

Swindler in Chief.

"It's the most anti-property owner proposal I've seen in the 20 years I've practiced law. There is institutional resistance to paying landowners just compensation." "The way they slipped this into the budget bill ... It just smells sneaky. ... This is really giving people the shaft."

These understatements came from attorneys Michael Bauer and Kelly Keady, slamming on Diamond Jim's budget proposal to make it more difficult for landowners to contest WisDOT appraisals of land that the agency seeks to take for road projects. Too bad our property tax bills won't share such plummeting values, simultaneously lowering our taxes.

Keady argued that legal costs would be more than clients could win in appeal, "Cases where the state wants to take 10 to 20 acres from a farmer would not be economical to pursue." Can you believe it?! Our former attorney general -- Top Cop! -- is trying to legalize state thievery! First he treads where no previous governor dared -- segregated funds -- to boost his general purpose spending addiction. Something so wrong, if Tommy Thompson had done it, AG Doyle would have sued to stop him. Tommy, though he loved to spend too, remained respectful of SEG funds. Sad times, sad times when we witness such unethical actions from our State's leadership, it reminds me of Rahm Emmanuel's statement, " never waste a good crisis...", the battle cry of the power hungry.

In a previous life, before becoming a mortgage originator, I did eminent domain [emphasis on the Eminent!] estimates for WisDOT on moving individuals it decreed must be relocated to fit their master plans. I abetted their land grabs, I must confess, in the name of supporting my family. I watched the State steal a man's property on the Wolf River that was an environmentally sensitive, irreplaceable wildlife refuge for a highway that should never have been built on that right-o-way. Other land was available, but the developer, a "friend" of the city officials, turned the heads of the DOT. It was down right criminal. I rationalized my role to soothe my conscience, but I confess it here and ask for taxpayer absolution.

I often spent time speaking with the poor folks the State felt necessary to plunder. IN my experience, and the above attorneys would bear me out, the WisDOT customarily under-bids, under-estimates the value of the individuals property, no doubt in the name of saving taxpayer dollars. But with better planning, WisDOT might find more mutually acceptable settlements. Let's face the fact that the taxpayer gets screwed, whatever the outcome.

This is just one of the many Marxist proposals floating in Diamond Jims septic budget. The oil tax, the hospital assessment, Badger-Care Plus meets Lane Bryant. Government is reaching into your pocket for the "greater good." The latest outrage is UW-Madison Chancellor Biddy Martin's differential tuition plan, that raises tuition for everyone over the next four years, but rebates those whose families' earn less than \$80,000 a year. Can you say Robin Hood?! And where did she pull the \$80K figure -- out of her butt? 80K is a pretty cozy wage in Wisconsin. All to bring more "lower class and middle class" students to the UW. An admirable goal perhaps, but charity, free market scholarships, are the means to that end. But Biddy didn't want to hit up rich alums for scholarship money when she was their bucks for campus projects. Biddy should not fail to choke on the University' endowment fund by 2008 figures exceeded \$ 1,735,000,000.00 (UW Foundation only.) What fairness applies here?

There is a wave of socialism in America today, the undercurrent left in the wake of Barack Almighty's ascendance to the federal throne. Beware the undertoe. Don't wade into those seemingly serene waters. The whole movement is wrong for America, wrong for Wisconsin, and despite all we may personally stand to gain from their income redistribution, we must oppose it. We must sing the tune of Quincy Adams Wagstaff [*Groucho Marx in Horsefeathers*]:

"Your proposition may be very good, but let's get one thing understood -- whatever it is, I'm against it. No matter what it is or who commenced it, I'm against it!"

Richard Parins - President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government

Trying to Decipher The State Budget.

In his 2003 State of the State address, Gov. Doyle stated, "We should not, we must not and I will not raise taxes." In his 2009 Budget address he proclaimed, "his budget would protect the middle class against tax increases." We realize that it is not always possible to predict the future but one can always prepare for the future.

When things begin to look bad, common sense says you save rather than spend, prioritize your needs by putting things off until you can afford them, and finally limit your spending to what your income and resources will allow.

