



Taxed Enough Already.

Well, I think we would mostly if not all agree with this statement. However, create a movement around the acronym associated with these three words, T.E.A. and well all hell breaks loose, establishment politicians get chills running up and down their spineless backs. That is unless; as some of the entrenched old (too old) guard has done that is to enlist the opposition party to do their dirty work. Thanks to Mississippi Senator Thad Cochran who has single-handedly done the impossible, convinced white and black Democrats to vote for him; methinks him lower than the Mississippi water moccasin. But I digress.

A few weeks back I was invited to sit and spend time with U.S. Representative Reid Ribble and listen to each other's concerns as well as put some wet fingers up in the air to see which way the wind blows. One such subject was the impending crisis in Federal Highway Trust Funds and sound out the sentiment for raising the Federal Gasoline Tax. Well, my sails were becalmed as I sat across from a man entrusted to represent Wisconsin and the solution once again seemed to be raise taxes.

To his defense, Rep. Ribble made it very clear he was asking for my/our thoughts on the matter and I respect that because reaching into the pockets of your fellow citizens to cure problems, certainly not of his making, would be a dicey proposition. The Representative is right, as I read and heard on the news; bi-partisan legislation to raise this tax has already been proposed by Sen. Corker, R-TN and Sen. Chris Murphy, D-MA.

At a time in our Nation's history when partisan politics has become the watchword, almost hallmark, of government, the one area politicians (most politicians) find to come together over is raising taxes. This is a real quandary; on the one hand keeping our transportation system healthy is vital to our common defense and economy, BUT is raising taxes the only solution these elected officials can find to agree? Sadly, I think so.

Let's face it, the last thing politicians are wont to do is cut spending. I truly believe that once in Washington, many legislators feel that they must "bring home the pork" even at the peril of economic ruin. This is a sad state of affairs we find ourselves mired in, the swamp that is Washington. Come to remember my history, Washington was mostly built on a swamp. With the exception of the more courageous legislators like Ron Johnson, Mike Lee, even Paul Ryan, few if any seem able to put their heads to the huge task of saving the American economy. Unfortunately, our President has demonstrated no will for economic prudence; there are simply some problems we can't spend our way out to a positive outcome. Mr. President, the Federal leadership, I feel I speak for most BCTA members when I say, "Taxed Enough Already!"

Richard Parins — President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 29th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

May Meeting Notes. *Founder of*

Taxpayers United of America Speaks to BCTA.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting held May 15, 2014 at Tiletown Brewing Corp.

Jim Tobin, founder and President of Taxpayers United of America (TUA), told that he started the group in 1976, and is has since become one of the of the largest taxpayer organizations in the country. His tax-cutting activities have been the subject of many articles by major media. Mr. Tobin has appeared on hundreds of radio and TV programs including ABC, CBS, FOX, WGN and NBC news programs.

TUA started the Cook County property tax strike in 1977. The strike resulted in a \$60 million property tax cut for Cook County homeowners. Since 1976, TUA has saved Illinois taxpayers literally billions of dollars, and its influence and activities are now felt in other states and in Washington. Since 1977, TUA has participated in fighting 225 local property tax increase referenda. Of these proposed tax hikes 190 were defeated, a success rate of 84 percent.



Jim Tobin Addresses BCTA Meeting.

In 2006, TUA began publishing the top state and municipal government employee pensions throughout Illinois. TUA has expanded government pension research to Wisconsin (including Brown and Shawano counties), Missouri and California.

Mr. Tobin distributed copies of a TUA study showing highly paid employees of Brown County, the City of Green Bay, and Brown County school districts. The study listed 2012 salaries, annual pension estimates, and estimated lifetime pension payouts. He expressed great concern about the potential unfunded liabilities these lifetime pension payouts

represent. He believes that higher contributions from employees and realistic discount rates are necessary to address this problem.

Taxpayers United is now fighting tax increases and reckless spending in states surrounding Illinois. TUA has plans to assist taxpayers and local taxpayer groups nationwide.

State Senator Rob Cowles commented on three accomplishments of present legislative session in Madison: The Jobs Database will link jobseekers with potential employers. Five tax reductions will benefit working families. More efficient solutions to the phosphorus discharge problem will protect the Wisconsin economy.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for June 19, and the speaker will be Pat Webb, Executive Director of The Brown County Football Stadium District.

Dave Nelson - Secretary

National Debt Update.

Unfortunately, the website that we have used the past several years to track the monthly fluctuations in the U. S. National Debt no longer seems to be functioning. Whether that is a matter of too many factors entered in to the calculation for even the governments super computers to manage, or if someone simply pulled the plug because not having to worry about the long and short term effects of our National Debt was the **“Right thing to do,”** is a matter of speculation.

