrels existed. However, oil was in the \$20 per barrel range at that time, and the remote location would make it difficult and expensive to extract.

Congress then restricted area 1002 to only 2,000 acres (3 sq. miles) and in 1995 President Clinton made all drilling in ANWR off limits, even though it could easily produce over one million barrels of oil a day.

Since the 1980's extensive drilling developments have been made. Today, a drill can go vertically for several thousand feet, and then be turned horizontally and go for another long distance, making it possible to reach areas formerly impossible in complete safety with a single drilling rig.

How rational is the decision to NOT drill in ANWR? Not very! It's flat and desolate. No hills or forest. It's not even a animal reserve. Better yet, the area that was formerly allowed for drilling, 2,000 acres, is actually smaller than Austin Straubel airport here in Green Bay. In other words, preserving an area equal to the size of our local airport in an area equal to half the state of Wisconsin is blocking development of a very badly needed resource to give us time to develop alternate energy sources for the future

If this were Wisconsin, would it make a difference? Logic and understanding are definitely lacking in this important decision in our present and future energy needs.

Rich Carlstedt - BCTA

## June Meeting Notes.

### Hobart Administrator Addresses BCTA.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Assn. meeting held June 19, 2008 at Tiletown Brewing.

Elaine Willman, Hobart Village Administrator, addressed the June BCTA meeting. She earned a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree from California State University, and is working on her PhD in Public Policy. An expert in federal Indian policy, she has more than 20 years of experience in community and economic development. She has addressed many nationally known organizations, including the Cato Institute.

Ms. Willman explained that she is of direct Cherokee ancestry and her husband is of Shoshone ancestry. Before coming to Hobart, she lived on the Yakama Indian Reservation in the state of Washington for 15 years. While she greatly respects her own ancestry and all cultures, she believes sincerely that all citizens have a duty to preserve and protect their constitutional and civil rights, and their property rights from inappropriate government decisions, whether those decisions result from the federal government, a state, county or tribal government. She emphasized that government decision-making is a very separate issue from respect for culture.

The situation facing the Village of Hobart is not unusual on the national scene, she explained. With federal subsidies for housing, transportation, and law enforcement, the tribes with casinos can direct large amounts of casino profits to land purchases and other investments. The Oneida Tribe of Indians has an annual budget of \$527 million, while the Village of Hobart has an annual budget of only \$3.7 million.

The Oneida Tribe of Indians now owns 32 percent of the village's taxable property. Presently, 11 percent of the land in the village has been placed into federal trust and removed from the tax rolls. The remaining 21 percent owned by the tribe has been packaged for placement into federal trust. Removing this land from the Hobart property tax base will be crippling to the village. Ms. Willman explained that tribal government is federally recognized for the sole purpose and duty to govern its land and its enrolled members. The Village of Hobart is a full municipality with rights of representative government. It has the full duty for roads and law enforcement within the village.

*Ms. Willman is the author of Going To Pieces...The Dismantling of the United States of America, resulting from a 6,000 mile road trip Ms. Willman took with a videographer, across 17 Indian Reservations from Washington State to New York.*

**Dave Nelson - Secretary**

"The American people will never knowingly adopt Socialism. But under the name of 'Liberalism' they will adopt every fragment of the Socialist program, until one day America will be a Socialist nation, without knowing how it happened."  
... **Norman Thomas**

"I want the people of America to be able to work less for the government and more for themselves. I want them to have the rewards of their own industry. His is the chief meaning of freedom."  
... **Calvin Coolidge**

## Crystal Ball.

Matthew Frank, Secretary Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has good news for you—we are going to take more mercury out of the air that is being generated by our coal burning electrical power plants. And, it won't cost us hardly anything. The air we breathe and the fish we eat should be cleaner (well maybe they will be) and it will be very affordable. Less than a dollar a month. There is only one problem, this isn't being done anywhere now.

