



Beasts of Burden

As April 15 approaches (or is here) I am always reminded of one of the reasons our great Nation was formed. After all, our masters the British, were not hated by all, they protected us from others who would harm the folks, pirates and other hostile interests. Then our former masters insatiable need for tax dollars or I should say pounds, pence, ha-pennies, and farthings, from over-spending on wars in far-away continents, to satisfy their political patsies and the lavish life-styles to which they were accustomed.

The citizenry stood up when their cup o' tea was singled out, their everyday lives touched and they sang out, "I'll never be your beast of burden, My back is broad but it's a hurting" later echoed by their own music maestros, the Rolling Stones. And thus began the start of the American Revolution. And the Patriots sang out.

Every day the media reports another abuse of our treasure, our labor, and while Americans are a generous people, feeding and protecting much of the world for decades I believe a time will come when our citizens will again stand up to say "am I hard enough, am I rough enough, am I rich enough, I'm not too blind to see..... I'll never be your beast of burden."

Do you see, do you read, those same reports as me, examples where government employees enjoy retirements or benefits rarely seen in the private sector? A recent example was a California woman taking a reported \$ 423,664/year retirement (POTUS Salary \$400k), lasting until death. At 63 years old and living the 85 years of age, her retirement could payout the tidy sum of \$ 9,320,608.00. Yes, she performed for a laudable 38 years as County Supervisor, but really, REALLY, as a matter of public policy what is California allowing to happen? It's not that she stole or gamed the system, but insiders of the system simply allow this form of chicanery to occur, and the debt created weakens the fabric of the Nation.

But far more ominous, is the prospect of the back-handed governmental theft, recently inflicted on the citizens of the tiny Mediterranean island of Cyprus. When the government unilaterally reaches into the bank accounts of private citizens to sweep huge sums into the state treasury, what is your reaction? Does the gut tighten, does your mind say "it could never happen here!"

As quoted of philosopher, Georges Santayana, "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.....", and later echoed by Winston Churchill, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it....." come crashing into the words of Rahm Emanuel "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before."

The time draws near when a potential *crisis* of debt and credit could precipitate a faceoff between the self-aggrandized political hacks and the United States citizens who refuse to lay down at governments attempt to socialize personal assets. But when bullets fly, and blood flows it will not be a time of grandiose revolution but a heart-wrenching, sorrowful time for all.

So, before we land on the shores of Cyprus, Spain and Greece, before our government says it's ours not yours, the taxpayer chorus must sing out, "I'll never be your beast of burden, I've walked for miles, my feet are hurting.....Never, never, never, never, never, never, never be....."

Richard Parins — President

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

Fact Check On Objections To School Choice Program.

Governor Walkers proposal to expand the School Choice Voucher Program has raised a lot of question as to how it would work, how much it would cost, and any advantages to our existing educational system.

Following is a list of statements concerning the proposal submitted by the Green Bay (*and other*) School Districts throughout the state, and responses submitted by Jim Bender of Parent Choice, an organization supporting School Choice in Wisconsin.

Items covered are: *Effects of the parental choice program, Increase in funding for the Parental Choice Program, False Statement on Decrease in Public School Funding, Cost to Green Bay Taxpayers, Property Taxes, and State Report Card.*

Statement: *“As the leaders of the Green Bay Area Public Schools, we want you to be aware of the devastating effects Governor Scott Walker’s 2013-15 budget will have on our excellent school system.” And “Because of the serious negative impact of vouchers on our community...”*

Fact: Giving low-income Green Bay families more choices in education will not have devastating effects. The majority of families will continue to send their children to Green Bay Public Schools. However, for many families in Green Bay the Green Bay Public School system is not an excellent school system.

According to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) only 64.3 percent of low-income students, 63.9 percent of Hispanic students, and 51.7 percent of African American students graduate from a Green Bay Public High School in 4 years. Green Bay Public Schools are clearly not meeting the needs of these families and the parental choice program will give those Green Bay families the opportunity to choose a different option. This will have a positive effect on Green Bay families and the community because it will give these students an opportunity that their traditional public school did not give them—the opportunity to graduate high school.