In any event, all indications are that it is still growing at a rate of about \$2 Billion or more each and every day, the total is not about \$17.8 Trillion, and like your own credit card debt, the unpaid interest becomes part of the total due.

While Congress may debate the matter for the benefit of the press, the net result will likely be authorization to raise the limit another trillion or so whenever needed, get reelected for another term in office by promising the folks back home some of the spending. Projected Federal budgets call for annual trillion dollar debt increases far into the future. As one of the projected candidates might say, **“What difference does it make?”**

A difficult point to illustrate or ponder. . If you took to present National Debt of \$17 Trillion in one dollar bills, stacked them on top of one another, you would have a stack about 1,191,730 miles high. High enough to reach from Washington D.C. to the moon about 5 times. Don't try this at home.

What are the solutions? We all have answers of what should be done, but for most of us the answer is for the government to spend less money there but spend more here. The problem seems to be that we may realize spending is out of control, but we still want more. The days of balanced budgets and penny pinching are past history, and we are probably all to blame.

First and foremost it is up to Congress and the President to recognize we have a problem and do something about it. We all realize our government is huge beyond comprehension with many imbedded obligations. While raising taxes may be a solution, it has always resulted in more spending, inflation, and economic disruption. Where the cost and ultimate value of federal mandates will fall should be carefully considered before they are imposed.

While nationally our states and local governments may try to provide necessary services and keep the cost and taxes in line, they expect more and more from Washington, which in turn goes to the National Debt. Much of this is due to questionable mandates and some by doing everything for everybody. An example is a recent item blaming Wisconsin for losing \$1 Million a day in Medicaid reimbursements from the federal government. While possible a bad example, there are daily reminders of spending indicating a lack of concern and responsibility with our money. Things like spending \$88 Million to sponsor a NASCAR team and advertising with no tangible results. The President and his family costing \$15.8 Million just to fly Air Force One to vacation destinations, plus other lavish expenses. \$100 Million for IRS office furniture at a time when they are reducing services. While a certain amount of waste may be expected with any government project, sometimes it appears the federal Government operates the other way around and could set a better example of management and efficiency into their budgets, at least for a starter.

JF

“A government that is big enough to give you everything you want is also big enough to take away everything you have.”

. . . **Barry Goldwater**

“I was going to start of tonight with an Obama joke, but I didn't want tp get audited by the IRS.” . . . **Jay Leno**

“Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it, And if it stops moving subsidize it.”

, , , **Ronald Reagan**

Wisconsin Municipal Property Taxes Rise 2.0%, Outpacing Schools and Counties.

With an increase of 2.0% over last year, municipal property taxes collected in 2014 will outpace growth in other local government levies. By type of municipality, town levies are rising 2.2%, slightly more than cities (2.0%) and villages (1.8%). These findings come from a Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX) review of preliminary property tax figures.

Gross statewide levies for the year are up 1.3% to \$10.61 billion. By local government type, school taxes are increasing the least, 0.8% to \$4.69 billion, followed by counties (up 1.2% to \$2.01 billion) and technical colleges (up 1.3% to \$797 million). Schools account for the largest share of gross property taxes (44.3%), followed by municipalities (24.0%) and counties (19.0%). Wisconsin's net property tax collections (after state property tax credits) total \$9.86 billion, 1.4% more than last year. Other than 2012 when net levies rose 0.2% and last year when they rose 0.9%, this year's 1.4% increase is the smallest in 17 years.

The principal reason for slowing levies is state-imposed revenue limits on schools and a near-freeze on municipal and county property taxes. The only exceptions to this freeze are an allowance for property value growth due to new construction, which averaged 0.9% for this year, and debt service.

Among the state's 25 most populous cities, the largest municipal levies are in Milwaukee (\$245.4 million) and Madison (\$198.4 million). The cities with the largest tax increases were Eau Claire (4.9%), Oshkosh (4.7%), and Beloit (3.8%).

Three major cities cut or froze levies: Green Bay-0.6%, West Bend--0.5%, and Franklin-0.0%. WISTAX also compared municipal levies to population. Among large municipalities, per capita property taxes this year are highest in Brookfield (\$947), Madison (\$834), and Wauwatosa (\$813).

Further property tax information is available from WISTAX, a nonpartisan research organization, in its new two-part series, "Property Tax Review." Copies are available at www.wistax.org or by emailing wistax@wistax.org; calling 608.241.9789; or writing WISTAX at 401 North Lawn Ave., Madison, WI 53704-5033.

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.

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

. . . Henry A. Kissinger

"If you think health care is expensive now, wait until you see what it costs when it's free." . . . P. J. O'Rourke

June Meeting Notes. *Ending of Brown*

County Stadium District Sales Tax Explained

Monthly BCTA meeting held June 19, 2014 at Tiletown Brewing Corp.

