



## A "NATIONAL" BCTA.

SCENARIO 1: By the time you've received and read this October newsletter, at least the first phase of the unfortunately all-too-familiar federal budget battle will have been fought vis-à-vis debates about the federal debt, sequestration of federal dollars, government shutdown, continuing resolution, and so forth. We will have been "informed" by the mainstream media about the various postures and strategies of our clever US congressmen in advancing their goals.

SCENARIO 2: In last month's BCTA newsletter, you read an excellent summary by BCTA Treasurer Tom Sladek regarding the history of the now-expired Stadium Tax and the persistent efforts of the BCTA, spanning many years, to challenge a proposed County sales tax that would pick up where the Stadium tax left off. As a result of this tenacity and determination, a County sales tax was discarded for now but would have to be justified, explained, and understood if proposed in the future. For now, the taxpayer has been well served.

What do these two scenarios have in common? Other than constantly assailing the money we've earned, nothing. Why do I present these two examples? To illustrate the difference that courage of conviction can make.

In Scenario 1, our Congress has walked away from its responsibility of keeping the nation solvent and holding the Executive Branch in check. There was a day when this nation fought wars to rid the planet of human butchery and senseless oppression of ethnic and religious groups. These wars were fought not so much for American power as they were for human freedom and dignity. Now our federal government actually subsidizes everything from Planned Parenthood, facilitating its spin-off industry of selling babies' body parts, to the endowment of art projects offensive to selected mainstream religious denominations (except Islam). Our Congress has abrogated its responsibilities and is thereby doing the bidding of the Executive Branch. We find ourselves not only financially bankrupt but morally bankrupt as well. In this scenario, the facts are as evident as Congress' lack of courage in dealing with them.

In Scenario 2, the BCTA was relentless in challenging political candidates over the years as to whether they would extend the Stadium tax upon its expiration, morphing it into a County sales tax. Long-held assertions by individuals, as well as "think tanks", justifying a County sales tax were challenged by the BCTA and fell short of factual verification. The moral of the story is that, by uncovering facts and then acting upon those facts, government can be checked. There are long-term goals worthy of short-term battles and even defeats. There's something to be said for getting lawmakers "on the record". As a former Army officer and student of military science, I understand that battles are fought because they need to be – not always because of guaranteed outcomes of victory.

We as citizens are not blameless, nor are we helpless. It's time for us to coerce, cajole, and shame Congress into stiffening their collective backbone. American citizens have at least five responsibilities of citizenship, two of which are (i) to stay informed of the issues that affect your community and (ii) to participate in our government's processes. If all we do is obsess or complain, we're as much of the problem as is Congress. By virtue of receiving and reading this newsletter, I assume that you DO stay informed about the issues. However, take on that second responsibility of your citizenship: participate in the processes. Politicians understand that for every one (1) written letter there are more than a hundred-fold unwritten letters that would share the same sentiment and opinion. As of this writing, I suspect that Congress will first perform a kabuki dance and then concoct a continuing resolution, vowing to do the "hard work" later on, kicking the proverbial "can" down the road. I could certainly be wrong about this (Halleluia!), but if not, we need to write (or e-mail) our congressmen and politely but firmly state that, unless they start making moral and constitutional decisions, we'll kick "THEIR can down the road" at the next election and at every opportunity between now and then. Courage of conviction is all it takes to make a difference. We must do at the national level what the BCTA has done at the local level. The work of securing our way of life is never finished.

*Rich Heidel* - Director

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

## September Meeting Notes.

### *Police Chief Addresses BCTA.*

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting conducted Sept. 17, 2015 at Titledown Brewing Co.

Jim Lewis, Interim Police Chief for the City of Green Bay spoke about current issues at the Green Bay Police Department. He was Green Bay's police chief from 1995 to 2003. He had been serving as the interim police chief since August 1, while the Police and Fire Commission searches for a new police chief for the city.

In 1995, he came to Green Bay from Bakersfield, California. He served as police chief in Green Bay from 1995 to 2003. Recently, he served as interim police chief in Appleton and Grand Chute and as chief in Pomona, California, and New Haven, Connecticut. He also has served as interim director of public safety at Yale University.

