



The Life of Fiscal Cliff Dwellers.

Cliff Dwellers have some significant places in human history; the most notable United States "cliffsters" being the Anaasázi folks who once domiciled in the Four Corners area of the American Southwest. Other notable "cliffsters" may include the Guyaju dwellings, an ancient bedroom community near Beijing, the Luke Skywalker digs in Matmata, Tunisia, the Bamiyan condos of central Afganistan, the Sassi di Matera abodes of Southern Italy, Vardzia homes of Southern Georgia (Russian Georgia) and many other locales of human habitation-a more complete list can be found at <http://www.touropia.com/cave-dwelling/>.

I am not alone seeing our economy dwelling on the steep slopes as a trip down 'Google lane ' quickly prof-erred musings from Simon Johnson, a former chief economist of the IMF, professor at MIT Sloan, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, and co-founder of a leading economics blog-Read more at <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/how-obama-can-overcome-republican-s-tax-intransigence-by-simon-johnson#YyrsAPPErtzyvol.99>, a fellow bemused of "Obamanomics," and the prospects of fruitful cliff habitation. He's joined and well countered by King Krauthammer at http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/charles-krauthammer-cliff-jumping-with-barack/2012/11/29/6ddd39f8-3a5f-11e2-8a97-363b0f9a0ab3_story.html

After watching the Sunday morning talking-heads, fellow cliff dwellers gave their views of varying possible outcomes, but none of these arguments were compelling enough for me to envision a life in the United States without accompanying cultural and financial vertigo. While one view for "increased revenues" read, increased taxes on the billionaires and millionaires, heretofore referred to as Bazillionaires gained traction as an election gambit, can anyone believe the numbers! Folks earning more tha \$250k, funds the US Government might only cover costs for a few days. Two numerical facts are either (1)the results of the new math, how 6 figures become 7 figures and ten figures to the left of the decimal point, or (2)the result of an amazing con-job that just saying so makes \$250K become \$1000K! Wow!

The other approach, as being sold on these same shows, decreases taxes on the same \$ 250K bazillionaires while skimming the middle class entitlements to pay for it! Wow, again! Somehow, using the old math, eliminating or reducing tax deductions on Real bazillionaires, lowering rates on all tax categories thereby yielding increased revenues across the board is a non-starter. Nor will Democrats join Republicans in an effort to reform entitlements to protect future generations from paycheck indenture.

Are these ideas from either sides puff-necked grousing or will we see a repeat of the healthcare legislation cram down on the Republic? Because Americans know they can't afford new taxes, but do we Americans grasp the reality that we can't afford to keep borrowing against our future all the while living on a fiscal cliff? For whatever reason the Anaasázi didn't survive, nor did their historical counterparts, but being holed up, hiding in caves isn't the American way, at least that is the history as once taught in our schools. We are a people who hit the ground running looking for new hunting and planting grounds, finding materials to make things then selling or buying with another in free and open exchange producing wealth to nsure the future. It is not to take from another's labors but laboring to cure, each their own part of prosperity.

Richard Parins - President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 28th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

Wisconsin and Obamacare.

“But we have to pass the bill so you can find out what is in it, away from the fog of the controversy.” . . . Nancy Pelosi

Buried deep in the bowels of the massive 2010 *“Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act”*, better known as and referred to by many of us as *“Obamacare”*, are provisions requiring (mandating) that all of the states submit their plan to establish and maintain health insurance exchanges covering the countries business establishments, beginning in 2014.

According to the Kaiser Foundation, an authority on healthcare and insurance matters, an exchange is “A new organization that will be set up to create a more organized and competitive market for buying health insurance. They will offer a choice of different health plans, certifying plans that participate and providing information to help consumers better understand their options.”

The states were offered the following three options, and the governor given the option to decide which they preferred. #1-Create a federally run exchange. #2-Create a state-run exchange. #3-Establish a partnership plan requiring the state to administer the exchange for the federal government. A deadline of November 16, or 10 days after the Presidential election had originally been established as a deadline, but this was eventually extended to allow more time for the states to make their decisions.