By most reports, the 2008-09 Wisconsin State Budget left the state with about a \$3 Billion deficit. No problem says the Governor, things will be better next year. This is now next year and things could not be worse. Nonetheless Governor Doyle proposes a budget calling for more spending, a number of controversial policy changes and serious questions as to where the money will be coming from.

Simply put, the purpose of the state budget is to determine the needs of state agencies for the coming biennium and allocate anticipated revenue accordingly. These revenues for payment are set forth and supposedly should equal anticipated expenses. The Wisconsin Constitution calls for a balanced budget without borrowing but that idea was thrown out the window several administrations ago.

The Governor's 2009-2010 budget totals 1,743 pages. Obviously a lot of fine print and detail can be included in a document that size, so a 94 page "budget in brief" is furnished. While this may contain the big numbers it is the other 1,649 pages that contain the policy changes and new revenue sources that will greatly effect our lives.

INCREASED SPENDING: While the numbers are confusing, it appears overall spending for the fiscal year 2009-2010 will increase about \$2.3 Billion over 2008-09. The Governor will claim he cut agency requests "to the bone," but many departments will still receive substantial increases.

INCREASED TAXES: While we acknowledge that some effort has been made to protect "The middle class" from tax increases, that is where the much of the additional \$3.2 Billion in new taxes and fees will come from. (\$1.2 Billion from budget repair bill and \$1.7 Billion increases in the 2009-2010 budget.) Unfortunately some of the proposed revenue may not be available through legal challenges or overestimates. For example, employment loss and stock market downturn could have a very negative effect on personal and corporate income taxes, which have been the states largest source of revenue. A decline in personal spending could impact sales tax revenues.

Some of the other new revenue sources include \$100 million from a tax on oil companies. (this would amount to about .10 per gallon and will either be passed on to consumers or be brought to court by the oil companies.) A hospital assessment tax supposed to raise \$270-330 million annually. (This is supposed to be reimbursed by the federal govt., but will probably just add more to cost of health care.) An additional .75 cent tax on a pack of cigarettes to raise \$127 Million per year. (Those that don't quit w/this increase will find out of state or native American sources, bootlegging still big business.)

The top personal income tax rate will be raised from 6.75 to 7.5% and capital gains taxes will be raised which is anticipated to raise \$175 million and \$85 million respectively. Note these taxes depend on the economy, and people earning sufficient income to pay them.

In addition, there are a number of other items which may or

not effect the average person such as taxing internet downloads of software and music, taxing internet sales subject to use tax, increases in most state issued fees and licenses, etc. There is not much left.

POLICY CHANGES: In the past, it has been a tradition in Wisconsin to insert various policy changes and regulations into the state budget, and making them law subject to fines and penalties. Often these items have no bearing whatsoever with appropriating funds or budgeting expenditures. At times these have been inserted at the last minute in order to pass the budget, and at times they are inserted at the whim of the governor with little likelihood of opposition. Often they are inserted under the radar with no public input or open discussion.

Following are some of the items which have been brought to light and there likely be more as the 1,743 page budget bill moves toward approval in the Legislature and Senate.

- **Repeal of tort reform legislation in Wisconsin allowing a defendant only 1% guilty to pay 100% of damages.** *This appears to be a gift to the personal injury lawyers of Wisconsin.*
- **A plan to give collective bargaining rights to the UW System faculty.** *A gift to the UW. Would be expensive for taxpayers.*
- **Giving state employees domestic partner benefits.** *This may be a coming thing but expensive when economy is hurting.*
- **Require County Clerks to issue domestic partner licenses to gay people upon request.** *What will be the next step?*
- **Requiring that every private construction job in Wisconsin receiving public subsidy to pay prevailing union wages. Another gift to campaign contributors.** *Would drive up the costs of many projects using federal incentive money.*
- **Require that all motorists have insurance coverage, and that all motorists carry \$100,000 personal injury, \$300,000 per occurrence and \$25,000 property.** *Maybe a good idea to require all motorists be insured if they could enforce it, and many of us do carry higher liabilities. However, this could be another gift to the personal injury lawyers who also contribute to election campaigns.*
- **Allow illegal immigrants who graduate from Wisconsin High to pay in-state tuition on UW institutions.** *Taxpayers are still supporting these schools.*
- **Elimination of the QEO laws.** *This is one of the few protections that taxpayers have to control school costs. Provisions are in the budget to make it easier to get around these controls.*
- **Require health insurance coverage for dependents under 27 years of age.** *Now 18 or 21 years.*
- **Eliminate front license plates for vehicles. Also eliminate yearly registration stickers to save money.** *Helpful to police for ID purposes. We wouldn't even get a little sticker for our \$75 annual fee. If they want to save money, how much does it cost to print the Blue Book?*
- Numerous other fees & policy changes throughout the budget.

