



Blindly Holding Hands into the Dark of Night.

By the time these musings have been to the printers, the Nation will have possibly heard some ideas, or plans to patch the Medicare system pitched to voters from the Republican & Democratic conventions. It seems every attempt to engage an adult conversation on the subject of entitlements has met with fear-mongering and senior-scare tactics.

Our Nation might be finally willing to hear out the likes of Paul Ryan and Mitt Romney and their ideas to keep the system viable past the next few years. I'm probably naïve to suggest any notion the younger vote may listen to any idea that preserves the faintest possibility to recoup a smattering of their contributions. Maybe a faint glimmer of light does exist.

For the moment, the tagline reads, "just gimme some of that Obama money....." as evidenced or intimated in a recent Quinnipiac /NYT/CBS poll that says 60% of independent voters support keeping Medicare as it is, as do 8 in 10 Democrats. So do fiscal conservatives lay down their cards at these numbers or is the Reagan Way, the bold way, hold em until someone blinks that clears a path to victory for our children and grandchildren.

I don't hold much faith in polls, but these darlings of the editorial boards, the counting of fingers and toes, do illuminate the tactics of the 5th Estate, the media elite who thought Reagan just a political whim of the most radical. The truth came to be called the Silent Majority, and their voice becomes a clarion call in the darkest hours of our Nation's struggles to keep liberty first in our hearts.

I do have faith in my fellow citizens, like the group of friends standing in front of the theater this past weekend, coming out of a documentary entitled "2016: Obama's America." They seemed to quietly share their thoughts, however, for me it signaled the small quiet gathering of citizens sharing concerns for events they try hard to understand. The movie goers were from all age groups, although predominately Baby-boomers by my guess, but not all. Sprinkled around were the "Millenials," the young who have all to lose and everything to give, to an entitlement.

To me the few taking the most from these programs seem to be those who gave the least in terms of dollars, but the most in terms of sacrifice, the "GI Generation"; a fitting if not ironic tribute to those men and women whose sacrifice has only recently been lifted up. Better to lift these men and women high than to go walking blindly into the night, hands outstretched to take what ever they can grab. "just keep giving me, their money....."

Richard Parins — President

The BROWN COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION
In our 27th Year of Promoting Fiscal Responsibility in Government.

Dear President Obama and Members of Congress.

Each of you continues to talk and make speeches about reducing the national debt and balancing the federal budget. And you're just the latest. Politicians before you have talked for years and years about balancing the budget. But it just isn't happening. We've run a deficit almost every year for the last fifty years. Then I checked and this year we're projected to run the second largest federal deficit ever—over 1.3 trillion dollars!

For this reason I really don't think politicians know how to balance a budget, or for that matter, how to set up a budget in the first place. So I'm going to tell you about the methods I use to balance a budget that is much more important than yours—our family budget. This simple approach works perfectly every year.

Around thanksgiving I begin thinking about our financials for the upcoming year, and start cataloging important figures. What is my income going to be? How much will our expenses increase? What about charitable giving? How much will we invest each month...and in what? Are there any major projects that should be done, or that we want badly enough to be done? This is called planning.

Just after Christmas, there are always a few days of quiet, just before the new year starts. During that time I work further with our plans. We never go through the year just paying bills as we go. We take our plans and fit what we are going to do within a yearly, and then monthly budgets. This way we always have money to pay for our needs, wants, projects, investments, charities, and so on. Our annual budget is always set before the new year begins.

Some bills don't come due every month. For instance, the auto insurance bill comes in June, and it's a pretty big one. To handle it, we set aside what we need to pay it, month to month, until June comes around. This way there's always money to pay every bill, and there's never any panic. It's called managing money through an accrual system.

We put a pretty large sum of money into one special account within our monthly budget. We designate the money in this account to be used for unanticipated expenses, unexpected repairs, and the like. Since we plan for it, we don't have to raid our assets or borrow money to handle the unexpected. We don't even think of an unexpected event as an emergency, or crisis. But we call our account what most people call it, an emergency account.