Recently, the DNR Board, an unelected, governor-appointed board of seven decided unanimously that our coal burning electric plants must cut their current mercury emissions by 90% over the next seven years. Electric power plants nationally are already cutting their mercury emissions by 80% from 75 tons nationally to 15 tons. (EPA website link) The last ounce of mercury is the most expensive to reduce. This is the law of diminishing returns (if you don't believe in the law of supply and demand, you won't believe in this, either.)

U.S. power plants, overall, are responsible for about 1 percent of current global mercury emissions

And our DNR board would make it 1/10th of 10%. And it will only cost a buck a month. Secretary Frank must be using his crystal ball again. Because there is NO existing technology to accomplish these desires at this time.

Because of prevailing winds, Wisconsin ratepayers (electricity users) will be paying to clean up Michigan and New York. These new strict mercury controls will not benefit Wisconsinites. Well, we can feel good about ourselves because we are doing something. Somehow. Feeling good is a benefit.

At a time when our economy is weak, energy costs are rising and our food costs are growing faster than we can afford. Now is not the time to impose additional costs on the backs of electric users. At a time when there are pay cuts in the air, people are losing their jobs, this unelected board has moved forward with a decision that could double our electric bills over the next five to ten years without inflation or increased costs.

What we need now is NOT additional regulation. NOT additional expenses. We need a time-out because our economy has to catch up.

Protecting our environment is important. Heating our homes, turning on the air conditioning, getting to and from work (and an occasional trip to grandma's house) today is more important than some new incremental gains that we can't realize for years to come. There needs to be a balance. There needs to be a return on investment. Only prosperous growing societies can afford to protect the environment.

With a price is no object attitude our prosperity is endangered. Our state and country must remain prosperous. Only then will we be able to continue our respect of our environment.

The environmental extremists want to load us up with ever increasing regulations. This will at some point reduce us to a third world lifestyle. I think they want some other country to lead the world. The Chinese understand the relationship between economic growth and better living standards for all and the need to fuel this growth with an energy growth policy. I wish our national leaders understood this.

**Rep. Frank G. Lasee**

## July Meeting Notes.

### Update on Green Bay Schools.

Monthly BCTA meeting conducted July 17, 2008 at the Tiletown Brewing Co.

Jim Steineke, candidate for the 5th Assembly District seat, which covers parts of Outagamie County and also parts of Brown County as far as Green Bay. He spoke about himself and his reasons for running for the Assembly. He began by outlining his experience. He is presently serving as Chairman of the Town of Vandebroek and also serves as an Outagamie County Supervisor. Jim is the regional manager for an investment company. Formerly a mentor for developmentally disabled adults, Jim, along with his wife, is developing a mentoring program to serve disadvantaged youth in local elementary schools.

Mr. Steineke stated that he is very concerned about the future of our state, with major employers leaving the state and reducing their workforces in the state. General Motors is closing its Janesville plant and Kimberly-Clark is reducing its operations. He sees little effort coming from the state to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses to Wisconsin. Our infrastructure is in bad shape and huge amounts of money are being siphoned from the state Transportation Fund to pay for non-transportation items.

The combination of high taxes and regulations has made it difficult for Wisconsin businesses to compete. Citing Iowa as a model for improving government efficiency, Jim explained that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources applied lean manufacturing techniques to its permitting processes. The drastically shortened permitting times make Iowa much more attractive to businesses that are searching for places to invest in new facilities.

Making tough decisions as Chairman of the Town of Vandebroek has given Jim experience separating necessary items from nice-to-have items in the town budget to stay within levy limits. From this experience, he would like to see levy limits apply to the state government, too. Instead of taxing more, he believes the state government needs to spend less.

Rich Carlstedt gave an update on the Green Bay School District's Enrollment Task Force. A final report is planned for September. There are seven proposals on the table. Accurate population projections are crucial to projections of future enrollment numbers. Rich believes that the key driver for long-term enrollment projections is job growth, not housing starts.