Pat Webb, Executive Director of the Green Bay/Brown County Professional Football Stadium District, and Greg Kuehl, consultant to the District, presented their projections of the termination date for the Brown County Stadium District 0.5 percent sales tax.

The requirements for the optional dissolution of the Stadium District include payment of all bonds (completed in August, 2011), certification of full funding of statutory reserves, and performance of other contractual obligations. The certification of full funding of reserves requires approximately \$93 million. To date, approximately \$69 million has been accumulated. The expected time to complete full funding of reserves is 11.3 months. The sales tax collections are expected to terminate at the end either September or December, 2015.

The Brown County Board has the authority to establish a 0.5 percent county sales tax whenever it chooses to do so. BCTA members have expressed concern that County Board members might believe that enacting a Brown County sales tax to immediately replace the Brown County Stadium District sales tax would be "painless" to Brown County taxpayers who have been paying the Stadium District sales tax for more than a decade. This is the reason the BCTA has been surveying candidates prior to each County Board election to publicize the candidates' positions concerning enacting a Brown County sales tax.



Pat Webb speaks to BCTA

President Richard Parins reported that he met with Representative Reid Ribble over coffee on June 5th and discussed the idea of raising the federal gas tax to bring additional funding to the Federal Highway Fund. Representative Ribble clarified his position regarding Senator Ron Johnson's current lawsuit against provisions treating Federal employees differently in regard to Obamacare costs. He mentioned he is in frequent contact with Senator Johnson and is working to create his ideas to fight back against the full Obamacare employer mandate rather than just the Federal employees/staffers coverage issue in particular.

This was in response to Mr. Parins mentioning the dissatisfaction among BCTA members over the lack of action against Obamacare, the main reason conservatives voted for him. Representative Ribble replied that he voted as did most Republicans in the House on numerous occasions to repeal or change Obamacare, only to see legislation die in the hands of Harry Reid.

The next Brown County Taxpayers Association is scheduled for July 17, 2014. The subject will be Act 10. Details on the back page of this TAX TIMES. **Dave Nelson-Secretary**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE—www.BCTAxpayers.Org
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Things That Make Us Wonder.

While the U.S. ponders increasing the minimum wage to \$10,10 per hour to "raise the standard of living," voters in Switzerland recently turned down a proposal to increase their minimum wage to the equivalent of \$25.00 per hour by a margin of 3 to 1.

Switzerland is already one of the most expensive places to live, with the average worker now earning about \$45 per hour. No telling how much Swiss McDonald's workers make or what they already charge for hamburgers. However their voters seem to realize that when you try to mandate prosperity you usually end up with more inflation and even greater unemployment and poverty.

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I recently received a packet from my life insurance company with about a pound of paper explaining in fine print and detail how they invest their reserve funds set aside for claims. Quite frankly, I didn't understand a word of it and doubt if anyone, including CPA's or lawyers could decipher it either.

This insurance company has been in business for over a hundred years, and has a record of success and integrity that is outstanding. Also, I doubt that their management would not voluntarily undertake the expense of preparing and mailing to their millions of customers a packet of gibberish that does not serve any useful purpose. I am probably wrong, but this type of waste imposed on private industry has all of the indications as being some ridiculous government mandate designed to keep the bureaucrats busy rather than providing a useful purpose for the public.

What could really be helpful would be a complete disclosure of how the U.S. Government earns and invests its money, along with a disclosure of who is benefitting the most,

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The Fall Elections for state and national offices are still several months away, but already the pollsters are hard at work publicizing their takes

on the daily ups and downs of the popularity ratings of the major candidates involved and what the final outcome will be, according to them.

The results of these polls, regardless, of their methodology, are often well publicized by the media, especially if they suit their editors interests.

Most polls seem to be sponsored by special interest groups or political parties either to see how their candidate is doing and to gain additional support if necessary. If the results appear unfavorable to the sponsor they are simply not released to the media to be publicized.

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Ever since man discovered the world was not flat, and that we were all living on a big round object hurtling through space people have wondered if there were planets such as ours somewhere out there?

Now NASA with the use of their high powered space telescopes has announced the discovery of a planet about the same size as earth, with a similar orbit, distance from its sun, and other similar characteristics. They have called it Kepler 186t,

One major problem with trying to communicate with Kepler is that it's about 500 light years away, which at 186,282 miles a second would equate to about 3,000 trillion miles. This also means that the images we are witnessing occurred about 500 years ago, and if someone on Kepler was watching us what they are seeing also would have been from about 500 years in the past, or about the time that Columbus made his epic journey. They could watch it happening, with the assumption their technology has also mastered time as well as distance, and is able to fine focus on details. Perhaps Einstein could theorize better.