Chief Lewis discussed proposals from City Council members to add more police officers for a gang unit and a traffic unit. He explained that if the City Council authorizes \$500,000 for more officers, it will create a problem with spending limits for the city. The \$500,000 will require an offsetting reduction in the city budget, possibly in the Police Department budget. Citing some of his experiences with intensive gang problems in Pomona, California, he feels that a dedicated gang unit is not an optimal solution for Green Bay. The flexibility of assigning officers as needed for gang issues is more efficient, he believes. He noted that the police department's excellent community relations is useful tool for addressing gang issues in the city.

Similarly, Chief Lewis believes that assigning officers as needed for traffic issues is more efficient than having a special unit limited to traffic enforcement. He noted that all officers are expected to enforce traffic ordinances.

County/municipal committee reports. The Green Bay Metro Fire Department has a new fire boat. It was purchased using a \$225,000 grant from several companies with tank farms near the Fox River. The new fire boat had a total cost of \$315,000, requiring a \$90,000 investment from the City, with the balance coming from business donations

The boat is a state of the art unit that provides the department with the capability to flow high volumes of water off the river through a mobile fire hydrant. The boat will also provide the capability to apply foam which is needed in chemical and gasoline fires.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 15, 2015, at Titledown Brewing Annex. Details on last page of this TAX TIMES..

Dave Nelson - Secretary

## National Debt Update.

At the end of September, the official U. S. National Debt stood at about \$18.4 Trillion. While the rate of increase has slowed somewhat in recent months it certainly has not changed direction. As predicted, the previously National Debt limit will soon be reached, and by law (as if anyone cares) Congress is supposed to approve a new limit. This has happened a few time before. The first time was probably to raise the limit to \$1,000. back in 1777 to pay Revolutionary War Debt.

As usual, with the election coming, there is talk of shutting down the Government unless certain items are removed from the budget. This really doesn't make much sense unless a LOT of things are removed, which is very unlikely to happen.

There are a couple of complications to be aware of. One is the Federal Reserves hesitation to raise interest rates. No matter what happens there will be winners and losers. An increase could stimulate saving, but raise the cost of borrowing money including payments on the National Debt. Leaving the interest rates low may encourage business expansion and encourage employment, but too much debt is seldom good either.

The stock market is also a concern. While fluctuations in value are to be expected and considered normal, nobody has ever accurately predicted without fail where or when it will go. It is like forecasting the weather, or the outcome of a football game. All the factors may be there, but some of the factors may also be speculation. While most analysts seem to say not to worry, they may point to danger signs, one of which is the National debt.

Unfortunately it is the stock market which provides income for many retirees through their individual or employer accounts, investments made by charitable and educational institutions which benefit all of us, banks and other financial institutions, and even the government itself who may invest their loose cash here and there on occasion.

Getting back to the National Debt. We haven't heard the subject mentioned yet at the debates or from the campaign trail. Check [U.S.Debt.Clock.Org](http://U.S.Debt.Clock.Org), and watch the total increase right before your eyes, and draw your own conclusions. There is a great deal of other information provided, including individual state debts,

Also included are the governments unfunded liabilities such as Social Security, Medicare, individual credit card debt, and the valuation of all the personal property in the country. It's worth a look.

Jim Frink - BCTA

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**BROWN COUNTY Taxpayers Association**

"If it be asked what is the greatest source of our security in a Republic?, the answer would be, an inviolable RESPECT for the Constitution and Laws." . . . Alexander Hamilton

"If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, than we will be a nation gone under." . . . Ronald Reagan

"When I make a joke nobody's injured. When Congress makes a joke, it's The law." . . . Will Rogers

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](mailto:BCTA@ExecPC.Com).

# Things That Make Us Wonder.

The United States has literally thousands of cities, schools, monuments, buildings, and geographic landmarks named in honor of and to remind us of the many great heroes, politicians, and assorted visionaries who helped to form and become part of the history of our great country. One notable example is (was) Mount McKinley in Alaska, named to honor our 25th President, who served our country well in the historic and busy period of 1896 until his untimely assassination in 1901.

