

The Legions march on....

Even while writing for our relatively modest circulation in the hundreds, I believe every reader is due accuracy of the facts. But facts can be eye opening. Using the phrase, "Dead Presidents" to represent our tax dollars, I imagined only a couple of rows of former leaders marching before me. Then I "googled" for an accurate account of their names and numbers, and to my surprise, roughly 29 Presidents are commemorated on U.S. currency. This would include coins, certificates, and our most commonly used types of paper currency. My first thought after reading the list was to who decided which Dead President went where? And then came the question, why is Woodrow Wilson's portrait is on the largest of denominations, the \$ 100,000 Gold Certificate while that of our County's first and maybe greatest President, George Washington, humbly yet gracefully is pictured on the dollar bill? Send me the answer, please.

So why pick this image? It began a week or so ago while reading an article naming various agencies throughout the area and State having a rough go of compliance with federal government reporting standards for tracking stimulus money. First off, and this just ticks me off, it's "our money," our tax dollars someone decided to call "stimulus money." So when the article quoted Pam Johnson of the American Indians Against Abuse, as stating, "I made a promise this morning that if I don't get into compliance within 24 hours, I will step down," my blood pressure rises. Don't tell us, the taxpayers, if the job of compliance is too tough, you will simply walk away. It's another case of grab the money and run, with no accountability!

While you can read the whole piece in the Wisconsin Reporter, April 24th issue, entitled, Meet non-compliers: 11 WI stimulus recipients not reporting on time, the article points to this Nation's growing tendency to be moochers, a case is better made in Charlie Sykes' latest book, A Nation of Moochers. The article's list goes on, including both Green Bay's Transit Authority, and Appleton's Transit Department who together accepted taxpayer's money for no less than \$ 4.2 million of our earnings, or should I be more accurate and say our grandchildren's earnings.

Now granted, the government's paperwork is a miasma of irreconcilable differences. Just ask anyone who regularly works with this paper pulp maze. Let's ask the question, why can't we divorce ourselves from this highly regulated picking of our pockets? In an 1850's treatise of Frédéric Bastiat, French Economist and Writer warned that "under pretense of organization, regulation, protection or encouragement, the law may take from one party in order to give to another, help itself to the wealth acquired by all the classes that it may increase that of one class, whether that of the agriculturists, the manufacturers, the ship owners, or artists and comedians." Sykes descriptive is the more contemporary, "a nation of moochers."

The issue remains, the Enablers, the plutocrats and bureaucrats (any differences here?) and the Takers, the Moochers, both having a self-serving interests, are in direct conflict with the Givers, the Taxpayers, having lost control of the Enablers and Takers, either by election and the deeply entrenched nature of their positions. I'll stop here because we can also take some heart from efforts of BCTA Schools Committee members to initiate an audit of the Fund 80 spending by school districts. School districts throughout the State bent well-intentioned use of public funding, not requiring normal budgetary restraints, to infuse their insatiable appetite for tax dollars. The Schools Committee garnered support from local Senators, Rob Cowles, Joint Legislative Audit Committee (Co-Chair), and Frank Lasee as well as State Representative's Andre Jacque and Karl Van Roy.

These citizen efforts, those of our Governor and other fiscally responsible members of the Wisconsin Legislature are the only path to remove the yoke from our children and grandchildren's necks. It deeply saddens me when some talking head states, the current public debt our Nation faces has already spent the projected revenues from the generation that would be our youngest children now alive. So thank the BCTA Schools Committee, those Legislators who stood with them, then vote on June 5th to stop those interests we might call, the Moochers.

Richard Parins - President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

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Despite a significant compromise adopting numerous positive amendments to the bill that was previously passed in the Assembly. The legislation provided clear, defined, impartial regulations to make the process uniform and streamlined without compromising the integrity of critical environmental protections.

We needed to update our laws because they ranked dead last in the nation in terms of attracting mining investments. The rejection of the mining bill has put the final nail in that coffin. The company interested in starting an iron mine in northern Wisconsin said the Senate action sends a clear message that Wisconsin will not welcome iron mining. We get the message. The company ended its plans to invest in the mine, and as a result, thousands of good-paying, family-supporting jobs will be lost along with billions of dollars in positive economic impact for the state.

