



## No Harmony in this September Song.

Something I've learned in 16 months serving on Green Bay's Common Council is that you can't predict what issues will emerge, and which of them will provoke the press and public. The latest example is the potential of Walmart pursuing a downtown store on the north end of the vacant Larsen Green property on North Broadway. Like most, I was surprised by the idea since we're all accustomed to seeing Walmarts in edge-of-town settings, and the notion of one in an urban center is a break from the norm. From the contacts I've received, the debate over this idea will be fascinating since just about every constituency will likely be divided.

First, I expect division among the businesses in the Broadway district. Many are boutique type shops with owners who think the area should be populated with similar outlets to further solidify a unique character to the area. But others, like food and drink establishments, may believe they will benefit from the additional activity and commercial traffic. It's interesting that the organization formed, funded, and directed by district businesses, On Broadway Inc., is the party pursuing the Walmart idea. Does this signal support from Broadway businesses, or is it driven by On Broadway's desire to get out of its ownership (and payments) on Larsen Green?

Second, I know from contacts I've received there will be division among city residents. Some think the opportunity to bring a successful large business into a blighted area, increasing the tax base and reducing risk (the city guaranteed On Broadway's Larsen Green loan) is a great idea. Then, there are the Walmart haters, one of whom wrote to instruct me, "Walmart is never a good idea anywhere". The Broadway neighborhood residents will, I predict, also be split. The new gentrification crowd living in waterfront condos and apartments envisions a downtown of public squares, fine dining, outdoor concerts, boutique stores, and a grocery store featuring sushi and organics. Yet, the neighborhood is mostly other people with other priorities, fewer means, with limited budgets and limited transportation resources. Should they be denied access to something which may help them manage their finances and improve their families' situations?

There is a general consensus that good progress is being made in the redevelopment of downtown Green Bay. If the Walmart concept becomes a Walmart proposal, consensus will not be the order of the day.

*Tom Sladek,*

Brown County Taxpayers Association President Richard Parins was unavailable this month and asked Treasurer Tom Sladek to fill in for our cover article.

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

## July Meeting Notes. *NEW Water*

### *Director Speaks to BCTA.*

Monthly meeting of the Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting July 18, 2013 at Titledown Brewing Co.

Thomas Sigmund, P.E., Executive Director of the Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District (GBMSD) explained the GBMSD's new name: NEW Water. GBMSD has served Northeast Wisconsin for over 80 years. It will continue to be known as the Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District legally. It will continue to provide the same quality water treatment service. The new brand complements a new attitude of viewing materials received as a resource to be recovered, rather than a waste with which to dispose. NEW Water will be working closely with the greater Northeast Wisconsin community toward a common goal of clean water, an essential part of the quality of life in the watershed area. The GBMSD took over operation of the De Pere waste treatment facility in 2008.

GBMSD serves approximately 217,000 residents in a 285 square mile area. Customers of GBMSD include the Cities of De Pere and Green Bay; the Villages of Allouez, Ashwaubenon, Bellevue, Hobart, Howard, Luxemburg, Pulaski, and Suamico; the Towns of Green Bay, Humboldt, Lawrence, Ledgeview, Pittsfield, Red River, and Scott; and contract customer Procter & Gamble Paper Products Company. NEW Water serves approximately 217,000 residents in a 285 square mile area. Customers of NEW Water include the Cities of De Pere and Green Bay; the Villages of Allouez, Ashwaubenon, Bellevue, Hobart, Howard, Luxemburg, Pulaski, and Suamico; the Towns of Green Bay, Humboldt, Lawrence, Ledgeview, Pittsfield, Red River, and Scott; and contract customer Procter & Gamble Paper Products Company.

GBMSD does not bill residents directly for wastewater treatment service. GBMSD is a wholesaler of wastewater treatment service and provides a monthly bill to each municipality and one contract customer it serves. NEW Water does not bill residents directly for wastewater treatment service. NEW Water is a wholesaler of wastewater treatment service and provides a monthly bill to each municipality and the one contract customer it serves. Each community owns and maintains its own sewer pipes. Sewer rates charged to residents by the individual municipalities vary.

