



## Honesty is Good Business.

Has our Nation, our State, or our City lost sight of what an honest day's labor is worth? It used to be we were eager to exchange the value of our brains or brawn for some worthwhile medium of exchange. Yet as we look around us the clarion call is, by some arbitrary means, is to take from people or organizations that which they honestly earned or created. Where did this notion of, "if you got a business, you didn't build that...." or "don't let anybody tell you that it's corporations or businesses that create jobs!" find its roots?

From my study of history, the garbage heap this kind of dishonesty sprouts its noxious weeds that stick like burrs and thistles, is the notion that Socialism will liberate the poor, enslaved masses. But where's the evidence to support this sophism, because I'll be damned if I can find it. And still, this is the line of dishonest ideas that spill out of our schools and from those who would have us turn our futures and those of our children into their vacuous hands. What fools we must be, sitting in the pot of water arming around us, unaware how we will soon be cooked and ready to devour, as has happened so many times before.

This is impoverishment of spirit that steals our very humanity, because true wealth rises from honesty, the kind that rests at the end of a day's labor, when you can sit, surrounded by the fruits of your labor, those things you trusted another in exchange for promised benefit or what Adam Smith best described in the Wealth of Nations as capitalism. Whether you worked for another person or group, a corporate body, this was a free will bargain that neither coerced by legal edict nor enslaved unlike the pernicious arrangement that socialism brings.

The hallmark characteristic of capitalism is found in the risk/reward function, no risk no reward but true risk because even if there is risk there is no guarantee of reward. How different this way of living from the "guarantee of subsistence" socialism offers or as Sir Winston said, "Socialism is a philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance, the gospel of envy. Its inherent virtue is the sharing of misery." It remains the dream to rise above misery that proves itself in the many stories of America's immigrant step children who start with next to nothing but risk everything to reach the dream this country can bring.

What honesty can be found in the taking of the just rewards of another's labor, ideas, or creation? What moral merit can be derived from political or governmental regulation or law that arbitrarily assigns achieved benefits to another who never met nor understood the value created by this dividend that we correctly call profits? Capitalism is honest for the reasons described by Leonard Read, Founder of FEE-Foundation for Economic Education, a libertarian think tank, when he says, "Anything that's peaceful." There are no "do's," and the only real don't at bottom "don't use force." All else is permitted, but there is no guarantee the market will sustain or reward it.

Dishonesty is costly—"Crime; distrust and dishonesty impose huge losses that go beyond those suffered directly. Much of the cost of crime and dishonesty is borne by people who least can afford it— poor people." So says Walter Williams, "Dishonesty, lying and cheating are not treated with the right amount of opprobrium in today's society." In a nutshell, this is the hole our culture has slithered down, camouflaged by an attitude that turns the eye to that old, out-dated notion of morals and values, good and bad, black and white, a world so gray the morning ditch mist is crystal clear.

Far be it for me to call the kettle black, but gray just seems so much more ugly. Proselytizing is so lame; however the task falls to those who will create an environment that values honesty and begins to connect the relationship between honesty and the magic revealed in the invisible hands.

*Richard Parins* — President

**The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION**  
*In our 30th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.*

## Amend the First Amendment?

### *Don't Even Think About It!*

The first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, referred to as "The Bill of Rights", were ratified and signed into law on Dec. 15, 1791. Freedom of speech and religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment was unique in the world at the time, and established the privileges and principles that made this country great.

**"Amendment I: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."**

That's it: With only 45 words, our founding fathers established the rules allowing for freedom of religion, speech, the right to assemble and petition the Government with their grievances. While a lot has changed since 1791, it has survived as the law of the land in countless legal decisions going all the way to the Supreme Court, and the administrations of 44 Presidents during the past 223 or so years that our country has been in existence.

While the first amendment is considered a right, we all must realize it is also a privilege. We can acknowledge that abuses will take place in its interpretation from time to time, but somehow the intent always seems to prevail. For example, obscenity or good taste is not specified or restricted.

