

THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

Your Independent Source For Local News And Opinion – An Official Google News Source

Volume 4, Issue 5, March 4, 2008

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Bill Clinton At Lakewood High School - March 1, 2008

Former President Bill Clinton made a stop at Lakewood High School, 2000+ people filled the LHS East Gym, for a Hillary Clinton for President Rally.



photo by Ivor Karabatkovic

President Clinton takes the stage to a large Lakewood crowd.



photo by Ivor Karabatkovic

President Clinton shaking hands after his speech.

City Of Lakewood Fiscal Strategy For 2008 And Beyond

by Jennifer Pae

Director of Finance, City of Lakewood

Expenditure growth has outpaced revenue growth resulting in structural imbalance of the General Fund since 2000 for the City of Lakewood.

The General Fund is the primary operating fund for the City that supports services such as police, fire, refuse collection, and parks. General Fund revenues are generated primarily through income tax, licenses, fees, and property tax collections.

To balance the annual General Fund Balance, year-end fund balances were used resulting in the depletion of this safety net from over \$5.6 million at the end of 1999 to a year-end fund balance of under \$350,000 in 2007.

Faced with a projected year-end deficit for 2008, the City of Lakewood Administration and Council in 2007 resolved to address the fiscal crisis by examining how the City provides services through:

• Convening the Structural Balance Task Force

A citizen group of financial professionals charged with reviewing and analyzing General Fund expenditures and operations in order to identify possible cost reductions.

• Developing a Fiscal Strength Strategy

A document that details financial goals and strategies, and reports on their progress on a monthly basis.

• Conducting a Core Services Survey

A process where participants were asked to rate 470 separate City functions and programs to determine

where resources should be dedicated to increase the tax base and to attract and retain residents.

• Creating a Municipal Peer Staffing Comparison

A comparison of the City of Lake-

wood's staffing levels to that of five regional peers with populations of approximately 50,000.

In November 2007, the City of Lakewood Finance Department projected over a \$4.5 million 2008 General

Fund operating deficit. The projection assumed that the City would continue to provide services at the same level it had over the past several years without any

continued on page 10

City Finances Presented At Lakewood Alive Meeting

by Steve Hoffert

On February 26th, Lakewood Alive held an informative meeting giving the public an overview of the financial challenges facing the city of Lakewood. The members of the panel for this discussion were: Mayor Edward FitzGerald, Finance Director Jennifer Pae, Councilman Mike Summers, Yvette Ittu, CFO Greater Cleveland Partnership and former Lakewood Finance Director, and Kevin Obrien, Executive Director for the Center of Public Management.

Jay Foran making introductions vowed to "put the moose on the table." Luckily I had worn my boots in case there was more than just the moose on that table. Joe Gibbons, an active member of the community, acted as moderator. Mr. Gibbons explained that Lakewood Alive was formed after the controversy surrounding the west end development to keep residents informed about important issues in the community.

The discussion began with a general overview and history of the city's finances presented by Jennifer Pae. This primer on municipal finance briefly explained the \$100 million used annually to keep the city maintained and functioning. An informative chart

explained individual funds, expenditures and revenues.

Revenue supporting the general fund, whose services include public safety, public works, health and other departments, comes from the 1.5 percent income tax, license fees, permit inspections, service fees, court costs and \$17 million of the total \$81 million of effective real estate tax.

Enterprise funds include water distribution, sewer collection, waste water treatment and Winterhurst, whose revenues are generated by user fees. Other funding sources were mentioned briefly.

Ms. Pae said that the city's move to their own income tax collection in 2005 has saved the city \$1 million, but that this gain has been offset by a loss of real estate taxes of the same amount. This recent revelation has put an additional strain on the already overtaxed general fund.

The next speaker was Yvette Ittu who quickly went over where we stand as a region. As a self-professed "positive person" she sees the cup as half full in our region during these challenging times, but then again, Lakewood has always faced challenges.

After an advertisement for the Greater Cleveland Partnership, she got down to business saying that many sec-

tors, such as finance, health care and technology have seen growth, and that others, such as manufacturing, have not. The outlook for 2008 was looking up, though, thanks to an aggressive marketing campaign to bring businesses to our region.

Mortgage insurance companies

continued on page 3

In This Issue

Events & Notices	2
Lakewood City Council.....	4
Lakewood Library	5-7
Lakewood Schools	10
Lakewood Sports	11
Society's Child.....	12
Secret Shopper.....	14
Pulse Of The City.....	15
Chef Geoff	17
Lakewood Perspective	18
Conservation Corner.....	19
Lakewood Real Estate ..	22-23
Classifieds	24

Events & Notices

The Lakewood Observer is pleased to publish Notices on a first-come first-serve basis. Please be patient with us as we have a limited amount of free space available for these items. All notices must be submitted through the Member Center at www.lakewoodobserver.com

Huntington’s Disease Society Of America Northeast Ohio: Chapter Kevin Gianotto Named Executive Director

The Huntington’s Disease Society of America (HDSA) announced the appointment of Kevin Gianotto to the position of Executive Director of its Northeast Ohio Chapter.