Various interest groups, led by Senator Kohl and Senator-elect Baldwin, assorted insurance companies and business groups pressured Governor Walker to opt for a plan wherein the state would have more control, which could be best in the long run. Other groups, however, pointed out that there are still many uncertainties in the health care, including just how much federal control would be imposed on the states under any circumstances, and the ultimate cost to each state and its residents as a result. We realize this is a controversial subject with different interpretations, right or wrong, of the healthcare law.

We all can probably agree that while our health care system and availability of care is probably the best in the world, there is ample room for improvement. However, the overall cost is already expensive, and all citizens do not necessarily have access to the same level of services. We have just gone through a very contentious presidential election with many questionable accusations made by both parties on taxing and spending practices, but with very little said of the many hidden tax and spending increases, including penalties and fines tucked away in the Affordable Health Care act. Many of its clauses may cause more problems than they resolve, particularly in regards to the economy,

We would believe that improvements to health care is the desire of all citizens and elected representatives regardless of their party affiliations but unfortunately the matter has become politicized to the point where it may never live up to its original promise or intentions. Problems began when the President didn't truly allow bi-partisan interests to help draft the plan and inserted more layers of bureaucracy in the finished product than affordable or practical. The bill was approved and signed without adequate input or debate and as a result will likely face a lack of cooperation until it is either repealed or re-written.

In the meantime, attempts to phase in parts of the law bit by bit, such as the provision requiring the states to establish health insurance exchanges are meeting with opposition, partly because the rules are too confusing or just don't make sense. Another is that sooner or later the federal government will have to start living within its means and they really don't seem to have a clue at this time as to what affordable health care will ultimately cost or impact the economy.

The following three articles consist of a letter submitted to Governor Walker by a coalition of patriot, taxpayer, and business interests including the BCTA outlining reasons to decline state participation, a letter from the Governors office regarding his decision, and a copy of his letter to Secretary Sebalius of the Health and Human Services Administration. We understand several governors made the same decision.

Jim Frink—BCTA

Groups encourage Gov. Walker to "Pass" on State-Created Exchanges

Governor Scott Walker delayed the implementation of the misnamed Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") as much as possible in Wisconsin until after the 2012 Presidential Election, and we, the undersigned, applaud his efforts in such regard. With President Obama's reelection to a second term, however, it is now clear that Obamacare will not be repealed by the Federal Government. As a result, by November 16, 2012, Governor Walker must decide if the State of Wisconsin shall create health insurance exchanges, or if the State shall instead allow the Federal Government to create the health insurance exchanges for Wisconsin.

We, the undersigned, strongly encourage Governor Walker - and the State of Wisconsin - to not take responsibility for the creation of Wisconsin's health insurance exchanges. Regardless of which government entity (State vs. Federal) creates the exchanges, there is no opportunity for state-controlled exchanges at this time; through its rules, regulations, and expressed authority, the Federal Government shall maintain complete control of Wisconsin exchanges no matter which entity bears the initial responsibility for the creation of the exchanges.

As such, the State of Wisconsin has nothing to gain by taking responsibility for the creation of health insurance exchanges, but the State does have much to lose - as do Wisconsin taxpayers and businesses. If the State creates the exchanges, Wisconsin taxpayers shall be solely responsible for the costs associated with the creation of the exchanges; on the other hand, if the Federal Government creates the exchanges, the Federal Government is responsible for the costs associated with the establishment of the exchanges. Obamacare is a federal law; it is therefore appropriate for the Federal Government to assume responsibility for the law's costs.

