



Can you hear me now?

Nothing fries my beans more than getting billed for services I didn't ask for? Except paying for services I didn't receive and getting and getting a barnyard full of lousy excuses. The latest load to knock a buzzard off the dungwagon was a letter from Daring Dave Hansen when I happened to question the dubious integrity of running from a tough vote, standing on the safe side of the Illinois border and sneering, "Neener neener neener, you caaaaaan't get me."

"Leaving my wife and missing family events like my daughter's birthday and my grandson's basketball games was not something I would have preferred to do." Well, senator, you wouldn't have had to miss those precious moments if you'd stood your ground, stated your case on the senate floor, and cast your vote, like we pay you to do. We would have been exactly where we are now – with an injunction law, under legal siege by the Wisconsin 14's misguided allies. Ozanna in the Highest! We got Falked!

And we've yet to see the expense reports after your triumphant – or ignominious, depending on whom you ask – return from the land of the Mighty Quinn. You and your colleagues vowed not to use campaign or state funds to pay for your lengthy AWOL. We'll see if we get more excuses after we see who paid for your 3-week charade of principles. Will we hear more lousy excuses?

Next lousy excuse, presented by counsel (oxymoronic title) to the complaint filed against the vote for Supreme Court Justice, "If an election for Supreme Court Justice is tainted by the misconduct or incompetence of a local election official, the Supreme Court's integrity is jeopardized and it's standing in the eyes of it's citizens is diminished." Last Thursday at the Nickolaus news conference explaining the mistake, Ramona Kitzinger, the 80 yr old Democratic volunteer canvasser, was quoted as saying, "all the numbers jibed up, and we're satisfied they're correct. I'm not going to stand here and tell you something that's not true." Poor Ramona retired from her position when her honest, sincere statement came under fire from her Waukesha Democratic Party Chair, Victor Weers and the State Party put the screws to her, and later retracted her original statements. First statement is often the most truthful, ask any police interviewer.

The observable excuse for continuing the Kloppe parade and charade, can be not the fact that real votes were reported late, rather the Kloppe and Dems don't like the result, and have created unsubstantiated meetings of the Governor and Justice Prosser and a string of thin reasons, and the cost to the State, the cities and counties, loom large in light of economic conditions. Well boo hoo, where were these complaints when hundreds more ballot than registered voters turned up in Milwaukee County during the 2004 vote? Dead people and felons turned up in the registrations-thank be that the Legislature is writing new voter ID laws as I write.

Now last but closest to home doesn't have a recorded excuse because the Office of Brown County Prosecutor has none for the apparent dereliction of duty when failing to assign an Open Meetings request over a 10 week period. Members filed for Open Meetings Requests regarding numerous meetings of County personnel, some with a vendor, during the process of handing out free rides to Disneyland after bonding for multi-millions to pay for a new County-wide radio system to comply with Federal standards plus cotton candy for life at Disneyland. Seriously, no one denies the need to update County Emergency communications; the County Board and numerous County Executives have failed to maintain current systems and plan for future needs, so noted. When BCTA members, as private citizens, requested notes, roll calls and vendor attendance of the closed door, un-posted meetings, County Prosecutor deferred the process to another county. Fine, but 10 weeks passed, 10-14 day response required by law, our respectful requestors have received the fat, middle-finger answer.

This has become the norm, insulated and privileged, these smug bureaucrats and quasi-elected types, have taken to ignoring the pesky little flies in their ointment. I'm sure you can add to this important, but small list, and you should. Email the personal favorite to me at rparinsster@gmail.com and we will publish the next opportunity, send out the message, "can you hear us now?"

So until we can vote their lame arses out, or push to have them remanded, enjoy our 25 days of summer,

Richard Parins — President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 26th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

Protecting Senior Care .

The State of Wisconsin offers a prescription drug assistance program called SeniorCare to individuals who are over 65 years old and meet eligibility requirements. This has been a highly successful program created by Gov. Thompson in 2001, and now serves approximately 89,000 seniors statewide. For these individuals, this program provides a significant cost savings in comparison to the Medicare Part D prescription drug program which is offered by the federal government.