Gianotto most recently served as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Director for ALSAC / St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital where he oversaw the organization’s fundraising activities for the states

of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, southern New Jersey and the District of Columbia. Prior to that, he served as the Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations for the national office of Community Health Charities, the country’s largest alliance of health care agencies. Before his entrée into the non-profit sector, he held positions at The Washington Post Company, Clear

Channel Communications and The Berline Group, a large advertising agency located in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Gianotto will undertake an aggressive three-year expansion plan for the HDSA Northeast Ohio Chapter, oversee a local media campaign and manage the chapter’s fundraising initiatives, which include but are not limited to its annual Hoop-A-Thon, Summer Gala

and Holiday Amaryllis sale.

Huntington’s disease (HD) is a devastating inherited illness of the brain. Affected individuals usually start to experience symptoms in their 20s or 30s, although there is also a juvenile form of the disease. Over time, persons with HD become less able to control their movements and become unable to care for themselves. There is no known cure.

Curves Supports Communities Nationwide

Staff Writer

Curves of Lakewood will be participating in the Curves Food Drive to benefit local food banks.

Last year, the Curves Food Drive collected almost 11 million pounds of food for local communities all over the world. This year, Curves has set a goal to collect 15 million pounds to help even more people in need of healthy food.

To celebrate the generosity of the

community, Curves is offering a discounted service fee of \$30 for any new member who brings in a bag of non-perishable groceries and commits to a 12-month CD membership between March 3 and March 15. Last year, a quarter of a million new members joined Curves during the food drive.

Others wishing to donate may drop off non-perishable food items at Curves Monday through Friday during business hours through the month of March.

This year’s food drive includes a twist: a weekly theme that gives people fun options and helps them pick healthy foods to donate. The schedule includes: Week 1-Empty Your Pantry of Healthy Staples; Week 2: Foods From Around the World; Week 3: Souper Suppers; Week 4: Family Friendly items including healthy snacks for kids and baby necessities.

“The Curves Food Drive promotion is always exciting,” said Joe Pianeck, the owner of the Lakewood club. “We have a chance to help so many people at a time when the food banks are lowest. It’s a win-win situation for everyone, and we’re very proud to participate.”

For more information, contact Joe Pianeck at 440-724-937 or www.curves.com.

Curves works every major muscle group with strength training, cardio and stretching in every 30 minute workout. And now there’s CurvesComplete.com: an online subscription diet and fitness solution based on founder Gary Heavin’s New York Times bestselling book Curves, Permanent Results Without Permanent Dieting and the results of an ongoing university study. Heavin and his wife Diane are considered the innovators of the express fitness phenomenon that has made exercise available to more than four million women worldwide. With more than 10,000 locations in dozens of countries, Curves is the world’s largest fitness franchise. For more information, please visit: <http://www.curves.com> or www.curvescomplete.com.

Lakewood Home Show Adds Home Business And Arts & Crafts Section

by Patty Ryan

The Lakewood Chamber of Commerce and the Lakewood City Schools Community Education and Recreation Department announce the addition of a Home Business and Arts & Crafts Section to the 2008 Lakewood Home Show. As consumers enter the show, a new section has been added for smaller exhibitors and Arts and Craft businesses.

Businesses will be set up in a high traffic area between the main entrance and main exhibit areas for only \$100. These booths are in limited supply so if you are interested please act now. Major sponsors of the Lakewood Home Show include Slife Heating and Cooling, Sun News, Valpak, West Life News, West Shore Magazine, Cox Communications, Dominion East Ohio, Lakewood Hospital, The Lakewood Observer, and Madison Avenue Car Wash. You will

find discounts on your tickets from the Show’s Ticket Sponsors Nature’s Bin and Walgreens.

The Home Show is a family friendly show with something for everyone. Mark your calendar for March 8 and 9. The Home Show will be held at Harding Middle School in Lakewood, 16601 Madison, and runs Saturday March 8 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday March 9 from 1 p.m. through 5 p.m. Offers on the back of tickets for the LAKEWOOD HOME SHOW add up to more than the admission price of \$5 (parking is free and kids under 18 are free) Tickets are available now online and at the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, 14701 Detroit Road. For more information visit www.lakewood-homeshow.com. Your Suburb...Your Home Show. See you there!

USPS Safety Corner: Slips, Trips, and Falls

Slips, trips, and falls. Throughout the winter months, our safety committee is bombarded with calls from customers who did not receive their mail daily. The first question we ask them is, “Are your steps cleared?”. If they are not, carriers are instructed to avoid all hazardous conditions. These procedures will ensure the safety of the carrier. What can you do to help and ensure daily delivery? Although we know it is impossible to keep your steps clear at all times, there are certain things that you can do to help.

Here are some pointers: 1. If possible, the ideal situation would

be to move your mailbox to ground level even if it is just for the season. 2. Make sure railings are secured. 3. When repainting porches add a little sand to your paint. It acts as a drying agent and will not make the surface slippery.

We invite your input on any safety issues regarding the post office. Please submit your input to the following address: Safety Committee c/o Lakewood Post Office, 1475 Warren Rd., Lakewood, Oh. 44107.