Additionally, if the State of Wisconsin was to create the health insurance exchanges, Wisconsin businesses covered by the law would be on the hook for a \$2,000 fee per employee who is not offered health insurance through the company. This \$2,000 per employee burden does not apply to Wisconsin businesses //the Federal Government creates the exchanges in Wisconsin. Pushing responsibility for the creation of exchanges to the Federal Government would not only prevent current Wisconsin businesses incurring this fee, but it also would provide an incentive for new businesses to locate in Wisconsin. Governor Walker rightly asserts that Wisconsin is "open for business;" making the Federal Government responsible for the creation of exchanges is consistent with Governor Walker's assertion.

Finally, if the State of Wisconsin creates the health insurance exchanges, the State loses its ability to challenge the law itself. If the Federal Government creates the exchanges, however, the State maintains its ability to challenge the law. We, the undersigned, oppose Obamacare as a law in its entirety as a matter of principle. Consequently, we support the preservation of Wisconsin's ability to legally challenge Obamacare in all ways possible.

For these reasons, we, the undersigned, urge Governor Walker to refuse State responsibility for the creation of Wisconsin health insurance exchanges, and to continue to provide strong, principled, conservative leadership for Wisconsin and America.



SCOTT WALKER
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

P.O. BOX 7863
MADISON, WI 53707

November 16, 2012

On November 6, citizens across the state and country voted to reelect President Obama. Elections have consequences. The implementation of federal health care reform will move forward.

While I may disagree with the federal health care law, a health insurance exchange will now be built. To do so, federal reform provides states three options: 1) create a federally run exchange; 2) create a state-run exchange; 3) establish a partnership plan requiring the state to administer the exchange for the federal government.

The most important consideration for me in deciding which option is best for our state is protecting Wisconsin's current and future taxpayers.

Today, I informed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that Wisconsin will not build a state-based health insurance exchange and will defer to the federal government's insurance exchange. You can find the letter attached.

Here are the facts influencing this decision:

1. The long-term risk to Wisconsin taxpayers is too high. If a state takes on the task of running the exchange, it also commits to long-term spending obligations from uncontrolled costs that are not fully funded. When federal funding dries up, costs for Wisconsin taxpayers would skyrocket under a state-run exchange. Putting state taxpayers on the hook for a program we cannot control is simply not responsible governance.

2. No matter who sets up and administers the exchange, the federal government makes all the decisions and the final product is the same. The federal health care law dictates to Wisconsin and to our health care providers exactly what policies and products may be offered in the exchange and elsewhere. Decisions regarding eligibility, minimum standard of coverage, and all other important details will be determined by our federal government. For instance, the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary defines "qualified health plans" and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor issues "best practices of plain language writing" for qualified health plans.

3. The federal government's demonstrated lack of cooperation and detail increases the burden and risk to our state. While there has been ongoing rhetoric that states will have flexibility in creating a state-based exchange, we have seen very little cooperation from the federal government on issues related to the implementation of federal reform. Thus far HHS has provided little to no guidance on the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on the Medicaid elements and implementation.

4. PPACA does not allow for a uniquely Wisconsin option. In Wisconsin, we have been successful in providing health insurance coverage to over 90 percent of state residents without the creation of an exchange. Other states moving forward with state-operated exchanges have nowhere near our level of coverage. To preserve this, we would all like to build a uniquely Wisconsin exchange, but the reality is the federal health care law simply doesn't allow it. Whether an exchange is administered by the state or the federal government does not change the fact the federal government will set uniform policies for all states. Utah's state insurance exchange further demonstrates this point. Utah had an established insurance exchange prior to the enactment of federal reform. As a result, the state has submitted their exchange to the federal government in an effort to meet the insurance exchange requirement. Rather than demonstrating a willingness to work with the State of Utah, the federal government simply directed the state to go back to the drawing board.

In the end, the only difference between the three options is the potential cost to taxpayers, which made our choice clear. As a result of our decision, Wisconsin taxpayers and consumers will have access to the same products without the risk of having an extra burden placed upon them at a time when they can least afford it.