A lot has happened in technology during the past 500 years but there is still a long way to go.

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The NFL draft is now history and we all anxiously await to see if our teams selections are as good as

advertised. Once players have been selected they will immediately be contacted by agents promising to negotiate the best possible contract with their team, for a percentage of their salary,

Since there are no limits to the number of players an agebt can represent, this appears to be a lucrative occupation with less chance of career ending injury than being a #1 draft choice.

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A recent news item claims that the average 2014 college graduate owed \$33,000 in government backed student loans. It wasn't made clear if the word average included all college students or just those with student loans, but either way the total is about a trillion dollars.

Finding that either due lo the economy or what other reasons, President Obama has announced a "forgiveness" program, which in effect makes this a taxpayer expense. We all realize and should agree that an educated population provided by our great institutions of higher learning are in the national interest. We sometimes wonder though, if the means and results justify the cost.

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The IRS has been strongly criticized for harassing organizations claiming tax exempt status, accusing them of promoting partisan politics. As a result they may be opening even bigger cans of worms.

While the requirements to obtain tax exempt status are quite specific, no doubt there are violators to the established rules. Being exempt from income and property taxes gives any organization a huge advantage in managing their cash flow. In addition donors to qualified exempt organizations are eligible to claim deductions on their own tax returns.

Exempt organizations come in all shapes and sizes. We tend to think of traditional entities such as churches, schools, government property, hospitals, etc Some are automatically exempt due to their nature while others must obtain exempt status through application to the IRS. There are about 300 "other" organi-



zations active in Brown County, engaged in qualifying charitable activities ranging in size from the Boys and Girls Clubs to family trusts donating scholarships and grants to various causes and operated by volunteers, These local charities play a vital role in making our community a great place to live and actually save us both property and income tax expense by providing certain needed services more efficiently and at less cost than if they were performed as a taxpayer supported service by government agencies.

Getting back to the IRS. Each year, in order to qualify and retain their valuable exempt status charitable non-profit organizations are required to submit a form 990 which in recent years seems to have grown to be a detailed, self-incriminating questionnaire. The form contains 12 pages of detailed questions, along with 37 pages of instructions including penalties for providing false information.

Requested information includes the charities purpose, management and directors sources of income, costs of operations and expenditures as related to their stated purpose. Some questions seem to be politically oriented, however, as non-profits are technically not permitted to use their funds for political purposes.

What seems to have happened through years is that the terms "educational" and "advocacy" as qualifications for tax exempt status have entered more into the equation permitting environmental activists, social causes, and other politically sensitive issues to obtain tax exempt status, and in many cases funnel large amounts of money legally towards their causes and promotion thereof.

While we acknowledge that all interests could benefit, you know what happens if someone senses an advantage or inequality and that seems to be what is happening here.

We realize that monitoring the system to protect the interests of taxpayers is important. We read the IRS is revising their rules somewhat regarding political activity. It will be interesting to find whether or not they give consideration to the massive, partisan spending by labor unions.

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The Village of Wrightstown has negotiated to purchase Lake Michigan from the Green Bay Water Commission.

It was just a few years ago that Green Bay made extensive repairs to their pipeline while Allouez, DePere, and others built their own pipeline all the way to Manitowoc as a more practical option. Pipeline construction and environmental concerns have brought steady increases in the price of this necessity, Whether a single Metropolitan water supply district similar to the Metropolitan sewer district which was proposed at the time would have been more cost effective is a matter of speculation. Too late now.

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President Obama has been doing everything in his power to delay construction of the proposed Keystone Pipeline to transport crude oil from North Dakota and Canada to refineries in Texas and Louisiana. We acknowledge there are many considerations and interests involved. One minor problem is that until a pipeline is built they have been shipping the oil by rail, which is slow and cumbersome, and opens the door for derailments which seem to be a common occurrence.

It still seems we have gone from dependency on imported oil to a surplus. While this may be good news, oil is not a renewable resource, and world demand is increasing dramatically which will put pressure on our reserves in the future. Our national policy seems to be worry about the future when it gets here. We worry about the environment which is fine, but not about conservation for the sake of conservation to benefit future generations.

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High gas prices and more efficient vehicles have combined to reduce gasoline tax revenues for the Wisconsin DOT. That means that financing for such projects as the massive #41 corridor on Green Bay's west side may be in jeopardy.

We haven't heard if they are over or under budget, but there is a lot going on and they still have a long way to go. We commend the DOT for keeping traffic moving during construction but realize all the temporary roads add tremendously to the cost as well as give drivers a chance to simulate a

NASCAR driver while racing through the orange barrels. Too bad people can't slow down a little.