While perhaps not the most notable of our Presidents, naming the highest mountain in U.S. territory and the entire North American continent for that matter seemed appropriate and proper for a former U.S. President.

However, on a recent trip to Alaska President Obama, apparently on his own accord, decided to rename the mountain "Denali" which means high one in the Indian language. While the President could have had any number of motives, including never having heard of McKinley, or his legacy, it still seems a matter of ignoring and changing history. Let's hope it doesn't become commonplace for political purposes like renaming cities.

In the meantime we can pity poor President McKinley who has suffered what appears to be his second political assassination.



**The Former Mount McKinley.**

\* \* \* \* \*

Every few years it seems there has been talk of a new bridge across the Fox River south of DePere. While the benefits could be considerable, so would be the cost. While this would probably

be the states responsibility, they seem to have more highway jobs going than they can afford now.

Unless the DOT can convince people they are prioritizing and spending money prudently and convince people the need to enhance their revenue it might take a while.

In the meantime other construction in the area is making possible bridge and access sites more expensive.

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Someday lets hope they get some adults running the Social Security Administration. Do they really, know how much money they have in the bank and where it is going?

One recent article stated they had identified \$128 Million made in overpayments. They then spent \$323 Million in collection costs, and recovered only \$108M for a loss of \$214M. While this is only a fraction of their daily spending, it's still our money,

One suggestion would be to hire people who manage VISA or Master charge to run the SSA, and get rid of all of the political appointees.

VISA, etc., probably handle many times the daily volume of the SSA with fewer people, and seem to keep things straight handling transactions from all over the world.

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Anytime the government decides to dole out money, someone will figure out a way to get a share, whether they are entitled to it or not.

An article in "Atlantic" magazine claims that fraudulent claims consume about 10% of the \$500 Billion Medicare budget.

This is not caused so much by Medicare customers who normally do not see or approve claims made on their behalf but by providers inflating charges and charging for procedures not actually provided.

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The Federal Government has imposed a \$900 Million fine on General Motors Corp., as punishment for ignoring orders to recall and remedy faulty ignition switches on various model vehicles.

While this probably was in order due to accidents caused by the defect and GM probably had the funds in reserve

questions still arise.

One of President Obamas first initiatives in office was to loan several billion dollars to various troubled industries to boost the economy including \$8.1 Billion to General Motors. Much of this is probably still buried in the National Debt someplace but understand GM paid their portion back and again making a profit while the U.S. Treasury went \$19 Trillion in the hole.

While GM can probably sell a few more Chevys to pay the fine, it will still effect their bottom line which provides dividends to shareholders including many retirement investment accounts.

The point is there are a lot of people who had nothing to do with GM's ignition switch problem but will end up paying for the governments action in more ways than one.

\* \* \* \* \*

While the Presidential election is still more than a year away, the media is acting like it's going to be tomorrow, featuring daily polls and tracking the various candidates in hypothetical scenarios as if it were a horse race determining the winner at the end. The daily changes often are based on candidates remarks or views on subjects more relevant to the media than the voting public. The elections and conventions are still a long way off and we are sure the best candidates will prevail.

\* \* \* \* \*

We were sorry to see Gov. Walker drop out of the Presidential race. He is still fairly young and are sure his talents will be put to good use either in Washington or back in Madison. We commend him and all the other candidates for stepping forward and volunteering to seek what must be the most demanding job in the world.

While none of the candidates on either side of the race seems to boast all the qualifications everyone is looking for, they all seem to offer good ideas that belong in their parties platform. We would believe Americans are looking for a strong leader we can trust to really "do the right thing," and put the welfare of the country first over single issues.

This is assuming of course

Continued next page →

there is such a person.

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There are a lot of extremely serious problems facing the world, and more specifically the next U.S. President, whoever he or she may be.

While abortion rights and related issues are rightfully important to many people, should this be the driving force behind our entire political system? This also covers those who threaten to shut down the government because of planned parenthood spending.