Rich also gave a report on Fund 80, the Community Service Fund, which can cover all non-curricular costs. It was established by the Legislature for all school districts. It is up to local school boards to tax for Fund 80. It has been used by southern Wisconsin school districts. Fund 80 is difficult to audit. The Green Bay School Board passed the concept last year. This year, the Community Service Fund levy was \$1.5 million. Next year, \$1.9 million is expected, including \$1.1 million for 10 school liaison officers.

The Green Bay School District's Emeritus Program was discussed. It pays retiring teachers one-third of their final year's salary for each of the three years after they retire. To collect, the teachers must work a limited number of hours each year on tasks directed by the administration. Currently, 188 retired teachers are reported to be participating in the program. Originally, the purpose of the program was to replace senior teachers at the top of the pay scale with less costly new teachers at beginning wages. This seems to be in total conflict with the School Board's recent action to increase starting salaries by 14 percent. Now, the Emeritus Program appears to have evolved into a retirement perquisite.

The next Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting will be Thursday, August 21, at Tiletown Brewing. Details on the last page of this *Tax Times*.

Dave Nelson - Secretary

## Net Property Tax Levies Up 5.7% in 2008

### Increase Is Largest Since 2005

Net property taxes in Wisconsin rose 5.7% in 2008, the largest increase since 2005, the year before the recent levy limits on municipalities and counties were imposed. A new report from the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX) found that while gross property taxes climbed 6.2%, state lawmakers increased the school levy credit \$79.3 million to \$672.4 million to lessen the impact on property taxpayers. According to the new study, school levies rose the most, 7.4%. With the recent state budget delayed until October 2007, school aids were unchanged from 2006-07. Since school property taxes are tied to state aids through state-imposed revenue limits, the budget delay resulted in higher school property taxes. County and municipal levy increases were limited by state lawmakers to the greater of 3.86% or the increase in property values due to new construction. There were exceptions to the limits, particularly for new debt service. The WISTAX report noted that, with a slowing real estate market, statewide net new construction growth was 2.5%. However, municipal property taxes climbed 5.0%, and county levies were up 4.5%.

Among the three types of municipalities, municipal-purpose property tax levies in cities (5.3%) grew fastest, followed by villages (4.6%) and towns (4.2%). The report noted that the state's two largest municipalities had above-average increases: Milwaukee was up 9.0%, while Madison's municipal levy climbed 6.9%. The largest county increases were in Eau Claire (19.2%), Polk (13.5%), Door (12.4%), and Pierce (12.3%) counties.

"The new report noted that state financial assistance to local governments can be of some help in reducing property taxes, but research has shown this often to be temporary. Wisconsin ranked eighth in state transfers to local governments, yet also had the ninth-highest property taxes. Large aid increases temporarily reduce property taxes, although there is evidence that some of the aid is used for new spending. Unless local aids are continually increased, their effect on property taxes diminishes over time.

Complete 2008 municipal tax levy information can be obtained at [www.wistax.org](http://www.wistax.org) in the "Facts and Figures" section. A free copy of *The Wisconsin Taxpayer* report on Wisconsin's property taxes is available by contacting WISTAX at 401 North Lawn Ave., Madison, WI 53704-5033; e-mailing [wistax@wistax.org](mailto:wistax@wistax.org); visiting [www.wistax.org](http://www.wistax.org); or phoning 608.241.9789.

Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX)

"We are apt to be deluded into false security by into false security by political catch-words, devised to flatter rather than instruct." James A. Garfield

## Things That Make Us Wonder.

**The Wis. Dept. of Public In-**struction informs that 6 Green Bay Schools failed to meet federal progress standards for 2007-08. Although it was not specified how really bad the situation was, we have always taken pride in our school system and its educational accomplishments.

While reports of this nature are often suggestions that taxpayers should fork over more money to remedy the situation, we wonder if the problem is the schools not teaching or certain students not learning. If this is going to continue giving our schools a bad mark, perhaps we should focus more attention to profiling the non-achievers rather than penalize everyone else.