Of course, things don't always go exactly according to plan. For example, sometimes a big project we budgeted for proves to be a lot more costly than anticipated. When this happens, we don't overspend, let the bills pile up, stop our investing or charitable giving, or drive the budget into the ditch. Instead we don't do the project, or we don't do another project we'd planned for. Maybe we do the project over two years instead of one. This is called knowing and dealing with priorities.

In the end, none of this is very hard because we earn our money, so we manage it well. We can't create money at the touch of a button like the Federal Reserve does for you. It's hard to imagine that you have to think about priorities, or worry about working within a budget when you have money created for you. But worse than that, creating more money silently dilutes the value of all the money already in circulation. That harms innocent people in a legal, but insidious way—especially the poor. Unfortunately words like "counterfeiting" and "fraudulent" are never applied to your practice of creating enormous sums of money through the political machinery in Washington. You use a more polite and civil expression instead. You call your money creation "deficit spending."

Since our family can't create money, we budget and spend within our means, minimize debt, and have become wealthy—without harming anyone in the process. You can do the same! Just use these methods and you will never have a deficit again. Your budget will balance every year.

Sincerely,
Scott Liddicoat,
Responsible Citizen.

WISTAX "BRIEF'S."

Wisconsin's 231 largest cities and villages spent \$3.5 billion, or \$694 per person to operate in 2010. Per capita, Milwaukee spent \$1,492 and Madison \$992. The median amount spent by the state's other municipalities with populations over 30,000 was \$911. General obligation debt for all cities over 30,000 ranged from \$1,406 to \$1,503 per person. During the period 2005-10, Madison reported the largest increase in debt, 68.7%, while Milwaukee's increased 25.9%.

Partisan rhetoric makes it difficult to know the truth about federal debt and the future of Medicare and Social Security. US debt held by the public reaches 73% of GDP this year vs. 35% in 2000. Medicare "outgo" has exceeded income since 2008. Trustees project exhaustion of Medicare's trust fund assets in 2024 and Social Security in 2033.

As the result of the August 14, primary election, 34 (25D and 9R) of 116 contested legislative seats are virtually decided - 6 in the state senate and 28 in the assembly. Of these 34 seats, 25 are unopposed and another 9 only face token third-party opposition.

Some members of Congress have proposed ending "Bush-era" tax cuts for those with incomes over \$1 million. IRS data for 2010 show that such returns represent 0.19% of all returns, and already account for 22% of all taxes paid.

For the fourth consecutive year, the total market ("equalized") value of Wisconsin property fell, this time 3.2% to \$471.1 billion. Preliminary data for 2012 from the Dept. of Revenue show residential values were off more than (-4.0%). All but seven counties had declines; the exceptions were mainly in the western part of the state while the largest drops were in the southeast part.

From WISTAX. Wisconsin Taxpayers, Alliance, (608-241-9789 for more information.)

"Remember that nobody will ever get ahead of you as long as he is kicking you in the seat of the pants." . . . **Walter Winchell**

"Government is like a baby: An alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other." . . . **Ronald Reagan**

July Meeting Notes. County Executive Streckenbach Speaks to BCTA.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association held on July 19, 2012 at Titledown Brewing Co.

Brown County Executive Troy Streckenbach discussed the state of the county. He noted that Brown County property taxes decreased for 2012. The tax levy decreased from \$4.58 to \$4.57. In order to accomplish this reduction, a \$7.5 million cost to continue had to be overcome. Bonding costs are down. The Brown County Board has approved a \$1.5 million expenditure for critical maintenance at the main Brown County Library. This avoids is \$23 million cost for a major renovation of the library building.

To improve efficiency in County government operations, the Highway Department was merged with the Facilities Department. Also, the Zoo was merged with the Parks Department. The structure of County government is being reviewed. Succession planning is beginning for County departments.

For 2013, the County faces a \$3.5 million cost to continue. Insurance deductibles for County employees are being increased, which reduces insurance costs for the County. Brown County taxpayers should not see a property tax increase for 2013.