In an effort at compromise, over 20 changes were made to the legislation to try and bring at least one job-supporting Democrat on board. Unfortunately, it was clear that opponents of the mine had no desire to compromise. They put political partisanship and games ahead of Wisconsin families and the prospect of family-supporting jobs because they didn't want the GOP to score a win for job creation. The Department of Natural Resources Secretary Cathy Stepp recently issued a statement which I feel sums up the situation well:

Don't Buy the Hyperbole - WI DNR Could Have Sited An Iron Mine While Protecting the Environment by DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. "As the debate on the mining bill raged, we all heard the hyper political language about the environmental harm that would result from any iron ore mine. It was very difficult for me to sit back and watch. I was ever hopeful that calmer heads would prevail considering the \$1.5 billion investment and the thousands of resulting jobs that the state could have welcomed while the environment is protected.

Unfortunately, I was wrong. This issue became just another political piñata with some Senators clearly displaying that politics is more important than getting things done for Wisconsin citizens. I wish it wasn't true, but unfortunately in the end the motivation to not allow a potential success for Governor Walker appears to be what really killed the bill.

The debate even degenerated with some suggesting that the DNR lacked the expertise to site a mine. I think it is time to

legislation
Senate, de-

set the record straight and to recommend that we need to have a higher dialogue on environmental issues if we expect to move forward as a state. The days of scare tactics should be over. We can have disagreements and debates. There are legitimate differences in opinion on the environment and lots of other issues. Can't we have these discussions without the fear-mongering?

As for the particulars of the mining bill, the amendments made by the Joint Finance Committee were all positive amendments that provided the DNR even more tools to successfully site a potential iron ore mine. Many of the amendments had fingerprints from the bill proposed by Senators Schultz and Jauch. The end bill was a result of lots of reasonable compromises. Unfortunately, Senators Schultz, Jauch and other Senate Democrats were not willing to compromise. It was their way or the highway. As we saw, Gogebic took that highway out of the state unfortunately.

Lets face the facts. Mining is one of the most regulated, if not the most regulated, industries in the world. This mining proposal would have had to garner DNR approval, Army Corps of Engineers Approval, EPA approval, US Fish & Wildlife Service approval and to meet the water quality and quantity standards established downstream on the Bad River Indian Reservation. With all of these approvals, do we really buy into the pollution-goes-wild fear mongering. How can mines be sited in Michigan and Minnesota? Are we incapable of learning from their successes and their shortcomings

It is also a fact, that a mine would change the landscape. This is not in dispute. The bill before the Legislature recognizes this fact. The bill does not change any of the off-site environmental protections. It does however recognize that the ore-body is located where it is. As a result, some flexibility is needed to change the landscape to get at the ore deposit. Recognizing this fact, this bill required that the mining company avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and navigable waters. If such impacts could not be avoided, mitigation at a rate of 1.5 acres to 1 acre was required. It is important to note that under current mining law, no such mitigation is required. I believe this is an improvement to current mining law-don't you?

As you know, such flexibility leads to lots of speculation about what could occur. It is easy to play those kinds of games. However, this is not a game. In the end, don't we trust the regulating agencies to do their job? On my travels throughout the state, I have found that most of the citizens of the state trust the DNR to do its job. Why don't Democrat State Senators?"

State Representative Karl Van Roy

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

Community Services Fund (Fund 80) Abuse Update.

In our continuing effort to stop the abuse of Fund 80 by local school districts, your BCTA, in conjunction with local legislators urged the State Legislative Audit Committee to conduct an audit of the Community Service Fund. Although resource issues prevented a full audit during the last session, we have started to get some traction with the Audit Committee, in the form of an information request from the Committee to the Department of Instruction for more information concerning oversight of the fund.

This is an encouraging step in the process. Fund 80 abuse is a major issue for the Schools Committee of the BCTA and we will continue to our efforts to require local school districts to meet their intent of the fund and stop their abuse of the taxpayer (nearly \$3.5 million in the Green Bay district alone) by shifting costs from the general fund, bypassing the legislative costs controls.

As you have contact with your state legislators, keep this issue on the front burner of your discussions. School districts eagerly ask legislators for help with their agendas. We taxpayers need to do the same!