NEW Water is starting a project to replace its 1976 era solids incineration equipment with a new Resource Recovery and Electrical Energy generation system known as the R2E2 Project. \$150 million of equipment will be purchased this fall with construction occurring in the fall of 2014. The R2E2 Project is expected to cut GBMSD's annual energy costs in half during the first year (an estimated annual savings of more than \$2.2 million).

NEW Water anticipates about a 9% increase on its wholesale rate each year through 2016. Each municipality sets its own wastewater treatment rate, so the impact of these increases will vary by municipality. Generally, NEW Water's current charges make up less than half of the average household's sewerage charge, which is part of combined water and sewer bills.

Improvement in regional water resource quality continues to be elusive. This is largely due to nonpoint source pollutants. NEW Water faces a potential \$230 million cost for phosphorus reduction, even though it contributes only a tiny percentage of the total phosphorus discharge into the Fox River. Working cooperatively with other dischargers could save \$170 million of this cost.

**Dave Nelson—Secretary**

## Debt is the problem NOW.

Politicians mislead us to believe that the harm of our \$16 trillion--and ever deepening--national debt is going to be the problem of future generations.

Talk like this is wrong and deceptive because the real harm is happening right now—not later. After all, deficits 48 of the last 50 years haven't changed how Congress operates today.

No, instead the harm is happening every day as each deficit dollar is created and spent. Every one of the roughly 2,700,000,000 (two billion, seven hundred million) dollars the Federal Government creates each day makes our existing dollars worth less and less. The harm is exactly the same as if those dollars were created by counterfeiters.

Our incomes, savings, and investments slowly and steadily decline in value. Businesses slowly and steadily raise prices to keep up with dollars that continue to become worth less and less. The harm comes to us from continually rising prices everywhere we shop.

And who is hurt the most? As always, the poor, the unemployed, and the retired--those who cannot readily increase their incomes to keep up with rising prices.

The insidious practice of deficit spending is harming everyone, here and now, day by day.

**Scott Liddicoat**

## National Debt Update.

As of the beginning of September, 2013, the U.S. National Debt had risen to an official total of \$16.92 Trillion. We note that this is only about \$30 Billion more than last reported the first of July. In any event it will not be long before we reach \$17 Trillion and it will be time for Congress to authorize an increase in the National Debt limit or face shutting down the government for a few days.

Not to worry. This has happened 78 times since 1980, and Congress always gives in. Similar to a youngster wanting a candy bar you know is not good for him but you finally give in rather than listen to him cry all day. Incidentally, the National Debt in 1980 was still under a Trillion dollars so you can see what has happened.

Unfortunately Pres. Obama's philosophy seems based on more, rather than less government spending and that is the way things are going. Congress is split and unable to work with the President or vice-versa. In the meantime, the media seems to support higher debt limits and beating the drums blaming Congress for its unwillingness to work with the President. **Jim Frink—BCTA**

"The real goal should be reduced government spending, rather than balanced budgets achieved by ever rising tax rates to cover ever rising spending."  
... **Thomas Sowell**

"In general, the art of government consists of taking as much money as possible from one party of the citizens to give to the other." ... **Voltaire**

## Energy Answers are NOT Blowing in the Wind.

No Wind = No Power.

A recent study by the Civitas Institute, a think tank based in England, finds "There is no economic case for wind-power." In England, there has been a significant movement against onshore wind turbines following concern about the health effects and unsightly appearance of gigantic industrial turbines covering the countryside.

The Civitas Institute study also warns that mandating certain targets for the percentage of electricity generated by renewable sources increases electric rates for families. In Wisconsin, we already have excess electric generation capacity without new power sources. So why are we building more?

Not only are wind turbines bad for people, they are bad for wildlife. Pro-wind advocates are always trumpeting the fact that wind energy (and all green energy) is good for the environment and good for consumers. Unfortunately, such statements aren't the truth. In addition to people's health and pocketbooks, wind is taking a toll on wildlife. In California alone, it is estimated that wind turbines kill 80 golden eagles (a protected species) per year.

Under Wisconsin law, ten percent of the state's electricity must come from renewable energy by the end of 2015. As we near that goal, some in Madison are pushing for a higher renewable energy mandate. This is a bad idea. Imposing a higher renewable energy mandate will increase electric costs for hardworking families and businesses that employ them. This doesn't make economic sense.