Wisconsin Act 10 has had an effect on the work culture for County employees. Work rules are now the responsibility of management instead of being defined by labor contracts. This has produced savings for taxpayers. More savings have come from the fraud investigator hired to reduce welfare fraud, who has recovered several times the cost of the investigator's position. Responding to questions about the Green Bay Recycling Center, Mr. Streckenbach explained the County's responsibility to work with municipalities and other counties to develop agreements for stable long-term landfill availability.

County Executive Streckenbach stated that he welcomes suggestions from citizens for efficiency improvements and other savings ideas. Suggestions can be submitted on the Brown County website.

Dave Nelson—Secretary

"Let me get this straight...We're going to be "gifted" with a health care plan we are forced to purchase and fined if we don't, which purportedly covers at least ten million more people, without adding a single new doctor, but provides for 16,000 new IRS agents, written by a committee whose chairman says he doesn't understand it, passed by a Congress that didn't read (but exempted itself from it) and signed by a President who smokes, with funding administered by a treasury chief who didn't pay his taxes, for which we will be taxed for four years before any benefits take effect, by a Congress which has already bankrupted Social Security and Medicare, all to be overseen by an obese surgeon general and financed by a country that's broke!! What the hell could possibly go wrong?"

. . . Donald Trump

National Debt Update.

"The fact that we are here today to debate raising America's debt limit is a sign of leadership failure. It is a sign that the US Government cannot pay its own bills. It is a sign that we now depend on ongoing financial assistance from foreign countries to finance our Government's reckless fiscal policies. Increasing America's debt weakens us domestically and internationally. Leadership means that, 'the buck stops here.' Instead, Washington is shifting the burden of bad choices today onto the backs of our children and grandchildren. America has a debt problem and a failure of leadership. Americans deserve better."

~ Senator Barack H. Obama, March 2006

One of the political quotations we often refer to in the TAX TIMES is "Nothing is so admirable in politics as a short memory," and the above is a classic example of what a politician says in order to be elected to office and what happens afterwards may be two different things. In 2006, when the above statement was made the U. S. National Debt was about 8 Trillion dollars. By the time you read this, shortly after the first of September, of 2012, the National Debt will have gone past the 16 Trillion mark, or double what it was back in 2006 when Senator Obama made his profound statement.

It has been growing at the rate of about three Billion each and every day with no tangible signs of correction. At this rate it should reach Seventeen trillion sometime during July or August of 2013. Does anybody really seem to care?

We are seeing more and more national news articles warning of economic catastrophe, largely as a result of what happens in the United States. The economies of several countries has already gone into default as a result of over spending. The United States government borrows something like thirty-five cents of every dollar it spends, and each dollar borrowed adds interest payable to the top of next years budget.

Perhaps this years Presidential election is only serving as a distraction to the problem. While so far both parties have avoided the subject, it is also apparent that no one really seems to have a viable solution to the problem. What can you do to balance your books when your outstanding debt is six times your income, and your annual income is already one and a half times your income? The chart at the left could give

you an idea of what your own balance sheet would like under the same circumstances.

While the political debate revolves around maintaining Social Security benefits and financing Obamacare, there are a lot of other political promises from the past to be paid for in the future.

It is estimated that the Federal Government will owe over \$15.9 Trillion for Social Security benefits, \$21 Trillion for the prescription drug program, and \$83.2 Trillion for Medicare. These are all programs difficult to cut.

In addition, State and local governments, who have learned to look to the Federal Government

for financial assistance have problems of their own, with the states being \$1.1 Trillion and local governments \$1.7 Trillion in debt. One bright spot is the amount of individual credit card debt, only \$895 Billion. About the same amount the Federal Government added to the debt for their "Stimulus Bailout" which was supposed to get us out of this mess in the first place. By the way, does anyone know how all of this money was spent?