Thank you,
The Safety Committee
Lakewood Post Office



THE

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OBSERVER

Your Independent Source for
Lakewood News & Opinion

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Lakewood Observer

Lakewood Alive Meeting

continued from page 1 *More on Page 4!*

believe that the second round of housing foreclosures and devaluation should not hit our region as badly because of our currently depressed housing costs. One item of interest is that new housing starts for our region have out-paced job production at a rate of two to one. Typically this rate should be one new home per two new jobs created. Luckily this over optimistic housing faux pas will have a much greater effect on outlying suburbs (take that Avon).

Kevin Obrien came out swinging with several factors that are effecting our regional economic development. These include the current housing crisis here and Ohio's elimination of the tangible personal property tax. On one hand, the tax reduction aids businesses willing to relocate to our area, but local and state governments have lost this revenue stream, adding additional financial stress.

Long term movement of residents from the city of Cleveland through the inner ring suburbs and eventually to outlying areas has created an inner core of lower income residents, thus further eroding the tax base. Lakewood is less affected by this phenomenon because it more closely resembles an outer-ring suburb with a diverse, well-built housing stock along with higher household incomes.

Lakewood is challenged by a hous-

ing value that merely keeps up with inflation thus leaving tax collections flat. Gee, what a concept, government revenues growing at the rate of inflation (sorry, I couldn't resist.)

He also asserted that an aging population is making Lakewood's future dark, but the fact that the city offers more city services than other communities is a competitive advantage. After all, we are

How does Lakewood reach a balance between providing services and the amount of revenue?

competing against Westlake and Solon, not Cleveland; with our great housing stock and community we should compete well in the changing market.

How does Lakewood reach a balance between providing services and the amount of revenue? Some communities have used a program budget which clearly sets forth spending on individual services beforehand. He also discussed consolidation of services, which the city already practices on a small scale.

In 2005 the city had 1016 businesses with 14,000 employees with a gross payroll of \$110 million, although these numbers are slightly down this year. It is critical that these numbers

remain strong and increase.

Finally, he wondered what are we going to be when we grow up? Will Lakewood invest in itself in order to attract people?

Thus, the historical portion of the presentation sadly ended and the talk shifted to the present and future.

Ms. Pae once again took the hot seat and explained that tax revenues have been relatively flat since 1999. Expenditures, on the other hand, have increased significantly, leading to the city's current financial crisis. Requests

additional commercial office space would boost our economy more than that of retail.

Born from the Grow Lakewood project initiated in 2004, City Council and the former Mayor created the structural balance group comprised of citizens from the private sector. This group evaluated 6 major departments by financial impact only. After speaking to the managers of these departments, the group submitted their final analysis in late 2007. Cost reductions of \$1.7 million could be obtained relatively easily with an additional \$2.5 million gained through more aggressive cost reductions. This report was presented to mayor and council.

Mayor Fitzgerald praised the panel and those who worked so diligently to find a solution to the city's financial problems. He proceeded to run through a list of "random notes" from his first fifty days as mayor.

He recalls that during the west end eminent domain debate those in opposition "made some very good arguments" against building another retail outlet, but at the time he felt that if something was not done then, more drastic measures would have to be taken at a later date.

The biggest political question facing the administration and council since 2003 concerning the impending financial imbalance was whether to nip

continued on page 13...



- Fady Nageeb, M.D.
- Degree: Ain Shams University Faculty of Medicine, Cairo, Egypt
 - Fellowship: Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH
 - Internship and Residency: Ain Shams University Hospitals, Cairo Egypt

Lakewood Hospital and Westlake Medical Center Welcome Fady Nageeb, M.D.

Dr. Nageeb is part of Cleveland Clinic's comprehensive pain management program, one of the largest programs in the nation. His specialties include back pain, abdominal pain, CRPS/RSD and regional anesthesia. Patients can also find the widest range of care in Northeast Ohio right here, with services that include psychiatry, physical therapy, medication management and integrative medicine.

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Westlake Pain Management Center
805 Columbia Road
440.835.8233

clevelandclinic.org/painmanagement



Lakewood City News

Council Fills Board Seats

Council president Mike Dever called the February 19, 2008 meeting to order at 7:36 PM. The first order of business was a resolution presented by Dever (at large) commending Thomas J. George for his public service as Mayor of Lakewood.

In a turnaround from his past two and a half decades of sitting in a council seat or the mayor's chair, George

by Stan Austin
LO's 8th Man On Council

stepped up to the public podium to offer his thanks and offer his good wishes to the new council and administration. Each council member present (Mary Louise Madigan, ward four, being absent) offered their own personal

thanks and remembrances to George. In each member's remarks they used the title "Mayor" George which might indicate a salutation for life.

Council then passed a series of resolutions appointing volunteers to

various boards and commissions.

The first appointment was Michael Fleenor to the Lakewood Board of Building Standards/Architectural Board of Review/Sign Review Board for a five year term.

The second appointment placed Mary Breiner on the Lakewood Board of Zoning Appeals for a two year term.

Third up was the appointment of Mary Cierebiej, who will become a member of the Lakewood Planning Commission for one year to complete an unexpired term.

Ellen Bryztwa was named a Community Trustee of the Lakewood Hospital Association Board.