We have been a strong advocate for SeniorCare which is partially funded by the federal government through a waiver program that was approved at a time when the federal government was not offering prescription drug coverage to seniors. Several years ago, the federal government created Medicare Part D, which in their minds, eliminated the need to continue providing funding to Wisconsin's SeniorCare program. In past sessions, we have found that both houses and both political parties have worked diligently together to get the federal government to renew the waiver and save this valuable program with the most recent waiver set to expire on December 31, 2012.

Faced with another probable fight on our hands to get a renewal of the federal waiver, federal government cuts to state Medical Assistance programs, and a \$3.6 billion state budget deficit to fill, I can understand why Gov. Walker proposed requiring individuals to apply for Medicare Part D first and use the SeniorCare as a "wrap-around" program. This is what the vast majority of states do because it shifts more of the costs associated with providing prescription drug coverage onto the federal Medicare Part D program and away from the state.

In my opinion, the SeniorCare program is cheaper, easier to understand, and more effective for most seniors than Medicare Part D. Many seniors who live on limited incomes may find themselves having to choose between paying for prescriptions or buying food if they are forced to go on Medicare Part D. SeniorCare is an extremely well-managed program that is not faced with a deficit. For these reasons we should leave the program as is and fight for another renewal of the program from the federal government. To that end, we have been working with the members of the budget review committee, the Joint Committee on Finance, to maintain the SeniorCare program as it currently exists and remove the proposed changes to SeniorCare from Governor Walker's budget bill.

If you would like to find out how to apply for the SeniorCare program, call the SeniorCare Customer Service Hotline at 1-800-657-2038 or go online at: <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/seniorcare>.

Rep. Karl VanRoy.

Articles and views appearing in the "TAX TIMES" do not necessarily represent the official position of the Brown County Taxpayers Association. We want to encourage discussion and input on current issues of taxpayer interest and invite your comments or articles suitable for future "TAX TIMES." Please send them to the BCTA, P.O. Box 684, Green Bay, WI 54305-0684, or call Jim Frink at 336-6410. -Mail BCTA@ExecPC.Com.

"It is much easier to be critical than correct."

. . . Benjamin Disraeli

"America needs Obama-care like Nancy Pelosi needs a Halloween mask."

. . . Jay Leno

"Humor is also a way of saying something serious."

. . . T. S. Elliot

Strange But True Provisions of Collective Bargaining.

Recently the Governor's office released examples of how collective bargaining impacts government and how reforming collective bargaining can improve government. Following are some of the items contained in the release.

Employer (*taxpayers*) must provide bulletin boards to post information about union social and recreational activities. The size and location of the board is subject to collective bargaining. When a local union meets the following conditions are subject to bargaining: lighting, vision care and examinations, noise, chairs, desks, footrests, adjustable terminals and keyboards, work environment design (wall cover, carpet, windows), room temperature, starting of vehicles during cold weather, paid time off to donate blood.

Other specific examples from collective bargaining agreements indicating extraordinary costs to efficient government operations include:

Under the Green Bay School District's collectively bargained Emeritus Program, teachers can retire and receive a year's worth of salary for working only 30 days over a three year period. This is paid in addition to their already guaranteed pension and health care payouts.

While the Green Bay Emeritus Program requires teachers to at least show up for work, the Madison Emeritus Program doesn't even require that. In addition to their pension payouts, retired Madison public school teachers receive annual payments of at least \$9,884.18 per year for enrolling in the Emeritus Program, which requires ZERO days of work.

A Wausau public employee union filed a grievance to prohibit a local volunteer from serving as a school crossing guard. The 86-year-old lives just two blocks away and serves everyday free of charge.

Some state employees, due to the nature of their positions, are required to carry pagers during off-duty hours in order to respond to emergency situations. Due to the collective bargaining agreements, these employees are compensated an extra five hours of pay each week. This can amount to \$6,000 per year in extra compensation.