While the budget still must be approved by the State Senate and Assembly, they will likely applaud the Governor's budget. If not, he still has his magic veto pen. We also observe that most governmental budgets grow in size and scope before they are finally approved and this one will likely be no exception.

Jim Frink – BCTA

"Did you ever know of a politician that was not "facing the most critical time in the world's affairs' every time he spoke in public."
 . . . Will Rogers

March Meeting Notes.

DPI Candidate Rose Fernandez Addresses BCTA.

Monthly meeting March 19, 2009 at Titledown Brewing.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Candidate Rose Fernandez addressed the large attendance and explained her plans for improving education in Wisconsin. She holds an M.S. degree in Pediatric Nursing from UW-Madison. She is the manager of the trauma unit at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. She is the mother of five children, ages 7 to 17, who attend an online charter school.

An outside reform candidate, Mrs. Fernandez has no allegiances to any of the traditional organizations in public education. She is running because the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has so much influence on public education. We deserve better than we are getting, she stated emphatically. "We must put children first," said the Mom on a Mission. She fought WEAC in court over virtual schools. Her opponent, Deputy State Superintendent Evers, led the DPI assault on virtual schools.

Candidate Fernandez explained that Wisconsin's standards for schools are only in the middle of all the states and they are fuzzy, too. We need high standards, she stated, that are clear, tangible, and objective. She promised, if elected, high standards by 2010.

As for Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), Mrs. Fernandez stated that we need to consider the cost of failure. We cannot afford to lose another generation of MPS students. She proposes that a turnaround team of community experts be appointed to direct the MPS turnaround. The team would replace the ineffective MPS board for a three-year period. At the end of that period, the turnaround team would recommend actions to reform MPS, possibly dividing it into smaller districts that would be more responsive to citizens.

Mrs. Fernandez wants good teachers to be allowed to use their creativity. She supports merit pay for excellence. She supports the QEO to protect taxpayers, and levy limits with the provision that levy limits may be exceeded by referendum. She has more detailed information about her positions on her website, www.ChangeDPI.com.

Rich Carlstedt reported that he had attended a school board meeting where two major and three minor options to deal with overcrowding of some high schools were discussed. The Green Bay School District has 700 extra high school seats available. Economic considerations are not conducive to adding more rooms to Preble. However, redrawing the high school boundaries will provide a ten-year solution to overcrowding at all high schools. West High School could provide space for a charter school such as the International Bacheloriante and thereby draw students from the Preble area of the district to a facility with space.

The next Brown County Taxpayers Assn., meeting is scheduled for April 16, at Titledown Brewing. Our speaker will be State Representative Tom Nelson, who is also the majority speaker of the Assembly. Details on the back page of this Tax Times.

Photograph of
Rose Fernandez.

**Rose Fernandez speaks at
March 19, BCTA meeting.**

Dave Nelson – Secretary

"Vote for the man who promises least: He'll be the least disappointing."

. . . **Bernard Baruch**

Doyle's Budget Raises Taxes and Fees.

The non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau released its analysis of Governor Doyle's proposed 2009-2011 budget and revealed that taxes and fees will increase by \$1.7 billion over the next two years. This is in addition to the \$1.2 billion in tax increases passed by Democrats and signed into law through the budget repair bill with only 48 hours notice and no public hearing.

As we face a deepening recession and high unemployment, this is the worst time ever to raise taxes or to increase government spending by 7.6%. Wisconsin is ranked 8th highest in the nation for state and local tax burden. We need to be putting money back into the pockets of Wisconsin citizens and businesses in order to stimulate the economy and create much-needed private sector jobs.

Results of a poll conducted on February 25 and 26 were released showing that the majority of Wisconsinites overwhelmingly (75%) support spending cuts over tax increases to solve the state budget problem. In addition, 74% oppose Doyle's plan to increase the number of state government workers by 946 positions.