Statement: *“This means there will be no additional resources for public school students but a 10-24% increase to the voucher program.” And “Our second concern is the 0% increase in public school funding, alongside a 10-24% increase in funding for the voucher program.”*

Fact: Green Bay Public School students receive significantly more per-pupil in state and local aid than students in the parental choice program, even with an increase in the voucher. The per-pupil revenue limit for Green Bay Public School students is \$9,215.64 per pupil. Green Bay Public Schools also receive a significant amount of funding through categorical aids and federal funding. Students in the parental choice program receive a voucher made up of state and local aid worth no more than \$6,442 per pupil.

In total public schools in Wisconsin would receive about 11.85 billion in taxpayer dollars over the next two years, while the parental choice program would receive about 381 million in taxpayer dollars over the next two years. Schools in the parental choice program are not eligible for other types of aid such as categorical aids. While

public schools in Wisconsin have received significant funding increases over the past 10 years through 2010-11, the per-pupil voucher amount has remained flat and was decreased in 2009-10 to \$6,442 per pupil from \$6,607 per pupil in the previous year. The proposal in the budget will not increase the voucher amount next year. The proposal would increase the per-pupil voucher to \$7,050 for students in grades K4-8, and \$7,856 for students in grades 9-12 in 2014-15, which is still significantly less than public school per pupil funding.

Statement: *“The voucher formula decreases funding for public school students...”*

Fact: Dollars allocated for the voucher do not decrease per-pupil funding for public school students. State aid allocated for the voucher is from a completely separate pot of money than state aid for students in Green Bay Public Schools just like dollars allocated for medical assistance or other programs. In other words, Green Bay Public Schools would receive the same funding per-pupil if the parental choice expanded to Green Bay or not.

Statement: *“If 200 students choose vouchers to attend private schools, it will cost Green Bay Area taxpayers an extra \$1.2 million in the first year and, in addition, will decrease the funds available for each student choosing to stay in our district.”*

Fact: The first problem with this statement is the math. The \$1.2 million figure comes from multiplying the maximum voucher payment, \$6,442 by 200. In fact, only 38.4% of the choice payment, or \$2,474 per-pupil, would come from Green Bay taxpayers. \$2,474 times 200 is \$494,800, not \$1.2 million.

The second problem with this statement is that public schools in Wisconsin are funded on something called a three-year rolling average. What this means is that instead of being funded on a district’s current headcount, the district is funded based on a membership count, which is the average enrollment of the current year and the previous two years.

What does this all mean? This means that if 200 students choose to use a voucher to attend a private school in the first year,

Green Bay Public schools will receive 100 percent funding for those students in the first year, and will not lose a single penny. Green Bay Public Schools will continue to receive partial funding for those students in the following two years, even if they are not educating those students. Additionally, as stated above, the parental choice program will not decrease the per-pupil funding for students in Green Bay Public schools by a single penny. This amount is determined by the revenue limit.

Statement: *“a proposal that would harm public schools and neighborhoods, and increase property taxes.”*

Fact: Green Bay Public Schools will continue to levy property taxes for students in Green Bay as they currently do with the only difference being what type of school—public, charter, or private school in the parental choice program—the student chooses to attend.

Statement: “As the governor's voucher plan spreads and grows, property taxes will continue to increase. Last year, Milwaukee taxpayers paid an extra \$55 million in property taxes due to the voucher program.”

Fact: Property taxpayers in Milwaukee have to pay for a portion of the education funding for Milwaukee students regardless of whether they attend a public, charter, or private school in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. If the MPCP ended, Milwaukee property taxes would continue to be used to educate those children in a public or charter school. In fact, over time, Milwaukee taxpayers would see a much larger tax bill because on average Milwaukee taxpayers pay less per pupil for a student to attend a private school through the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program than a public school in MPS.

This would also be the case in Green Bay. The accounting of the local taxpayer cost should consider the local taxpayer cost if the student would otherwise be in the Green Bay Area School District. This year the **district's general fund property tax levy per-pupil is \$3,073, \$599 dollars higher than the local per-pupil cost for a student in a choice program.**

Statement: “The governor bases his recommendation for vouchers on the new state report cards. He uses only one year of data to declare schools as ‘failing.’”

Fact: the Department of Public Instruction was required by the US Department of Education to create this report card and the report card was approved by the US Department of Education. Additionally, DPI worked for over a year on the report card and got input from an accountability task force made up of education experts from different sectors in Wisconsin.