A Cedarburg school teacher was reinstated by an arbitrator after being fired for viewing pornography on a school computer. The school district succeeded in terminating the teacher only after taking the case to the Wisconsin Supreme Court at great cost to the taxpayers.

A Milwaukee teacher was laid off one week after being named Outstanding First Year Teacher by the Wisconsin Council of English Teachers. She lost her job because the collective bargaining agreement requires layoffs to be made based on seniority rather than merit.

Racine County began using county inmates to cut the grass in medians and right-of-ways at no cost to the taxpayers. A county employee union filed a grievance indicating it was the right of government workers to cut the grass, even though it cost taxpayers dramatically more.

In 2009, the City of Madison's highest paid employee was a bus driver who earned \$159,258, including \$109,892 in overtime, guaranteed by a collective bargaining agreement. In total, seven City of Madison bus drivers made more than \$100,000 per year in 2009.

Correctional Officer collective bargaining agreements allow officers a practice known as "sick leave stacking." Officers can call in sick for a shift, receiving 8 hours of sick pay, and then are allowed to work the very next shift, earning time-and-a-half for overtime. This results in the officer receiving 2.5 times his or her rate of pay, while still only working 8 hours.

These are only a few of the examples reported but the overall cost to taxpayers means cuts in other services.

“The Donkey Wrench.”

The pattern is now clear - Democrats in the state of Wisconsin, having lost the majority vote, have decided to throw a monkey wrench into the works of government. If they can't sit in the driver's seat, they will gum up the mechanism in whatever way they can.

They did not have the votes to prevent passage of the new law that changes public employee union rules so that local and state governments have the power to cut costs, so they fled the state.

When legitimately outraged citizens began recall efforts against the men and women who abandoned their posts, they put their election machine into action to recall Legislators who were just doing the job they were elected to do. If they could not win in November, they reasoned, perhaps they could change back the balance of power in July or August. When they could not win at the polls or by running away, they hired attorneys to stall the law in court.

This converted the nonpartisan Supreme Court race into a Democratic referendum about Republican policies. Still they could not win, so they demanded a recount to slow down the process even further.

The goal is not to move forward, create jobs or balance the budget. The goal is to stop Republicans from moving the state forward, creating the jobs or balancing the budget. They have made winning the next election a higher priority than solving the states challenges.

Cato 30 - BCTA

National Debt Update.

As of May Day, 2011, the United States National Debt had soared to **\$14,344,380,411,909.00**, an increase of about Seventy-Six and a quarter Billion since April Fools day. The interest alone was \$413 Billion for 2010, and is now the Federal Governments fastest growing expense item;

In the meantime Wisconsin residents have a \$3.5 Billion deficit to deal with. In both cases the problem is not the lack of money coming in but the amount that is going out. Our government somehow will have to stop being everything to everybody.

It took about 200 years, until 1982, for the U.S. Debt to reach a Trillion dollars. It was only a little over \$200 Billion at the end of World War II. We are probably all to blame for expecting Washington to keep giving money to the state and municipalities.

The problem seems to be that Congress and the President have no idea of how to handle money. Anyone who uses a credit card knows that if you don't spend more than you can afford you will get along but as soon as you start making minimum payments or extend your credit to the limit you will be in trouble.

Before long your interest payments will catch up with your purchases and you will dig yourself a hole you can't get out of.

JF

APRIL MEETING NOTES.

Monthly meeting of the Brown County Taxpayers Association held April 21, at Titledown Brewing Co.

John Filcher, representing Incinerator Free Brown County (IFBC), spoke about the proposed biomass plant that would use incineration labeled pyrolysis gasification to reduce trash to ash. This plant, now proposed to be constructed on the very north side of the City of Green Bay, would produce 5 MW of electricity to be sold to the local electric utility. Mr. Filcher noted that the plant would be funded by federal Stimulus dollars.