Also, there is no shortage of wasteful and controversial items in the budget simply because of politics and disagreements on spending priorities unlikely to change anytime soon.

That's how the system works.

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The population of the world is now estimated at 7.3 Billion, and the United Nations estimates it will increase about a third to 9.7 Billion by 2050, or just 35 years from now.

Much of this growth will take place in developing countries of Africa and Asia, many of which have problems feeding and housing their present populations. Many are hostile to us and our lifestyle, We often see mass migrations due to wars, unstable governments, and overcrowding but with no place to go.

The bottom line is things may start to get more hectic here and there as a result. Let's hope it's not all here.

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Brown County and the various communities are debating what to do with the cash windfall they are supposed to receive as a refund from overcharges on the "temporary" Lambeau Field sales tax during the past 14 years since it was imposed.

We assume the Dept. of Revenue has also been instructing business establishments they can stop collecting the tax so we can all celebrate the event,

\* \* \* \* \*

Citing dry conditions, California has reported more wildfires than usual this year. This includes over 1,500 homes destroyed and polluting the environment, The expense of personal property lost and fighting the

fires will probably effect all of us, even including a few spotted owls.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Federal Reserve Bank warns that the average household balance of credit card debt has been rising, to \$7,813. While this could indicate confidence in the economy by people buying and charging for more goods, it could be a sign of poor money management.

Remember credit card companies make their money from sky-high interest rates and minimum payment fees. A good rule is not to make this your money.

\* \* \* \* \*

The visit of Pope Francis has provided a welcome change from the Presidential Election bickering and has been a most inspirational event. We realize some of his views were somewhat controversial to many but were well presented for consideration to Congress and United Nations.

It was a busy time, as President Obama had to sandwich meetings with the Pope between his own meetings with Vladimir Putin, the President of China and the UN, while Pope Francis also met with the Castro Brothers and appeared before Congress and the UN.

Too bad all of these power players couldn't get together for a private pow-wow that would not end until all of the world's problems were settled to everyone's satisfaction.

\* \* \* \* \*

One interesting observation of the Pope was that despite his immense popularity, security, and world stature, he was content to ride in a budget Fiat or a Jeep converted to a Popemobile at public appearances. Setting a perfect example to show the world he is the "Peoples Pope."

While the world has become a very dangerous place full of maniac wackos necessitating maximum security wherever crowds gather this is indeed a welcome change from other world leaders who take it upon themselves to live the life of luxury often at the expense of the public. The Vatican doesn't have any 747's to fly the Pope about. He goes commercial.

\* \* \* \* \*

The area in the vicinity of Lambeau Field is being improved, and will no doubt be a popular destination for visitors the year round, even more so than at present.

One possibility was the possibility of a "strip club," which while an attraction, could also change the character and reputation of the entire neighborhood. Although not specifically prohibited by ordinances, it seems they have never really flourished and have been more of a nuisance in Green Bay. Bad idea.

\* \* \* \* \*

We read that the Packers are spending \$55 Million to upgrade the Luxury Suites at Lambeau Field. We realize this is important to enhance their cash flow.

It would also be nice if they could at least put in some railings for the safety of the people climbing the 12" concrete steps on their way to their bleacher seats in the coach sections. We realize that their isn't room for comfortable seats like other stadiums but safety is also important.

\* \* \* \* \*

We note there are several projects in the area involving the renovation of older buildings into apartments or retail areas. This is encouraging as we would assume it is still less costly than demolition and new construction and still maintains the character of past history. The bottom line is finding occupants for the projects when they are completed.

We don't recall ever reading where they dumped all the bricks and concrete when they tore down our old downtown and replaced it with parking ramps and the failed Port Plaza Mall.

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In 2013, with the help of donations, the Crystal Lake, Illinois school district spent \$1.2 Million for a new steel stadium for the high school sports teams. However, they made one mistake by not notifying the city for permission or approval of plans.

This caused a stink between the school board and the city questioning authority, zoning, design, and involving attorneys, and laws all the

way to the Illinois Supreme Court. At this time it appears the result may be to tear down the new stadium and replace it.

