

KREKELER LAW REPORT



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KREKELER STROTHER, S.C. OPENS NEW BROOKFIELD OFFICE

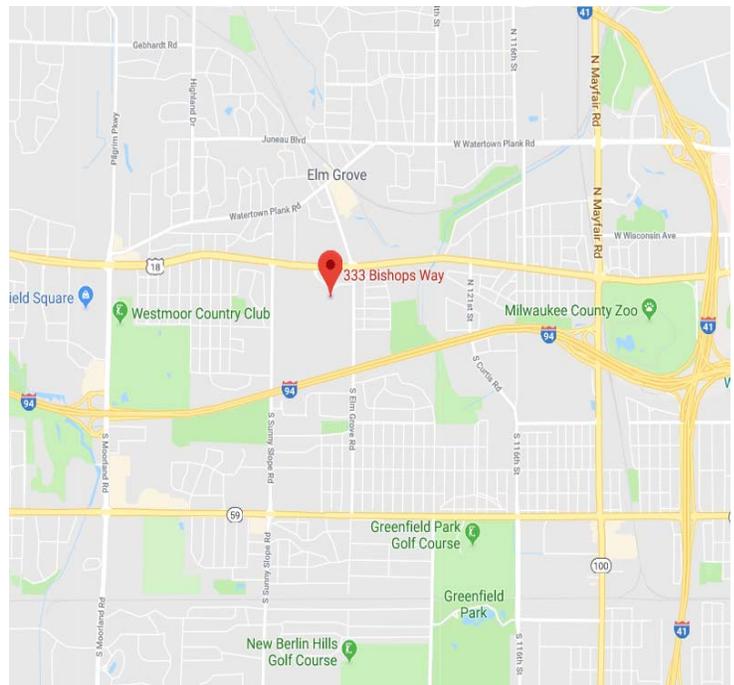
For several years, clients, attorneys and accountants have asked us to have an office in Eastern Wisconsin. NOW WE DO.

Our new office is located at:

Arbor Terrace
333 Bishops Way, Office 156A
Brookfield, Wisconsin 53005

offering easy access off of I-94. This presence will enable us to more cost-effectively attend hearings and creditor meetings in Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Green Bay, Kenosha and Racine. We can more conveniently meet with clients who live or work east of Madison.

We are pleased and happy to be able to better serve you and all our clients.



In This Issue

- *Krekeler Strother, S.C. Opens New Brookfield Office*
- *Using Your Credit Card Program for Rental Car Insurance*
- *Saving Money When Buying Gas*
- *Work Out a Payment Plan After the Utility Moratorium in Wisconsin*
- *Are Health Insurance or Medical Bills Making You Bankrupt?*
- *Grocery Delivery*
- *Sports and Entertainment Budgeting for Millennials*
- *Where's Krekeler?*



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Comments? Contact Colleen at (608) 310-3404 or email cwenos@ks-lawfirm.com so we can make things right.

USING YOUR CREDIT CARD PROGRAM FOR RENTAL CAR INSURANCE

It's almost time for a summer break, and you might be itching to get out of town. It's worth checking if your credit card program offers free rental car insurance. An article from [The Simple Dollar](#) does the math: a \$15 a day policy on your trip would equate to \$5,475 a year. Here are some pointers to picking the right program.

- Does your card offer primary or secondary coverage? Primary coverage means you don't have to file a claim with your personal insurance should damage occur. Avoid higher premiums to your policy this way.
- Are there territories that are not covered? Be sure you're not traveling to one before you leave.
- Consider what cars might be excluded. What are the coverage limits? Your policy might not cover a luxury vehicle, for example.
- What are the other rates, fees, or benefits of your card? Is there a foreign transaction fee? Not great if you are planning to rent a car overseas.

Cards that fit this criteria: Platinum Card from American Express, Chase Sapphire Preferred, Chase Sapphire Reserve, United MileagePlus Explorer Card, American Express Blue Cash Preferred Card.

Most [Visa and Mastercards](#) will cover theft, damage, towing, and loss of use, but not property damage or damage to other vehicles.

SAVING MONEY WHEN BUYING GAS

I just read a USA Today article by Nathan Bomey that explains how you can save money by buying your gas on the best days. In Wisconsin, the best day to buy gas is Tuesday, while the worst or most expensive day is Sunday.

This all made sense after I thought about it. On Sunday, all those Illinois tourists are gassing up and heading south, so naturally stations would want to be charging their highest prices that day. I am not sure why Tuesday is the best day to buy, pricewise, but maybe some of those Illinois drivers are delaying their departure.

In most states, the most expensive day to buy gasoline is Friday. That makes sense, since people are gassing up and heading out for the weekend. But in Wisconsin the most expensive gas is usually available on Sunday.

WORK OUT A PAYMENT PLAN AFTER THE UTILITY MORATORIUM

Did you know that there is an annual moratorium break on utility customers from Nov. 1-April 15 for those with hardship? It's due to Wisconsin's harsh winters like this one we just had.

If you have not been paying winter utility bills and have not worked out a payment plan for this with your utility, the payment in full is expected after the April 15 date. If you cannot pay, power may be cut off.

If you find yourself in this situation, here are some things you should know.

➤ Utilities understand hardships, and they are willing to work out a payment plan with you. If you've not yet filed for bankruptcy, call your utility directly.

Madison Gas & Electric – 608-252-7144

Alliant Energy – 800-255-4268

Wisconsin Public Service Commission – 800 225-7729

➤ What if you've declared bankruptcy?