The report card uses a combination of test scores, achievement growth, high school graduation rates, achievement gaps, ACT participation and performance, test participation, absentee rate, and dropout rate to determine a score for the report card. It does not rely

on a single factor and uses more than one year of data.

However, based on the history of data reported by DPI, Green Bay Public Schools have a history of failing to educate and meet the needs of its minority and low-income students. For example, for the two years that 4-year graduation data is available only 63.2 and 64.3 percent of low-income students graduated high school. Only 41 percent and 51.7 percent of African Americans graduated high school. Only 57.4 percent and 63.9 percent of Hispanics graduated high school.

Only 47.1 and 47.5 percent of American Indian/Alaskan Natives graduated high school. Green Bay Public Schools has a truancy rate of 17.7 percent, 49.3 percent were African Americans. In Green Bay Public Schools African Americans have had a truancy rate of greater than 40 percent since 2004-05 according to data from DPI. Fewer than 18 percent of African Americans have taken the ACT since 2004-05 according to DPI. These are only a few of the dozens of statistics that are publicly available from DPI for the past several years.

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School Choice Wisconsin.

School Choice Wisconsin is a nonprofit organization that seeks to ensure an honest debate about school choice by providing accurate information on the impact of school choice on families, communities, and schools.

School Choice Wisconsin's experienced staff works with students, parents, taxpayers, legislators and communities interested in school choice programs across Wisconsin, including the new program in Racine. The email distributed by the school board in Green Bay last week was riddled with factual errors and misleading statements. They are not leading an information campaign, but a misinformation campaign.

This document goes through each of their erroneous statements and corrects them. If you have any further questions, feel free to contact us at School Choice Wisconsin.

Jim Bender—President
bender@parentchoice.org

Marx Bros. in Congress.

Does it seem that more so in recent years, rather than cooperating and compromising on issues for the good of the country, partisan party politics are getting a little out of hand in Washington and even Madison?

Classic examples are how Obamacare was passed with little or no bi-partisan input, and the way that money is being spent in Washington with no concern for the future or how it will ever be repaid. Our representatives are not even able to agree on a budget which would at least guide their spending.

It reminds us of the old Marx Brothers classic song, part of which is printed to the right. Bring up “I’m Against it” on Google and Groucho will even sing it for you. It should be the Congressional theme song. You will see what I mean. Enjoy.

“I’m against it.”

As sung by Groucho Marx.

*“I don't know what they have to say,
It makes no difference anyway,
Whatever it is, I'm against it.*

*No matter what it is, or who
commenced it,
I'm against it.*

*Your proposition may be good,
But let's have one thing understood,
Whatever it is, I'm against it.*

*And even when you've changed it,
or condensed it,
I'm against it.”*

From *Horsefeathers*, 1932.



“All people are born alike, except
Republicans and Democrats.”

. . . Groucho Marx

“If you find yourself in a hole, stop
digging.”

. . . Will Rogers

“The difference between a democracy
and a dictatorship is that in a democracy
you vote first and take orders later;
in a dictatorship, you don't
have to waste your time voting.”

. . . Charles Bukowski

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.BCTaxpayers.Org

E Mail, BCTA@ExecPc.Com

Frac Sand – Wisconsin’s tan gold!

Fracking, which is short for hydraulic fracturing, involves drilling down into the ground until hitting a layer of oil shale, then drilling sideways. Once the well is dug, a mixture of sand and water is pumped in at high pressures. This enables us to get oil and natural gas now trapped thousands of feet within the earth.

Not just any sand can be used for fracking. For the best results, the frac sand must be a certain size, a certain shape, and composed of almost pure quartz. Western and Central Wisconsin is home to some of the best frac sand in the world, and frac sand mining is growing the state’s economy. In an area that used to have high unemployment in the trucking industry, there is now a shortage of truck drivers. People are getting back to work because of frac sand, and that is a good thing. More jobs means more money for families, less dependence on the government and more people paying taxes.

The number of frac sand mines in Wisconsin increased in 2011 to 87 in 2012. Twenty more frac sand mines have been proposed. There are also 30 frac sand processing facilities in the state and more on the way. This jump in economic activity has led to an increase in land values, tax revenues, and jobs.