The skyways are impressive but intimidating and certainly have added a lot of expense to the project. It will be interesting to see how they remove snow and drive in the winter.

Before they impose higher gas taxes or user fees, it makes us wonder how much of a factor the final cost is going to be when they design and approve these projects.

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The recent botched execution of a lawfully convicted murderer in Oklahoma brought cries of how inhuman our capital punishment methods are along with demands for reform. Unfortunately the fear of execution does not seem to be a deterrent to violent crime, and hanging or firing squads also seems to turn people off.

Keeping prisoners in jails and prisons is a big industry in this country. We have about 2.3 million people, or about 1% of the adult population locked up. Figures show that 68% are returned within 3 years of being released, indicating that they have not been rehabilitated, or just like it there. New laws result in more prisoners, and more business for our lawyers. It's a vicious circle.

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It's not exactly an export, but it brings in trade dollars. The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX) has noted that of all the international students attending schools in Wisconsin, 36.8% are from China. While this can be taken as a compliment to the reputation and quality of our education, you can never tell what their ultimate goal is. We assume they get their student loans from China.

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A UW-Milwaukee phone survey of 453 state residents in March claimed that 32.7% of respondents would approve eliminating the state income tax and doubling the sales tax. This would be interesting considering the income tax is not a factor for much of the population but the sales tax applies to everyone and just about

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everything that people buy.

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We realize people standards and beliefs towards certain subjects change through the years, and have no trouble accepting things as they are and most if us seem to accept things as long as aren't jammed down our throats involuntarily, or change our way of life for the worse.

In November, 2006, by a vote of 1,264,310 to 862,934 Wisconsin voters approved a Constitutional amendment describing marriage as between one man and one woman. A rather positive majority.

We realize that things change and sometimes need a push to get accomplished. What is difficult to understand is how one Federal Judge sitting in Madison can determine that the law approved by voters in 2006 is "unconstitutional", and the next day people are accepting her decision.

We may have a great legal system in this country, but sometimes our laws seem rather fragile when they can be thrown out so easily.

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Between 2006 and 2012 Wisconsin raised its cigarette tax from \$0.77 to \$2.52 per pack to discourage smoking as an excuse..

While smoking has decreased dramatically, the *Tax Foundation* reports we rate fifth nationally in the number of cigarettes smuggled in from states with lower taxes such as Illinois where the tax is still less than \$2.00. However, Illinois residents probably return the favor by buying just about everything else in Wisconsin as their sales tax is up to 10% in Chicago,

The state with the biggest smuggling problem is New York charging \$4.35 per pack.

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Lambeau Field has been rated the top venue in the entire world in which to attend a sporting event and we commend the Packer organization for their ongoing improvements.

While we realize that it may be impossible to install more comfortable seating for the customers sitting in coach, we note that virtually every other professional stadium in the country at least has hand rails in the

aisles for the safety of the fans climbing up and down the concrete steps.

A 50' high Lombardi Trophy replica proposed for the east gate will undoubtedly be featured frequently on national TV. Should this receive priority over fan safety? What have the people attending the games received with all the improvements except a larger *Jumbotron*, higher prices, and less available parking due to the additional seating which has been added?

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The Wisconsin State Crime lab reports there were 227 deaths caused by heroin overdose in the state during 2013, up from 210 during 2012. This compares with 527 traffic deaths in the state during the same period, and about double the number of gun related deaths in the state which seem to receive most of the media attention.

It has become a major problem for law enforcement as it drives other crimes, and will likely become worse unless the sources, distribution, and demand can be stopped.

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President Obama has taken upon himself to announce new environmental standards requiring power plants by 2030 to reduce emissions another 30% over 2006 standards. He even claimed the cost of energy will be reduced as a result.

No doubt there are a lot of pollutants entering our air and waters from a variety of sources, and things won't get better by themselves.

In the meantime, scientists on behalf of industry and environmental activists are both seeking ways to reduce pollutants and provide affordable heat and energy and save the world in the process. Like most issues these days, there are wide differences of opinion and they are miles apart.

One side feverishly warns of the polar ice caps melting and flooding coastal cities or of drought and return of the 1930's dust bowl (take your choice) while the other points out that climate change has existed since the earth was formed. The question may be does "*doing the right thing*" necessarily mean taking the most expensive or disruptive route?

While this is actually a global problem, most of the blame seems to fall on the United States. A recent article in *TIME* magazine related that China burns double the amount of coal as the rest of the world combined so maybe their scientists will be able to come with some good solutions.

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The western part of the country has been plagued by massive forest fires in recent years, somewhat due to drought and carelessness, but tremendously destructive to both property and the environment,

It would be interesting to know how much (if any) pollutants these disasters deposit in the atmosphere in relation to our burning of fossil fuels.