An analysis of the renewable energy mandate currently in place estimates it will cost Wisconsin households almost \$800 million in higher electricity bills between 2013 and 2016 - this is money that could be spent or invested on other things.

This shows that the only way wind energy can compete with less-expensive methods of generating electricity is through costly government regulations, government and electric user subsidies.

In the free market, if wind energy could not pay for itself no company would be willing to supply it. But because the government has stepped in at the behest of an idealistic agenda to promote wind energy, we all are paying more than we should for the electricity that we use. The federal government says you can no longer tour the White House because it costs too much (even though the tours are given by volunteers), yet they have no problem spending billions of taxpayer dollars to extend green energy tax credits for another year, really. If wind energy is as good as the advocates claim, it should be on the same playing field as other energy generation. It should pay taxes instead of receiving tax subsidies and grants, instead of costing electric users more, it should cost less or the same. According to pro-wind groups, the industry couldn't survive without government subsidies. Free market economics, not crony capitalism of the left or right, what a common sense idea.

**Senator Frank Lasee**

## August Meeting Notes.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting held August 15, 2013 at Tiletown Brewing Co.

The following committee reports were presented.

**SCHOOLS:** The budget passed by the Wisconsin Legislature placed some limitations on Community Service (Fund 80) expenditures by school districts. School Districts are now prohibited from levying more for community service activities in 2013-14 and 2014-15 than they did in the most recent year preceding 2013-14 in which the district levied for those activities. If a district wishes to exceed the limit on the community service levy, it can be done so through a referendum. School districts levying for community service activities in 2013-14 and 2014-15 are required to identify in the districts' budget summaries those expenditures that will be funded from that levy with a statement of how those expenditures meet the allowable criteria for use of the community service fund. The legislation freezes Fund 80 expenditures at previous levels, but it leaves Fund 80 outside property tax levy limits.

**COUNTY/MUNICIPAL:** The Green Bay City Council's decision to sell the Clarion Hotel to American Hospitality Management over Edgewater Resources was discussed. Major concerns with the Edgewater project were as follows:

- \* It seriously jeopardized the Hotel Northland project. Market data do not support the viability of over 350 luxury hotel rooms in the downtown area.
- \* The lack of affordable room options downtown could hinder the city's competitiveness for many conventions.
- \* The \$13 million in room tax commitments might be jeopardized. If the city isn't under construction before the end of 2013, the city could lose its main funding source.
- \* Edgewater's financing package and income projections were questionable.
- \* There were many open-ended questions about the expected level of city participation in the Edgewater project.

The Neville Public Museum is requesting \$100,000 from the Brown County Board to begin a master plan for the museum. The request is to tap into the County's general fund reserves.

Rep. Chad Weininger reported the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia announced that Wisconsin had the third best economic growth in the nation, and the Dept. of Revenue reports state tax collections up 4.2% over last year. Both positive indications.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 19. Details on last page of this *TAX TIMES*.

**Dave Nelson—Secretary**

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.

"Leaders are responsible not for running public opinion polls but for the consequences of their actions." . . . **Henry Kissinger**

"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**

## Things That Make Us Wonder.

While most of us are probably just as happy the George Zimmerman second degree murder trial has ended, the verdicts reached by the jury and that reached by the media still seems open to speculation.

Unfortunately this entire affair appeared to be more about race and politics rather than an unfortunate homicide brought to trial and regardless of the outcome it did little to improve race relations or compliment our justice system.

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The words "fair" and "fairness" often mean different things to different people. In today's world they are often used by those who do not have all of the benefits and rewards of those who do have them giving them the right to demand their "fair share". This may often disregard that in our society you can and in many cases are forced to make decisions on your own directing your future.

Politically the term has been used to help enact same sex marriage laws and often appears in the titles of proposed legislation to make it sound beneficial to everyone. The push to force internet retailers collect and report sales tax is referred to as the "The Marketplace Fairness Act." Another aim was that insurance benefits paid to traditionally married couples were not "fair" to same sex couples.

Perhaps what really isn't fair for some is that 10% of individual taxpayers pay about 90% of income and other taxes which benefit the other 90% of the population.