Letter to Dept. of Health and Human Services on next page →

"Witnessing the Republicans and Democrats bicker over the U. S. Debt is like watching two drunks argue over a bar bill on the Titanic." . . . Author Unknown.

"Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." . . . John F. Kennedy

"He that is good at making excuses is seldom good at anything else." . . . Benjamin Franklin

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.



SCOTT WALKER
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

P.O. BOX 7863
 MADISON, WI 53707

November 16, 2012

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

Please accept this letter as official notification to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that Wisconsin will not build a state-based health insurance exchange and will defer to the federal government's insurance exchange.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) gives states three options in building health insurance exchanges: an exchange built and managed by an individual state subject to federal mandate; a partnership plan requiring the state to perform functions on behalf of the federal government; or a federal exchange developed by the federal government. While the three options differ in who initially builds and operates the exchange, all three options are identical in that they are governed and controlled by federal policy. No matter which option is chosen, Wisconsin taxpayers will not have meaningful control over the health care policies and services sold to Wisconsin residents. If the state option is chosen; however, Wisconsinites face risk from a federal mandate lacking long-term guaranteed funding.

In Wisconsin, we have been successful in providing health insurance coverage to over 90 percent of state residents without the creation of an exchange and absent federal regulation. We have a long history of being a leader on health reform issues, and with more guidance and greater state flexibility, our competitive market system would have ensured health insurance coverage to the most vulnerable Wisconsinites without federalization of our market. Unfortunately, operating a state exchange would not provide the flexibility to meet our state's unique needs or to protect our state's taxpayers.

Therefore, after much consideration and outreach with citizens across the state, and in the best interest of the taxpayers of Wisconsin, we have determined Wisconsin will not develop a partnership or state-based exchange.

Sincerely,

Scott Walker
Governor of Wisconsin

National Debt. Update.

On December 1, 2012, the National Debt reached the total of \$16.306 Trillion. This is an increase of about 77 Billion since the first of November, and keeping up with the pace of increasing the amount we owe by about 3 Billion each and every day. For each citizen this amounts to \$51,863, or \$142,231 for each taxpayer. At last count there were 137,882,203 actual taxpayers in the country with only the top 10% already paying 70% of the taxes.

During the recent campaign, very little was said about the National Debt, or the dangers it presented to the country. Anyone who uses a credit card to finance their spending while allowing the balance payable to increase each month soon realizes they are getting deeper in the hole as the interest payable on the balance increases.

While Pres. Obama repeatedly stated that with "just a *small tax increase* on those earning over \$250,000 would enable the country to move ahead, reduce the deficit and bless us all with "affordable health care."

Truth is, if the federal income tax on all those making over \$100,000 were doubled, it would amount to less than \$700 Billion, which is a nice piece of change but we would still end up with a larger deficit each year unless government spending is controlled.

With the President's version of Voodoo economics they would likely find ways to spend any additional revenue rather than apply it against the debt. They have yet to put an accurate price tag on Obamacare and other federal programs. He can always fire up a 747 and go out and explain it to everyone.

So far the warnings of a "fiscal cliff," have not brought any noticeable sense of urgency to Congressional budget hearings. We acknowledge there are massive problems facing the country that have to be considered. During the recent campaign the President promised with a straight face to negotiate with Congress in order to solve the fiscal crisis, and he also promised no new taxes for the "middle class."

Most people seem to realize that if you can't raise your income you have to cut spending to break even. Where do you start? At last count there were 4,364,123 employees on the federal payroll, with more coming to watch over Obamacare. We don't know if this number includes the military or not, but we would guess that many of them have jobs that involve qualifying people and doling out federal dollars.

First step, check for waste and duplication and stop maneuvering for a disaster to blame the other party for come the next election.