He stated that the current proposed site is the fourth location to be selected for approval, and outlined a number of concerns that IFBC has about the proposed incineration project: Property values may erode in the vicinity of the plant, which would reduce property tax collections, including school taxes. The proposed plant is a prototype, with no other successful installations to evaluate. This type of electrical generation is very costly, which would make it an expensive source of supply for the electric utility. Finally, incinerating trash will generate more mercury emissions than burning coal.

Richard Parins expressed his concerns about the cost to Wisconsin taxpayers for a recount for the state Supreme Court race. With a margin of over 7,300 votes, the recount is unlikely to change the outcome of the race.

National/state: One member reported Congressman Reid Ribble's explanation of the national debt crisis. Congressman Ribble noted that Wisconsin has a two-year budget problem of \$3.6 billion. This amounts to \$1.8 billion on an annual basis. The annual federal budget deficit is close to \$1.8 trillion, making the federal deficit nearly 1,000 times greater than the deficit problem facing Wisconsin.

County/municipal: Troy Streckenbach has been elected as Brown County Executive. During his campaign, he strongly advocated reducing the County's debt and not increasing the County's property tax rate. These are two policies that the BCTA favors. On the other hand, Mr. Streckenbach was not adamant in opposing a Brown County sales tax. This is a matter of great concern to the BCTA. It was agreed that we will continue to send questionnaires to County Board candidates, asking them if they oppose a Brown County sales tax.

The Brown County countywide radio system has been approved by the Brown County Board for about \$12 million. This appears to be about \$4.5 million less than the original bonding proposed for the radio system. In addition, the county and local municipalities will be required to purchase \$5 million-\$6 million of new radios to communicate with the new countywide radio system infrastructure. This cost will show up on local property taxes

The next scheduled meeting of the BCTA will be Thursday, May 19, at Titledown Brewing Co. The April Tax Times listed May 10, in error, as all meetings are scheduled for the third Thursday of the month. Details on the back page of this Tax Times.

Dave Nelson—Secretary

“We contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.”

. . . Winston Churchill

“Democracy must be something more than two wolves and a sheep deciding what to have for dinner.”

. . . James Bovard

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.BCTAxpayers.Org

Email, BCTA@ExecPc.Com

Things That Make Us Wonder.

President Obama recently visited Lincoln Memorial for a photo op illustrating that increasing the national debt limit was keeping such monuments open to the public rather than closing them down for lack of funding.

Those who have visited this magnificent monument will recall it is wide open and be difficult to close down under any circumstances, even if no one was around to turn the lights out.

Unfortunately this example only emphasized that badly needed efforts to cut federal spending are insignificant in relation to the problem.

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In order to reach agreement with Congress to raise the National Debt limit the President agreed to spending cuts of about \$438 Billion.

This isn't even a start! At current rates of spending the Federal Govt. spends \$438 Billion in just 3 days.

* * * * *

Everyone, is still trying to figure out what happened in the Wisconsin Supreme Court race to cause such a difference in vote counts from one day to the next. The recount process will likely be contemptuous as well as expensive for taxpayers.

In all fairness, more so with elections involving Presidential and Congressional races the media is so anxious to get vote counts so that they can project winners and analyze the results that they hound election officials to the point where they make mistakes.

This is no excuse for what happened in Waukesha County, as elections for the people responsible for running our government is no place for foul play or careless bookkeeping.

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While it was obvious that the larger than anticipated turnout for the election was motivated by party politics, it also goes to show just how important your individual vote actually is.

If Ms. Kloppenburg's election night lead of 204 votes were to stand, she would have won the important Supreme Court seat by a margin of less than 3 votes for each county in the

state. If Justice Prosser's lead of 7,300 remains, he will have won by a margin of about 2 votes for each of the states estimated 3,600 voting precincts. That's just you and me.

It is obvious that it is important to vote, and that voter fraud and tampering with results is something that should not be tolerated.