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**Residents of Green Bay** and the Fox Valley can remember odors from paper mills and other industrial plants. Technology has made this problem largely a thing of the past.

Now modern technology has created a new problem. In the rush to build new ethanol production facilities. One large plant near Jefferson has been emitting obnoxious odors since it was opened. Several meetings between local residents and the DNR have yet to solve the problem. Another plant located near Milton, WI was found to be out of compliance with their DNR permit on 178 out of 371 items, including violation of the Federal Clean Air Act, and could be fined \$10-25,000 each day until corrected. Good thing they didn't want to open a new paper mill.

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**A report prepared** by the Bay Area Community Council concluded that 24,982 people, or 10.4% of Brown Counties population is living in poverty by definition of family income under \$20,000 annually. It was further estimated that 46% of Green Bay's public school enrollment qualify for subsidized lunches, up from 9.8% in 2000.

While this indicates a burden for all of us, it would be interesting to know if the poverty figures include the elderly trying to maintain their residence, pay property taxes, and live on Social Security or limited savings.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Milwaukee County** parks have been the victim of budget cuts for several years, and now their County Board is proposing a referendum to add 1% to the county sales tax for park purposes. This could set a precedent for other communities in the state. Will people accept additional taxes for parks when their schools, roads, and other basic core services are all claiming a shortage of funds? Unfortunately increased sales taxes look like the salvation of many state and local budget problems.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Chicago and Cook County** have been taking turns at increasing sales taxes a "little bit:" at a time until the total in Chicago was 10.25%, the highest in the nation. When neighboring states and counties started advertising their lower taxes, Chicago business started putting pressure on officials due to loss of business. It was reported that even southern Wisconsin got some of the action.

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**While Milwaukee County** is pushing for a sales tax increase to fund their parks system, the city of Milwaukee is proposing a \$20.00 annual wheel tax for street maintenance. No doubt other cities are watching this. By state law proceeds from a local vehicle fee must be used for transportation related purposes but this apparently doesn't apply to state government where gas tax and other proceeds have been sidetracked to other funds by the governor.

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**Someone is always** taking a poll trying compare one state with another, and generally the results don't really prove anything we didn't know.

A recent CNBC poll placed Wisconsin 37th best for business climate, indicating room for improvement. The big surprise in this poll was they rated the quality of our workforce as 47th. That was always our strong point.

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**Security at airports** keeps becoming increasing frustrating and time consuming for travelers. A recent drug raid in Green Bay disclosed "stun guns" disguised as cell phones.

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**Anyone with investments** providing income for the retirement is keeping a nervous eye on the stock market. This is also true of large corporate trusts including school districts and other governmental units. Some state school districts have made investments in risky "collateralized debt obligations" and are now concerned the funds may need additional financing.

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**Politicians keep throwing** stones at "Big Oil" companies for profiteering on the price of oil and governments keep trying to find new ways to tax them as Gov. Doyle tried in the present state budget. In the meantime investments in oil companies have been popular with government investment accounts including the Wisconsin State Investment Board which earned over \$200 million in the last four years from their oil co. investments. You can't have it both ways.

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**Does anyone wonder** what all of the FEMA employees who came to Wisconsin after the recent floods do when there are no natural disasters to inspect?

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**The Wisconsin Way** is a coalition of spending interests who have been going about the state holding public forums they claim are seeking ways to "**lower property taxes without lowering our quality of life.**"

Sounds nice but considering that members of the group include the Wisconsin Counties Association, WEAC, and the Wisconsin Transportation Builders Association perhaps the taxpayer public should be a little skeptical of their intentions.

\* \* \* \* \*

**While many people** are still scratching their heads over California's legalization of gay marriage, the Dane County Board has another idea.