JF

"Fathom the hypocrisy of a government that every citizen prove they are insured...but not everyone must prove they are a citizen." . . . **Ben Stein**

"A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship." . . . **Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)**

"Only in America, could politicians talk about the greed of the rich at a \$35,000 a plate fund-raising event." . . . **A Canadian Observation**

NOVEMBER MEETING NOTES.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting at Titledown Brewing Co., Nov. 15, 2012.

President Richard Parins commended the City of Green Bay for passing a 2013 budget that will not increase property axes for Green Bay residents. Mayor Jim Schmitt stated that the budget lowers taxes, fills all the positions, continues services and reduces the City's general obligation debt.

City employees and retirees will be paying more out of pocket for health insurance, achieving a total savings of about \$190,000. Increases in retirees' health insurance premiums will be phased in over a 10 year period to reduce the impact on retirees' healthcare costs. City employees will receive a two percent pay raise in 2013.

The adopted 2013 tax levy for the \$100.6 million budget is \$52.4 million, no increase from 2012. Property owners will see their tax rate decrease by six cents per thousand dollars of valuation. The spending increase is \$545,000 over 2012, but it is more than offset by increases in the residential and commercial tax bases.

The schools committee reported that BCTA Vice Presidents Rich Carlstedt and Rod Goldhahn spoke at the Green Bay school Board's annual budget meeting. A primary BCTA concern is the misuse of Fund 80 dollars.

State Superintendent of Schools Tony Evers' proposal to increase K-12 school funding increase by \$615 million over the next two years without raising property taxes was discussed. Unfortunately, the source of funds for the Evers proposal is redirecting the citizens' property tax credit from the Wisconsin Lottery to the school aid fund. So, property taxes would not increase, but the property tax credit would disappear.

Election of Directors and Officers: Returning directors Dave Dillenburg, Rod Goldhahn, Glen Schwalbach, and Beverly VanDeurzen were elected to three-year terms. New directors elected to three-year terms were Ed Jensen and Mark Tumpach.

Officers elected to one-year terms were: President: Richard Parins; First Vice-president: Rod Goldhahn; Second Vice-president: Dave Dillenburg; Treasurer: Tom Sladek; Secretary: Dave Nelson.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 20, at Titledown Brewing Co. The scheduled speaker is Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt. Details on the back -page of this Tax Times.

Dave Nelson—Secretary

To Mayor Schmitt, City of Green Bay Staff and City Council.

On behalf of the Brown County Taxpayers Association I wish to express our appreciation and support for the efforts of Mayor Schmitt, the City Staff, and members of the City Council for their work to "bend the curve" downward for the City Tax Rates. However modest the reduction may be, we commend the results as a positive direction for the Cities' Taxpayers. Additionally the BCTA also encourages continued efforts that may be made to reduce City borrowing. While likely modest in comparison to other communities, interest payments only slow the positive beginnings for residents tax reductions.

Our best regards to all who brought this budget to its successful conclusion.

Richard Parins, President

Brown County Taxpayers Association

Comparing Automobiles with Paper Clips.

The Federal deficit didn't reach the trillion dollar mark until sometime toward the end of 1981, when Ronald Reagan was president and Barack Obama was only 20 years old. Even in 1946, after the end of WW II when we spent unlimited amounts for ships, planes, and troops, plus rebuilding Europe with the Marshall Plan the debt was only \$270 Billion. It is now over \$16 Trillion, or an increase of about 60 times in just 32 short years. Has anything else increased that much that fast? Worse yet, does anybody really care?

The term trillion is used in Washington as casually as billion, or even million. The President and Congress simply don't get it, or seem to understand the implications. We saw plenty of evidence to that in the recent Presidential election campaign.

How much is a trillion? A recent E-Mail I received proclaimed that a trillion paper clips contained enough metal to build 800,000 Honda Civic automobiles. This certainly was not intended the car could be made out of paper clips, but was using an example of a well known quality product to help people visualize their point.