Jim Frink—BCTA

<u><i>If you ran your family finances like the Federal government does theirs.</i></u>	
Federal Government balance sheet.	
* Tax revenue:	\$2,470,000,000,000
* Fed spending:	\$3,820,000,000,000
* New debt:	\$ 1,350,000,000,000
* National debt:	\$15,975,000,000,000
* Budget cuts:	\$38,500,000,000
<i>Let's now remove 8 zeros and pretend it's your household budget:</i>	
* Annual family income:	\$24,700
* Money the family spends:	\$38,200
* New credit card debt:	(\$13,500)
* Existing credit card debt:	(\$159,750)
* Total budget cuts:	\$385
Get the idea ?????	

Where is Social Security Going?

The stability of the Social Security system, also now officially referred to as a “Federal Benefit Payment” has been a hot and controversial political topic. Like other government programs more money is going out than is coming in, and proposed solutions are not popular or even practical.

When first proposed and enacted during the 1930’s, the concept was probably popular and doable, The economy was strengthening after the depression and a reserve was built prior to paying any benefits. What has happened since can probably be blamed on both the economy and Congress.

First, it is likely the rate of inflation has been much greater than government economists of the 1930’s anticipated. To counter this *Cost Of Living Adjustments* (COLA’s) were initiated to increase benefits to recipients to allow for inflation. While this added to the cost, workers and employers “contributions” to the plan were increased almost on an annual basis to the point that it is the largest deduction from many workers paychecks and a major cost to most businesses. The system itself can be considered a major cause of inflation.

Next, bit by bit, new recipients have been added to the system who have not made normal contributions. We do not necessarily fault Congress or the government for their compassion, insofar as this is America, etc., but the belief that most of us have is that this is money we and our employers set aside for our retirement accounts. If the government sees fit to provide benefits to others fine, but set up some other fund or allocation for the purpose. One example is the number of “disabled workers” receiving benefits. This expense was added to Social Security by Congress in 1956. Not that these changes were not compassionate or appropriate but they were still an expense that was not fully funded.

By 1965 the ratio of workers covered by disability payments was 1 out of 65, and by 1987 it had grown to 1 out of 41. When Obama took office in 2009 the ratio was about 19 to 1, and presently it is reported that a total of 8,753,395 people of working age receive disability payments, or a ration of about 16 to 1. While certain requirements apply, and a supplementary 1.8% payroll tax is in effect this is still expensive.

Other items upsetting the system are the inclusion of Medicare, including payments to illegal immigrants, dead people, and who knows what else?

Perhaps the biggest problem is the management of the system itself. Do they really have the money in a segregated “lock box” account or do they have I.O.U.’s? Government units are notorious for moving funds from one account to the next.

We often hear of identity theft and the use of stolen Social Security identification numbers. If their computer system could correctly identify payments and withdrawals from an individuals account there should be no problem but governments and computers are both subject to mischief.

Maybe the best to fix the system would be to go back to its beginning and intentions, weigh the effects of all the changes made, and perhaps start all over again.

Jim Frink—BCTA

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.

August Meeting Notes.

Monthly Brown County Taxpayers Association meeting conducted August 16, 2012 at Tiletown Brewing Co.

Discussion focused upon the August 15 Pulaski School Board meeting to approve a proposed 29.9 million-dollar referendum for renovation of schools in the Pulaski School District. Included in the referendum question were a \$5 million athletics complex and a \$7.4 million swimming pool. An additional proposed referendum question would permit the Pulaski school district to exceed state levy limits by \$650,000 per year for five years for classroom technology purchases.

Members attending the Wednesday night Pulaski School Board meeting at the Pulaski High School auditorium reported about 100 citizens were in attendance. They reported that after substantial discussion and comments from citizens, the School Board voted to place a \$33 million referendum on the November 6 ballot.

The \$33 million referendum project would include the renovation of district schools, a \$5 million athletics complex, and the \$7.4 million swimming pool. The question to exceed state levy limits by \$650,000 per year for five years for classroom technology purchases was rolled into the larger referendum question, increasing the proposed borrowing by just over \$3 million. The net effect of the two proposed referendums, was reported by some to be a 12% to 16% tax increase for the school district.