The letter to the Dept. of Public Instruction requesting Fund 80 information is printed on the next page. We will keep you posted of any response or action.

BCTA Schools Committee.

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LEGISLATURE



Joint Audit Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:

State Senator Robert Cowles
State Representative Samantha Kerkman

March 1, 2012

Dr. Tony Evers, State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Dr. Evers:

As co-chairpersons of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we have received the enclosed request for an audit of the Community Service Funds (Fund 80) created by individual school boards. We write to request additional information from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) about Fund 80 accounts. For example:

- What information does DPI have about the number of school districts that have created Fund 80 accounts and total expenditures from such accounts by year?
- What guidance, if any, does DPI provide school districts about appropriate use of Fund 80?
- What is DPI's role, if any, in oversight of a district's Fund 80 account?
- Are school districts required to report information to DPI regarding revenue and expenditures associated with their Fund 80 accounts? If so, how does DPI use this information?
- Do the annual financial audits that school districts submit to DPI include Fund 80 revenues and expenditures and an assessment of compliance with statutory provisions governing the use of those funds?
- If limited information about Fund 80 expenditures is reported to DPI currently, what would prevent DPI from requiring each district to report additional Fund 80 information as part of their annual financial audits?

We would appreciate receiving your response to these questions, and any other information that would be useful related to this audit request, on or before Friday, March 23. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Senator Robert Cowles, Co-chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee


Representative Samantha Kerkman, Co-chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

cc: Senator Frank Lasee
Representative Andre Jacque
Representative Don Pridemore
Representative Karl Van Roy
Representative Evan Wynn

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Thursday, April 19, 2012 at Titledown Brewing Corp.

Eric Hovde, candidate for United States Senate, addressed members and a large number of guests. He outlined his background, explained his decision to seek the U.S. Senate seat, and presented his views on critical issues. He is a University of Wisconsin graduate, majoring in Economics and International Relations. After working as a financial advisor, he started his own financial advisory firm. He entered the community banking business and turned a failing bank around. Since then, he has purchased and turned around several community banks. Currently, he is CEO of Hovde Properties LLC, which develops and manages real estate in Wisconsin. In 1998, he created the Hovde Foundation, which supports a number of medical research and charitable organizations. His father served in the Reagan Administration from 1981 to 1986.

Mr. Hovde explained that his decision to seek the United States Senate seat was completed when he attended a banquet of the *No Greater Sacrifice Foundation (NGS)*, which receives support from the Hovde Foundation. NGS provides scholarships and resources for the children of fallen and wounded members of our armed forces. At this banquet, he was seated next to a soldier who had lost his legs in combat. Several other service members who had lost limbs and eyes were present at the meeting. Contemplating their sacrifices for their country, he realized that taking time from his career to serve his country in the U.S. Senate would be a small sacrifice by comparison.

He expressed his concerns about economic issues. "Our tax code is a disgrace, littered with corporate welfare," he stated. The last meaningful tax reform effort occurred in 1986. Americans spend over \$16 billion each year on tax preparers. Small businesses are paying taxes at rates up to 35 percent, while huge corporations with staffs of

accountants and lawyers pay at much lower rates. He proposes reducing individual tax levels to 10 percent and 25 percent. He wants to reduce corporate tax levels and eliminate the death tax, which is killing family farms. In addition, we need to shrink the federal government, minimize regulations, eliminate crony capitalism, and focus on resolving the national debt crisis.

Responding to a question, Mr. Hovde noted that we have 1,300 government agencies. They need to be examined to determine if their missions are still relevant. Each agency should be evaluated for efficiency; duplicate missions between agencies should be eliminated.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2012. Details on the back page of this *TAX TIMES*. **Dave Nelson - Secretary**

Eric Hovde at BCTA Meeting.

National Debt Update.

When we checked the National Debt Clock on the last day of April, it stood at **\$15,693,593,657.**, of or only \$15.9 Trillion in government talk. It is rather difficult to pin down an exact amount because it keeps increasing at the rate of about three billion bucks each and every day, and has gone up about \$86.7 Billion since the end of March.

No matter what happens, it only goes in one direction, and that's up. In addition to the National Debt, U.S. citizens have a total of \$15.9 Trillion of personal debt of their own, and my guess they are more concerned with that than they are with the National Debt. This total consists of \$13.4 Trillion of Mortgage debt, \$870 Billion in student loan debt, and the balance in credit card and other items.