Capitalizing on the talents of individuals and getting them back to work is a worthy goal – the Governor’s idea is a step in the right direction for Wisconsin!

According to one study, frac sand mining is responsible for 20,000 jobs in Wisconsin. About 10% of these jobs are directly linked to frac sand mining and the remaining jobs support the industry. The same study estimatary ates that by 2020, frac sand mining will support 33,000 Wisconsin jobs.

Wisconsin is well-positioned to benefit from the fracking boom. While environmentalists have raised concerns about frac sand mining, the process, just like other mining, is highly regulated by the DNR and the EPA. The legislature must do what it can to encourage the frac sand industry in an environmentally sustainable way so that it can continue to

be an economic engine for our state and our nation.

With estimates that the U. S. has oil and gas reserves that will last us athousand years at the present rates of usage means this industry, barring government intervention, will supply new high paying jobs for many years to come. This is in addition to plenty of oil, natural gas and plenty of taxes paid for valuable government services.

Senator Frank Lasee

National Debt Update.

At the end of March, 2013, the U.S. National Debt has risen to a total of \$16,754,038,192,821.00, which is about \$100 Billion more than it was a month ago at this time.

Under the watchful eye of Pres. Obama, along with his program of “sequestration,” the country still seems to be falling about 3 Billion dollars deeper into debt each and every day, including weekends and holidays. What could possibly be going wrong?

First is the fact that preparing and following a sensible and workable national budget during the past several years seems to have been a formality overlooked by the ruling class in Washington. While we understand the National Budget is an immense and complex work of art with thousands of items to be considered and provided for, there are a few similarities between it and the budget for a business or even a small household.

It would seem the first and most logical step in cutting expenses would be to identify the items which are costing the most which could be pared. Not eliminating token items as a symbolic gesture. While most people realize there are limits to their lifestyles, the biggest item which is usually their residence and related expenses should be examined. Next come luxury items like cable TV, cellphones, and club memberships. The point is, you probably wouldn’t try to reduce everything by a set amount, but first possibly eliminate more discrencionary items in an effort to balance.

The fact that the National Debt kept increasing at the same rate after a month of “*painful spending cuts*” speaks for itself and raises the question, where there actually any spending cuts, or just cuts in federal services to make it look

like they were actually making cuts.

Washington is over loaded with Federal agencies who’s primary function is handing out our money to whoever they can find to take it. Out of our population of 315 million, we have almost 48 million on food stamps. Agricultural subsidies to millionaires, welfare cheats, unfriendly foreign governments, wasteful and unnecessary pork projects are inserted into almost every spending bill by well-meaning Congressmen and Senators so the folks back home remember them at re-election time. It all starts to add up—Big time!

Every federal funded project or expenditure contains a lot of leakage of money by those who know how to receive their share. Lobbyists are well paid to get Congress to spend money benefitting their clients. It’s just the way they do business. This doesn’t happen with a well run business because people take responsibility for their actions. Individuals are definitely more careful about spending double for everything they buy.

Borrowing thirty-five cents for every dollar spent is inexcusable and will likely lead to disaster as interest payments consume a continuously larger part of our available money. How many times during the past 5 years have we extended the debt limit “just one more time?” Are we dealing with adults or children?

It is inevitable that some type of tax reform is in order. President Obama keeps touting that the rich should bail us out. He is probably right to the extent that our tax laws written through the years are loaded with special clauses more beneficial to the wealthy. However, many of them also are the result of money spent to elect representatives to pass these special deductions. Many of them were intended for a special situation the need of which no longer exists. Once a law is in the books, it is hard to get it out, but a full audit of our present tax laws would be a good first step towards tax reform. Let’s fix the laws we have first.

Finally, if the President and the rest of the government was really serious about cutting spending the place to start would be leading by setting an example.

We have all heard countless stories of the expenses and extravagances we are paying for on the part of the President, his family, and his staff and quite frankly, enough is enough. * * * *

MARCH MEETING NOTES.

Sheriff Gossage speaks to BCTA.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting held March 21, 2013 at Titledown Brewing Corp.

Brown County Sheriff John Gossage spoke about operations and issues of the Brown County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Gossage is a 25 year veteran of the Sheriff's Department, and was accompanied by Captain Randy Schultz, a 30 year veteran of the Department.