Also, and more important there are no specific restrictions on wandering from the truth, exaggerating, libel, slander, or otherwise making up statements which may be completely false or assumptive about another. For some reason much of this negative behavior seems to take place at election times when obtaining a public office is the ultimate goal and crucifying the other candidate or incumbent is determined as the most effective expedient. We have seen much of this in recent months, and our comment is that the privilege of freedom of speech should also include common courtesy and truthfulness.

In recent months we have heard rumors of restrictions possibly amounting to censorship being placed by our government on certain commercial broadcasting deemed to be hostile or otherwise contrary to the administrations policies. Some of our popular so-called talk shows for example. Possibly even influencing elections against their political interests. While the Supreme Court in previous decisions has noted that the First Amendment does not restrict obscenity, libel, slander or what is referred to as "*fighting words*," all of which can cover a lot ground. While common sense and good taste should determine what to broadcast, nothing much seems to be taboo these days, with so many means of mass communication available.

In September, 2014, a 38-page Congressional Research Service study was published attempting to identify items protected or not protected from immunity by the first amendment. While items objectionable to children and names of crime victims were emphasized, there were other areas of interest also.

At this time it is difficult to determine what will happen next. While government censorship of who provides or what is allowed would be a worst case scenario, and probably unlikely. However, you can never tell where the obsession for political

correctness, and or, the present administration will take us next.

Let's just hope common sense prevails and we leave the first amendment alone. While there are laws against public slander, they do not seem to apply during elections. Politicians only make the laws and set the standards but don't always abide by them. While the Supreme Court and all the appointed Federal Judges in the country already cause sufficient mischief with their decisions, some respect for our founding fathers, their intent and foresight is still in order.

While the First Amendment gives us our most important Right and greatest freedom without the imposition of ideological meddling, it still must be considered a privilege. Any attempt at government censorship beyond national security could lead to disaster. The best control is for media and other public information sources to monitor themselves for decency and public acceptance, and viewers able to draw their own conclusions as to what is proper and acceptable.

Jim Frink—BCTA

## When Taxation is above the law.

Recently the Brown County Taxpayers requested the assistance of the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty ( WILL) to engage the Green Bay School District on a taxing issue. A open records request for information was made by WILL and the District responded with less than a full response in my opinion. I gave a report to this effect at our September meeting and the minutes reflect that. I said that we received about 500 pages of emails (mostly duplicates) and 50 pages were withheld by the legal representative of the district. I have been requested by the representative of the Green Bay Public Schools to retract a word used in the meeting, that of "redaction" . My incorrect use of the word may have led to misunderstanding by our members. The pages **were not redacted, they were withheld !** Know this, our request was not for any personal information, but strict-ly budgetary.

Now read what the Supreme Court has said about the Open Records law. <http://wicourts.gov/sc/opinion/DisplayDocument.html?content=html&seqNo=52285>

**"§80 The legislature has stated that the Public Records Law serves "an informed electorate" and that "all persons are entitled to the greatest possible information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those officers and employees who represent them." Wis. Stat. § 19.31. This explicit statement of legislative policy supports making available those documents whose contents are related to the affairs of government, to the official acts of officers and employees, and to "the conduct of governmental business," rather than those related solely to the private affairs of officers and employees"**

**§81 Affairs of government and official acts include the public's ability to evaluate the use of public resources....."**

I guess when the Green Bay school district decides to tax you, the homeowner. YOU have no rights to know the reasons for the taxing, nor the judgment used (sic) in making those taxes which encumber your finances, or even the inner workings of the financial operations of YOUR schools. This is especially troubling as there is NO recourse under the law (You can't vote on their budget !), other than to file a Lawsuit to get information that should be made available to every citizen and to disclose how these charges came about. Thus the tax payer is being kept in the dark (without any assistance from your school Board) and becomes irrelevant !

This truly is taxation without representation ....

Rich Carlstedt - BCTA

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Brown County Taxpayers Association.

## October Meeting Notes.

### Representative Ribble Discusses Transportation Funding.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting held Oct. 16, 2014, at Titledown Brewing co.

Representative Reid Ribble discussed the shortage of receipts for the federal highway trust fund. The trust fund is funded by taxes on fuels (gasoline, diesel, propane, LNG, and CNG). A 12 percent federal excise tax on the sale of heavy trucks also contributes to the federal highway trust fund. These revenue sources provide about \$35 billion annually, but the spending amounts to about \$70 billion annually. This leads to \$35 billion of borrowing each year for highway spending. We would need to increase the federal gasoline tax by seventeen cents per gallon to replace the borrowing.

