

September 2, 2022



Dear friends,

Suicide is an uncomfortable topic to discuss but one that should be discussed openly and honestly. In an effort to help raise awareness and open dialogue, September is recognized as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Suicide's reach goes the person having suicidal thoughts or taking suicidal action; those around them, including family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc., are impacted, as well. Fortunately, there is a world of information and resources available. You can find more information at nami.org.

Until next time, stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

small business **SPOTLIGHT**



Racine's The Complete Experience Wellness Center is Reinvigorating for Mind, Body and Soul

Brooke Hesse, owner of The Complete Experience Wellness in Racine, began her career as a stylist with The Cutting Edge Salon and Spa, located in Mount Pleasant, which she co-owns with her mother, Kathleen Nelsen-Hesse. Brooke and business partner Kate Nor opened The Complete Experience in January 2022, offering such services as collective meditation; Vinyasa flow yoga; men's meditation; aerial hammock work; tai chi; and more to rejuvenate your mind, body and soul. The Complete Experience is located at 3801 Blue River Avenue in Racine.

Learn more at <https://www.thecuttingedgeracine.com/thecompleteexperience>.

In Case You Missed It



Federal Judge Rules Wisconsin Voters with Disabilities Must Receive Assistance in Casting Ballots

This week, a federal judge blocked a ruling by the conservative-controlled Wisconsin Supreme Court which would have prohibited Wisconsin voters with disabilities from receiving help in casting their ballots. The federal judge's ruling means that voters with disabilities can have another person return their absentee ballots for them.

The Supreme Court's initial ruling came at the same time that they prohibited the use of absentee ballot drop boxes in Wisconsin and provided that voters must mail their ballots themselves. Voters with disabilities and advocates for the community argued that this ruling would force them to choose

between breaking the law and disenfranchisement. U.S. District Judge James Peterson found that the U.S. Voting Rights Act protects the right of voters with disabilities to get whatever assistance is required to cast their ballots.



Evers Invests Additional \$90 Million in K-12 Education

Funds Will Address Staffing Issues, Direct Classroom Support, Expanded Mental Health Services in Schools

Governor Tony Evers has allocated an additional \$90 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars to K-12 education this week. Included in the allotment is \$15 million to double the Governor’s “Get Kids Ahead” initiative to provide mental health services in K-12 schools, and \$75 million to help districts address staffing challenges, keep classroom sizes small, and provide other direct classroom support. Through this most recent allocation, Kenosha Unified School District will receive approximately \$2.07 million, while Racine Unified will get about \$1.9 million.



Kenosha, Racine to Hold “Laborfest” Celebrations on Labor Day

For the first time since 2019, Kenosha and Racine will host their annual Laborfest celebrations on Labor Day, which this year is Monday, September 5, 2022. Kenosha Laborfest will be held at the St. Therese Festival Grounds, 2020 91st St., from 11 am to 5 pm, and will feature music, food booths, the announcement of Labor Person of the Year, activities for kids, raffles and more. There will also be a food drive for the Shalom Center; each food item donated will earn the donor a chance to win a door prize.

Racine’s Labor Fest 2022 will take place at the UAW 180 Union Hall, 3323 Kearney Ave. from 11 am to 4:30 pm; a picnic lunch will be served from 12:30 to 3 pm. Food donations will also be accepted at Racine Labor Fest, and the event will be dedicated to the UAW Local 180 workers who have been on strike against CNH since May 2, 2022.

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FDA Authorizes New Covid Booster That Targets Covid Subvariants

The federal Food and Drug Administration has authorized new Covid-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna for emergency use that targets the BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants of the Omicron variant, as well as the original Covid and main variants in circulation. The BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants are notorious for evading prior immunity to Covid-19. Before anyone can receive the new shots, the CDC must also weigh in and develop guidelines on how to distribute the new vaccine.



Wisconsin Launches Program to Send Out Free Covid Tests

Wisconsin residents can now get Covid-19 tests sent to them free of charge from the state. The federal government had been offering free Covid tests, but the funding for that program has run out.

The Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services (DHS) says that the [Say Yes! Covid Test website](#) is now live and operational. The site allows households to order five rapid tests for free. Households can still get up to eight rapid Covid tests per month through their insurance providers, as well.



Beware of Student Loan Debt Scams

On August 24, President Joe Biden made several changes to federal student loan payments, including a forgiveness program and an extension of the payment and interest moratorium

through December 31, 2022. Scammers are taking advantage of this new landscape to target borrowers with appealing – but illegitimate – offers. “Student loan debt relief companies” claim they can help borrowers achieve debt forgiveness or cancelation, reduce their monthly payments, consolidate loans, and more “for a price”. Consumers are advised that the offers these companies make can typically be done by borrowers themselves for free. Be wary of:

- Upfront fees or charges
- Promises that sound too good to be true
- High pressure sales tactics like “limited time offers”
- Claims of a special relationship with the federal government or Dept. of Education
- Requests for your Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID or for you to sign a form granting third-party authorization or power of attorney.

If you are or have been victimized by a fraudulent student loan debt relief company:

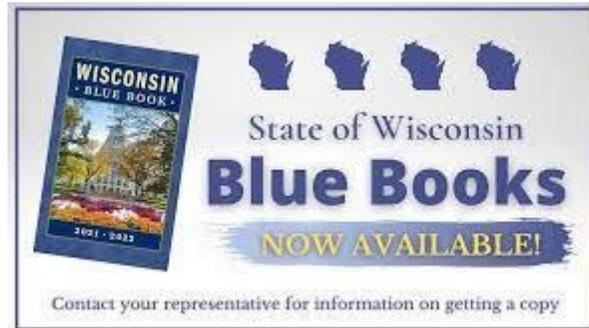
- File a complaint with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Bureau of Consumer Protection
 - Change your FSA ID and account passwords
- Contact your loan servicer to revoke any third-party authorization or power of attorney on file, and confirm no unwanted actions were taken on your loans
- Contact your financial institutions to request that payments to the company be stopped

Trusted resources for student loan debt information and questions include [Look Forward to Your Future](#) by the Wisconsin Dept. of Financial Institutions, the Wisconsin Student Loan Debt Hotline at (833)589-0750, and studentaid.gov.



Take My 2022 Legislative Survey

It's very important to me as a legislator to hear what you think about the important issues of the day. I've put together a survey on a variety of topics that I am hoping you will take the time to complete. You can find an online version of the survey at <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/22/wirch/surveys-and-petitions/2022-legislative-survey>.



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.