The student loan debt might as well be added to the National Debt, as much of it may be uncollectible.

While the federal government borrows about \$40 for every \$100 it spends, there is still a total of \$118.7 Trillion in unfunded liabilities ready to kick in during the years to come., to cover items like Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Government Pensions, and will probably be a lot more if Obamacare becomes a reality.

We note that more and more financial columnists in leading magazines are calling attention to probable consequences of allowing this debt to keep climbing at the present rate. So why is this such a big problem? For one thing, the higher the debt becomes, the more of our tax dollar goes to pay it, leaving less money available for other items.

Much of the debt is financed by the sales of U.S. Treasury bonds, paying a somewhat competitive rate of interest. There is a limit as to how long our country can keep paying ;for more and more bonds.

Already our debt is something like 22 times that of Greece, and we know how their financial problems have upset world financial markets. When the cost of borrowing money goes up, the cost of everything we buy goes up also. Inflation only makes it difficult for people to spend money. It's a vicious circle.

What can be done to reduce the debt. Raising taxes is the obvious answer, but this only creates more problems. When more tax money is available, government will only find more ways to spend it.

Obviously cutting spending will be necessary. We hear daily of gross examples of government waste and useless spending on projects that are of little value. A complete audit of government spending, as well as a review of our taxing system would be a good start.

Also an administration that understands the problem and leads by example would be a step in the right direction. **JF**

"If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail." . . . **Abraham Maslow**

"When the people find that they can vote themselves money, that will herald the end of the republic. Sell not liberty to purchase power." . . . **Benjamin Franklin**

"Journalists should denounce government by public opinion polls." , , , **Dan Rather**

"A government which robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul." . . **George Bernard Shaw**

"Talk is cheap, except when Congress does it." . . . **Will Rogers**

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resources that were available in most cases had a direct relationship to the prosperity and the lifestyle of the inhabitants of an area. Consider the natural resources available when European settlers first came to Wisconsin. A temperate climate and soil suitable for growing food, lakes and rivers for transportation, and ample timber for construction of buildings. There was game in the woods and fish in the water. The water was clean for drinking and the rivers and lakes provided for travel and trade. They had everything they needed to survive.

As the economy became more industrial oriented, our natural resources became even more valuable to our economy. Possibly our greatest resources at the time were still the vast forests and sawmills producing lumber and stone quarries providing the materials which were in demand for building the expanding cities of the Midwest. Our rivers could be dammed to provide hydropower needed for the production of paper and other products.

Again time passes bringing us to the present. Years of use had changed or altered the priorities placed on many of our resources. Many of our rivers and ground water supplies has become contaminated by industrial and municipal pollution, costing millions of dollars to remedy. Our forests have long since been decimated by over harvesting and urban growth. Our stone quarries and gravel pits are proving more useful as depositories for municipal wastes to remain buried until the end of time. Even our once renowned lead mines have long since been depleted. The construction of railroads and highways and the cities they connect along with urban sprawl has completely altered the landscape as the early settlers found it.

Although hydropower still provides some of our energy needs we do not have the reserves of coal or oil which must be obtained from other parts of the country.

This brings us to the point. Appreciate and preserve the assets and resources you have, because none of them will necessarily last forever. We have already found that out. Learn to share your resources with others if you expect others to share with you. The world is a very delicate place in which to live. Some recent news items illustrate this.

#1. Energy. The world is using more and more of all available sources of energy every day, and despite what we like to think, the world does not revolve around the United States of America. If we do have an actual energy policy, it is a well-kept secret. The controversy over the recent increases in oil products sets the stage. The price of gasoline at the pump recently went up seventy-five cents a gallon and we had people in Washington openly suggesting this was the time to open and deplete our strategic petroleum reserves. This type of thinking is like committing National suicide. While we still import a large portion of our oil from other countries, the rest of the world's increasing usage is competing for available reserves.

Fortunately we are still discovering and developing domestic petroleum deposits, but must remember that what is there is all there is. Yes, we should continue to develop available domestic reserves and improve our distribution and refining capacity. More importantly we should continue a crash program to produce new sources of energy besides windmills and solar panels, but more important we should think more about next year and perhaps the next hundred years.