* * * * *

While it is estimated that the recount of the Supreme Court election will cost taxpayers at least a half million dollars this is peanuts compared to what the special interests behind the two candidates spent in mostly negative advertising.

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign which tracks political spending reports a total of \$5.4 Million was spent on behalf of the candidates, winner whose job title includes correct interpreting the state constitution and representing all of the people of Wisconsin on an equal basis.

If the current margin of about 7,200 votes for Judge Prosser stands, each vote in his favor will be worth about \$750 each.

* * * * *

The Packers have announced that only 55 to 70 ticket holders out of 32,000 have not renewed this year, with 86,000 names on the waiting list. The average for the last 3 years was about 130 new ticket holders per year.

This is amazing as at that rate a complete turnover would take about 246 years and people on the waiting list will have to wait 660 years. While this may be a favorable indication of the longevity of people living in this area we note there are usually plenty of tickets available at inflated prices through local authorized scalpers which have to come from someplace.

In seriousness we congratulate the team on their success and their many tangible and intangible contributions made to our city and state.

* * * * *

The retail price of gasoline has sky rocketed about a dollar a gallon during the past couple of months for no comprehensible reason. In addition to costing more to drive our cars, trucks and SUVs, we find that just about eve-

rything we buy or eat costs ore to produce and ship to market. Does anyone get the feeling that some power beyond our government and even beyond the big oil companies is profiting, like in a James Bond movie?

* * * * *

Is there a difference between "corporate welfare", and "economic stimulus spending"?

The United States was about \$13 Trillion in the hole, and President Obama was given high praise by the media for creating \$787 Billion in more debt, calling it an economic stimulus investment. Any positive results still remain to be seen.

Wisconsin is about \$3.5 Billion in the hole, and in efforts to reduce unemployment from time to time allows tax breaks or makes economic stimulus loans to established or new business who exhibit a plan to create significant employment. True it doesn't always work as planned.

What is puzzling is that the protesters in Madison believe the answer to meeting their demands is to reduce the incentives to business's to create jobs which they call "Corporate Welfare" and raise taxes "on the rich" whoever they may be.

The problem with private job ocreation is that the company has to make a profit if it going to pay their help and taxes, and the investors have to make a profit on their investment.

* * * * *

While business profits are always a target for tax revenues, workers shouldn't forget that investments iin stock funds is what provides the income to keep their pension accounts solvent.

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Politics in Wisconsin has become very ugly in recent years and will probably will get a lot worse if recall elections proceed as planned.

For one thing all of the Senators up for recall were elected fair and square by the citizens in their districts, on platforms supported by the voters.

A recall election calls for candidates to oppose the recalled incumbent. I don't know if primaries will be involved, but if so, will only stretch the procedure out further.

Considering the power balance in the state senate could conceivably switch back to Democrat control there will be a lot of money from various sources raised and spent. Considering the backers and motivations behind the recall petitions, you can be sure any advertising will be extremely negative. I am sure people around the country wonder what kind of third world country Wisconsin is after the recent raucous protesting in Madison.

While a race for the Wisconsin Senate these days can easily cost over a million dollars, remember that 2012 will be another election year, so many of the players will have to run for election all over again.

And we wonder why people don't like politics.

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A recent *Press-Gazette* article featured the Green Bay based *Gablers Hot Line* which claims to receive over 14,000 a year from people needing help from their gambling addiction,

In 2010 they claim the average caller had gambling debts of \$43,800, and as a result were having problems with their marriages, employment, home ownership, and some were even become suicidal.

It wasn't disclosed if all of the 14,000 callers owed \$43,000 or if some had called multiple times. However even a fraction of the number should be considered a major problem which no doubt becomes a taxpayer problem to provide social services.

Also the article didn't dwell on what type of gambling was mostly responsible for the problem. We realize gambling has been a part of society since civilization began although most people realize the dangers.

Until the 1960's and 1970's Wisconsin had some of the strictest anti-gambling laws in the country. As other states introduced lotteries and Las Vegas became more accessible things changed. Now we have lottery tickets available almost everywhere, tribal casinos near all major cities, internet gambling and sporting event pools.