This sounded rather incredible, so I checked it out. I took a box of standard 1-1/4" paper clips and weighed them on a scientific scale. It came to 50 clips per ounce, or 800 to the pound. The next step was to divide a trillion (1,000,000,000,000) by 800 to find how many pounds a trillion clips would weigh. The answer was 1,250,000,000, or a billion and a quarter pounds of paper clips.

According to their specifications a Honda Civic weighs about 2,700 pounds, so we deducted 500 pounds to cover non-metallic parts like tires, glass, plastic, fiberglass and upholstery leaving 2,200 pounds for metal. We then divided the 1,250,000,000 total by 2,200 pounds and came up with 568,182 cars. Allowing 20 feet for each car, this fleet could stretch from Green Bay to Los Angeles by way of Las Vegas. A most impressive sight indeed.

Better yet, assuming an average retail price of \$20,000 for a new Civic, you could drive off with 50,000,000 (50 Million), of them with a trillion dollars. (\$20,000 x 50,000,000 = \$1,000,000,000,000.) While this would probably be a better deal than buying a trillion paper clips at a dollar per, we don't want to give President Obama any more ideas on how to spend our money. He already seems to know how easy it is to make a trillion or two disappear.

While my methodology came out a bit short of the original estimate of 800,000, remember just about everything is made with less product these days, including paper clips and automobiles. At least it gives you an idea of what a trillion looks like, and what a trillion of something can do. You can figure it out for yourself. **Jim Frink—BCTA**

"Remember that nobody will ever get ahead of you as he is kicking you in the seat of the pants."

. . . **Walter Winchell**

"Government is like a baby: An alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other."

. . . **Ronald Reagan**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.BCTAxpayers.Org

Email, BCTA@ExecPc.Com

Things That Make Us Wonder.

No doubt we are all thankful that the Presidential campaign is over and we can settle down to a life of watching personal injury attorneys hawk their services on TV rather than seeing our elected officials and those who wish to replace them rip each other apart. Nonetheless we congratulate the winners and hopefully look forward to the next elections.

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Citing the inability to meet the demands of the several unions representing its employees, Hostess Brands has filed for bankruptcy and announced plans to close down facilities all across the country. They were the 2d largest bread producer in the country, as well as producing a number of popular specialty items. While differences between the company and its 18,500 employees were not discussed it would appear there will be no winners if the company goes ahead and shuts down its 33 bakeries and 565 distribution centers.

While there is a possibility of other companies buying the Hostess assets and product rights, there will probably still be the unions to deal with.

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While the presidential election is now history, as usual after the dust settles campaign finance laws and election procedures will be up for discussion. Following are some of our leftover thoughts.

Billions of dollars were spent on advertising, much of which the source was difficult to trace. We can be sure there will be calls for campaign finance and ethics reform, but mostly from the losers. The winners will be happy with the status quo which means do anything as long as you win and leave things alone for the time.

One item being discussed are the annoying robocalls either telling us who to vote for or begging for more money to pay for more robocalls. When the "co-call" list system was established the politicians of the time managed to make their activities exempt from being classified as nuisance calling. Fortunately many if not most of us are capable of determining which candidate best suits are principles and is best for the country. We also understand the importance of voting and realize the value of financial support to the parties and candidates of our choice whatever they may be.

While most voters have an uncanny ability to separate truth from fiction in negative ads, it is always discouraging to see anybody's money being spent on the amount of false and misleading commercials we have seen during the last few months. Many of the ads would have brought big time libel suits for slander under normal circumstances. The TV stations apparently will broadcast anything given to them during election time, and are not held to the same high standards of "truth in advertising" they follow with regular commercial customers.

In Wisconsin we seem to have survived without photo ID, but many voters took advantage of early voting to avoid delays at the polls. It was reported about 70 percent of Wisconsin registered voters participated in the election while it was 88.6 percent in Brown County.

Eleven states, including Wisconsin allow same day registrations at the polls, and it has been pointed out that this increases the cost of elections as extra poll workers have to be hired and adds to the confusion on election days. Arguments for changing the law include there is ample time and publicity for registration before elections and same day voter registration can be subject to abuse.