The *Wisconsin State Journal* reported the board is sponsoring a proposal that any business serving the county would be required to provide proof they are offering the same benefits to employees "domestic partners" as they do to married employees. A registry would be kept of business's that qualify. In other words, if you want to do business with Dane County, you have to offer domestic partners benefits, whether you get the business or not.



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**Despite decreased** driving due to the cost of gasoline, the need for highway maintenance is building due to the age of many of our highways. This is both a national and state problem.

Unfortunately gas tax revenues also suffer when the amount of gas is reduced. Then we have calls for a gas tax moratorium to help consumers. This would be nice but won't help highways.

At the same time, members of Congress are calling for a federal gas tax increase of at least .10 cents a gallon to cover highway repairs.

\* \* \* \* \*

**There have numerous** reports recently of algae and other forms of pollution on Lake Michigan beaches. More than usual this year along with requests for studies as to the cause.

Maybe someone should do more studies as to what happens to all the millions of gallons of raw sewage that is dumped into the lake from Milwaukee and other lakeshore cities every time it rains. Remember this is also our drinking water supply.

\* \* \* \* \*

**In a related story**, officials in Manistee, MI, on the other side of lake Michigan, had to close 10 miles of public beaches because they were covered with various plastic waste products including cups and wristbands from events held in Wisconsin. Sounds like someone is not recycling properly

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**We can agree** that it is important to pay top personnel well assuming they do their job well and either make or save money for their employers as the case may be.

We were surprised though that the new Green Bay School Supt., Dr. Maass will receive a 24% increase in salary over what his predecessor received after 7 years of excellent service. His announced salary of \$184,000 does not mention health insurance, auto allowance, vacation and retirement benefits for a total in the \$220M range.

Also puzzling is the emeritus retirement benefit of \$153,000 which Dr. Nerad qualified for. This was a taxpayer expense, justified by the Board Of Education as a tool to encourage older teachers and administrators to retire early and

administrators to retire early in order to replace them with new employees at a lower salary. This obviously was not the case.

We will assume one of the criteria in the selection of the new Supt. was his experience with preparing a budget which should be a challenge this year for a number of reasons including the cost of energy for heating schools and running buses, a huge salary increase recently approved by the board for staff, and the fact that sizable maintenance projects for several schools has fallen behind schedule.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Despite a 2 to 1 defeat** of the referendum for a new Green Bay High School, the Bd. of Education commissioned a survey at taxpayer expense to find out why. While they may try again, with a new high school referendum or one only covering maintenance and operating costs of existing schools they will have to establish a definite need for the project. They should prove projected cost estimates are accurate and necessary as well as reasonable for taxpayers. Some idea of future operating costs for items like staffing should also be mentioned.

\* \* \* \* \*

**The phenomenal popularity** of the Packers has created a waiting list for season tickets which could again fill Lambeau Field. It has also created a black market for those with tickets to sell through scalpers at highly inflated prices rather than make them available to those on the waiting list, plus an opportunity for counterfeiters to move in.

However the idea of requiring a \$800 license and operating in a specific area could cause more problems than it would solve. The way it sounds, it would only further legitimizes and confuse the practice of scalping tickets and make it more difficult to move up on the season ticket ladder.

\* \* \* \* \*

**There have numerous** reports recently of algae and other forms of pollution on Lake Michigan beaches. More than usual this year along with requests for studies as to the cause.

Maybe someone should do more studies as to what happens to all the millions of gallons of raw sewage that is

dumped into the lake from Milwaukee and other lakeshore cities every time it rains. Remember this is also our drinking water supply.

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**What is the actual** population of Green Bay, and where is it headed? In the 2000 census it was 102,213 and rising. A 2003 estimate was 101,467 and in 2005 the estimate was 101,213. A July WISTAX comparison of state cities has it as 104,920.

A recent **Money Magazine** article on the 100 best U.S. cities gave the present population as 100,300. While we do not agree with all of the reasons Green Bay was not on the list, a declining population definitely is not headed in the right direction.