The trust fund returns 100.5 percent of taxes collected in Wisconsin to the state of Wisconsin and municipalities within the state, covering about 55 percent of Wisconsin and local road costs. Electric cars receive a \$7,500 subsidy from the federal highway trust

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Representative Ribble supports enactment of a long-term highway bill to provide states and municipalities with the resources needed to maintain our infrastructure. He has been talking to constituents and stakeholders about solutions that would put our transportation policy on a sound fiscal footing, while making sure our economy remains competitive in the long-term. He is requesting ideas to solve the highway funding problem from constituents and all interested parties.



Rep. Ribble

Representative Ribble noted that 20 percent of federal spending occurs in the last four weeks of each year. This is solid evidence of the "spend it or lose it" mentality in the federal bureaucracy. He noted that going to a two-year federal budget cycle would reduce the "spend it or lose it" spending by federal bureaucrats.

Eric Wimberger, candidate for the 90th Assembly District seat in the Wisconsin legislature presented his qualifications and political philosophy. He stated that he believes in smaller government and personal responsibility. After receiving his law degree, he served in the US Marine Corps, attaining the rank of Captain.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for November 20, at Titledown Brewing Co. This will serve as our Annual Anniversary meeting with discussion on the Nov, 4, elections and plans for the coming year. All members are encouraged to attend,

Dave Nelson - Secretary

## National Debt Update.

We entered the last day of October, (Halloween), with a **\$17,909,444,239,574.65** National Debt. It is presently increasing at a rate of \$2.42 Billion each and every day, which would put the total at **\$18 TRILLION** sometime during the day before Thanksgiving, not that we will be thankful as a result.

This doesn't include \$79 Trillion more in unfunded liabilities such as Social Security, Medicare benefits, and government retirement benefits but isn't that what "future generations" are for. We have long since passed the point of no return, where the daily debt interest payable is in excess of the increase in debt. That means that unless we can bring spending under control, interest payable alone will be our largest expense. Not good if our credit falters or interest rises.

## Things That Make Us Wonder.

The threat of an Ebola epidemic has been dominating the news in recent months. There is no question that this threat must be controlled, and we have to trust the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to do their job as is their mission.

While only limited deaths have occurred in the U.S. Let's hope that all other countries are as concerned as things could change in a hurry.

In the meantime, the importance and significance of the coming elections and the growing threat of ISIS to the world is pushed aside. At least we have the Packers as an option to worrying about Ebola, ISIS, or politicians who impose Obamacare.

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A recent *TIME Magazine* article reports a national push towards "paperless classrooms" in the nations schools. Accordingly, every student in every school would have their own personal computer. No doubt it could be part of "Common Core" strategy as it could enable a central source to send out uniform classroom material to the entire country at the same time.

While there's no question that computer knowledge is a requirement for most jobs today, our schools already seem to do a good job of teaching the essentials. Their use does not seem intended to replace traditional classroom materials such as books, pencils and paper. While a computer is great for looking up information, it is still intended as a tool to interact with other learning methods.

Proponents claim each student could save the equivalent of 48,000 sheets of paper each by not requiring textbooks or writing paper. While the government has been more famous for preaching political correctness than actually saving paper, might such a plan eventually eliminate the need for classroom teachers altogether?

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We should all agree that medical care and compensation for our veterans who gave so much for our country is a national obligation. Recent

Continued on next page →

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.

incidents of long waits for care and shoddy conditions at veterans hospital facilities are disgraceful.

In addition to the hospitals, \$65.7 Billion is budgeted each year for veterans disability compensation, conditions resulting from combat or other activities while on active duty.

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Too bad the country doesn't seem to be as alarmed over the hundreds of deaths already occurring each year from substance abuse as the still remote possibility of an Ebola epidemic. How many employers will knowingly hire a drug addict, or even a Marijuana user for that matter?

Maybe this has something to do with the unemployment rate our more progressive politicians have been using as campaign fodder?