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Reference is made to the first pages of this Tax Times regarding Governor Walkers decision not to pursue creating a state-run health care insurance exchange at this time.

There are a lot of pros and cons to sort through, and obviously some of us interpret the law and how it will effect us differently. The ultimate question is what does the country need, what can we afford, and how best to obtain these goals to the majorities satisfaction.

The Press-Gazette recently carried an AP story headlined "Report: Obama health law a good deal for states." Basically the article promoted cooperation and participation by the states to enact provisions of the health care law.

They stated it would be a "good deal" for states because for every dollar the states contributed to health care, the federal government would pay nine dollars. The statement was made that expanding Medicaid to 20 million more low-income people would cost \$1 Trillion nationally from 2013 to 2022.

It was not clear if they meant one Trillion over a ten year period, or one Trillion per year, but It does show the disregard for huge numbers as if no one really cares. In recent years state and local governments, along with private industries looking for financial aid have made a practice of depending upon federal handouts to finance their problems.

This is the kind of mindset promoted by the media that is literally bankrupting our country, and we are probably all to blame. To sell a plan by promising nine dollars back for every dollar you spend is bribery. Especially when they don't have the nine dollars to spend and are already borrowing forty cents out of every dollar they spend from other countries. What they may not be talking about are all of the taxes, including fines and penalties that will be imposed to pay for health care. It's not coming from the federal government; it's coming from you and me and the people who provide jobs for us.

We have yet to hear an honest appraisal of what "affordable health care" will cost or how it will be paid for. Every other government welfare plan from Social Security to Medicare has exceeded cost estimates, largely due to poor financial management and Congressional meddling and we see no reason to believe that Obamacare will be any different.

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Governor Walker and others have been under fire for alleged violation of doing campaign work on taxpayers time. These are gray areas of the law and seem to be politically motivated. One of the unfortunate facts about holding a public office is that you constantly have to be thinking of the next election. The best way to do that is by doing a good job while in office, but sometimes it is hard to draw the line.

Richard Nixon once said, "There is no such thing as a non-political speech by a politician." Is flying around the country campaigning on company time any different than having your secretary send out letters or answer phone calls.

* * * * *

It seems on a regular basis some part of the country suffers from a massive natural disaster such as floods, hurricanes, fires, tornados, earthquakes, and the like. The property loss and personal suffering to those affected is unimaginable.

Fortunately our people, charitable

groups and government agencies in most cases combine to clean up the damage and take the necessary steps to return to normal as much as possible.

One of the worst disasters in recent history probably was the "dust bowl" of the 1930's, causing horrendous suffering to residents living in several million acres of land centered in the panhandle area of Oklahoma. Also included were parts of Kansas, Texas, Nebraska, and the entire Midwest for that matter. This was a time when man made global warming was not available as an excuse.

Drought conditions, above normal temperatures and severe windstorms extending over a period of several years left the area a barren wasteland incapable of producing crops or sustaining livestock, which were the principle source of income for the residents. Poor farming practices practiced at the time were also a factor.

A recent Ken Burns documentary shown on PBS dramatically chronicled the events and personal suffering of this disaster and we would recommend you try to view it next time around.

Much of the hardships suffered were lost on the fact that the great depression was impacting the entire country with unemployment rates as high as 30% at the time, and \$100 was big money able to feed and cloth a family of four for a month.

While President Roosevelt was busy creating new federal agencies to deal with the depression there was not much he could do to reverse the drought.

Government aid as we know it today didn't exist. Food stamps, unemployment benefits, Medicaid and other handout benefits were yet to be invented. As the drought continued year after year people abandoned their farms and migrated to other parts of the country where they won't always necessary welcome.