The question is if the population is going up or down. Two supposedly reliable sources have a current difference of over 4,500. Have that many more people moved out than moved in, or are there that many people living here who are not being counted?

Accurate population counts are important for purposes of state and federal aids, school enrollment projections, and per-capita comparisons to gauge how tax dollars are being spent. We realize counting people is not an exact science but sometimes get the impression that even the Census Bureau uses **SWAG** technology in their projections.

\* \* \* \* \*

**We consider ourselves** a compassionate nation but Sen. Obama's announced plan to provide health care to everyone including illegal immigrants should cause concern.

The cost of health care has risen dramatically in recent years, putting a strain on employers, individuals and government units. While we want to see that everyone has access to quality health care the cost must be considered. The more that we legitimize illegal immigration across our borders by actions like offering health insurance, the more problems we are going to have as a nation.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Tribal interests** have been trying for the last couple of years to get permission to build a huge casino in the Beloit area. So far the State and Federal governments and local citizens have not shown much enthusiasm.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE 

Now with the GM plant in Janesville scheduled to close, applicants are using that as an excuse to proceed. What do you think?

\* \* \* \* \*

**The G. I. Bill** was a federal sponsored program providing college education from a grateful country to service men who sacrificed part of their lifetime during WWII and beyond. Many of our present business and government leaders benefited from this program.

I do not know what today's veterans receive, but assume there are ample provisions in their favor and it is in the National budget. To what part is this a state obligation? However, Gov. Doyle has proposed giving free tuition at state colleges for service veterans.

The big problem is that tuition at state schools has been increasing at a rather fast rate the last few years, and each time it creates a hardship for more everyday students. It is estimated that free tuition for veterans would add at least 5.5% to the cost for other students. Is this fair?

While this is an appropriate and proper gesture, it would seem that there are other effective alternatives available.

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**Congress and the President** have approved a massive bailout bill in response to the "home mortgage crisis" which guarantees low cost loans for those in trouble.. It will probably take some time to see if will do any good and what the ultimate cost will be.

In the meantime, there are all sorts of proposals for homeowner tax credits, etc., from politicians looking for votes.

While the economy in general is not helping the situation, it still appears we may be subsidizing some careless loans. Whenever government money is waved around, you can be sure that people for whom it was not intended will figure out a way to get more than their share.

\* \* \* \* \*

**In it's 20 years** of existence, the Wisconsin Lottery, \$8.7 Billion in tickets have been sold, with \$4.7 Billion, or about 56.8% being in prizes. Another \$2.8 Billion went to "Property tax relief."

Now lottery officials are suggesting internet sales of lottery games as other states already have them. This would take another constitutional amendment. Why don't they just legalize slot machines in bars,

charge them an annual license fee and give them some or the action? It wouldn't be any worse than now with all of the casinos we have.

\* \* \* \* \*

**We read that local** communities are making special efforts to assist new residents and newly eligible citizens eligible to vote. This is good to hear because if you don't vote you have to right to complain about your government.

What is sometimes disturbing is when political party or special interest targets a class of group of potential voters only because they will vote in their favor with disregard to what is best for the country or state as a whole.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Hopefully the day will come** when all PCB's have been removed from the Fox River and we can sleep in peace.

Now the proposal is to truck several thousand truckloads of the stuff from the river across the 172 Bridge, through DePere to a landfill in Calumet County. People in DePere and elsewhere are not happy are not happy with the idea.

Just think how much expensive gas they could save just by leaving things alone. Wasn't the original idea to truck it to a landfill near Detroit?

\* \* \* \* \*

**The recent "Body Worlds"** exhibit at the Milwaukee apparently was a money maker. This is good because the museum (and Milwaukee County) have had financial problems in recent years.

The museum then gave 150 of its employees cash bonuses averaging \$700 apiece. This was a nice gesture, but hopefully will not become a precedent for government units turning a profit splitting it up with their employees. Isn't this the way pirates and gangsters operated?