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Citing the high cost, Walmart the countries largest employer, has announced it will no longer offer group insurance benefits to it's 30,000 part time employees working less than 30 hours per week. It is reported that two thirds of the nations largest retail chains have already taken this action.

The overall effect this will have on Obamacare and the economy is yet to be determined.

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Employment in Wisconsin took a couple of hits with the announcement that Oshkosh Truck was cutting their work force and Manitowoc Ice was moving some of their production to a new facility being built in Mexico.

Despite excuses offered by the management of these companies for their decisions, it still seems to be a matter of Wisconsin's reputation as consistently being one of the 10 highest taxed states in the country saddled with anti-business regulators and a union dominated workforce.

While a great deal has been accomplished during the past four years under Gov. Walker to correct these deficiencies largely built up during previous administrations, other states have also been striving to make themselves attractive to business. When dealing with politicians representing a variety of special interests, it

is difficult to change things overnight, We certainly wonder what Mary Burke would have done considering the circumstances, and if she actually has a plan to turn things around

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Sooner rather than later something will have to be done about highway and transportation funding, both on the state and federal levels. There are too many demands for new and safer roads, and too many deteriorating bridges and highways to keep up with. The costs of land acquisition and construction keep rising dramatically, and the Federal Government can't keep picking up the tab.

While per gallon gas taxes have been adequate so far, increasing them has not been popular, or have any of the other schemes being proposed, including mileage charges, sales taxes, or license fees.

One thing for certain is enjoy the present low gas prices. We have seen how fast they can rise at times and politicians know we sometimes have short memories.

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While making highways safer may be the ultimate goal of highway planners, safety still depends on driver courtesy and obeying laws.

Does anyone get the impression that drivers today are substituting watching NASCAR on TV for driver education?

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On the subject of road construction. We are pleased to see that some of the jobs from last summer are now completed, and appreciate seeing the results of our tax dollars at work.

We fully realize that these projects take time with many contractors and considerations involved. It's also nice to see the jobs completed as soon as possible as detours, traffic delays, and business interruptions cost all of us money.

\* \* \* \* \*

Opponents of the voter ID law claim 300,000 Wisconsin residents would have problems obtaining proper identification in order to vote. Either they didn't have or need a drivers license, or their birth certificate was no

longer in their possession. Considering we seem to be overrun with illegal residents from all over the map, it would seem that this is a problem that should be addressed for reasons other than just voting.

While obtaining a certified copy of ones Birth Certificate could be a hassle, it is required for identification on other important papers. Just ask President Obama.

Waiving the fee on duplicate birth certificates for voting and ID purposes is already practiced, but perhaps other steps could be taken to make the process easier. It would be interesting to know how many of those 300,000 would actually get out and vote?

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Computer technology has developed rapidly in recent years, and is showing no signs of slowing down.

An item in *This Week* magazine claims that sometime between 2050 and 2075 there is a 90% chance that technicians will develop a computer that can perform all of the functions of the human brain. IBM's "Watson" was only the beginning.

Although such a device could have many uses, such as playing Solitary by itself to writing books, two of them could even run for President against each other. Let's hope they develop a way to turn the things off before they do any damage.

\* \* \* \* \*

Who says you can't buy votes? As of the middle of October it was reported that 38,000 TV ads at a cost of \$14 Million had been aired in Wisconsin for the Governors' race alone. A lot of them were in this area.

While many of the ads attempted to convince potential voters that disaster was around the corner due to the handling of the economy, we doubt the media and the hired spin doctors from ad agencies who make a good living preparing commercials were the ones doing the complaining.

\* \* \* \* \*

While the Media often takes issue with claiming advantage for the candidate with the largest "war chest" to spend on advertising, little is said of all the ads placed by well financed spe-

cial interest groups who prefer to keep their identities secret. At one time the elections boards required that sponsors of ads clearly identify themselves, and the candidate give their verbal approval.

As witnessed by the particularly tasteless campaign for Governor, these requirements have fallen by the wayside. Unfortunately, it's too late to make changes after the damage is done. Maybe next time. Ha!

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Preliminary reports from the City of Green Bay, Brown County, and the Green Bay School District seem to indicate that their budgets for the coming year will not ask for property tax increases. This is good news for property owners and a compliment to our elected officials.