Here are a handful of the \$1.7 billion in tax and fee increases contained in the budget and their financial impact.

- **Decreases** the individual income tax exclusion on long-term capital gains from 60% to 40% generating \$180.6 million in taxes that could have been reinvested into the economy.
- **Creates** a new individual income tax bracket generating over \$300 million in higher individual income tax revenues, money that could have been reinvested in the economy.
- **Increases** the nursing home bed assessment from \$75 per month to \$150 per month in 2009-2010, and from \$150 per month to \$170 per month in 2009-2010 generating nearly \$75 million and making it more expensive to keep our elderly loved ones in a nursing home.
- **Creates** a tax on oil companies generating nearly \$272 million. Although intended as a tax on oil companies, it could be passed on to consumers because no similar law passed in other states with an anti-pass through provision has survived legal scrutiny.
- **Increases** the state cigarette tax from \$1.77 to \$2.52 per pack generating \$310.4 million which is a regressive tax that mostly impacts the poor.
- **Increases** the tipping fee on garbage generating \$48.6 million and increasing the cost on households and businesses for garbage pick-up service.
- **Increases** the universal service fund fee on your phone bill generating \$23.6 million and increasing the cost on households and businesses for phone and internet service.
- **Increases** the handgun purchaser record check fee from \$8 to \$30 generating nearly \$1.7 million when the Department of Justice asked for only a \$5 increase to cover the actual costs of running the program.
- **Increases** the motorized boat registration fee between 15% and 32% generating \$2.15 million and making it more expensive for residents to enjoy our beautiful lakes and rivers.

I fail to see how any of these tax and fee increases will create jobs or make the economy better in Wisconsin, both issues Wisconsin residents care about more than anything else.

If you care about any of these tax and fee increases, then you need to let your elected officials know the impact that they will have on your daily lives. **State Representative Karl Van Roy**

Things That Make Us Wonder.

Wisconsin Sen. Russ Feingold (D) along with Sen. McCain (R) have introduced a bill which would allow line-item veto power to the President. The idea would be to give the President power to eliminate unnecessary or frivolous spending requests from Congress. It would be a great idea if it would work.

This has been suggested several times in the past, the last in 1998 when the Supreme Court ruled it to be unconstitutional because it gave sole power to the President over Congress.

This new proposal would give Congress the power to override a veto. In announcing the bill, Sen. Feingold said "The taxpayers- - - deserve a process that shows some real fiscal discipline." Sen. Feingold had previously voted to approve the \$787 stimulus bill, which contained an estimated 9,000 earmarks.

The Governor of Wisconsin has a similar line-item veto and somehow the budget always ends up costing taxpayers much more than it was when presented to him. No telling what President Obama would do with this power.

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The Environmental Protection Agency is charged with monitoring the air we breath and the water we drink, and mandates the requirements that individuals and Industries must follow to achieve their standards.

So far they have taken steps to reduce such items as carbon monoxide, mercury, ozone, sulfuric oxide and a host of other items considered dangerous to our health.

Now the EPA is making efforts to determine if Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) should be added to the list. This is basically a colorless and odorless substance which is formed from combustion, plant life decay, human and animal respiration and as a by-product of a number of industrial processes. It is naturally removed from the air by plant life. The percentage of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has been recorded as increasing since the beginning of the industrial age.

Since virtually all human activity is responsible for creating carbon dioxide it may difficult and expensive to regu-

late, but we can be sure the EPA will think of a way.

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It isn't really a new idea and probably will not be very popular. An article in the March 12, *Washington Post* reported that the administration will soon have to be looking for new revenue sources to cover all of their spending. One viable source would be taxing as income the employer portion paid for health insurance benefits.

This was first suggested back in the 1970's when the cost of employee health insurance as a benefit started to rise dramatically as new benefits were added and provider costs increased accordingly. It could be written off as a business expense for the employer which lowered their taxable income but was not considered as a taxable benefit for the employee.

The IRS would say that technically this is taxable income the same as use of a company car or taking your family along on a business trip.

If government health care ever gets off the ground some massive new sources of income will have to be found.