While there is probably more to the story than has been reported, it seems then real losers are the poor taxpayers of the district who may be stuck with the expense of building a stadium, then tearing it down, then rebuilding it again. All because elected officials couldn't work together.

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The City of Washington D.C., has long complained over the fact that they have no representation in Congress. President Obama even suggested license plates with the slogan "Taxation Without Representation" for residents.

The city's chief financial officer reported that the average per capita income for city residents to be \$75,000 while the National Average is \$44,000.

This brings to mind two thoughts, one is just how much are all these government employees getting paid, and is it possible we could all be making a lot more money if we didn't have any representation in Washington. Just wondering.

\* \* \* \* \*

President Obama has not really delivered on all his promises to his trade union supporters but does what he can with executive actions.

Examples are requiring govt. contractors to offer extensive sick leave benefits, tightening the requirements for overtime pay to salaried workers, and stricter health care benefits.

So far raising the federal minimum wage is on the table although some states and many employers have taken action on their own.

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An item from *The Washington Post* accuses states of duping the poor by promoting state lotteries and allowing gambling casinos to "raise *painless revenue*." While big winners are always well publicized, most people can't comprehend the odds, or the fact that only a small percentage of their wager is paid as winnings.

So far "Common Core" has

been touted as a testing standard to see how students compare nationally on their reading and math proficiency, but what happens after that?

Perhaps the questions still on peoples minds concern both what our students will be taught and the methods promoters have in mind to teach them.

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Climate control is a subject with more questions than answers, or is it the other way around? We realize we are living on a very delicate planet that took millions or billions of years to form and provide the resources we have and enjoy today.

As noted in a previous item, global population is growing at a pace that will assure the problem will not be what to do but where to do it in. Is the problem pollution, or conserving our resources for future generations? We keep burning our coal and oil, digging up our iron ore and other natural resources as fast as our technology and machinery can.

Yes, clean air, water, food supply are all important, but far more emphasis seems to be placed on clean air and oftentimes the costs and inconveniences involved than what will we have left in the future.

What do you think?

\* \* \* \* \*

Plans are being discussed to restore a swimming beach at Bay Beach Park. Great idea if officials feel the water is clean enough to swim in and perhaps take a swallow once in a while.

First beautify and extend the walk on the dike along the shoreline. This was constructed during the early 1950's after a combination of high water in the bay and a north wind flooded a good portion of the north-east side of Green Bay.

Fortunately flooding has not returned but a more attractive beach would be an improvement.,

\* \* \* \* \*

While they are working on the beach isn't it about time to do something with Renard Island? It would make a nice extension of the walk along the beach and put in a few

park benches and picnic tables.

At least plant a few trees until the city and county get together and manage to do something.

\* \* \* \* \*

The IRS has never been anyone's favorite government agency, and they don't do much to make friends.

The *American Legion* magazine reports that the agency "hung up" 8.8 million on customers calling with questions this last filing season while they hung up only 544,000 during the last season.

The solution is obvious. Assign more agents to helping people than they have counting the number of times they hang up on them.

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."*

"Never argue with an idiot, because bystanders don't know who the idiot is." . . . **Mark Twain**

"We are stuck with technology when all we really wanted was stuff that works." . . . **Douglas Adams**

"If we are to guard against ignorance and remain free, it is the responsibility of every American to be informed." . . . **Thomas Jefferson**

"I hope we never live to see the day when a thing is as bad as some of our newspapers make it." . . . **Will Rogers**

# The TAX TIME\$

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## Inside This Issue

A "National" BCTA.  
September Meeting Notes.  
National Debt Update.  
Things That Make Us Wonder.  
... AND MORE!

## The TAX TIME\$ - October, 2015

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

Thursday - October 15, 2015. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.  
Speaker and program.

Thursday - November 18, 2015. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.  
Speaker and program.

Thursday - December 17, 2015. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.  
Speaker and program.

**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. Annex, "TAP ROOM."

**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.



"What's good for comedy is bad for America," . . . Bill Maher

"A lot of people are afraid to say what they want, that's why they don't get what they want."  
. . . Madonna

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