Several District residents spoke in opposition to the \$33 million referendum. They spoke about the consequences of a large tax increase at a time of declining home values, high unemployment and poor economic conditions. Concerns were expressed that items like the swimming pool, the day care, and the fitness center would not serve all district residents and those items should be financed by the Village of Pulaski. Rolling the \$650,000 per year of technology purchases into the 20 year financing package was questioned as the technology purchased is likely to be obsolete in five years. This action reduces the short term levy impact, but increases overall project costs. Residents stated that the technology costs should be a separate referendum question. The school board felt that putting the referendum on the November ballot gave the largest number of voters a chance to voice their decision on the request, which is a good thing for the taxpayer.

While the final tax rate increase will be based on the interest rate available for the district, it was estimated to be in the vicinity of 10%.

In the end, the vote was 6:1 in favor of placing the \$33 million referendum on the November 6 ballot.

The next BCTA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 20, 2012. The speaker will be Wisconsin State Senator Frank Lasee. Details on the last page of this TAX TIMES.

Dave Nelson—Secretary

“When the political columnists say ‘Every thinking man’ they mean themselves, and when candidates appeal to ‘very intelligent voter’ they mean everybody who is going to vote for them.” . . . **Franklin P. Adams**

“There is no such thing as a nonpolitical speech by a politician.” . . . **Richard Nixon**

“Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists of choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.” . . . **John Kenneth Galbraith**

Things That Make Us Wonder.

Prepare for the biggest political advertising blitz you have ever seen leading to the November elections. The state recall and U. S. Senate primaries were only a preview of what we can expect.

In July *USA Today* reported that Pres. Obama and Mitt Romney both have already amassed reserves of over a billion for campaigning with the total expected to be over \$3 Billion. If 100 million people vote, this would amount to \$30.00 spent for each ballot cast.

Besides the Presidential candidates there will be all of the Congressional and state races to sort out. In addition to the political parties and candidates own advertising, there will considerable advertising by PACs and special interest groups who somehow remain rather anonymous .

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No doubt people of the 200+ nations participating in the London Olympics felt a sense of national pride as their teams paraded by in the opening ceremony. The Chinese must have particularly proud because at least two nations were wearing uniforms made in their country, one of them being the United States of America. The ultimate insult to American workers.

Cost should not have been a factor as there are plenty of American factories looking for work that could do the work better and cheaper. It was simply a thoughtless, incorrect, stupid and embarrassing decision by the people placed in charge of the project.

However, at least one country sported uniforms made in the USA. We heard that Russia had uniforms made here so not all was lost. Thank you Russia.

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We read that the Brown County Board Chairman has criticized Board Members for their behavior during meetings. From talking on cellphones to loud personal conversations while meetings were in progress. We realize that partisan politics and controversial issues arouse emotions but the purpose of the board is to resolve issues to the best interest of the county and it's residents while following rules of conduct.

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Green Bay's Schneider National

is one of largest, if not the largest and best managed trucking company in the country.

As such, they are constantly hiring and training drivers for their huge fleet of trucks. They must follow strict rules to ensure their drivers do not use drugs, and applicants are tested accordingly. They have found that samples of hair when tested can give far more accurate and dependable results than the traditional urine samples.

A couple of thoughts on this are that often in the case of star pro athletes the more popular they are to fans the harder it is to prove drug use, and if in question, hair samples should be used. The other is that if young people realize that drug use would prevent them from ever getting a job, they would think twice before getting involved with the habit to begin with.

It's too bad the same standards and requirements do not apply to movie stars, pop musicians, and for that matter our nation's politicians as they do for truck drivers and pro athletes.

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Presently the official salary of the U.S. President is \$400,000 per year, plus \$50,000 for travel and entertainment expenses. It is obvious that with present demands placed on a President for official business these restrictions are inadequate, but does anyone actually keep track?

The President's travel expenses alone can be several million dollars a day, with a very thin line separating campaign appearances and official business. A lot has changed since President Roosevelt traveled to Green Bay by train in 1934 and addressed the crowd from the back of the parlor car, but that's progress.

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Somehow the media seems absolutely obsessed with which politician or party receives the most contributions for their campaigning and from whom the contributions are made. They also take delight in reporting any and all polls often taken months in advance of actual elections and keep us posted on daily changes as they occur.