At large council members Nickie Antonio and Brian Powers were appointed to the Governing Board of Lakewood Hospital.

One advantage that the Lakewood Observer can bring to you and to help us know our community better is by picking out a conversation or exchange that may have been ignored by other media. Such was the case at the end of this meeting.

In the last few years we have all seen on television a Taser being used, generally by police. A Taser is a small gun-like device that fires electric darts to incapacitate a person temporarily. Police Chief Malley sent a request to council to accept an award of \$12,752 from the Office of Criminal Justice Services Justice Assistance Grants to purchase eleven Tasers, Taser Cameras, and training cartridges. Malley indicated that the acquisition of Tasers is part of an overall plan to supply this device to all officers. According to Malley, "the Tasers provide our officers another level of response to resistance and aggression and will further protect our officers and the public from those that are non-compliant and pose threats to all of our safety."

Nickie Antonio (at large) used this request educate herself and the larger community on the use of force by police. The relationship of police to the citizenry and levels of force authorized are elemental to our process of governing. Antonio posed the question to the Chief as to where a Taser fit in with use of force and whether it was excessive.

Malley pointed out that a Taser device actually gave another level of choice to an officer between laying hands on an individual or a much higher degree of force. He said that many times, physical confrontations led to injury of an officer and the non-compliant person. A Taser offers the opportunity to subdue an individual without the extra risk of injury.

Tom Bullock (ward two) asked if injuries to officers involved in physical contact resulted in sick time or an added expense to the department's budget. Malley indicated that injury downtime has been an outcome of those exchanges.

Antonio was satisfied with the answers and council voted to accept the grant award.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Making "Cents" Of Lakewood's Finances

by John Viglianco

On a snowy Tuesday, February 26, in spite of the local Obama-Clinton debate, many Lakewood residents packed a room at Harrison Jr. High to listen to "Making 'Cents' of Lakewood's Finances", a presentation sponsored by Lakewood Alive. In the presentation, numerous speakers talked about the economy in northern Ohio. The two initial speakers described the economic situation in Cuyahoga County, but it was the discussion of Lakewood's financial situation that motivated the residents to leave their warm living rooms and TVs.

Jennifer Pae, the Financial Director of the city of Lakewood, led the evening by explaining charts containing the hard financial numbers. (The "meat" of her presentation is available at <http://www.lakewoodalive.com/pdf/Lakewood-City-LakewoodAlive.pdf>) She reported that income tax collections have been flat, not decreasing. But Property Taxes, about 12 percent

of which feed pension, wastewater, and the general funds; have decreased. In the meantime, expenses, especially health care for about 500 city employees, have ballooned. The problem, realized in November, is that expenses would exceed revenues by about 3 million dollars, and there is no general fund cushion left to pay the overrun.

Michael Summers followed Jennifer. Summers has a long history of establishing planning agendas for the city. A few years ago he headed the Grow Lakewood group to help define the city's long-term goals. In November, 2007, he was a member of a quickly convened task force to access the city's financial picture and suggest where immediate cuts to the 2008 budget could be made. Mike, who is now the Ward 3 councilman, presented the summary of this task force. The group produced two levels of cutbacks – a minimal one, and a more aggressive one, if needed. The magnitude of the 2008 budget shortfall will require the broader cutbacks.

Mayor Ed FitzGerald then took the stage. FitzGerald started by discussing how the executive branch really controls the budget agenda. The Council has input, but it is the mayor who has to execute the tough personnel decisions that will have the greatest effect. Just like an old roof that is worn but not yet leaking, the previous regime managed to keep the budget on the plus side. Preventative maintenance is nice, but most things don't get fixed until they break. Now that the budget is in the red, the tough measures have to be taken.

Immediately following the beginning of his term, FitzGerald has taken steps to reduce expenses. He employed the services of the State Auditor, who did find that the new administration's budget assessment was accurate. The State Auditor will also continue to suggest best practices for the various departments of Lakewood city government. FitzGerald has frozen all raises and is negotiating with all of the city's unions and departments. He wants to explore regional consortiums for health insurance that may generate cost savings, in the long term. FitzGerald did not provide details concerning cutbacks, which are contingent on negotiations and as the budget process unfolds. He believes that the last administration could have done more in the way of reformation before asking the voters for more. His administration will not ask voters to sacrifice more in the way of taxes until they have proven that city hall has also made significant sacrifices.

Finally, FitzGerald talked about ways to improve the city apart from slicing budgets and personnel. He thinks that information technology can provide additional efficiencies in the public sector. He still aims to assemble a pool of funds to purchase foreclosed properties. Mentioning items related to his background in law enforcement, FitzGerald stressed his goal to add policemen, either full or part-time. He noted that our existing jail facilities are often inadequate, and that holding criminals in other locations has become a significant expense. His administration is exploring the possibility of constructing a new jail, that could potentially generate revenues from other suburbs!

Ed FitzGerald pledged to lead Lakewood through these difficult economic times and promises to do it with candor. In close, he asked for our help and patience for this arduous task.