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The Wisconsin Dept., of Revenue estimates there is now over \$1 Billion in delinquent taxes and fees due the state. They place the blame on budget cuts reducing the number of personnel they need to do their job. This may be so but if they have the time and means to identify the amount due they should have the procedures to collect them.

Their philosophy is that if you had taxable income you should set aside funds to pay applicable taxes. Just like that, no problem.

In any event, while the Governor is looking for new things to tax it may be more palatable to try and collect what is already owed us. A billion dollars could go a long way.

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The City of Oshkosh has announced they are considering removing all of the city's parking meters. They found out it was costing more to maintain them than they were receiving in revenue. Parking fines often went unpaid and were expensive to collect.

One question is, are the park-

ing meters in downtown Green Bay worth their keep or just another harassing nuisance to keep people away?

There has to be better ways to control parking on city streets while still providing income for the city. The bottom line is attracting business and their customers to the area

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Hopefully the matter of roundabouts on Military Ave., has been resolved and reconstruction will proceed satisfactorily.

Although there were many pros and cons presented, one factor that did not seem to be publicized was what would the ultimate cost be to the taxpayers of Green Bay, with or without state or federal aid? Was the cost of land acquisition with the various options factored in?

It would seem that with the economy down that the cost of any such project at this time should be a major consideration.

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In case you haven't heard, the November race for the U.S. Senator from Minnesota still hasn't been resolved. In other news, legislation has been introduced that vacancies in the Senate be filled by popular vote rather than appointed by the Governor. Good idea but depending what the Governors party is.

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During the past 20 or 30 years we have seen a flurry of mergers and acquisitions in just about every major industry. We are usually told this is to the benefit of all concerned because bigger is better. The government has usually turned its back as far as anti-trust laws, competitive balance, community impact, or loss of jobs is concerned.

We realize there is a lot more factors in the current economic mess than this. However, one downside of these mergers is that the fewer banks remaining after years of buying and merging with smaller banks left those remaining too big to effectively regulate. Also, problems with industries such as airlines to keep operating after becoming too big to manage, or the many manufactures who have no compunction in closing a former locally owned employer in a small town that becomes surplus to the needs of a larger firm which acquired them? These are things that can make us wonder.

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On the subject of banks, an March 17 , article from *Wis. Business.com* reports that most community banks in Wisconsin, generally those with assets of less than \$1 Billion but which make up 96% of the banks in the state generally have done much better financially than larger nationwide banks. They tend to be more conservative and are more familiar with their customers. Bigger is not necessarily better.

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We keep hearing of the promise of alternate fuels that will provide the needs for all of us in the future. Wonderful.

While there are stories of trucks operating on fuel made from used cooking oil or table scraps, has anyone ever put a pencil of how much of this stuff it would take to run just one family automobile?

In the meantime, the state's largest ethanol plant has filed for Chapter 11, bankruptcy protection. Other producers report demand is down. They all anticipate demand to increase with the economy, but it will probably take more than ethanol in the future to keep us moving.

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The Wisconsin Dept. of Commerce recently mandated that all building and construction contractors in the state be registered with their office.

Although not much information or their motives were given there is a \$25 fee and penalties for not registering.

While this information may serve a useful purpose, it could also be used for Dept. of Revenue checks, union organizers, license holders or just giving people in Madison something else to keep busy. It could also be used to make sure that only union contractors receive jobs using federal stimulus funds.

Whatever their justification, it seems like just another way for the state to get involved with controlling business and another confusing layer of bureaucracy.

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Huge bonuses paid to Banking and Wall St. executives after receiving federal bailout funds has been upsetting to many of us. What is the justification of awarding executives multi-million bonuses after they lead their companies to the verge of bankruptcy? A very poor example.

It appears there was little oversight or restrictions when our money was

doled out. Sooner or later we will find if the right steps were taken by Congress and the Administration to get the economy on track but right now it appears lobbyists and their clients were big winners.

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While on the subject, the disclosure that AIG Corp; plans to award \$165 million in bonuses ranging from \$1,000 to \$6.5 billion to some 400 employees has us all wondering.

Recall this is the same AIG that received umpteen Billion of our money back in January to "save our economy" and another \$170 Billion "emergency" bailout just a few of weeks ago.