While we acknowledge that contributions and polls may tell which way the wind may be blowing what counts are the results at the ballot boxes at election time.

Since much of the advertising is of a negative nature, it is left to the individual to digest what they are presented along

with what they believe best represents their interests and the country or state as a whole.

While the media often seems to have its own agenda, they should also be the agent urging people to get out and vote. A statewide voter turnout of only 20% was predicted for the recent Senate primary despite millions of dollars spent in advertising to influence voters. A turnout of only 14% was predicted for Brown County.

Like it or not the selection of the President at this point in history could mark a dramatic turning point in which direction our country heads. One of the responsibilities of the papers and TV should be to encourage people to get out and exercise their right to vote, at least in return for their profits from political advertising and not actually encourage them to stay home.

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Some of the problems we adjust to in our lives are caused by nature, such as tornados, heat and cold, earthquakes, etc. There is not much we can do except try to survive. Other things can be caused by man such as wars, fires, and artificial shortages created by poor planning or market manipulation.

One situation proving to be expensive for all of us may be from a combination of the two. The result of the dry weather we have experienced this summer and priorities in the use of our resources. While some will blame the weather on global warming caused by humans there are records of droughts going back to the Bible.

In any event, in the U.S. the biggest effect may be from a poor corn crop this year, About half of normal.

Corn is the basis of animal feed, as well as a bi-product essential to industrial processes and production of many of the foods that we eat. We will manage to get by, but will likely be paying considerably higher prices for meat and many other products we depend on.

However, to complicate this we use a good percentage of our corn crop in recent years for the production of ethanol, requiring that it become a percentage of automotive gas as a part of our energy policy. Reports are that in recent years this has already driven up the cost of food items for consumers.

While the use of ethanol produced from corn may prove our salvation in the future, it presently is not necessarily cost effective inasmuch as it uses fossil fuel to

produce, reduces gas mileage, and production is subsidized by taxpayers. Let's hope that a shortage of corn to produce ethanol isn't used as the excuse for a gas shortage.

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Governor Thompson won the Wisconsin U.S. Senate Primary after a hard fought campaign which seemed to be designed to select the least worse candidate rather than the most qualified for the job. The position of Senator is of greater importance than many people realize. It is unfortunate that qualified and respectable candidates for office and their supporters have found negative advertising effective.

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Gun control is right at the top of the list along with right to choose and government controlled health care when it comes to political issues people get excited about, More important than jobs and the economy, national defense, education, the infrastructure or freedom of speech..

In Wisconsin alone there are more than 600,000 hunters, all owning guns responsibly, The national total is estimated at 50 million or more.

As long as car bombs and suicide bombers are alternatives to guns for the crazy maniacs who make headlines from time to time lets leave things alone..

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The Government Accounting Office disclosed that the Federal Government has about 14,000 vacant and unused buildings sitting around the country, and costing millions of dollars each year to maintain.

These are apparently in addition to all of the military installations which have been abandoned in recent years. While it is possible some of these sites sold or used for other purpose, it is difficult to get various government agencies to work together.

Whenever a new building is needed somewhere it is easier to appropriate the funds to build a new one.

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Since July 13, when Pres. Obama declared that "If you've got a business, you didn't build that, somebody else made that happen." small business people in particular are trying to figure out his rationale.

With the economy desperate for job creation, small business is where it will likely come from. Some factors that the President may not be aware of. #1-Small business establishments (usually under 300 employees) actually employ far more

people than all of the so-called large employees. #2-Most if not all large companies started out small and grew by their own success. #3-Most small companies are locally owned, with the proprietors using their profits to expand and hire more employees. #4-In most cases, small business operations are started to fill a demand or produce a new product by local individuals with local funding, in spite of more often than as a result of government assistance.

We acknowledge that when a new business is initiated it most always requires a team effort including financing, partners, and a plan with the help of advertisers, insurers, lawyers, and local officials.

The most important factor however is usually an entrepreneur with the vision and ambition to take the risk of financial failure and responsibility for providing meaningful jobs for employees to support the community

Government on all levels and its layers of bureaucracy must be dealt with but in very few cases could be credited with starting any successful business.