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Construction is proceeding per schedule on U.S. 41 from Green Bay to DePere. It will be a impressive work of art when it is finally finished.

We just hope the state saved enough money in their construction budget to paint visible lane lines when finished to guide motorists find their way and not wander all over the road as they seem to do now in construction zones and highway #172.

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It is claimed that 60 years ago Detroit was the richest city in the country. They couldn't make cars or spend money fast enough. Since 1950 half of their population has moved out, dropping them from 4th to 11th as the nation's largest city. Over 700,000 people have moved out leaving thousands of vacant buildings and \$18-20 Billion in municipal debt including \$3.5 Billion of unfunded employee pension benefits payable. The result is Detroit is filing for bankruptcy protection.

It is no secret that Detroit has been one of the most corrupt and poorly managed cities in the country, and kept getting worse rather than better. Unfortunately there are other cities with massive financial problems. The country itself sets a terrible example. Any forgiveness of public debt would only encourage more reckless spending and debt.

The lesson should be when you find yourself in a hole you stop digging deeper and get your house in order. You get what you vote for.

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The use of ankle bracelets has been praised as a method of monitoring law offenders without the expense of formal incarceration.

This probably not a problem in Green Bay, but a recent *Press-Gazette* AP story relates that nationwide there have been thousands of incidents of false alarms transmitted or weak signals making it difficult to track users. Just goes to show that nothing government does is perfect.

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Not to mix politics with religion except to note that so far Pope Francis has been receiving good reviews in his difficult job of leading the Catholic faith. He believes in leading by example to the thousands of officials under his watch from parish priests on up. For example.

He has taken steps to reverse the notion that corrupt officials have mismanaged church assets. Unlike his predecessor, he lives in a simple apartment and shuns wearing fancy vestments.

He has cautioned nuns and parish priests to spend humbly and

not be swayed by new cars and smartphones. He has simplified Vatican protocol and bureaucracy to save money and cut red tape.

He has established a panel to review the activities of the Vatican Bank which has had a reputation for questionable dealings in the past.

While the Pope does not have a bi-partisan congress and hostile public to deal with, he has millions of followers throughout the world who emulate his every action.

All though he does not have matching 747's and an army of news reporters endorsing his every move he seems to be fulfilling his worldly position simply leading by example.

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In his efforts to control the weather, night and day, plus the environment, President Obama is supporting even further restrictions on coal burning power plants. He claims this will help eliminate disastrous tornadoes. The higher cost to consumers would be "an investment in the future."

While eliminating every speck of pollutant in every breath of air we breath would be nice, is it really possible or even necessary to strike a perfect balance between providing what is needed, what is affordable, protecting the environment, and preserving resources for the future?

While anything that burns coal seems to be the villain, we wonder if all of the huge wildfires we have been having effect the atmosphere?

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So far several wildfires have consumed hundreds of thousands of acres of prime forestland, mostly on government property, along with thousands of private residences. As this is written the beautiful area around Yosemite Park is in danger..

It will take many years to restore the damage to the scenery and wildlife and impossible to put a price tag on the damage. We also realize some may have been caused by natural causes and some by human carelessness including arson making it difficult to access the blame. Unfortunately the rugged terrain makes them difficult to control.

Perhaps we are all somewhat

guilty for this disaster. Environmental interests have rallied against the logging industry for harvesting timber for commercial purposes, and destroying the natural habitat of species such as the spotted owl. While these are notable they did not always allow needed road access or provide fire breaks necessary for fire control.

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A recent *Press-Gazette* article warned of higher Brown County property taxes for next years budget. A lot of factors will figure into final levy passed on to property tax payers, not the least of which will be state and federal aid payments for various purposes. As usual, the property taxpayers really won't know what their tax bill will look like until sometime about the end of November until all of next years expenses, property valuations, items to be added to the budget and those that can be eliminated as a result of public hearings can be factored in.

After that you just wait for the envelope from the treasurer's office.

In the meantime various elected officials are busy preparing their budgets which contain items necessary for the operation of their departments including personnel and perhaps a few discretionary items which may or not be approved based on their merit.

We are fortunate that the majority of our elected officials are fiscally responsible but it never hurts to attend budget hearings to ask questions and stay in touch. It's you and your neighbors money that they are spending.