LCPI Board Changes

by Mary Anne Crampton

Lakewood Community Progress Inc (LCPI) announces the election of its 2008 officers:

Mikelann Rensel to president, Jack Gustin (Lakewood Hospital) to vice president, Tim Laskey (Laskey CPA) to treasurer, and Curt Brosky (LSC Service Corp) to secretary. Ex-officio: David Shaw (First Federal Lakewood)

Two new members have been elected to join the board: Tom McConnell (Discount Drug Mart) and Jenni Baker (LakewoodAlive)

Lakewood Community Progress Inc, is a nonprofit community development organization dedicated to facilitating economic development and planning in Lakewood, Ohio. LCPI is the oversight organization for the Main Street Lakewood program.



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Apple Cinnamon Pupcakes	\$2.95	\$5.95		
Veggie Bites	\$2.95	\$5.95		
Sampler Bag	\$2.95	\$5.95		
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Lakewood Public Library

Lakewood Public Library Services: Homebound Service

by LaTasha Redding

Because of the generous work of the Friends of the Lakewood Public Library, the library is able to offer Lakewood residents a home delivery service. The Friends of the Lakewood Public Library have provided a van to the library that is used to deliver library materials to patrons who live in Lakewood and are unable to leave their home on a temporary or permanent basis.

Patrons call the library to make their requests for books, magazines,

audio books, compact discs, DVDs and videos and those items are delivered to their Lakewood residence. People needing this service can make their requests for a delivery by calling (216) 226-8275 ext. 120. They also call this number to request a pickup when they are ready to return the materials to the library. Requests can be made any day of the week. Deliveries and pickups of library materials are made Tuesday afternoons only, so requests made on Tuesdays need to be made before 12:00 p.m. in order that library staff has enough time to gather the requested materials.



Paul Dimmick stands with pride next to new LPL van, purchased by th Friends of the Lakewood Public Library

Lakewood Public Library Events Calender

Sunday With the Friends Rust Belt Blues: The Mississippi River flows straight through the Rust Belt in the person of Oliver Buck, blues revivalist. With an expressive yet unaffected voice and a direct, unadorned sound he brings the gamut of human emotion to stomping blues classics and old-timey originals alike. Sunday, March 9 at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library auditorium 2:00 p.m

Irish Songs to Melt the Heart: Our St. Paddy’s celebration begins a day early with Elise McKnight on the Celtic harp. Sing along when you know the words. Lesser-known ballads sprinkled throughout will give us all a chance to sit back and appreciate the depth and beauty of the Irish heritage. Sunday, March 16 at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library auditorium 2:00 p.m

Lakewood Historical Society Towpath Tunes and Trails: Tap your toes to the history of Ohio’s Erie Canal. These stories and songs have been passed down for generations. Historical interpreter Hank Mallery plays Cletus, dressed head to toe in period costume, offering his own original compositions on a variety of instruments. Thursday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library auditorium

Business Book Talk with Tim Zaun and Friend: Join Tim Zaun and his friends to discuss Blessed Unrest: how the largest movement in the world came into being and why no one saw it coming by Paul Hawken on Thursday, March 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library auditorium

Five Star Films Movies: Escape with the Giants. For more than a hundred years, the motion picture industry has produced magical works that have become the centerpiece of our entertainment culture. Barbara Steffek-Hill traces their evolution from the Silents to today and touches upon the elements of film and how to watch them. Sunday, March 9 at 4:00 p.m. in the Main Library auditorium

Tango (Spain) Directed by Carlos Saura 1998 PG-13. The soul of tango is captured in all its elegance and beauty by renowned director Saura and cinematographer Vittorio Storaro. Against this lush and captivating backdrop, a love affair begins between a film director and a dancer with the lurking danger of her mobster ex-boyfriend close at hand. This film is Spanish with English subtitles. Saturday, March 15 in the Main Library auditorium. There will be a reception with light refreshment at 5:00 p.m. The movie begins at 6:00 p.m.

Second Saturday Folk Music Fritz Schaufele is back with an eclectic sampling of today’s best folk musicians, drawn from a variety of traditions. Crawley & Taylor – Scottish folk singers. Saturday, March 8 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library auditorium

Family Weekend Wonders Make the library a part of your family weekend time with programs featuring stories, activities, music and crafts for children. Our staff will provide materials and ideas for families wishing to continue reading and storytelling at home. The programs are free and there is no need to register in advance. Choose the day and time most convenient for you.

Upcoming Themes:
March 7, 8, 9 **Sky Above, Earth Below**
March 14, 15, 16 **Buds and Blossoms**
Day **Time**
Friday 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.
Saturday 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m.
Sunday 2:00 p.m.
In the Madison Branch auditorium

Homework ER: for students in kindergarten through eighth grade- Tuesday, September 4, 2007 – Thursday, May 22, 2008: Need a little extra help with your homework or just want a cool place to work? We transform part of the library into the Homework ER with helpers and a cart full of resources. Homework ER will be closed for school holidays and vacations. No need to register.

Monday-Thursday, 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. at the Madison Branch Four O’clock Club: for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.Join the Club! Come for a different activity each weekday. No need to register. Tuesday, September 4, 2007 – Friday, May 23, 2008

ACTIVITY	DAY	TIME
Make-It-Take-It (craft day)	Mondays	4:00 p.m.
Marvelous Mysteries (surprise day)	Tuesdays	4:00 p.m.
Twist, Shout, Act It Out (Movement, Music and Drama)	Wednesdays	4:00 p.m.
Games Galore (game to play or make)	Thursdays	4:00 p.m.
Make-It-Take-It (craft day)	Fridays	4:00 p.m.

