

April 1, 2022



Dear friends,

We've got a two-for-one this week. Today – April 1- is recognized around the world as April Fools' Day, dating back hundreds of years and celebrated by many different cultures. While the exact origin is unknown, the tradition involves playing a trick or practical joke on a loved one, often yelling, "April Fools!" at the end. In modern times, it brings a bit of levity into our lives during the early days of spring, which, as we have experienced this week, can be cold, damp and dreary. The following day is a much more serious occasion, World Autism Awareness Day. This year marks 15 years since the day was first recognized to bring attention to the increasingly common autism and other autism spectrum disorders. April is also [World Autism Month](#), a time to share stories and increase understanding and acceptance of people with autism. We've come a long way, but there is much more work to be done.

Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

small business **SPOTLIGHT**



Town n' Country Title Takes the Worry Out of Real Estate Transactions

Town n' Country Title has a friendly, knowledgeable team ready to make your experience in real estate transactions as smooth and hassle-free as possible. The experienced staff is will meet your title insurance, settlement services and all other land title needs. Town n' Country also has insurance products available to make sure your home is protected from title defects. If an issue is found during their extensive search process, they work with consumers, lenders and real estate professionals to correct the defect so there are no last minute surprises. Town n' Country has grown from a one-office company based in Holmen, Wisconsin, to a growing enterprise with ten locations, including Kenosha. Find out more on their [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

In Case You Missed It



After Republicans Block State Investment, UW MIA Project Turns to Online Concert Fundraiser

After Republicans in the State Legislature once again blocked state funding for UW Madison's Missing in Action Recovery and Identification Project, known simply as the MIA Project, the group held a virtual concert this week in an attempt to fund its missions abroad. The concert event, called COMING HOME, was held on Sunday, March 27, featured a number of local

bands, with a suggested donation of \$25 per household. The Project has plans for a recovery project in Belgium this June and is currently working at the underwater site of a military plane crash close to Saipan, an island and American commonwealth near Guam in the western Pacific Ocean.

The MIA Project consists of UW Madison students and staff from different fields who assist in the discovery, identification and return of the remains of American service members. Since 2014, the Project has had a hand in returning the remains of three MIA service members and are currently investigating several dozen Wisconsin cases.

During the 2019-2020 legislative session, I sponsored bipartisan legislation that would have provided \$180,000 annually for the Project; this would have funded three trips. Republican leadership denied the bill a vote. Governor Evers included the funding in his 2021 state budget proposal before Republicans rejected it, vowing instead to pass standalone legislation. In a shameful act of partisanship, Senate Republican leadership again denied the bill a vote.



April 5 is Election Day

Tuesday, April 5, is Election Day in communities across the state, including Kenosha, Racine, Somers, Mount Pleasant and Elmwood Park. Each municipality and county has different local races on the ballot. If you haven't voted absentee, you can find your polling place and see what is on your ballot at <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>.



Text Messaging Scams on the Rise

Officials Warn of Two Particular Scams

Most of us have gotten those persistent, annoying phone calls from would-be scammers. Awareness is at an all-time high. With that being the case, scammers are turning to text messages as their next tool. There are two new text messages scams in particular that consumers should be aware of.

State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882 • (608) 267-8979

Toll-Free Office Hotline: 1-888-769-4724

Email: Sen.Wirch@legis.state.wi.us • Website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen22/news> • Fax: (608) 267-0984
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The first begins with the consumer receiving a text message from his or herself. The message comes from your own phone number and notes that your bill is paid for the month. The text usually reads, “Free Msg: Your bill is paid for March. Thanks, here’s a little gift for you:”, and is followed by a link. **DO NOT CLICK ON THE LINK.** This is what’s known as phishing; the scammers are trying to get you to reveal personal information. According to those who have clicked the link, it takes you to various Russian websites. The scam seems to be particularly prevalent amongst Verizon customers. Verizon offers these tips for blocking spam texts:

- 1) Do not respond to the text in any way, shape or form.
- 2) Forward the spam text to Verizon at 7726 and/or report it to the [Federal Trade Commission](#) and then delete it.
- 3) Utilize the various call filters offered by your platform or carrier. Use those to block unknown numbers. On an iPhone, go into settings>messages and turn on “Filter Unknown Messages”. On an Android phone, go into settings>spam protection, then turn on “Enable Spam Protection”.