One interesting observation could be that while FDR and his multitude of big government agencies and initiatives can still be haunting us today, some lessons could be learned from one agency that could solve some of our present problems.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was formed in 1936, for the purpose of providing employment and building America's infrastructure. While in existence, about 8.5 million people were employed at various times, 1.4 million projects were worked on, including highways, dams,

bridges, parks, monuments, public buildings and airports at a cost to the government of about \$12 Billion. The same amount our national debt now increases in just one week under the present administration. Many of these projects are still in use and serving the public.

The reason we point this out is that today government aid seems to be in the form of direct handouts of food, money, and other benefits with no reimbursement necessary from the recipient.

While employing masses of unskilled labor may not have been the most efficient to build things, it accomplished several goals. It provided employment at a time it was badly needed, and provided training in construction skills. It provided needed projects for the entire country at a time when money was extremely scarce. Most of all, workers were required to send a portion of their wages of \$50-70 per month to their families back home to help them through the depression,

Compare this with the way Government does things today. Construction of public projects is outrageously expensive due to the layers of bureaucracy involved along with paying the highest possible wages to construction workers.

Maybe living in the 30's wasn't entirely bad after all.

* * * * *

The S.S. Badger car ferry is under fire from the EPA because it dumps its coal ashes into Lake Michigan. Whether this actually is causing a nuisance or health problem has not been disclosed. We assume that before the EPA came along all of the freighters and ships plying the great lakes burned coal there must be a lot of ashes sitting somewhere. They also dumped their garbage overboard and didn't have holding tanks for sewage, yet all the cities around the lake drink the stuff.

Not that it's right, but is the Badger causing a greater health hazard that the City of Milwaukee notoriously allowing millions of gallons of raw sewage to flow into the lake with every major rainstorm, or with fish and birds depositing their waste in the water we drink?

* * * * *

Work on removing PCB's and other contaminants from the Fox River continues, and hopefully will be completed some day. The cost is now estimated to exceed one billion, which is probably more

than double the original estimates.

We can agree that clean water and the environment are important, but so are a lot of other items on our want lists.

* * * * *

President Obama has been an active advocate of clean energy, even though he has yet to explain how wind and solar power will fly airplanes or fuel trucks that keep our economy moving.

Fuel economy standards for automobiles can be mandated but will require a lot of research to achieve. While he claims reducing dependence on foreign oil is his goal, we should also be concerned about future generations.

The election is over, and the winners should always lead by example. Matching 747's are a perk of the office, and a necessity for trips here and there as part of his job as "leader of the free world."

The cost to fly them must be tremendous, as witnessed by the price to fly commercial in one with 300 other people.

We acknowledge his personal appearance and fund raising events were a necessary part of his re-election campaign, but it would be interesting to know what it cost taxpayers for his trips around the country the past couple of months.

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."

"Politics, n. A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles." . . . Ambrose Bierce"

"Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists in choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable." . . . John Kenneth Galbreath

"Practical politics consists in ignoring facts." . . . Henry Adams

The TAX TIME\$

Brown County Taxpayers Association
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The TAX TIME\$ - December, 2012

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday, December 20, 2012. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co.
Speaker, Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt.

Tuesday, December 25, 2012. Have a Merry Christmas.

Tuesday, January 1, 2013. Happy New Year.

Thursday, January 17, 2013. BCTA Monthly Meeting,
Program to be announced.

Thursday, February 21, 2013, BCTA Monthly Meeting.
Program to be announced.

**Public officials and candidates for public office are cordially invited
to attend any of our meetings and be recognized.**

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

December, 2012.



“Leaders are responsible not for
running public opinion polls but for
the consequences if their actions.”
. . . Henry Kissinger
“A government which robs Peter to
pay Paul can always depend on the
support of Paul.” George Bernard Shaw

SUPPORT THE BCTA

**New Members are Always
Welcome. Call 499-7701
Write us at P. O. Box 684
or visit our website
www.BCTaxpayers.Org
for Details.**