At the Madison Branch Hogwarts Games: a book discussion program for students in the fourth through eighth grade. Discuss events that take place during Harry Potter’s time at Hogwarts and compete in activities to see which house will win the prestigious House Cup. All seven of J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter books must be read before the program to participate. To register, stop in the Madison Branch or call (216) 228-7428.

Thursday, March 6	<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone</i>
Thursday, March 20	<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>
Thursday, April 3	<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>
Thursday, April 17	<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>
Thursday, May 1	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>
Thursday, May 15	<i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i>
Thursday, May 29	Summary of the first six books
Thursday, June 5	<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i>
7:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Madison Branch	

LAKEWOOD EARTH & FOOD COMMUNITY

LEAF

Community Supported Agriculture | Bulk Food Buying | Soil Building | Community Gardens

Community Supported Agriculture

Public Meeting

Sunday March 16th, 2008 5:30 PM

Lakewood Public Library Main Branch – Main Auditorium

Featuring City Fresh and Covered Bridge Gardens

Learn about the 2008 LEAF Community initiatives, how to buy your produce locally, benefits of supporting local farms, how to sign up for our programs, and about volunteer opportunities. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions and request specific items from the farmers.

Last year, our first year, over 200 people participated in the LEAF Community’s Community Supported Agriculture Program. We are excited for the 2008 season to begin as we grow as an organization to meet the needs of the Lakewood Community.

www.leafcommunity.org

Lakewood Public Library

Christopher J. Dawson:

Lakewood's Man of Steel Looks Inside the Mills

by Kenneth Warren

Christopher J. Dawson is Lakewood's man of steel. His grandfather was a steel worker in the Ohio Valley. His fascination with factories began when he was a child. A formally credentialed historian with degrees from Bowling Green State University and Cleveland State University, he is now the Development Officer at University Hospitals. Having once served as curator of Urban and Industrial History at the Western Reserve Historical Society, he was the essential steward who cultivated relationships with people and institutions to ensure the acquisition and preservation of the LTV Steel Collection.

With the publication of *Steel Remembered: Photographs from the LTV Steel Collection* by Kent State University Press, Dawson delivers to readers interested in Cleveland's industrial history and commercial photography an especially unique book, which features amazing images of workers inside the Northeast Ohio mills of Republic Steel, Otis Steel and Corrigan, and McKinney Steel.



This photo shows the ore dock crew in 1936. The photo was taken by Krohn Studios of Cleveland and according to the caption on the back, these are the folks in the picture: Front row, left to right: Harry Sheets (dock superintendent), Stanley Kuchinski (labor foreman), Charlie Senkbiel, Ed Goers, Phillip Siwik, Joe Narolesski, Tom Jennings, Alexander Abraham, Stanley Novakowski, Steve Kurowski, Anthony Novak, and John Marsinick (dock clerk) Middle row, left to right: Ed Moran, Mike Lasch, Walter Miller, Carl Hills, Dan Ruscitti, and Ed Vosmik Back row: Dan Ricci

"When people think of steel they think of Pittsburgh. But Cleveland was and is to this day a steel-making center," Dawson explains. "Today there's one mill outside Pittsburgh. Cleveland has one

huge mill producing with a fraction of the people. Because so few work in steel they don't see it as a major industry."

Published by a university press, *Steel Remembered: Photographs from the*

LTV Steel Collection is intended, nevertheless, to reach a general readership.

"I was aiming at a very general audience, somebody who worked in the industry, as well as sons, daughters, and granddaughters, people who heard about the mills but never saw the inside," says Dawson.

Steel Remembered: Photographs from the LTV Steel Collection is a marvelous testament to Dawson's will to preserve, narrate and commemorate a history easily lost. With an eye for the human drama of industrial labor, Dawson has assembled from more than forty-five thousand photographs a telling array of historical images that speak dramatically to the force of steel on lives in Northeast Ohio.

"In terms of industrial photography, it can't be better than a steel mill. I don't think Hollywood could ever create a set as dramatic as a steel mill," says Dawson.

Indeed, images tell a great story in *Steel Remembered: Photographs from the LTV Steel Collection*. However, Dawson's writing provides considerable insight concerning the steel-making process and the wider historical context for appreciating the story of steel in Northeast Ohio. And usefully enough, he includes a "Steel Process Glossary" at the close of the book. Thus his grip on artistry, history and industry spans image and word to make *Steel Remembered: Photographs from the LTV Steel Collection* a practically inspired addition to any library.

In crafting the book, Dawson manages to steel himself in a refreshing vision that goes against the usual postmodern focus on decaying and demolished steel mills. His appreciation for the life pulse behind the steel industry is evident with each turn of the page.

"I didn't want the book to be an obituary but a celebration of the industry to this region. There are enough other books that serve as obituaries for steel. I wanted to show one being built, one still around and still in use," says Dawson.