When news of these bonuses hit the fan, Congress, The President, and anyone else in Washington who may have been involved expressed complete outrage. Unfortunately this appears to be a typical government reaction when something goes wrong. Place the blame on somebody else. In this case, AIG Corp. and greedy business executives. In general.

Hold on: Who made this Federal money (*which we really don't have*) available to reverse the financial crisis? Who set the rules for doling out these funds and overseeing responsibility? Who decided if requests met the criteria to protect interests of the U. S. Government. the economy and taxpayers? Who handed the money over to AIG just like that? Let's put more of the blame where it belongs.

Does anyone else wonder what the hell is going on?

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While the AIG bailout is still keeping the people in Washington busy pointing fingers, ABC News on March 18, reported various AIG executives in 2008 gave campaign contributions totaling \$103,100 to Sen. Chris Dodd, \$101,332 to Barack Obama, and \$35,965 to Hillary Clinton and \$59,499 to John McCain just in case they were elected. The question is, at what point do campaign contributions become illegal?

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Could it be that the public outcry over the executive bonuses paid to the AIG executives could be part of a well choreographed smoke screen?

The \$165 Million that went for the bonuses was actually only .0097% of

the \$170 Billion given to AIG. We will leave out the Billions they received previously. While the news networks and just about everyone else is up in arms about the bonuses, nothing has been said about what happened to the balance, a tidy sum of **\$169,835,000,000** of our money that was given to AIG to handle? This was **1,030 times** the amount of the bonus, and nobody seems to be least bit upset about that. You figure it out.

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There have been a number of tragic accidents in the area blamed on DUI plus incidents of repeat DUI offenses which is inexcusable. The suggestion has been made that upon a conviction the drivers car should be impounded by authorities for a period of time. Anyone letting a convicted offender use his or her car could also have their vehicle impounded. Would probably work better than a complicated interlock system.

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Over 90% of the respondents to our recent taxpayer issues survey agreed that illegal immigration was a serious problem in this country and being ignored by Washington for political reasons.

They also agreed that as such it could and should be properly addressed through existing immigration procedures. The current drug war in Mexico is further evidence that our borders should be better monitored.

This apparently was a problem for previous administrations also. Although the circumstances may have been different at the time, the economy and unemployment were problems. We read that Pres. Hoover ordered illegal immigrants at the start of the depression, Pres. Truman deported two million Illegals after WWII, and Pres. Eisenhower deported several million Mexican nationals in 1954.

In each case the rationale given was to provide jobs for U.S. citizens due to a large number of unemployed at the time. Presently the total national unemployment rate is approaching 10%. Any questions?

Is this a problem in Green Bay? A March 19, *Press-Gazette* article discussing the oncoming 2010 Census mentioned the possible under counting of Hispanic residents. The 2000 Cen-

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sus counted 8,698 Hispanics in Brown County or 3.8% of county population.

However, various estimates have put the actual total at 13,000 or more, It would be nice to really know.

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State Rep. Mark Pocan (D) has publicly criticized the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WTA) because some of its directors have made what he considered partisan political contributions. Don't WEAC and a number of other prominent statewide organizations claim to be non-partisan?

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, www/wisdc.org, does a fairly good job of tracking and reporting campaign contributions for state and national races in Wisconsin and it is interesting to see how much and where the contributions to elect our public officials do actually come from.

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It does not speak well for the governments oversight of the securities business when a crook like Bernard Madoff can get away with a Ponzi scheme raking in an estimated \$ 60 Billion. He dealt with some large and respected clients and would have had to furnish proper #1099's covering his activities for the years he was in business. The IRS and securities exchange commission must have been sleeping.

Now that he is jail, it is estimated he has an estate worth over \$100 million. One question is: Will the IRS keep the money for payment of back taxes?, Will investors who lost money get some of their money back?, or will his wife get to keep it? One problem is that investors may get to write off their losses which means taxpayers get stuck with the bill.

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Legislation has been introduced that would allow the Dept. Of Public Instruction to investigate complaints of schools using Indian mascots or logos for their athletic teams. If determined to be offensive, our schools could be fined from \$100 to \$1,000 per day until they name a politically correct mascot. Sponsors of the bill claim Wisconsin would be the first state with such a law. Presently, 38 schools in the state are identified as offenders.