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A school district in Indiana announced it throws about \$300,000 worth of fruits and vegetables into the garbage each year simply because students reject the healthy lunch program designed by Michelle Obama. We don't know if this is a problem in the Green Bay school district.

While there is no question improvements in all of our diets would be in order, there must be better ways of coming up with healthful foods people are willing to eat.

Where are all those starving children of India and Africa our mothers told us about when you need them?

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On the subject of food waste, New York Mayor Bloomberg is said to be considering an ordinances requiring that food waste be composted rather than sent to landfills with other waste, He claims other cities already do this,

Possibly a good idea but considering the high price of food at New York restaurants how many people can afford not to eat every bit they buy in the first place?

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Divide and Conquer is a warfare technique to defeat an enemy used successfully since war was invented. While politics is often referred to as war without bullets, variations to divide to conquer are often used between political parties and the results can be every bit as nasty

While the ideologies of our two main political parties may seem as different as night and day, they both seem intent on being in complete control of everything rather than cooperating and compromising in the national interest.

Notice that any difference of opinion about an issue or within the leadership of either party is immediately touted in the media and broadcasted as a sign of weakness and exploited by the opposition.

We all have our own opinions, but sometimes we wonder if some of the stuff we read and hear isn't skillfully placed propaganda rather than actual facts.

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The monthly unemployment rate compiled by the Bureau of Labor statistics is intended to be the barometer of how well things are going in the country. It is supposedly based on the number of people filing for unemployment benefits each week, but sometimes it appears to be adjusted to how well the administration would like to have things going,.

Trouble is a lot of people find part-time jobs, switch jobs, or give up looking for work. Also there are people who are for the most part unemployed for a number of reasons, often beyond their control.

One report claims that while

the government claims unemployment at about 7.5%, it actually should be reported at about 14.3%. The point seems to be that it is just a number often used for political purposes.

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Nobody seems to know for sure what the imposition of Obama-care will do for healthcare, inflation, or employment and there does not seem to be much enthusiasm around to find out. Regardless of what the government and brain-washed media tell us, "affordable health care" will cause more damage than benefit, While offering all employees insurance sound like a good idea, most large employees already do so. Through the years the the cost of health insurance has risen dramatically, due in large part to government regulations and mandates. However, at least one employer, UPS, has announced it will drop employee dependent coverage due to Obamacare. Apparently this was not covered in the 20,000 or so pages of regulations written to date.

Obamacare will only add to the cost of insurance and not fix any flaws existing in our present system. While the government likes to blame insurance companies for the cost of healthcare, it really is the other way around. Unfortunately, if the law takes effect it could have a disastrous effect on employment due to the cost of insurance benefits.

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There is talk coming out of Washington of raising the minimum wage from the present \$7.25 per hour to even as high as \$14-\$16.00 per hr. An AP article appearing in the July 29, *Press-Gazette* was headlined "4 of 5 adults in US face near-poverty, joblessness." Certainly not encouraging news coming from Washington, or for that matter the direction in which our country is headed.

While all of us would like more money to spend most working people do make more than the present minimum already. Good jobs still go begging to be filled. Some jobs are worth more than others under most any circumstances and many workers are worth more than others. Training and opportunity are available to all of us.

Whenever the minimum has been raised it has only resulted in more inflation rather improve the standard of living to any extent, with more people ending up with food stamps.

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An interesting PBS program a few weeks ago covered the construction of Mt. Rushmore, one of our most iconic National Monuments.

It took 400 men working from 1927 to 1941 to complete the job, without a single fatality despite impossibly dangerous working conditions. The total cost was \$989,907, or less than a million dollars. It would probably cost \$500 million or more today.

We certainly are not advocating a return to the pricing and poverty of the 1930's, but it shows how things have changed and makes us wonder where we are headed economy-wise.

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In many ways, the USPS is a perfect example of how not to run a business. No matter how hard they try to operate at a profit, they just keep getting deeper in the hole. No question the main problem is Congress, who sets the rules, generally rejecting any sensible money saving ideas such as eliminating Saturday delivery, non-profitable offices, or selective rate increases on services costing more than they earn.