With the work of the book behind him, Dawson can still speak with an enthusiasm and respect for factories, industrial processes, inventors and laborers.

"The actual process is akin to medieval alchemy with raw materials from earth transformed into the most useful material man has made. There's liquid bouncing around like water, radiating heat and light. Even when it solidifies there's bright orange material giving off light and heat."

Steel Remembered: Photographs from the LTV Steel Collection generates a powerfully felt historical reflection on Northeast Ohio's industrial age, revealing how creative snaps, historical facts and productive acts back a labor of love, which through Dawson's intervention is still glowing from faces, black and white, for readers in these times.

Escape With The Greats

by Barbara Steffek-Hill

Being in a theatre just as the movie begins is like stepping onto a magic carpet. In mere seconds, the audience is whisked into the realm of someone else's imagination, artistry and creativity.

Just weeks from now, Lakewood Public Library launches a new film series entitled *Five Star Films* that takes to the silver screen at its Main Library Auditorium. The series will feature one film per month from March through August, 2008. FSF's objective is to offer the community a set of motion pictures that best exemplify the art and craft of cinema, both arthouse and classic, meant to immerse the audience in excellence.

While living for several years in Tarpon Springs, Florida, I was asked to produce/host a weekly feature film

series for that city's Cultural Center Theatre. It was a dream come true. Fast forward to late summer 2007, eight months after we'd moved back to Lakewood. Good fortune struck again in the persons of library Director Ken Warren, Deputy Director Kim Paras and John Guscott, Manager of Electronic Services. My husband, Noel Hill, had mentioned the Florida production to Mr. Warren. He invited me to a group meeting. Within the week, we'd sat down to discuss the possibility of LPL adding a new film series into its upcoming programs.

Needless to say, I was thrilled to be named producer/presenter. And with neither shame nor regret, admit to having a life-long love affair with motion pictures since age four, when my parents took me to see *Gone with the Wind*. Two of my uncles operated

movie houses, and having this familial easy access to the magical world of films was equivalent to letting a kid loose in a candy store.

Five Star Film's premiere choice is *TANGO*. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, where the musical genre tango was born in the 1890's, tango soon became embedded in the everyday life of the people. Pure tango is comprised of the dance, the music and the singers of tango. A more contemporary form is the highly-stylized theatrical or stage version that emphasizes the dance. Today numerous tango cafes remain very popular, crowded with devotees and students of the dance.

With this motion picture, renowned Spanish film director Carlos Saura (*The Trilogy: Blood Wedding/El Amor Brujo/Carmen*) has captured the soul of tango in every aspect of its elegance and beauty. The spectacular cinematography is by the legendary Vittorio Storaro (*The Last Emperor*). Choreography and music are mesmerizing. Against that lush and sensual backdrop is set the fledgling romance between a recently-jilted film director and a beautiful dancer in the movie he's shooting about tango. But danger overshadows them, posed by her jealous underworld ex-boyfriend. When he attempts reconciliation, she rejects him. He threatens her. Nevertheless, the couple remains together. Will fate be cruel – or kind?

Showtime: 6:00 P. M. on March 15, 2008, in the library's Main Auditorium with a reception beforehand at 5:00 p.m. So pack your popcorn and plan to get away with the greats.



Lakewood Public Library

Oliver Buck Brings “The Rust Belt Blues” To Lakewood Public Library

by Eve Klodnick

Cleveland native Oliver Buck will bring his sound, a mixture of Country, Blues, and Folk, to the Lakewood Public Library Auditorium at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, March 9th. Buck, a talented singer, songwriter, guitarist mixes in covers and standards with his own original songs to reflect life in the “heart of the great American Rust Belt.”

Buck, who has been performing and touring since he was sixteen, is also somewhat of a musical historian. He holds a Master’s degree in History with an emphasis on American popular music. He was influenced by the likes of Bob Dylan, Dave Van Ronk, Skip James, Johnny Cash, Hank Williams, The Band, John Hiatt, Jimmie Rodgers, and The Grateful Dead.

The 1920s through the 1950s is one of Mr. Buck’s favorite musical eras. This is a time when according to Buck, “Country, blues, folk, and rock & roll were all mixed up together. Sure, the marketers and radio programmers tried to separate artists into genres. But for the most part, musicians and songwriters hadn’t gotten the message yet. You listen to those old Memphis and Nashville records and there it is--all kinds of sounds and approaches to playing intermingling together. That’s what makes those Sun Records sides so compelling.”

Buck himself released a solo album in 2007 titled Rust Belt Blues. The album garnered praise from critics in both the United States and Europe. Buck describes the album as, “A stripped-down, not-quite-lo-fi sound. It’s a small-budget, self-produced record, and the sound is more direct and intimate than anything I have done before.”

In 2007 Buck was named a finalist in the Telluride Blues Festival Acoustic Blues Competition. As a solo artist and also with his band, The New Madrids, Buck plays at both large and small venues across North America. About performing he says, “I love to meet people all over the country who share my passion for American music. In a marketplace dominated by the latest teen

sensations, it never ceases to amaze me that so many people love and support blues and roots music.”

