



DID YOU KNOW?

## Feds: No More Funny Signs

An updated rules manual issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation last December means the end for punning overhead highway signs maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

The signs, which flashed messages like “Hocus pocus, drive with focus,” and “You’re not a turkey, don’t drive basted,” have appeared on electronic signs throughout the Badger State.

But federal transportation officials worry that drivers will misunderstand the signs or be distracted by them.

The updated federal manual specifies that road signs should be “simple, direct, brief, legible, and clear” and should only be used to “relay important information.”

Source: *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* **WL**

OUT THERE

## What’s In a Name?

A University of Houston lecturer seeking trademark protection for the terms “buckynomics” and “buckymarkets” has a battle on his hands with Bucky Badger.

Ed Hirs, an expert on energy economics, says that “buckynomics” and “buckymarkets” are derived from buckminsterfullerene, a carbon particle that’s commonly known as “buckyballs.”

Hirs said he uses “buckynomics” and “buckymarkets” to explain how energy markets are linked by network economics.

UW-Madison, which has registered trademarks for “Bucky” and “Bucky Badger,” has opposed Hirs’s application with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The university claims that Hirs’s use of the two terms in providing services may make people mistakenly think the terms are linked to the university.

Source: WPR **WL**



QUOTABLE

## “Well, grow up. Life is not comfortable.”

–McClennan County District Court Judge Thomas West

A 20-year-old man who didn’t show up for jury duty in Waco, Texas, last December got an earful from an irate judge.

Bryan Dominguez was selected as a juror in a murder case. But he didn’t show up for the first day of trial and, when contacted, told court officials that he didn’t feel comfortable serving as a juror on the case.

McClennan County District Court Judge Thomas West told Dominguez that he could be jailed for six months and fined \$500 for contempt of court.

“I don’t know what world you are living in, but this a grown-up world,” West said.

Source: KWTX **WL**

OUT THERE

## Ye Olde Charter

An Iowa man last November reached way back in the statute books – 806 years back – to mount a defense against theft charges.

After he was convicted of cutting down and removing dozens of trees from a wildlife area, Jason Ferguson moved for a new trial.

Ferguson claimed that the Charter of the Forest, issued by England’s King Henry III in 1217, applied to his case.

The Charter of the Forest gave back to free men rights to access the royal forest – rights William the Conqueror and his heirs had steadily hacked away at since 1066.

The judge concluded that the charter only applied to forests in England and denied Ferguson’s motion.

Source: *The Daily Nonpareil* **WL**

DID YOU KNOW?

## Ban on Medical Debt Reporting

Effective Dec. 13, 2023, hospitals, medical providers, and ambulance services in New York are barred from giving negative information about medical debt to consumer reporting agencies.

Under the law, any medical debt reported to a consumer reporting agency is void.

According to a press release issued by Governor Kathy Hochul after she signed the law, 740,000 people in New York have consumer reports marred by medical debt.

Companies are twice as likely to report medical debt to a consumer reporting agency if the debtor is a person of color, the press release said.

Colorado also passed a medical debt reporting law last year.

Source: LexBlog **WL**