Sheriff Gossage stated that he tries to operate the Sheriff's Department as efficiently as possible. He noted that the department was able to return \$1.5 million to the County in the last budget year. Using bracelets to monitor nonviolent offenders instead of holding them in the County jail is very cost effective. Keeping an offender in jail costs \$55 per day. Keeping a juvenile offender in jail costs \$80 per day because juvenile offenders must be held in a separate unit with additional requirements, which increases staffing costs. He explained that adjoining counties work together to consolidate the housing of juveniles.

Captain Schultz explained that the Sheriff's Department has contracts with Allouez, Bellevue, and Howard to provide police services. He noted that the new Sheriff's Department facility provides better access to the highway system, saving 10 minutes per officer per day. He reported that the OWI Task Force appears to be producing results as there has been a 43% reduction in OWI arrests since 2010-2011.

Sheriff Gossage spoke about the recent multicounty sting operation that led to 16 arrests of men attempting to arrange meetings with underage girls for sexual activities. The success of this operation resulted from extensive cooperation of law enforcement agencies in this area of the state.

Former state representative John Gard, on behalf of School Choice Wisconsin, spoke about the school voucher issue being addressed in the new state budget. He feels strongly that competition will improve quality of education. He stated that the Green Bay School District appears to be overreacting to the possibility of school choice. He noted that students in the present parental choice program receive a voucher of about \$6,400 for the gaining school district. The losing school district receives about \$2,750 of aid for each departing student even though it has no costs for the student.

The next BCTA meeting will be held Thursday, April 18, at Titledown Brewing. The speaker will be Harry Maier, Chairman of the Green Bay Redevelopment Authority. Details on the back page of this Tax Times.

Dave Nelson—Secretary

together in the interest of promoting their religion and cause.

Pope Francis's frugal life-style could set an example for Pres. Obama.

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What would happen if every four years or so we locked about 100 people in a room along with a stove that produced white smoke. Half would be democrats and half republicans. Women and minorities would be represented. They would consist of 50 Washington politicians who thought they were qualified to be President. The other 50 would consist of those from various backgrounds such as popular governors, college presidents, business leaders and others who could qualify due to their background and experience but perhaps were not as well known nationally and kept a low profile while building up their resumé.

They would be allowed to tout their qualifications, and others of the group would be allowed to speak in support of outstanding candidates. No one would be allowed to leave until a qualified person had been selected and approved by a majority.

We agree it probably wouldn't work here, but it seems to work in Rome and could certainly be an improvement over our present system.

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The closing of the Kewaunee Nuclear Power plant raises the question of do we no longer need the electric power it produced for so many years, and if not, what are the alternatives for consumers? With the constant increase for power demand with new residential, commercial and industrial construction are the remaining facilities able to meet the demand, especially during peak hours and emergencies?

We note that just about every means of supplying energy meets with public resistance, be it by coal polluting the air, hydro consuming land and damming rivers, nuclear because it's nuclear, windmills because their noisy and don't work that well or burning garbage because it smells. Even transmission lines to move power from one area to another have met with public resistance.

Continued on next page →

"The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help."

. . . Ronald Reagan

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.

Things That Make Us Wonder.

We must compliment the Catholic Church for their efficient system of selecting a new Pope: one of the most powerful persons in the world.

The entire process lasted about a week with no big fundraisers leaving donors to be rewarded after the election, no disgusting negative advertising casting doubts on the integrity of both the winner and losers, and everyone in the world seems happy with the result. We are sure there were some disappointed Cardinals in the mix for various reasons but they will all work

While the same people lamenting the loss of the Kewaunee plant and it's effect on the local economy are possibly some of the same ones who protested when it was built back in the 1960's. We must remember that adequate and reasonably priced energy are near the top of list for attracting new industry if that's what we want.

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MapLight, a nonprofit organization which studies political campaign financing and analyzes the results reports that in last falls Senatorial campaign in Wisconsin, the winner, Tammy Baldwin, was able to raise and spend over \$15 Million, or more than \$5M more than the loser, Tommy Thomson. This was also about \$5M more than the national average of \$10M for winners in Senate races. While Congressional and Governor's races were generally less costly, most of them, win or lose. were well into the millions. Lot of money to be raised and spent just to get a job. Considering that much of the money is raised from out of the state from special interests, it is difficult to believe that the welfare of the citizens of Wisconsin is a concern.