We were surprised by a recent *New York Times* article which disclosed that for several years the post office has been photographing the face of every piece of mail processed in the United States: 160 Billion pieces last year alone, While the methodology was not disclosed, under any circumstances this would be a huge, expensive and time consuming operation, even with modern equipment.

If true, and who would question the *New York Times*, we wonder who's idea it was and where they are going with it. The USPS may justify their actions as a safeguard against Ricin and Anthrax attacks. However, in view of recent reports of FBI and IRS resources being used to profile private organizations the possibilities for mischief are endless.

For example, "all mail" would include mailings made by political or-

ganizations, business interests, and magazine and newsletter subscribers. If fed to a computer this information could be the end of privacy, with political implications. Some reassurance and explanation is in order.

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A rodeo clown in Missouri has been blackballed for wearing an Obama mask as part of his act at their state fair. Just a warning to be careful when you buy Halloween masks for your kids this year. The IRS may be watching.

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Federal regulators have delayed approval of the proposed merger between American and US Airways. Airlines claim the merger would save passengers money by eliminating duplication of services,

While this may be true the downside would be the elimination of competition and possible reductions of service to some destinations. There have been a number of airline mergers in recent years and we are running out of airlines to merge. Are headed towards only one airline completely managed by the government such as in other countries.

We realize the cost of fuel and employees largely controls air fares, but since this mergermania started, we have seen many creative and annoying charges imposed by airlines which have not necessarily improved service ranging from luggage fees to meal charges. Also they have found ways to cram more passengers in their planes. What they will do with less competition is anybody's guess.

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We acknowledge there are still a few details to be worked out to implement the Charter Schools voucher plan in Wisconsin. Also there is no such thing as any plan for anything making everybody happy.

Just for the record, Wisconsin is just one of 28 states to approve some form of tuition tax credits so far, indicating we are not alone in seeking methods to improve our system of education. No doubt each state has their own problems and concerns to deal with, but the bottom

line is still providing the best education at an affordable cost.

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There are two things that never seem to change in Wisconsin.

First, the U. S. Census Bureau announced that our state and local individual tax burden is the 10th highest in the nation for the year 2011. This bad news was somewhat offset by the announcement that the UW-Madison was selected as the 8th best party school in the country.

In the meantime daily protests complete with singers exercise their free-speech rights for the entertainment of visitors including groups of school children at the state capitol. They seem to have a list of grievances to sing about including the restrictions against their demonstrations.

However, we doubt that the high taxes we pay for the services we receive or the good times at the University are among them.

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There have been many scary scenarios leading to the end of civilization from nuclear war, a meteor hit, or our own environmental self destruction. A recent *Time Magazine* article added a new prospect.

For several years, scientists have been alarmed by the decline in the number of honeybees in the world. The common little insects who pollinate most of the worlds food crops in the process of making honey.

For some reason they have been dying off and disappearing at alarming rates. Albert Einstein once said, "If the bee disappears from the surface of the globe, than man would have no more than four years to live"

Pesticides, pollution, predator insects have all been blamed. Obviously it could be a serious problem at a time when the world needs to feed more people so we are sure our top scientists are working on it.

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Based on the negative attack ads we have been seeing aimed at Senator Ron Johnson, it appears that coming elections will set all records money to be raised and spent and for sleaziness of advertising content.

After every election we hear

calls and promises for election finance reform as well as addressing all of the other factors which make our system of electing the people who run our government so disgusting.

Considering that Congressional elections are well over a year off, and our Senate race three years away, we can be sure that he or she who can raise the most money will do whatever it takes to try to be elected irregardless of their background or qualifications.

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An item in the Sept. 1, issue of *Forbes* noted that at \$91,054 per family, Washington D.C., had the highest median household income in the country. Considering the city has no manufacturing base, or any of the other factors that make places like New York, Los Angeles, etc., prosperous, it appears that as much as they complain, working for the government pays quite well. It's with our money.

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The Federal Student Loan Program was established to assist college students meet the high costs of obtaining a college education, and therefor the overall living standards of the country. For the most part it probably rates as a success.

However, as with just about any massive federal initiative prepared with good intentions things can get out of control in the programs administration. At present, there are about \$1.2 Trillion in student loans **outstanding**, accounting for a good portion of our National Debt. About a third of the total is behind in payment or in default.

