

March 11, 2022



Dear friends,

In March 1987, President Ronald Reagan issued a public proclamation urging Americans to provide individuals with developmental disabilities “the encouragement and opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential.” Since then, March of each year has been recognized as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM). While there have been significant positive changes in the ensuing decades, many challenges remain. The 2022 theme, *Worlds Imagined*, focuses on how the world is changing as we move through and beyond the pandemic; it encourages exploration of new and ever-changing opportunities. You can find out more about the history of DDAM, including the advancements made and the hurdles that remain, [here](#).

Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

small business **SPOTLIGHT**



Feel Young(er) Again at Inner Child Comics and Collectible

While comic books are often thought of as “kids’ stuff”, Dr. Steven Kahn disagrees. That’s why he disbanded a successful medical practice and started Inner Child Comics & Collectibles, 5921 Sixth Ave. A in Downtown Kenosha. Dr. Kahn estimates that he has more than 200,000 comics in his personal collection, along with thousands of toys and other collectibles. He says he loves the art and craftsmanship of the work, as well as the joy the items bring. Kahn doesn’t have many kind words to say about big comics dealers, who may harass a collector who has an items they want. The name of the shop represents Kahn’s personal connection to comics and the desire to reconnect with the child in all of us. Store hours are somewhat in flux, so give them a call at (262)653-0400 to find out when they are open. You can also learn more [here](#).

In Case You Missed It



Governor Evers Offers “Help for Homeowners”

This week, Governor Tony Evers announced the launch of the Wisconsin Help for Homeowners

Program, which will provide more than \$92 million in financial assistance to Wisconsin homeowners who have experience hardship as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Eligible homeowners can receive assistance with mortgage payments, local property taxes and utilities, including internet, as well as housing counseling and legal services. To qualify, you must be a Wisconsin homeowner living in a single-family home, condominium, duplex or factory-built home as a primary residence; have experienced a qualified hardship after Jan. 21, 2020, and earn a household income at or below the area median income (roughly \$64,000 per year for

residents of Kenosha County; approximately \$61,000 for Racine County residents). Even homeowners without a mortgage who meet income requirements and are struggling with overdue bills related to their home are encouraged to apply for assistance. An online application is available now, and additional eligibility information is available on the [Wisconsin Help for Homeowners website](#).



Get Help With Overdue Home Bills

How It Helps The pandemic has financially impacted thousands of Wisconsin families. If you're finding it hard to make ends meet, Wisconsin Help for Homeowners is a new statewide program that can help with overdue bills like your mortgage payment, property taxes, and utilities, including internet. <i>You can apply even if you haven't been sick with COVID-19.</i>	Who Can Apply If You Are A Home Owner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-Family Home• Duplex• Condo• Manufactured Home If You Have Been Financially Impacted by COVID-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fewer Paid Hours at Work• Loss of Wages• Job Loss• Increased Household Costs
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Visit HomeownerHelp.WI.gov or call 1-855-2HOMEWI to learn more

Wisconsin Help for Homeowners is a program administered by the state of Wisconsin funded by the American Rescue Plan Act



State Supreme Courts Select Maps Submitted by Governor Evers

Late last week, in a 4-3 decision, the Wisconsin Supreme Court chose the maps drawn by Governor Tony Evers as the maps the state will use in our elections starting in August. This is a victory for fair maps. It means that our maps, while still tilting the playing field in favor of Republicans, will be slightly less tilted than the current maps and those offered this time by Republicans. Early on in the legal challenge phase, the conservative majority on the state Supreme Court declared that they would take a “least change” approach to selecting maps. While the new Republican maps were based on the current, highly gerrymandered maps, and adhered closely to them, Governor Evers found a way to draw maps that better meet the “least change” requirement while also creating a number of districts that are more competitive. This

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was enough to convince conservative Justice Brian Hagedorn to join Justices Ann Walsh Bradley, Jill Karofsky and Rebecca Dallet in choosing the Evers maps. Republican leadership has asked the state court to stay the ruling while they appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. Should this ruling stand, it would represent a small victory that we could then build on to finally eliminate partisan gerrymandering in Wisconsin. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published a tool that allows you to compare the current districts with those that will be used for the next ten years; you'll find it [here](#).



Republicans Go Back on their Promise to Pass Bill Funding Missing in Action Recovery Program

During last year's state budget deliberations, the Legislature's Republican majority removed from Governor Evers' budget proposal a provision that would provide \$180,000 per year, for two years, to the UW-Madison Missing in Action Recovery and Identification Program, known as the MIA Project. My Democratic colleagues and I offered an amendment to put the funding back into the budget, but it was defeated on a party-line vote. At that time, Republicans vowed to fund the MIA Project through separate legislation; I co-sponsored that bill. Last week, the Republican-controlled Assembly adjourned for the last time in the 2021-2022 legislative session, and Republicans in the Senate followed suit this week, without sending the bill to the Governor's desk.

Since 2015, UW-Madison has run the MIA Project, through which a team of faculty, staff and students from several different fields assist in the discovery, exhumation, identification and return of remains of missing-in-action American service members. As of May 2020, the federal Department of Defense officially listed 81,900 American service members as still "missing in action". The MIA Project has brought closure to a number of families who have waited decades for answers on the fates of their loved ones. Now legislative Republicans have left the program without critical funding. It is shameful that they have once again put partisan politics ahead of military families who have sacrificed so much and simply want answers as to what happened to their loved ones. This Project is too important to too many Wisconsin families; I will continue to work with my colleagues and the Governor to find a way to provide the funding it needs.



Don't Forget to "Spring Forward" This Weekend

Daylight savings time officially begins Sunday, March 13, at 2 am, meaning we move the clock ahead one hour. The change pushes more daylight hours into the afternoon and pushes sunset back later. We will remain in daylight savings time until we switch back, or "fall back" an hour, on Sunday, November 6.



Free Covid Tests Available

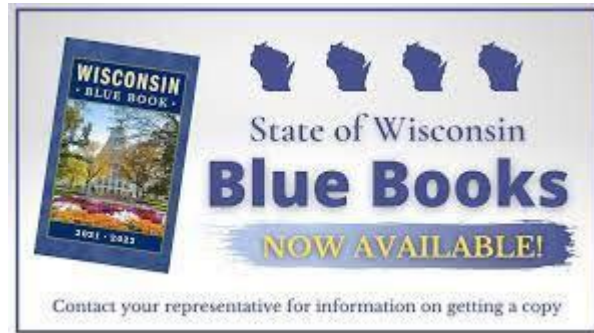
You can now sign up to receive two (2) sets of four free Covid-19 tests per household, thanks to an order from the Biden administration. With just your name and address, you can order the tests for your household at <https://www.covidtests.gov/>; you can also use this site to find nearby testing locations. 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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