We can appreciate the motivation behind this proposal, but wonder if any problems have ever been solved by giving

one group or class of people legal advantage over another? While the native Americans may have a legitimate gripe, there are others who for some reason or other object to nicknames such as Red Devils, Pirates, Phantoms, or Raiders, which are commonly used around the state

If this proposal becomes law, groups such as the ACLU could propose municipalities should be fined for Christmas displays and who knows what next?

If the Native Americans have problem with school nicknames, how about the many cities in our state proudly named in honor of their culture? The name Wisconsin included. If there is a problem because they deem the nicknames derogatory, talk to the DNR or county governments about names such as Squaw Lake, Black Hawk, Indian Creek, or Lake Tomahawk found on state maps. The word Indianhead is commonly used.

There are way too many laws on the books now to enforce and penalize people for. Public opinion has already caused many schools to change their nicknames and probably more will do so on their own as time goes by..

Lets see if the Washington Redskins and Cleveland Indians change first.

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The University of Wisconsin is one of the best in the country and we are all proud of its accomplishments. Perhaps their biggest problem is the constant requests for more funding when there are so many other demands facing taxpayers.

They seem to have a good publicity department spreading the word that whatever happens they would like more of our money . A few weeks ago we read that enrollment in the system was declining. Their solution was to suggest increasing tuition and more taxpayer subsidies to stay afloat.

A March 17, item reported that enrollment at the 28 UW campuses was at a record high. They must have recouted. At the same time Gov. Doyle proposed a \$240 Million expansion at the Milwaukee campus.

We wouldn't question the spending as much as proposing it at a time when the economy is hurting and the state budget is a disaster getting worse.

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Groups in California have always led the nation in efforts to legalize marijuana. The state has about a \$35 Billion

budget deficit so will do anything for cash.

The state figures marijuana is the states biggest cash crop valued at about \$14 billion a year in sales. Most of it under the radar for tax purposes because it is illegal. A proposal has been introduced in their assembly legalizing and regulating the sale by the state. They estimate it could bring in about \$1.3 billion a year in revenue. Either way it appears California is going to pot.

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Governor Doyle has announced a 6.5% cut, or about \$7 million in the state Attorney Generals budget. The only choice this leaves the Attorney General, is to reduce the number of assistant district attorneys in the state which are part of this budget.

This is one area where spending some money could save money elsewhere. It is the district attorneys and their assistants who are responsible for preparing cases and the prosecution in criminal cases. It takes a lot of time to do the job right. In the meantime these criminal cases stretch out for months, costing counties and the state huge amounts of money waiting for cases to come to trial.

A study by the Legislative Audit Bureau in 2007 disclosed that 120 more assistant DA's were needed in the state at that time. They will apparently have to wait for awhile. While we realize that attorneys are a well paid profession, the entire court and justice system in the state is a big expense item and we question that savings will be realized by slowing it up even more.

Is it possible this particular budget cut was politically motivated?

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It is difficult to either praise or condemn all of the stimulus and bailout funds being sent from Washington. While we appreciate government efforts to bolster the economy it seems money is being doled out indiscriminately and unlikely to accomplish much except run the National Debt out of sight.

First Congress took care of themselves with long lists of earmarks. Then the states had the opportunity to fight over what was left. The ultimate goal of creating jobs and reviving the economy still seems elusive. For example, Gov. Doyle stated the funds Wisconsin receives "will provide unemployment compensation for 550,000 residents and create 70,000 jobs." The numbers should be the other way around to do any good. Medicaid bene-

fits, education and highway projects will consume \$2.8 Billion of Wisconsin's share against the state budget deficit and another \$1.2 Billion will be distributed to Cities and Counties in the state.

Brown County alone submitted 51 projects totaling \$191.8 million calculated to create nearly 6,000 jobs. These include \$10 Million to upgrade the Library, \$25 Million to move coal piles, and \$10 Million for a convention center.

We cannot fault the cities and counties from holding their hands out for whatever federal money they can get. Their rationale could be it saves them from going to the taxpayers at a later date. Some of the projects approved were no doubt urgent and others could probably wait a few years. The lists submitted for approval to the "Office of Recovery and Reinvestment" exceeds the money available so there will probably be a few disappointments.