The big concern is really where the money comes from. Anyone making a political contribution expects some kind of return, either from the little guy who feels he has been or will be well represented, or the big guy who expects some legislation to help his cause or his pocket-book personally. Agree?

* * * * *

President Obama's declaration in his state of the Union address that he would like to raise the minimum wage to \$9.00/Hr. to make sure that "no one who works full time has to live in poverty," may have sounded nice but is it practical idea?

Although most employed full-time workers already make than the \$9.00 minimum proposed, what would raising the minimum do to help the unemployed, which still accounts for about 8% of our work force. Many of the jobs paying less than the minimum are part time in food service or retail, require no skills or training, and are

held by students or those earning extra money. In many cases these jobs provide the experience and discipline for workers to move on to better paying positions elsewhere.

However, mandating employers to pay more would likely result in fewer of these jobs made available. If a person can't qualify themselves to find more lucrative employment is it the governments or the individuals fault?

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Whenever some new taxpayer supported venue is proposed, the clinching argument often is all the tourist business it will attract to spend their money in the area.

However events like Packer games and Marathon runs only occur on just so many weekends per year while hotels and restaurants are open for business every single day.

One attraction that brings in people on a daily basis for almost four months steady is the Bay Beach area. It has been pretty much self supporting through the years, and any enhancements that have been proposed will make it a bigger attraction. My only suggestion would be to advertise it as an overnight stop for tourists on their way to Door County.

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We often wonder why it often takes so long to investigate and convict those guilty of trafficking drug in the area. It does seem to be a major problem. An article in the Feb. 4, *Press-Gazette* addresses the problem, and as suspected, the solution requires money and a lot more.

While the local drug task-forces are able to make "controlled buys" and identify violators, the District Attorneys office has not been able to keep up with the necessary paperwork and other requirements to prosecute offenders, claiming a backlog of over 500 cases to be processed.

The problem is blamed on the shortage of prosecutors caused by budget considerations. No doubt the expense of court trials which in some cases can be lengthy, and which can require gathering witnesses to testify is a consideration. Also, more often than not taxpayers

end up paying legal fees for both the prosecution and the defendant even though their obligation is to oppose each other,

It is expensive to keep suspected drug criminals in jail awaiting trial, but also dangerous to leave them free to roam the streets. Fortunately some of them leave town and disappear by the time their case gets to the top of the list.

Solutions range from legalizing some drugs so they are not illegal to spending more, lots more to keep fighting the problem.

What would be your solution?

* * * * *

While we always welcome our neighbors from the state immediately to the south of us to bring us money to spend and sports teams to beat, we would just as soon they keep their corrupt politicians and principals of government operations at home.

For years, Illinois officials from the state down to local levels have voted themselves lush pension benefits to take place upon their retirement,

Where the money would come from to pay these benefits was never a major concern, however. Now it turns out that the Securities and Exchange Commission has charged the state for misleading bond investors by not disclosing the states **\$192 Billion** of unfunded liabilities in the form of pension indebtedness due employees.

President Obama's spent his political internship learning in Illinois.

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It's a delicate world we live in when the sovereign island state of Cyprus, tucked away at the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea south of Turkey can default on its debts and as a result throw the worlds financial markets into a panic.

The island is smaller than our big island of Hawaii, with a population of 700,000 consisting mostly of Greeks and Turks who don't get along well to begin with.

It seems odd that we should worry about them when we can't get our own fiscal affairs in order.

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Brown County Recycling has announced it is making plans to ac-

cept more items such as certain items such food items for recycling.

People would likely have less objection to recycling if they know it is serving a useful purpose such as being used for other products.

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It is no wonder that WEAC's main focus is on higher monetary compensation for it's member teachers. While they make generous contributions to political candidates who support them, they also pay their own staff very well.

A 2012 report based on IRS filings claims that in 2010, WEAC's, 147 employees average salary was \$104,180.63 with some making over \$200,000 in salaries and benefits. This compares with Gov. Walkers salary of \$144,423, and we assume more than that paid to the State Supt. of Schools or any of the local school district administrators. Most of their revenue comes from, membership dues of up to \$700.