Oil is definitely going to be more expensive simply because new sources will cost more to develop. Presently we seem to have a

depended
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belief we can use as much as oil as we can afford, as there will always be more. We also see a lot of extravagance and waste which may haunt us in the future.

Whatever happens, environmental and safety concerns will have to be resolved to keep coal and nuclear power in the energy mix.

#2. Wisconsin's iron and copper deposits. As mentioned previously, Wisconsin really doesn't have any abundance natural resources that could be in demand or have economic value. A couple of exceptions could be potable water from the Great Lakes which could be piped to areas where water shortages are becoming a reality. While this is unlikely to happen who knows about the future. In recent years geologists have identified sizeable deposits of iron and copper ore in northern Wisconsin Counties which could be mined, creating employment and boosting the economy of the entire state. So far environmental and political concerns have prevented any development. Sometime in the future these may prove to be of great value if environmental, conservation, and political concerns can ever be resolved. The ore is not going anywhere in the meantime.

#3, Money. Money itself is an resource which must be preserved and used wisely. Whether by individuals, business, or units of government, deciding how it is spent depends on the amount available and determining priorities for the best or most pressing use. Unlike minerals or oil in the ground, if a government unit or individual runs short, you can always borrow money to be paid at a future time.

The Federal Government has perfected this practice to the point where our country is well over \$15 Trillion Dollars in debt. The blame goes from insufficient income to indiscriminate spending, and many of our elected officials just keep on spending and borrowing regardless.

Here is one local example of how our money is being spent. The Fox River as a resource is a treasure that played a major role in the settlement and development of this area. Through the years, agricultural activity, manufacturing, municipal waste and just about every activity in between contributed to the river becoming heavily polluted. It was to everyone's interest to try restore the river to it's natural state.

The Federal Government and DNR stepped in and determined that paper mills were largely to blame for the problem and as such should be made to pay for the cleanup. The original plan of action called for something like \$300 Million and cleanup work proceeded. We believe this project is managed by the federal government, and do not recall ever seeing any breakdown of how or where the funds are spent.

Several years have passed and the cleanup is still not completed. The cost to complete the job has now risen to a Billion dollars plus attorney fees and the paper mills who are now questioning the cost. While we realize that cleaning up the river is in the public interest and the money so far has come from the paper industry, and government funds, it is still a billion dollars that could go for schools, highways, public safety or any of the other items government spends our money on.

To put a Billion dollars in perspective, it is likely more than the combined annual budgets of Brown County, Green Bay, the Green Bay School District, plus the combined budgets of all the other municipalities and school districts in the county. We would question the amount of money being spend and will the results be justified? The next big project will probably be cleaning up the air we breath.

Jim Frink - BCTA

"Apparently, I'm supposed to be more angry about what Mitt Romney does with his money than what Barack and Michelle Obama do with mine." . . . **Thought for the day.**



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Despite a chance to submit your vote in the highly publicized presidential primary, and local elections for County Board, City Council and other municipal races less than 25% of the states eligible voters bothered to vote April 3. The turnout was only 23.5% in Brown County.

We can understand the frustrations people are having with state and national politics, but the local races have a lot to do with your property tax bills which many of us our concerned the most with.

People in Wisconsin seem to prefer putting more effort and money in removing people they don't like from office over voting to put them in. Maybe their protesting voter ID laws was an excuse to stay home.

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Warren Buffett's disclosure that his secretary paid a higher percentage of her income in taxes than he has brought a flurry of demands for income tax reform.

Unfortunately getting all of the special breaks out of the tax codes may prove to be easier said than done. They were all placed for special interests through the years by powerful influences in Congress from both sides of the aisle.

A *New York Times* article discloses that for 2011 Pres, Obama paid a little over 20% in taxes, which was at a slightly higher rate than his secretary.

While he credited donations to charity as the reason for his tax break, many if not most deductions available in the tax code are intended to create employment, improve the environment or finance charitable causes. The richer you are the more you get to deduct. Even the President seems to agree with that.

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The media has made issue with Congressional expense accounts, and probably rightfully so. It is another example of why our National Debt is rising through the roof and Congress could set a good example regardless of what the President himself does with our money.