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While we all may criticize federal spending as being wasteful use of our tax dollars, Wisconsin has always complained about being on the short end of federal spending per capita. Usually close to the very bottom.

Despite Gov. Doyle going to Washington, with our state deficit problem, we are also near the bottom in federal stimulus money per capita. In other words, this is costing more than we will receive.

* * * * *

Believe it was back in the 1980's when the IRS discontinued the allowance of personal interest as a deduction. The idea was to encourage home ownership but no longer allow high interest deductions.

Whether it was a loophole or be design but it didn't take long for home equity loans against the value of you home for any purpose whatsoever became popular.

Just curious if that was one of the underlying causes of our mortgage crisis?

* * * * *

The Postmaster General anticipates a \$2.8 Billion deficit for 2008 from their operations and warns they may have to cut back delivery service and reduce the number of employees. They may not be aware of this, but a lot of employers have done the same things and still manage to provide adequate service to their customers. It's called management and survival in a down economy,

* * * * *

Not really a "Thing that makes us wonder", but an example of people helping people when the economy is bad.

We would like to commend John Olson of Van's Ability Printing of Green Bay for offering to print resumes, cover letters, envelopes and calling cards free of charge for persons seeking employment. You possibly saw the article in the Press-Gazette.

We are also pleased to mention that Van's Ability Printing is the printer for "The Tax Times," and do a super job.

Otherwise, lots if things to wonder about. Jim Frink

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

Articles and views appearing in the "TAX TIMES" do not necessarily represent the official position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association.

"The liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be, secure when the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them."

. . . Patrick Henry

"There are certain things only a government can do." . Barock Obama

"The government is like a baby's alimentary canal, with a happy appetite at one end and no responsibility at the other." . . Ronald Reagan

"Political correctness is tyranny with manners." . . . Charleton Heston

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

National Debt Update.

How can you visualize what a Trillion dollars looks like? A stack of 100 \$100 bills would be worth \$10,000, be 1/2" thick fitting nicely in your pocket. You could buy a good used car with that. 100 of these packets would be worth a million and fit into a grocery bag. Multiply that by another 100 for \$100 million and you could fit it on a standard pallet. It would take 10 pallets of \$100 bills to hold a billion. Since a trillion is a thousand billion, it would 10,000 pallet loads, or about 200 semis with 50 each to haul. If you use \$10.00 bills, 2000 semis. You could give \$3,272.57 to every man, woman and child in the United States, which is what Pres. Obama apparently is trying to prove.

Now that you and I know what a Trillion dollars looks like, what about the robotic bobble-heads in Congress who seem to think money grows on trees?

As of the end of March, the National Debt was \$11,045,119,449,331. Up over \$150 Billion since last month with an increase of a trillion over the past year. The interest alone on this at 5% would be over \$1.5 Billion a day, which would amount to about be about 40% of the national budget when the economy is doing good. Figure it out for yourself.

Making matters worse, there is a proposal to add another \$400 Billion in stimulus money, \$634 Billion for health care (how did they arrive at the amount?) and another Trillion to purchase treasury bonds. Before the inauguration Pres. Obama warned of a Trillion-Dollar deficit proposal. Apparently he is keeping his promise.

Congress says go for it. Jim Frink-BCTA

TUESDAY,
April 7, 2009
VOTE!
Why?
Wisconsin Supreme
Court Justice.
Supt. Department
of Public Instruction.
Many local races and issues

The TAX TIMES

Brown County Taxpayers Association
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The TAX TIMES - April, 2009

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Tuesday - April 7, 2009. General Statewide Election day. **VOTE!**
State Supt. Of Public Instruction, Supreme Court Justice
Various local elections and issues.

Thursday – April 16, 2009. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co., “Frost Room.”
Speaker: Representative Thomas Nelson
Majority leader Wisconsin State Legislature.

Thursday – May 21, 2009. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co., “Frost Room.”
Program will be announced.

Thursday – June 18, 2009. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co., “Frost Room.”
Program will be announced.

Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at Titledown 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.



April,
2009

“Giving money and power to Government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys.”

. . . P. J. O'Rourke

“Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws.”

. . . Plato

“Vote early and vote often.”

. . . Al Capone

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
for Details.