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**Homelessness in Green Bay** is a problem that is not taking care of itself. It is probably not a unique Green Bay problem either. When you build shelters and provide facilities people will come; from all over. It seems to be a way of life. There have been complaints of the homeless living in abandoned buildings and other nuisance incidents. What is most disturbing are reports from schools

claiming students who are homeless. This indicates we have more than a vagrancy problem.

\* \* \* \* \*

**A report from the Wisconsin** Taxpayers Alliance claims Wisconsin spent 8.5% more than the national average in 2006. This amounted to \$10,190 per pupil. The U.S. average was \$9,390. The report further indicates benefits for Wisconsin teachers were 52.5% higher

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**Wisconsin is not** the only state with budget problems. We read they are all having the same problems. Spending more than their traditional sources of revenue will provide and scratching for new ideas. They simply do not have the ability or smarts to live within their means.

California has a \$17 Billion shortfall, and Gov. Schwarzenegger is proposing a plan to borrow against future lottery proceeds, Isn't that what we do in Wisconsin? You can win the jackpot but it takes 25 years to collect your prize unless you settle for less. Even though the prize money was wagered and the state took its cut, it is still in their bank depending on future funds to pay you.

\* \* \* \* \*

**When Gov. Doyle** signed the state budget, he stated that we would see roadwork delays unless more funding was made available. Apparently this is what is happening at the intersection of 172 and 41 where thousands of orange barrels are being continuously being moved from side to side with little visible highway construction progress made from day to day.

\* \* \* \* \*

**While "The Wisconsin Way"** travels about the state seeking ways to fund schools and other government expenses without depending on property tax revenues, another group calling itself the "Association for Community-Responsive Government" or **ACRG** is making itself heard. They claim to be an organization of Wisconsin citizens who support representative government that fosters thriving communities.

They would do this by adequately funding government at all levels secured through fair taxation and free to raise and allocate such funds wisely. Their website [www.ACRG.Org](http://www.ACRG.Org) further goes on to proclaim Their opposition to candidates for public

office who "simple-mindedly" oppose taxes and such measures as TABOR.

While it is difficult to imagine any candidate running for public office on a platform of increasing taxes, this seems to be exactly what they have in mind. While the sponsors of this organization and membership was not listed on their website, they cite public education and teacher compensation at the top of their lists of items requiring more public funding so draw your own conclusions. They will probably be a factor in the coming Legislative elections.

All candidates for office will likely promise to improve the economy, Wisconsin's record of high taxes, and poor business climate. Ask them what they are going to do after the election.

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**The Wisconsin State** Journal reports the first major test for Supt. Nerad in Madison will be whether to ask voters for approval to raise property taxes to cover an \$8.2 million shortfall in their 2009 budget to cover operating costs.

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**It doesn't hurt to ask.** State Rep. Donna Seidel (D), has suggested the state ask Washington for federal aid in the amount of \$650 million to cover our budget deficit. Now who will the Federal Govt. ask to cover their deficit?

\* \* \* \* \*

**The Wisconsin Supreme Court** has ruled the Dept. of Revenue must return about \$300 million in sales tax collected on custom software for business which was determined not subject to tax.

Since county sales taxes apply to the same items as the state tax. It will mean that counties who collect the .5% tax including Brown with the stadium tax will have to return part of their receipts.

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**Wisconsin is one** of the nations largest producer of cranberries. The demand has grown in recent years, and producers claim they could use an additional 5,000 acres of bogs for planting.

Only problem is the bogs are classified as wetlands, and the DNR is reluctant to give it's approval.

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**Sick leave by State Employees** is a touchy item. While the average state employee used 65 hours sick pay per year,

Dept. of Correction employees used an average of 106 hours. One problem is that taking sick pay often means other employees have to work overtime. Overtime pay by state employees cost taxpayers about \$65 million last year.