Office equipment, personal staff, travel, and printing and mailing privileges are all factors. However, communication and mailings to the people back home are also important to let their constituents know what is going on in Washington.

Funny the cost of mailings wasn't a factor with the last Congressional representative we had from this district.

As with any organization, if rules established and followed, those at the top are expected to set the example for the rest to follow. We are hearing daily examples of extravagance and waste by our government from the President on down, and it is obvious there is no concern whatsoever for fiscal responsibility by anyone involved.

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The annual WIAA Girls State Basketball Tournament will make a nice fit for the Green Bay area. We have all of the facilities and amenities with a more central location plus better parking and hotel accommodations.

The people in Madison keeping the boys tournament is probably because they noticed all the publicity we were creating here about what an economic asset it would be. The girls tournament is estimated to have a \$3 million impact.

Economic impact can be a tricky item to track. For example, the Packers recently reported lower sales tax receipts from the .5% Brown County Stadium Tax.

While a \$500,000 reduction in revenue only effects the stadium bonds and expense reserves, it also means that collectively all of the business's in Brown County who collect sales tax on their receipts lost at least \$100 Million in taxable sales during the same period of time. It takes that amount to collect \$500,000 at .5%. Figure it out for yourself. Even the \$3 Million from the tournament will help.

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Mayor Schmitt has proposed asking the U. S. Postal Service to reconfigure the Green Bay area ZIP codes so as to reflect the corporate boundaries of the city without using the same ZIP code for outlying suburban areas.

While this is unlikely to happen, there is already a solution in place courtesy of the postal service itself. For some time, the USPS has allowed residents of Ashwaubenon, Allouez, Bellevue, Howard, and other locations which share ZIP codes to use their own municipality in the address, as long as the 9-digit ZIP code is included and is correct.

If residents of these areas started using their town and village names in their mailing addresses it would also give them some needed recognition.

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We don't know for sure if the Younkers condemnation affair has finally been settled. The *Press-Gazette* has reported that Green Bay has spent a total of

\$920,000 in legal fees during the past 8 years and we assume the owners of Younkers probably spent the same.

We realize that legal assistance is often required in government operations but there are a lot of other uses for \$920 grand in the Cities budgets.

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The total number of full-time active federal employees is a closely guarded secret with no place to go for an honest straight answer. Also, we have not heard of any serious effort on the part of the Obama administration to cut the number of Federal employees or controlling salaries and benefits such as most states and local governments have been compelled to do.

One low estimate is that about 40,000 employees have been added during the past two years, and if Obamacare is approved the total will be several times that.

What all these people do is anybody's guess, but a lot of them probably spend their time creating regulations to further complicate our lives and qualifying people for various entitlement programs they have already created. Shuffling piles of paper from office to office to keep each other busy is also creates government employment.

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Two weeks after making fans pay for their season tickets, the Packers have announced their fall schedule of what they will be getting. We acknowledge the economic impact this has on all facets of life in Green Bay and that it takes time for the league to prepare.

One unfortunate consequence is that other events available to Green Bay do not schedule dates until the Packer schedule is set due to the availability of hotel rooms and other accommodations. Conventions and other events are often held in the fall and dates may be set 1-2 years in advance. This has to be a problem for the people trying to bring these events here.

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Green Bay, Brown County, and many of the municipalities and school districts in the area are now holding meetings with new members in their administration as a result of the April elections.

Without exception balancing budgets and keeping constituents happy will probably be a challenge. No doubt all of those elected did so on a platform of efficient and frugal government, responsive communication with voters, and no mention of the possibility of tax increases.

Any person with the dedication to

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One thing in common with most successful business operations is that they possess a well disciplined work force and the management leads by example. Everyone knows their job, realizes where they fit and how important they are in what they do for the success of their employer.

Is this the way the federal government operates? Not according to what we read daily in the papers or hear on the news.

The General Services Administration blowing millions of taxpayer dollars on a lavish Las Vegas convention, or the antics of the elite secret service detail charged with protecting the President while in Columbia are examples. While not necessarily the fault of the President, it is his duty to lead by example and expect every person with responsibility he appoints to carry out his mission to do the same. When it comes to spending money, maybe that's exactly what they are doing.