If it came to a referendum most people would probably support gambling as it is but one question may be does the state make as much from their

lottery games and casino licenses to pay welfare benefits for losers?

* * * * *

As much as people like to ro lottery tickets and speculate of what they will do with the winnings if they are lucky, some perhaps neglect to check and see if they ever are a winner.

The Wisconsin Lottery officials claim there is a total of \$44,852,93 unclaimed lottery and jackpot prizes from the state from the past 13 years.

The average is about \$3 Million per year. You are allowed 180 days to redeem a Powerball ticket.

* * * * *

After the ruckus in Madison, several union groups, including our local teachers and police encouraged people to boycott business establishments deemed unsympathetic to their cause. Perhaps this is a standard procedure in their playbook but it can also work two ways.

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While there are a lot of other factors involved the National Right to Work Committee, a group opposed to forced union membership in the workplace claims that the eight most populous states with "right to work" laws had an average 24.9% personal income growth statewide between 2000-2010 while those with forced union membership had an average Income growth of 8.9%. Their message is that forced union membership in the workplace discourages new business.

As usual, lots if things to wonder about.

Jim Frink

"Things That Make Us Wonder," consists of taxpayer related thoughts that occur to us from daily news events. We use reliable, published information and statistics. Some items 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, our purpose is to encourage debate, as we realize there are two sides to every question. Comments or suggestions are welcome for inclusion in future "TAX TIMES."

School districts pay more for health care than private businesses.

School districts pay up to 76% more for health care than private sector businesses. Some Wisconsin school districts were highlighted in a recent Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article for spending much more for their health care plans than private sector businesses. According to the article, some school districts are paying nearly 76% more for single health benefit plans and 33% more for family plans than those offered to employees of private-sector.

It was estimated that the school districts mentioned could save nearly \$221 million a year, simply by switching to a different health insurance plan. This savings, coupled with additional contributions from employees, could give school districts a better opportunity to put money back into the classroom and provide tax relief for families across Wisconsin;

I have heard from citizens across my District that our number one priority is to cut spending we will continue to make the difficult decisions to get Wisconsin's fiscal house in order. Our state must make the same tough decisions that Wisconsin families have had to make during this great recession and help move Wisconsin forward.
Rep. John Nygren

"Giving money and power to government ia like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys."

. . . P. J. O'Rourke

"Environmentalists changed the word jungle to rain forest because no one would give them money to save a jungle"

. . . Anonymous

"If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing you so is stop digging."

. . . Will Rogers

"Public opinion in thias country is everything." . . . Abraham Lincoln

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.

The TAX TIMES

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The TAX TIMES - May/June, 2011

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday - May 19, 2011. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Tiletown Brewing Co. Speaker, **Troy Strechenbach,**
Brown County Executive. Note: Mr. Strechenbach
Will speak at the first part of our meeting so we ask
that you try to arrive by 12:00. Also, in the last TAX TIMES
We announced this meeting would be May 10. This was in
Error as our meetings are always the third Thursday of the
month and we apologize for any inconvenience.

Thursday - June 16, 2011. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Tiletown Brewing Co. Program, Current events, Reports.

Thursday - July 21, 2011. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Tiletown Brewing Co. Program, Current events, Reports.

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

Meetings are open to the public.

**BCTA Members, their guests and other interested parties are cordially invited
to attend and participate in our open discussions.**

COST: \$8.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.
Call Tom Sladek – 499-7701 for information or to leave message.

May/June

2011

**Please note that during the
summer months the TAX
TIMES will be printed only
other month,**

“The one function TV news performs very well is that when there is no news we give it to you with the same emphasis as if there were.” . . . David Brinkley

“In politics, stupidity is not a handicap.” . . . Napoleon

“The best way to get a bad law repealed is to enforce it strictly.”
. . . Abraham Lincoln

School districts pay up to 76%

Protecting Senior Care. VanrOY

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