- Since utility bills are unsecured debts, they should be listed as that on bankruptcy schedules and the balance you owe the day of filing will be discharged.
- Utility companies can require a deposit when a bankruptcy is filed.

➤ What if you can't pay the payment plan's deposit?

- If you do not pay the deposit, the utility can terminate services.
- But, to add another twist, the utility may let you pay it off over 3-6 months by signing a Deferred Payment Agreement, not associated with your normal billing.

Try to be a good consumer and pay your bill every month to avoid complications. But, in a pinch, remember courtesy and cooperation can go a long way in resolving payment issues. And you do have other remedies.



ARE HEALTH INSURANCE OR MEDICAL BILLS MAKING YOU BANKRUPT?

It used to be that one spouse could carry health insurance for the entire family, allowing work flexibility.

Now, health insurance can result in \$800 premiums per month (or more) for families. Some households are two-income households simply for the insurance.

More Americans are also now on high-deductible health plans, which often require the patient to pay thousands before insurance kicks in. Networks of doctors have grown narrower, meaning more providers are likely to be out-of-network.

Additionally, consumer advocates note the uninsured rate is going up, and more people are signing up for cheaper but less comprehensive health insurance plans. Health care coverage will be a top issue in the 2020 presidential election.

According to a study by the American Journal of Public Health and cited by the [Atlantic](#), nearly **60%** of people say a medical expense contributed to their decision to file for bankruptcy. That's more than either home mortgage debt or student loan rates.

Debt collectors may try to collect from you without making charity care available. Yet, hospitals provided more than \$38 billion to patients who could not afford care in 2017. If you're socked with thousands of dollars in medical debt, here are some steps you could take for relief.

- Try to negotiate your bill through ambulance services or the hospital.
- Ask about financial assistance.
- Ask about payment installments. One of our staff members, faced with a \$2,200 bill that went toward her deductible, spaced out these payments over a year in monthly installments.
- Bankruptcy may be a good choice, depending upon your circumstances. If you are at risk of wage garnishment, seek help immediately.
- Chapter 128 can stop and prevent garnishment without bankruptcy.

GROCERY DELIVERY

I have noticed lately that local grocery stores will deliver my groceries, sometimes for free. I worked in a grocery store for several years before and during law school, and I know that the profit margins on many grocery items is quite small.

So how and what would local grocery stores accomplish providing this service?

The answer at least in part is Amazon. Amazon purchased Whole Foods in June 2017. That \$13 billion-dollar purchase drove fears throughout the industry that the e-commerce giant would move into this field as it has in all other retail markets.

Wal-Mart responded promptly with its online grocery delivery service. Others, including small and medium-sized grocery companies, are following suit. Hy-Vee, Woodman's, Target, Trader Joe's, and Aldi now offer this service. A new business, Instacart, promises to deliver in as little as an hour from Whole Foods, Hy-vee, Costco, CVS Pharmacy, Pick-N-Save, and Madison's Sur la Table.

We will continue to watch this trend and will likely comment upon competition in the local grocery market, employment loss, and consumer savings.

- Do you have any other comments on this trend?
What do you think?
Do you use this service?
Why or Why not?

SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT BUDGETING FOR MILLENNIALS

Marketers look towards Millennials and Gen Z for shopping and spending trends. To these age groups, experiences are more important than things. That is why they tend not to invest in wedding china or big houses, and why many are opting for rideshares and public transportation over cars.

A big portion of experience spending is sports. Millennials spend more on entertainment and sport per month than any other age group, according to a recent article by [Chime Bank](#). Sports fans should make sure their sports spending falls within their monthly budget and not let the FOMO (fear of missing out) effect take over. Setting aside a separate bank account for these expenditures may help, too. If you're planning to attend the game, check for online discounts on tickets.

WHERE'S KREKELER ?

Last week I had the privilege of attending the Wisconsin Credit Union League educational event. Credit Union collectors, managers, and officers from all over the state attended to update their knowledge.

The first half day was a roundtable discussion on all sorts of issues related to collections. It turned into a lively discussion of all things debtor/creditor.

The second day I thought would be a more formal presentation, with me presenting on Bankruptcy Basics in the morning and more complex bankruptcy issues in the afternoon. The audience and its questions drove the discussion, though, and it ended up turning into another roundtable discussion.

I had been worried that it would be difficult to fill that much time with a bankruptcy presentation. I was wrong. The credit union questions were outstanding, and led us to touch on a number of topics I had not even planned on presenting. Below is a picture of some of the attendees at the end of the conference. They were still smiling, so they must have either been happy with the presentation, or happy it was over.

We will be providing information to the Credit Union League as a follow up. If you or your organization would like information on bankruptcy or anything related to debtor/creditor relations, let us know. We probably have materials for you. The participants (pictured below) generated lots of terrific questions. They all earned a fidget spinner. Thank you, Pauline Kussart of the Stark Company and LaMont Bonham of Connexus Credit Union, for your planning assistance!



We're going high tech now! David presented a one-hour webinar, his very first ever, on farming contracts and collections to Vita Plus customers and potential customers earlier this month through GoToWebinar® software. They loaded the slides and advanced them, David talked over the phone from the comfort of his desk, and everything went well.

David's been doing some endurance running through the UW Arboretum on weekends. He was pleased to see Arboretum was recently added to the National Register of Historic Places. If you're in the Madison area, check it out!



Have a question? Idea for a future article?

If you ask for it – we will write it!

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