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The U.S. Treasury Dept. just announced the Social Security Trust Fund will run out 3 years sooner than previously announced. Sometime during 2033 according to their expert calculations.

The reserve is supposedly held in a segregated fund but we have never been told how much or where. With a \$15 Trillion National Debt it's probably difficult to keep track of everything.

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We have seen and heard a number of references lately that the U.S. Constitution has become outdated and should be revised to bring it up to date. Especially the parts about the balance of power between the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of our government.

Probably more to the point was a April 22, *New York Times* no less, article relating that President Obama, citing gridlock and his inability to work with Congress, has been using his powers of Presidential Discretion through "assertive use of executive action," or in other words, bypassing the Congress of the United States.

The article went on to explain his use of the slogan, "We can't wait," listing numerous examples of the President approving items, mostly of his domestic policy agenda without waiting for Congressional approval. It was also mentioned that regu-

encies have been more active directives which do not require additional approval.

The Constitution has served us and been obeyed for 225 years so far and only been amended 27 times. We acknowledge that things have become more complex but the Supreme Court is still able to use it as a basis for decisions.

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While local units of government didn't ask for the coming recall elections on the state level, they will still get stuck with much of the cost. An estimated \$17 million for election clerks, security, printing and counting ballots for all of the precincts in the state.

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The coming recall elections in Wisconsin will be watched by all of the other states in the country for various reasons. The tone of the attack ads so far has been critical of the incumbents and their challengers so we could very well be setting a precedent which only reinforces the negative opinion people seem to have for all people in public office.

One of the arguments used is are we creating jobs in the state or are we actually losing them? With companies coming and going all the time it is difficult to know where we stand.

The standard statistic for job loss is the rate of unemployment, and that can be difficult to determine as it is based on those receiving benefits at a given time.

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The battle cry for progressive spending is to cut corporate tax loopholes and increase taxes on the "rich."

The tax laws have literally thousands of special rules inserted through the years for this purpose or that, and once they are in, they are often forgotten about.

Locally non-profit organizations are exempt from property taxes. These rules were established when property taxes were less of a factor to the overall community than at present and apply to a wide variety of organizations. There are examples of exempt organizations actually competing with taxable business for the same market, and it is obvious that not having to pay property taxes improves your bottom line.

The same goes for special tax incentives on the state and federal level. Also most were established for such as

creating employment or stimulating the economy in a distressed area, closer examination will likely indicate political influence was involved.

One recent article identified 280 big public firms, including General Electric and Boeing as paying little or nothing in corporate taxes.

Many economists have called for lower corporate tax rates to stimulate the economy and encourage investment;

This may be just another sign that our entire tax code needs examination and possible revision.

As usual, lots of 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, one of our purposes 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."



"Foreign aid might be defined as a transfer from poor people in rich countries to rich people in poor countries." . . . Douglas Casey

"I predict future happiness for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them." . . . Thomas Jefferson



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Inside This Issue,

- The Legions march on.**
- Iron Mining Legislation Dead.**
- Community Services Fund (Fund 80) Abuse Update.**
- April Meeting Notes.**
- National Debt Update.**
- Assets and Resources.**
- Things That Make Us Wonder.**
- And more.

The TAX TIME\$ - May-June, 2012

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday—May 17, 2012. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titletown Brewing Co.
Speaker: George Lucia, U. S. Senate Candidate

Thursday—June 21, 2012. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titletown Brewing Co. Program to be announced.

Thursday—July 19, 2012. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Titletown Brewing Co. Program to be announced.

All candidates for Public Office are cordially invited to attend Our meetings and be recognized....

NOTE: We will not publish “The Tax Times” in June per our Summer schedule. The next issue will be July-August.

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: \$8.00, Payable at meeting. Includes lunch, tax & tip.

Call Tom Sladek—499-7701 for information or to leave message.



**May -
June
2012**

“Don’t worry about the world coming to an end today. It’s already tomorrow in Australia.” . . Charles M. Schulz

“Of all the animals, man is the only one that lies.” . . . Mark Twain

“Newspaper editors are men who separate the wheat from the chaff. Then print the chaff.” . Adlai Stevenson

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are Always Welcome.**
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www.BCTAxpayers.Org