Maybe Pres. Obama can sign a law against forest fires.

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As this is written it appears a decision on building a new Wal-Mart on Green Bays west side may take a while. While both sides in the argument have what they consider valid arguments, it is still the existing property owners and residents in the immediate area who must abide by whatever decision is made, and the effect on their own property and life.

It seems that so far this proposal has created more controversy than the construction of the Port Plaza Mall back in the 1970's which resulted in the destruction of most of our old downtown area and existing locally owned business's in the process. Now both the mall and the old downtown are just memories.

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Donald Sterling has not set an appropriate example as a role model for a major sports team owner: enough said. It is also probably true to say that we all have somewhat become somewhat more politically correct and careful with our statements..

As a result of his careless and outrageous statements, even though in private, he has placed himself into a publicity storm and has been soundly and publicly punished by the NBA and public opinion as a result. While as far as we know there are no real laws against non threatening or dis-

criminatorary remarks made in private, common sense should always be your main concern if you are any kind of a public figure.

We sincerely hope that this unfortunate affair does not set a precedent whereby anyone who makes statements contrary to the precepts of the thought police doesn't get crucified in front of a cheering public. Whatever did happen to free speech?

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Liberal minds in particular may wonder why conservatives sometimes don't have more respect for the United Nations organization. *National Review* reports that the U. N. has just appointed a representative from Iran to their Woman's Rights Committee. We doubt if any sane nation in the world would want to emulate Iran's record of treatment to women.

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The FDA has determined that cheese makers should stop using wooden boards on which to age their products as they could possibly be contaminated. If enforced, this could have an adverse effect on the Wisconsin cheese industry, which claims it has never been a problem in the first place. Wooden boards work best.

Possibly the next thing they will think of is picking out all the bits of discoloration in the various variety's of bleu cheese we produce because they found out that it's a type of mold. They probably haven't even smelled our limburger yet.

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A study by *New York University* claims that a standard U.S. \$1.00 bill can be home to more than 3,000 different types of bacteria, courtesy of all the people who handle it in the course of daily activities.

Maybe that's why the government spends so much of the stuff is to protect our health.

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The *Tax Foundation* estimates that the total deductions attributed to "tax breaks", or legal deductions including exemptions and credits totaled \$1.2 Trillion in 2014.

Of this total, \$1.036 Trillion applied to individual returns, while the

remaining \$148 Billion applied to corporation returns.

They didn't say how much tax revenue is lost each year due to illegal tax evasion which is probably another \$1.2 Trillion, but isn't that about what he National Debt increases each year?

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The *Pew Hispanic Center* estimates that somewhere between 1.8% and 2.7% of Wisconsin's population is composed of unauthorized immigrants. Higher than neighboring Minnesota of Michigan but less than Illinois with between 3.8 and 4.6%

The difference between 1.8 and 2.7% in our 2014 population of 5,726,398 would be about 51,538, so is this a problem for us or isn't it?

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Recall back in March, an 8-car CTA train failed to stop at Chicago's O'Hare terminus, and proceeded up an escalator injuring 32 passengers, and causing at least \$6 million in property damages and personal injury lawsuits.

It turns out that the 25-year old engineer was new on the job, had an extensive police record, and had fallen asleep at the time of the accident. In most cases this would have brought charges of negligence and termination of employment.

However, in this case the union representing her has threatened to sue the city, and as a result she is still on the public payroll.

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A report from the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX), suggests that even with unemployment levels relatively high, Wisconsin may face a job shortage in coming years.

The reason being that our population is aging, and that the rate of deaths is growing faster than the rate of births, leaving fewer people of working age. Their solution would be to encourage more people of working age to move here.

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The recent, unfortunate, publicity of a Green Bay police officer, attacking what appeared to be an innocent bystander made headlines

all over the country.

Obviously something sparked the incident, and this should be cleared and resolved when the investigation and report is completed.

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Attorney General Eric Holder recently made the statement, "There is no such thing as too big to jail," during a hearing involving executives from his favorite target, the banking industry,

While laws are laws, and courts are courts, and lawyer are lawyers we wonder to what extent his statement would apply to government officials who willfully waste taxpayers money and mislead the public with their actions and statements.

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While Wisconsin's teachers and other organized workers rail against Act 10, high-level administrators, in particular at the Dept. of Public Instruction have been doing rather well.

Since June of 2012, 117 of the departments 437 employees have received discretionary bonuses. While most state employees raises have been limited to 1%, the DPI raises to top employees have been 2% or more.

This should compare favorably with many private sector jobs.

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The Washington Redskins were founded in 1932, and have enjoyed much success including 2 Super Bowl wins in the ensuing 82 years.