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Like many other states, California has spent itself deep into debt. Several of their major cities have actually declared bankruptcy. For example, one of these bankrupt cities, San Bernardino (Pop. 180,000), spends 75% of its budget on salaries and benefits for employees which range up to \$230,000 per.

To make matters worse, Gov. Jerry Brown has signed a bill that will commit the state to spending tens of billions on a high-speed rail project which isn't really needed and is destined to financial failure.

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A New York Times poll taken after the Supreme Courts decision supporting Obamacare indicated the country is evenly split on their opinion of the job the nations court system is doing.

More than half of the respondents felt the courts decision was based on the justices personal or political views and only 3 out of 10 felt their decision was based mainly on legal analysis. For the time being however, we are stuck with the courts decision.

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On Aug. 15, USA TODAY reported on a poll claiming that as many as 90

million Americans eligible to vote will not even bother on November 6. This is even more people than receive food stamps.

While this number seems rather high, it also shows distrust and dissatisfaction with our political system. A Pew poll taken in 2010 found that only 59% of American adults knew who our vice-president was. Negative advertising was cited as a major reason people had simply lost all interest and trust in government, political parties and politicians in general.,

Perhaps the problem is with our education system. With millions of dollars being spent to influence voters, do people really know what they are voting for?

If they don't even know who the vice-president is, do they know the difference between a Congressman and a Senator, or a State Representative from a Supreme Court Justice. The negative ads keep coming and is what people notice. Just give us free health insurance and make the greedy millionaires pay for it.

In the meantime you can count on both parties trying to recruit new voters if they know what is going on or not!

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As is his privilege, Citing "We can't wait for Congress to act," Pres. Obama used his authority to enact the "Dream Act", allowing up to 1.7 million young illegal immigrants to receive deportation deferrals. These were basically children brought into the country illegally with their parents, and now seeking permanent residency. Many of them have jobs or are attending school.

There is no other country in the world, including Mexico, which allows aliens to clandestinely cross their borders and set up residency in a without following that countries procedures. Not only that, illegal immigrants seem to have little trouble finding jobs, and establishing themselves with all of the privileges of citizenship while our authorities look the other way.

While we are told that offering amnesty is the solution, in the past this has only made a bad situation worse. Half of the illegal aliens are afraid to register for they fear they will still be deported. When they realize nothing will happen more aliens start pouring over the border.

One solution would be strict enforcement of established rules verifying citizenship by employers, and closer inspection of earnings reports submitted by employers to the Social Security administration with

their business income tax returns. Names that don't match account numbers should be obvious. Isn't that why the government keeps buying new computers?

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There is no question that an incumbent in office at almost any level has a lot of advantages over their opponents at election time. While critics of Gov. Walker have made an issue of the use of his clerical staff, we should also look at the tremendous advantages a president has over his opponents.

Assuming each candidate is able to garner the same size war-chest from supporters, possibly as much as a billion dollars each this year, the big difference is how the money has to be spent.

In this jet age it is possible to make appearances all over the country on the same day. Flying around in a 747 accompanied by escort planes loaded with personal vehicles and security could easily cost a candidate several million dollars a day, unless it is done at taxpayer expense. Otherwise a candidate has to pay for transportation from his own pocket.

The Air Force estimates the hourly cost to operate Air Force One alone at \$181,757 per hour so you can do the math. While it is possible some of this is being reimbursed, it appears more like another example of the President's disregard for his use of taxpayer money.

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A recent article in the Construction News *Daily Reporter* relates that the states highways and bridges are deteriorating with projected maintenance costs exceeding revenues. A look at all the construction on Highway 41 in Green Bay gives a good example of how expensive and complex highway updating can be.

While traffic volume has increased dramatically in recent years, gas tax revenue, the states principle source of DOT income has not due to people driving more fuel efficient vehicles.