In addition 1.6 Million borrowers have already applied for the government's stealth bailout program allowing debt forgiveness under certain circumstances including the obligation of the student loan prevents graduates from being able to get married or buy a home after graduation. Unfortunately a government loan to get a college degree does not guarantee a job.

President Obama, in one of his recent and rousing college speeches, suggested a plan to tie federal aid and student loans based on each schools "*frugality rating*," or how well they manage their finances based on

a formula yet to be determined by Congress. In other words, student loans could be tied more directly to a schools tuition costs as determined by each schools own circumstances.

While this may sound great, it will unlikely ever happen. As much as we can be proud of our colleges and their accomplishments, by nature most of them have never been noted for operating on a tight budget. *Time Magazine* notes that since 1985 college costs have gone up 500%, or double that of items such as food, gasoline or housing. They are in a position to raise tuitions at will and still compete with other schools to have the best faculties, facilities, and wealthy alumni. As long as they have a waiting list they are happy.

Secondly, the President using the term "*frugality rating*" is a blatant example of reference to a technology he seems to know very little about as evidenced by our government under his watch's disrespect for spending the taxpayers money.

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The Teamsters Union is always on the lookout for new industries to add to their control. Good taste or public opinion has never been an obstacle for them. An item in the *National Review* reports that in the Chicago they have resorted to soliciting Funeral Homes to join their union.

They had been picketing prospects, and harassing mourners with all of the techniques at their disposal until a judge ordered them to stop.

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The mega-casino proposed by the Menominee Tribe near Kenosha had been on hold until the Bureau Of Indian Affairs (BOIA) recently endorsed the project. We acknowledge there are many pros and cons to be considered here, but it would seem that the state should have final approval, along with the consent of the majority of our population rather than the Washington bureaucrats.

Obviously the location is ideal due to the traffic from Illinois on I-94. Economically it should be a success and quite likely accomplish the goals for employment and income that have been announced. As we are all well

aware, a number of impressive and successful casinos have been built by various tribes in recent years. However, patronizing them is a matter of personal choice and most people realize and respect this.

If this project proceeds, it will probably only be a matter of time until cash-starved Illinois finds a way to construct even larger casinos on their side of the border, and other Wisconsin tribes will justify continuing to expand their operations. This has been the pattern to date, at times creating more problems than were solved.

With all respect to the tribes and their economic problems, shouldn't the real question be: *How far does Wisconsin want to go towards becoming the Las Vegas of the Great Lakes?*

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Finally, received a notice the other day from our municipal assessor that they have lowered the valuation on our residence by 9% or so. The reason given was the depreciating value of real estate due to the economy.

The bad news is that my investment in a home is also worth less. The real bad news is that my property tax bill this year can and probably will still be higher than last years.

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, 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."*

"If you don't read the newspaper, you are uninformed. If you do read the newspaper, you are misinformed."

... **Mark Twain**

"I don't make jokes. I just watch government and report the facts."

... **Will Rogers**



# The TAX TIME\$

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

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## Inside This Issue

**No Harmony in this September Song.**  
**July Meeting Notes.**  
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And more , , ,

## The TAX TIME\$ - September, 2013

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

- Thursday, September 19, 2013** BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.  
Titledown Brewing Co. Program.
- Thursday, October 17, 2013** BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.  
Titledown Brewing Co. Program.  
David Fiorenzo, Pres. Media Check  
and Jerry Bader, WTAQ
- Thursday, November 21, 2013** BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.  
Titledown Brewing Co. Program.
- Thursday, November 28, 2013** A Day for Thanksgiving.

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

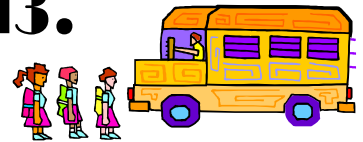
Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at Titledown Brewing Co., 200 Dousman St.

**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.

# September, 2013.



“Talk may be cheap but it can be expensive when you don’t know when to say no.” . . . Doug Larson

“It’s awful hard to get people interested in corruption, unless they can get some of it.” . . . Will Rogers

## **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](http://www.BCTaxpayers.Org)**  
**for Details.**