We acknowledge their choice of names and logo could be controversial, if one chooses to make it so, but shouldn't this be a matter for the team owners to quietly live with and resolve without having the U.S. Senate voting to demand the name be changed, while they sidetrack more pressing national issues in the process?

To involve the U.S. Patent office in an end around play to accomplish their political goal seems an outrageous abuse of power. Unfortunately there are a number of names used by athletic teams and business establishments offensive to some. Do we want the government to start dictating what names are OK to use

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Recall a few years ago when mascot names first became an issue animal rights activists were suggesting the "Packers" change their name as it referred to the teams slaughterhouse origins. There is no limit as to where this "offensive name" stuff could end.

My suggestion would be that if the Washington NFL team realizes they have a serious public relation problem, they should include a poll offering a name change with their season ticket notices, and requesting alternatives, and then quietly abide by the results. Amen.

* * * * *

Some one of these days Congress will have to get serious about immigration reform. It is estimated we have over 15 Million illegal aliens are living in the United States, including 150,000 here in Wisconsin. No one seems to know for sure and no one really seems to care.

One segment of the country which seems to benefit is the farming industry in their quest for seasonal help with harvesting crops. It seemed that at one time this was no problem with temporary visas but now our government can't even keep that straight.

* * * * *

Maybe it just seems polls today indicate a worse job performance for "Congress" than the President or any of the branches of government which have been in the news lately.

Is it possible this is the result of people believing what they are told and being misled by the media, or just looking for someone to blame..

Article I, Section 1, right at the beginning of the U. S. Constitution grants all legislative power to the CONGRESS consisting of BOTH the Senate and House of Representatives. At this point in history, the Senate is controlled by Democrats, and the House, often referred to as just Congress is controlled by Republicans.

This is not necessarily a bad or unique situation, as it has existed many times in the past, and often has led to political compromise on important national issues, and agreeable to the President at the time.

Unfortunately this has not always been the case in recent years,

and it sometimes appears the President and media have been able to blame "Congress" for lack of compromise, as if all fault can be blamed on the Republican Congress.

There can be a lot of finger pointing but when you say "Congress" you include both the Senate; the House of Representatives, and all the people we send to Washington.

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A recent survey by Gannett Wisconsin Media compared the amount of time spent home in Wisconsin by our elected officials compared to the amount of time in Washington. There seems to be two different and valid points of view.

Even though Congress is in session only part of the time, there are hearings, committee meetings, and personal office work that can occupy the rest of their free time. Visits to home are usually in demand for public relations appearances, with the constant need to be looking forward to the next election,

Anyone who wants to run for Congress should plan on keeping track of their frequent flying miles.

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While the rate of unemployment in Wisconsin is still a little above the desired level, we still rank ahead of neighboring states and enacting legislation favorable to job creation. Unfortunately we do not have huge undeveloped sources of energy or low cost labor that states with better rates seem to have.

As things have turned out, if Gov. Walkers promise of 250,000 new jobs would have materialized, we could have the lowest unemployment rate in the country, which still wouldn't satisfy his opponents.

While we can understand Mary Burke criticizing the shortfall in job creation, would her position of a return to the policies of Jim Doyle be the answer? It seems that a good many Wisconsin jobs went overseas in recent years due to many factors, with high taxes, high labor costs, and an unfriendly business climate in general at the top of the long list.

* * * * *

The Federal Government,

alarmed at the fact that American students did not seem to be as fluent in subjects such as math, science, and language skills established a list of "Common Core," standards with the intent they be approved and adapted by all states Depts. of Public Instruction. While most states, including Wisconsin jumped at the chance to comply, some are now having second thoughts.

Reasons given being the loss of state control over their own established and independent systems, but probably more specifically, disagreement with what Washington wanted them to teach and methods they wanted to use teaching them.

In another somewhat related subject, the Federal Government, concerned that our children were not eating the proper foods and spurred on by Michelle Obama has set standards for school lunches consisting of more fruits and vegetables, and fewer sugary and fattening items which children seem to crave.

As it turns out, the new diets cost school districts more to prepare, and were ending up in garbage cans.

Maybe both problems could be worked out if someone would design a diet consisting of more brain enhancing protein items that kids seem to like with less mushy fruit and vegetables which they don't. What do they eat in all the other countries?

* * * * *

It may take a while to sort out all the factors between the John Doe witch hunt and Gov. Walkers campaign financing. While it appears to be politically motivated, it is keeping a lot of lawyers and judges busy, and is sure to play out until the very end.

We all know that high office political campaigns cost millions of dollars, and that both major parties and their candidates must and will do everything in their power to gain advantage and win. This includes disqualifying an opponents contributors, actions of associates if at all possible.