The second text scam often begins with a picture, usually of a woman with red or blonde hair, and contains a message like, “I haven’t heard back from you; did I do something wrong?” While the origin of the text messages is unknown, the goal is to get the recipient to reply that the sender has the wrong number, thus beginning a conversation. The sender will then attempt to gain personal information or lure the unsuspecting consumer in so that the sender can perpetuate a “romance scam”. If you’ve been the victim of this or other scams, report it at BBB.org/scamtracker. Your report can help expose scammers’ tactics so others don’t fall prey.



Governor Evers Announces \$8 Million to Help Wisconsinites Access Civil Legal Service

With many Wisconsinites needing legal assistance as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Governor Tony Evers has allocated an \$8 million grant to fund civil legal services around the state. The grant is being made to the Wisconsin Trust Account Foundation, Inc. (WisTAF), which works with and funds legal aid organizations statewide so Wisconsin’s low-income residents and families can access legal assistance.

Many Wisconsinites still face housing challenges stemming from the pandemic, including overdue bills such as mortgage payments or rent; property taxes; and utilities.

Additionally, homeowners in need of assistance can visit the [Help for Homeowners Program](#) site for further assistance with mortgage payments, and renters are encouraged to apply for rental and utility assistance through the [Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#).



Kenosha County ADRC to Offer Free “Memory Screen Mondays”

Every Monday from 8 am to noon, the Kenosha County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is offering free and confidential memory screens. Memory screens are recommended for anyone concerned with changes in memory, family history of Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia, and even for those wanting to set a baseline for future comparison. Memory screens can provide comfort to those concerned with memory loss, aid in the diagnosis of cognitive conditions and facilitate lifestyle changes earlier enough to make an impact on memory loss. Screening results themselves are not a diagnosis, and those with concerns after the screening should pursue a full medical exam. Appointments are available by calling (262)605-6646.



Free Covid Tests Available

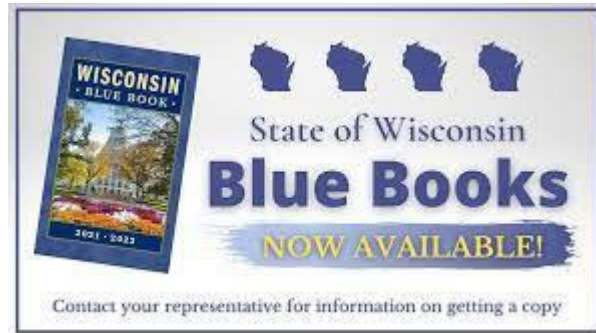
You can now sign up to receive two (2) sets of four free Covid-19 tests per household, thanks to an order from the Biden administration. With just your name and address, you can order the tests for your household at <https://www.covidtests.gov/>; you can also use this site to find nearby testing locations. If you already ordered your first set of 4, you can use the above link to order your second set. Additionally, because of actions taken by both President Biden and Governor Evers, your insurance may be required to cover up to eight at-home rapid tests per month. If someone you know either doesn’t have or doesn’t use a computer, please call my office at (608)267-8979 for assistance ordering your household’s tests.

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Reserve Your Copy of the 2021-2023 State of Wisconsin Blue Book

The latest edition of the State of Wisconsin Blue Book has arrived. If you would like to have a copy sent to you, contact my office at (608)267-8979 or sen.wirch@legis.wisconsin.gov. These books are free and contain interesting and valuable information about our state's culture, history and government.