Not being able to work due to illness is a popular and often necessary benefit. Anyone who has employees on the payroll will assert it is often abused.

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**On the subject of sick leave** pay, 40,000 employees in Milwaukee filed a petition to city requesting an ordinance to make ALL employers in the city to provide sick leave to their employees.

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**While the state** may have problems raising taxes, they have no problem raising fees. One proposal is to raise the fees for restaurants which handle raw meat or poultry from \$290 to \$430 in 2010 and another \$110 in 2012. Fees on other industries would also be sharply increased.

While we can understand applying fees to the specific industries or parties which require them, it sometimes seems they are also feeding the general fund. Every time a fee is established or increased the cost of administering and collection also goes up.

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**Finally, thanks to our system** of popularity contest primaries, the Presidential candidates are campaigning full speed prior to their national party conventions. The election is still 3 long months away.

Rather than let people make up their minds based on party philosophies and assessment of the candidates, we have polls deciding for us. It will not be long before the state legislature and congressional get underway, and these promise to be quite contentious this year as both major parties seek control of complete power of our state and national governments.

The parties and candidates retaining the most creative and responsive advertising agencies always seems to have some advantage. Remember it is their job to influence your vote one way or the other rather than bore you with facts. They have the methods and resources to plant false or misleading items accepted by the

news media.

When you read the polls, see the ads, read the stories on E-Mail, be sure to look at the source. Much of what you see or read comes from special interests with their own agenda. Make your decision based on your own assessment of the candidate and what he will do once in office and most important of all, **BE SURE TO VOTE!**

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, from the days news events. Some are relatively unimportant and probably not worth commenting about while 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."*

**Next BCTA Meeting**  
**Thursday, August 21, 2008**  
**Titletown Brewing Co,**  
12:00 Noon – Details on Back Page  
**"Come and Join the Conversa-**

"The most successful politician is he who says what people are thinking most often in the loudest voice."  
. . . **Theodore Roosevelt**

"A fool and his money are soon elected."  
. . . **Will Rogers**

"The only difference I've found in Congress between the Republican and Democratic leadership is that one of them is skinning us from the toes up and the other from the ears down."  
. . . **Huey Long**

# The TAX TIMES

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

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## *Inside This Issue*

**How Much is Enough?**  
**A Less Than Neighborly Neighbor.**  
**Just Sent It All In.**  
**National Debt Update.**  
**Can Congress Solve The Energy Problem?**  
**Energy Independence and Rational Thought,**  
**June Meeting Notes.**  
**Crystal Ball.**  
**July Meeting Notes.**  
**Net Property Tax Levies Up.**  
**Things That Make Us Wonder.**  
and more.

## The TAX TIMES - August, 2008

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

**Thursday - August 21, 2008, Monthly BCTA Meeting, 12:00 Noon**  
**Titletown Brewing Co., “Frost” Room.**  
Program, Speaker, Current Events

**Thursday - September 18, 2008, Monthly BCTA Meeting, 12:00 Noon**  
**Titletown Brewing Co., “Frost” Room.**  
Program, Speaker, Current Events

**Thursday - October 16, 2008, Monthly BCTA Meeting, 12:00 Noon**  
**Titletown Brewing Co., “Frost” Room.**  
Program, Speaker, Current Events

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

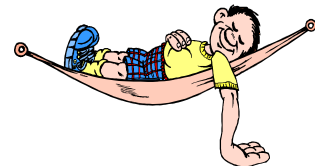
**Meetings are open to the public.**

**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.

**All candidates for public office, and all public officials are Cordially invited to attend are open meetings and be recognized.**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [WWW/BCTAxpayers.ORG](http://WWW/BCTAxpayers.ORG)**



## August, 2008

“You can’t be for big government, big taxes, and big bureaucracy and still be for the little guy”  
. . . Ronald Reagan

“People never lie so much as after a hunt, during a war, or before an election.” . . . Otto von Bismarck

### **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.**