Public budget hearings will be held prior to approval and anyone with concerns or comments about what is or isn't included will be welcome to attend and be heard.

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Keeping a reserve fund for emergencies is generally considered as prudent financial management for individuals, business, and even units of government. The question may be how large should a reserve, and does maintaining a reserve actually raise or possibly lower the taxes assessed to maintain it?

The Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance reports that state School Districts have about \$2.1 Billion in reserves including \$90 Million in this area.

While each district may have different reasons for maintaining their reserves, fear of budget cuts and saving for future construction were listed. Maybe a good item to question at public budget hearings.

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As the November 4, election day approaches, it is reported a higher percentage than ever are using absentee ballots or voting in advance.

In Florida only a third of those voting do so on election day. Whether this is a result of the fear of longer lines due to picture ID requirements is questionable. No doubt checking voters is more of a challenge in Florida at

anytime with so many people splitting their residency with other states.

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One of President Obama's first initiatives was the "cash for clunkers" program whereby people with old automobiles received a cash bonus to buy a more fuel efficient model. A win-win deal for everybody.

Studies of the results by Texas A&M University indicate otherwise. The 677,000 transactions cost taxpayers about \$3 Billion. Participants in the program generally bought less expensive autos not necessarily made in the USA. While new car production increased when the program ran, it also decreased during the following 9 months wiping out any gains, which cost the auto industry about \$3 Billion.

While the program claimed to reduce fuel consumption with more efficient vehicles, the Cato Institute reports total net savings would be 1.6 million barrels annually. This sounds like a lot, but it's what we consume in just 2 hours per day. At least it made 677,000 Obama supporters happy.

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It is reported that since Marijuana became legal in Colorado, 87% of sales go to the highest users, who manage to get high on the stuff at least 21 to 31 days each month.

We wonder what the rate of unemployment is there, and for that matter how do they pay for the stuff?

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Wisconsin has traditionally had some of the highest property tax rates in the country, which has been cited as a deterrent to economic growth.

In the meantime there is talk of reducing or even eliminating the tax and replacing it with higher sales, income, or user taxes: Particularly to fund items such as Technical Colleges.

While no tax is ever going to be popular with everybody, switching one tax for another usually may not be a good idea either. At least it takes personal or corporate resources to accumulate and maintain real property, (including taxes), while sales taxes can discourage retail spending creating a burden for rich and poor alike.

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As often happens after contentious elections such as we have been witnessing, legislation is proposed in Congress to supposedly level the playing field for candidates. This year it's Joint Resolution S. J. 19, introduced by a number of Democratic Senators including Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin.

While the announced intention may be to give Congress the authority to regulate the raising and spending of campaign funding, it seems more like a tongue-in-cheek apology for all of the deceitful methods presently used to gain the power that comes with public office. We hear this kind of talk after every election. It simply takes too much money to ignore special interests and their influence

Like two cannibals fighting over a missionary, you don't want to give the other guy an advantage. You have to be very careful with the fine print, as the wording can work both ways. If a loophole isn't deliberately written in, the other side will find one.

For now, we congratulate the Nov. 4, election winners and assume they will live up to the faith that voters have placed in them.

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."*

"Half of American people have never read a newspaper. Half never voted for President. One hopes it is the same half." **Gore Vidal**

"You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

. . . **Abraham Lincoln**

# The TAX TIMES\$

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## The TAX TIMES\$ - November, 2014

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

Tuesday - Nov. 4, 2014, **ELECTION DAY!** Did you VOTE?

Thursday—Nov. 20, 2014, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.  
30th Anniversary Meeting. Discussion & Future Planning.

Thursday—Nov. 27, 2014, Time to Give Thanks for our many blessings.

Thursday—Dec. 18, 2014, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.  
Program to be announced.

Thursday—Jan. 15, 2015, BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.  
Scheduled: Brown County Executive Troy Streckenbach.

**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.



"A new diet calls for eating nothing but garlic and onions. Everyone stays so far away that from a distance you look thinner."

. . . American Legion Magazine

"One lie has the power to tarnish a thousand truths." . . . Al David

### **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.**