Increasing the state gas tax is not a politically acceptable option at this time. Neither do schemes to assess charges to highway users, somehow based on the number of miles they drive and use highways each year. Another idea that probably won't fly is to add a surcharge based on the estimated MPG a vehicle is supposed to get either at the time of purchase or at license renewal time. The idea being that

the number of miles driven on state highways should be more of a supporting factor than the amount of fuel used., This would be a terrible idea if reducing our dependence on foreign oil, preserving our own energy resources for the future and preserving the environment are still of any concern. People would be penalized for trying to conserve.

Meanwhile the DOT should do their best to prioritize projects by need rather than political pressure, get competitive bids to keep costs down, and put safety and convenience ahead of aesthetic appearance when designing new projects. Also, they should do their best to relentlessly pursue development of a cement that lasts more than 10-20 years, requirement replacement at double the original cost.

By the way, did the DOT ever get all the money back that Gov. Doyle "borrowed" to pay for other expenses?

* * * * *

Many of us seem to agree there are a lot of reasons to dislike and fear the monster known as "Obamacare," and all of the uncertainties it contains. This includes new taxes, new government regulatory agencies to impose fines and penalties, and yet to be deciphered rules covering the nations' health care system.

By official count, the document contains a total of 2,163,744 words. Considering the average person reads at a rate of 200 words per minute, it would take about four and a half 40 hour working weeks to read the whole thing and a lot longer to make sense of it. No wonder very few people, including Congress, have actually read it let alone understand what they have created.

There is one possible consequence of the plan which could dramatically drive up the cost of healthcare to both the public and government, and which has been quietly overlooked, perhaps intentionally, and should be addressed.

An article in the Sept. 10, issue of *Forbes* notes that government unions spent tens of millions lobbying for the passage of the "Affordable Healthcare Plan" despite the fact most of them were receiving "Cadillac" benefits. The story is that Congress was considering taxing health care benefits at the time, but the president agreed to include union workers in the plan which added \$120 Billion to the cost.

The real problem is that fine print in the law throws the door wide open for unionizing most of the 21 million health care workers in the country. Presently only about 10% of the nations health care workers are unionized, and unions see potential. Their covert plans are to merge private practices and small clinics into large hospitals which could more easily be organized. Under Obamacare, many of them would actually qualify as government workers.

While it is estimated that each million members of unions pay a billion dollars in dues, the cost to the "middle class" and everyone else who uses health care could end up being much, much more.

In short, whatever Obamacare doesn't do to mess up the Nations health care system union bosses probably would.

* * * * *

The Green Bay Area School District has announced a number of expense reductions in their proposed 2012-13 budget, and expects the tax levy to be about the same as previous. This certainly would be good news for taxpayers and we commend them for their efforts.

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."

"I believe that everything that happens is for a reason. Usually, the reason is that somebody screwed up" . . . Maxine

"The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary." . . . H. L. Mencken

The TAX TIME\$

Brown County Taxpayers Association
P. O. Box 684
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The TAX TIME\$ - September, 2012

BCTA Meeting and Events Schedule – MARK YOUR CALENDARS.

Thursday—September 20, 2012. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co. Speaker: State Senator
Frank Lasee

Thursday—October 18, 2012. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co. Program to be announced.

Tuesday— November 6, 2012. Presidential Election.
YOUR VOTE DOES COUNT !

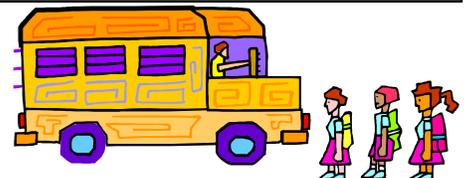
Thursday—November 15, 2012. BCTA Monthly Meeting. 12:00 Noon.
Titledown Brewing Co. Program to be announced.

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

Meetings are open to the public.

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

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



September, 2012

“I’m starting to wonder how bad
four years with no president would
be.” . . . Maxine

“This country has come to feel the
same when Congress is in session
as when the baby gets hold of a
hammer.” . . . Will Rogers

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**New Members are Always
Welcome. Call 499-7701
Write us at P. O. Box 684
or visit our website**

**www.BCTaxpayers.Org
for Details.**