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Remember the TV ads from the "Scooter Store" touting the little portable electric scooters intended for the chronically handicapped. The claim they made that all you had to do was call toll-free, and they would rush you a scooter, and then send the bill to Medicare for payment by Uncle Sam.

On Feb. 20, a team of 150 federal agents armed with a search warrant raided their offices seeking evidence of Medicare fraud. Darn it, I was just getting ready to order one.

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Do you get a warm feeling every time you pay your telephone bill? Among all the fees AKA/taxes which have been added to your bill in recent years is an extra dollar or so for something called the "Universal Service Fund."

The proceeds from this go to a fund administered by a private non-profit organization loosely overseen by the FCC which provides telephone service to just about anyone earning less than 135% of the established federal poverty level.

As of 2011, 13.7 Million accounts had been established. If we recall correctly, this program was origi-

nally initiated so that prospective employers could contact job applicants regarding openings as a step towards reducing the unemployment rate. Also in 2011 an FCC audit disclosed that over 400,000 persons had received 2 or more phones under the program, and that 41% of applicants had failed to prove they met the qualifications for "free stuff."

No figures were given as to how many people obtained jobs as a result of the program although the phone dealers who talked the government into the program in the first place probably did OK.

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Gun control advocates in Washington and the various states are having are all trying to outdo each other in proposing new regulations regarding firearms. So far they have met with little success.

Meanwhile the NRA announced that as a result, sales of firearms across the country are at an all time high, with renewed interest in gun shows and carry permits.

That must prove there is nothing like a little free advertising if you really want to sell something.

* * * * *

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett has been pushing for a new 2-mile street car line connecting the northeast side of the city with the downtown area. He claims it will reduce traffic congestion and be a great tourist attraction.

He further claims the \$64.6 million cost will be largely paid by the Federal Government.

So far support has been limited due to likely cost overruns from massive street and utility disruption during construction, and the unlikelihood of ever operating at a profit when the job is finished.

At least he doesn't want to run the thing all the way to Madison as Governor Doyle had proposed.

* * * * *

More people receiving a higher education maintains a top priority as the key to improving our standard of living doesn't it seem odd that many of our colleges and universities are better known for

their athletic teams than their educational standards accomplishments.

Not that this is all bad as sports play an important part in our society. However. A recent article in *Time* magazine suggests that the cost of supporting sports programs in many schools takes money away from their main purpose which is education. They claim that of 227 public institutions with Division 1 sports programs, only 22 are self-sufficient. It is probably even worse in smaller schools which do not have large stadiums of other sources of revenue.

Reasons given where the huge salaries paid coaches in excess of instructors, granting scholarships to athletes taking money from other students and programs, and the high costs of facilities, transportation, and tutoring athletes who do not necessarily always rate high scholastically. We realize there are a lot of pros and cons involved, and sports serve a vital function in the college experience.

However with the demand for, and the rising costs of education it could be a matter of what taxpayers expect and are willing to pay for. Will it be a choice between training scientists who can find a cure for cancer or a trip to the Rose Bowl ?

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."

"We contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

. . . **Winston Churchill**

"Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys." **P. J. O'Rourke**

The TAX TIME\$

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

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The TAX TIME\$ - April, 2013

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Tuesday, April 2, 2013. STATE AND LOCAL ELECTION'S.
DID YOU VOTE?

Thursday, April 18, 2013. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Tittletown Brewing Co. Speaker: Harry Maier,
Green Bay Redevelopment Authority Chairman.

Thursday, May 16, 2013. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Tittletown Brewing Co. Program to be announced.

Thursday, June 20, 2013. BCTA Monthly Meeting, 12:00 Noon.
Tittletown Brewing Co. Program to be announced.

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

Unless otherwise notified, BCTA monthly meetings are held the Third Thursday of each month, 12:00 Noon, at Tittletown 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.



“God, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

. . . St. Francis of Assisi

“You can’t be for big government, big taxes, and big bureaucracy and still be for the little guy.”

. . . Ronald Reagan

SUPPORT THE BCTA

New Members are Always

Welcome. Call 499-7701

Write us at P. O. Box 684

or visit our website

www.BCTAxpayers.Org

for Details.