While the laws disclosing contributions and disclosures are quite specific, like any laws they are full of loopholes to work around or exploit.

Is there a difference between

a contribution backed by George Soros or the Koch Bros? Is there a difference between a fundraiser at a meeting of business interests or flying to Hollywood to mingle at a fund raiser of wealthy movie stars? Is there a difference between a PAC formed to support ones candidacy or an appearance at the AFL-CIO convention.

One thing that would be nice and perhaps help clear the air would be to enforce the disclosure rule on TV commercials stating who is paying for the ad. Most of them are so jumbled and flashed by so fast they are impossible to read. The information can tell a lot about who supports the candidate and why.

* * * * *

One problem with politics in general is that while politicians have to appeal to the public for votes, they also have to make friends with various special interests, whether they fully agree with them or not. This is where much of the financing to run their campaigns is likely to come from, and a lot of this comes from out of the area because that's where the money is.

That is just one reason it is important to know where the money comes from and where it goes. Unfortunately not many voters can afford lobbyists to sit down with elected officials and remind them of this.

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The Wisconsin Dept. of Justice claims their cost of defending lawsuits and outside counsel to date so far total \$961,000 and rising. Apparently no one in Madison has taken the initiative to figure out how much the state and taxpayers have saved as a result of Act 10.

* * * * *

The "Evil" Billionaire Koch Bros. serve as the target for groups critical of money influencing politics. A recent article in the *Washington Examiner* claims they are not even in the top 10 donors to political interests, but for the years 1989 to 2014 would rank 59th on the list.

Six of the top 10 donors were trade unions, who collectively contributed \$278 Million during the 25 years, or 15 times more than the Koch Bros.

* * * * *

While on the subject of campaign financing, there is still nothing wrong with making contributions to the candidates and parties of your choice. This is an indication of your support,

Also, remember that politics start at the local level and many good candidates for contested offices don't have organization or funds to get out their message and make themselves known. Even a yard sign helps.

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Finally, while we can find plenty of "things that make us wonder" by reading the daily papers and watching TV, the following is a Top 10 format list from the internet that has been around for a while but for the most part are still very current issues.

10. Only in America...could politicians talk about the greed of the rich at a \$35,000.00 per plate campaign fund-raising event.

9. Only in America ... could people claim that the government still discriminates against black Americans when they have a black President, a black Attorney General and roughly 20% of the federal workforce is black while only 14% of the population is black 40+% of all federal entitlements goes to black Americans,

8. Only in America...could they have had the two people most responsible for our tax code, Timothy Geithner (the head of the Treasury Department) and Charles Rangel (who once ran the Ways and Means Committee), BOTH turn out to be tax cheats who are in favor of higher taxes.

7. Only in America...can they have terrorists kill people in the name of Allah and have the media primarily react by fretting that Muslims might be harmed by the backlash.

6. Only in America...would they make people who want to legally become American citizens wait for years in their home countries and pay tens of thousands of dollars for the privilege, while they discuss letting anyone who sneaks into the country illegally just 'magically' become American citizens (this probably should be #1).

5. Only in America...could the people who believe in balancing the budg-

et and sticking by the country's Constitution be thought of as "extremists."
4. Only in America...could you need to present a driver's license to cash a check or buy alcohol, but not to vote.

3. Only in America...could people demand the government investigate whether oil companies are gouging the public because the price of gas went up when the return on equity invested in a major U.S.Oil company (Marathon Oil) is less than half of a company making tennis shoes (Nike).

2. Only in America...could the government collect more tax dollars from the people than any nation in recorded history, still spend a Trillion dollars more than it has per year - for total spending of \$7-Million PER MINUTE, and complain that it doesn't have nearly enough money.

1. Only in America...could the wealthier people - who pay 86% of all income taxes - be accused of not paying their "fair share" by people who don't pay any income taxes .

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."

"Energy efficient vehicle. Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust."
... Sign on back of Amish Carriage

"Nothing is so unbelievable that oratory cannot make it acceptable."
... Cicero

"Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government."
... James Madison

The TAX TIMES\$

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The TAX TIMES\$ - July-August, 2014

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

- Thursday - July 17, 2014, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Speaker: Scott Liddicoat, Act 10
- Thursday - August 21, 2014, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Discussion on current events.
- Thursday - Sept. 18, 2014, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Speakers, candidates for election.

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 Tiletown Brewing Co., 200 Dousman St.

Meetings are open to the public.

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

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



**July -
August,
2014**

“Just because we have the best hammer doesn’t mean that every problem is a nail.” . . .Barack Obama

“Don’t go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.”
. . . Mark Twain

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New Members are Always
Welcome. Call 499-7701
Write us at P. O. Box 684
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www.BCTaxpayers.Org
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