With his band the New Madrids Buck has just finished a new album, “Prodigal Son.” You can listen to songs from the new album on Oliver’s website at www.oliverbuck.com.

So come out March 9th to see Oliver Buck and enjoy songs that he describes as “joyful, cathartic, stomping, subtle, like all well made blues, running the gamut of human emotion if you listen long enough.” The program is free and open to the public.



Promotional photo of Oliver from oliverbuck.com

Songs Of Ireland (Not Just Drinking) For St. Patrick’s Day

by Ben Burdick

Irish vocalist and Celtic harpist Elise McKnight will begin her Monday St. Patrick’s Day celebration with a Sunday concert at the Lakewood Public Library. Everyone is invited to sing along when they know the words. Lesser-known ballads will also be sprinkled in to give celebrants a chance to sit back and enjoy the depth of the beauty of Irish culture. And because it’s a party, light refreshments like Irish soda bread baked by the performer herself will be provided. “Irish Songs to Melt the Heart” takes place at 2:00 p.m. in the New Main Library Auditorium on Sunday, March 16.

You don’t have to be Irish to appreciate McKnight’s sonorous voice and delicate playing. Everyone who enjoys good music is invited. Still, the St. Patrick’s Day holiday means a lot to the performer. She’s grateful to the Friends of Lakewood Public Library for the opportunity to be, “presenting real cameos of Irish culture instead of drinking songs. I am Irish 365 days of the year and grateful that America was and is a haven for so many heritages, wronged abroad and accepted here.”

Originally a vocalist, McKnight picked up the Celtic harp three years ago. “I needed an instrument to accompany my singing. The harp

has such an entrancing sound and it’s similar to playing the piano, which I already knew. The smaller sized harp (without pedals) is light and easy to take into many settings. I’m also interested in the therapeutic power of harp music. And I’m drawn to the fact that it was played by both King David and the Irish King, Brian Boru.”

For McKnight, calling her show “Irish Songs to Melt the Heart” is a personal goal, not a boast. Her favorite part of performing these songs is, “connecting the audience and myself to another realm of beauty and understanding. It heals. It inspires. It reveals things to all of our hearts that otherwise would be buried.”



Elise McKnight and Friend

Song And Story Program At The Main Library March 6

by Amy Kloss

The Lakewood Historical Society presents Hank Mallery as he leads his audience through a collection of toe-tapping songs and stories in the Main Library Auditorium on Thursday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m. A historical interpreter for the Cleveland Metroparks, Mallery evokes the history of Ohio’s Canal Era through songs and sto-

ries passed down over the years and through his original creations inspired by canal life. Dressed in canal era clothing, Mallery sings and plays a variety of instruments. He takes on the persona of “Cletus” to pass along the stories. Join us for this free program of “Towpath Tunes & Tales” suitable for all ages. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at the Main Library Auditorium, 15425 Detroit Avenue.



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Register your team early!

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WEEKDAY AND SUNDAY LEAGUES

SEASON BEGINS MID-APRIL

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Lakewood Observer

Obama, Baby! - Field Trip

by Stephen Davis

The presidential campaign of 2008 has left me a little cold and cynical. I follow it, read about it, watched the news and debates, but MY candidates withdrew early. It seems that substance has been lost over style.

I'll admit right now that I am not going to vote Republican, but I have also been quite ambivalent about my remaining Democrat choices.

I have been a volunteer for a number of presidential candidates, starting with McGovern, and I generally grab any opportunity to witness Presidents, and candidates. They can be fun events. Just watching the Secret Service work is usually worth the price of admission. Unfortunately, my enthusiasm has waned.

Jim O'Bryan told me that he and Ivor Karabatkovic were going to the Cleveland Barack Obama rally to get some photos, and asked me if I wanted to go. In my present mood, I almost balked until Jim said, "We can go in with the media."

Wow! Now, THAT would be fun. I got online to the Obama campaign site to sign up for a press pass. They wanted to know if we needed a parking space for our satellite truck. Jim and I were tempted to duct tape an old TV rabbit-eared antenna, with a Bakelite base, to the top of my Subaru, and maybe add some tin foil wings to the ends (For better reception, of course.), throw on a magnetic LO sign, and take them up on that parking spot. I even considered a run to the Goodwill store to buy a couple of old fedoras to wear with PRESS cards stuck in the hatband for that old movie reporter style.

Here was my chance to see what the supporters of Senator Obama were raving about. It would also be interesting to converse with the lesser media outlets like ABC News and CNN.

Young people that I've talked to are very excited about Obama. To them, he is the new John Kennedy. I admit that I have wondered if Obama is that charismatic, or if charisma has been projected upon him by passionate supporters.

We arrived at Public Hall to lines of waiting people wrapped around the building, and found our way to the media door. We were welcomed by enthusiastic Obama volunteers. After showing our credentials and identification, we were thoroughly searched and wanded by Secret Service, then escorted to the press area where volunteers regularly asked us if we needed anything, if everything was okay, and told us about how the media area works.

The press area was in front of, and on the main stage of Public Hall. A separate platform was constructed in the front and to the side of Obama's platform. The Media view was perfect for candidate and crowd video and photos. On the main stage, there was a "cut riser". We were instructed that that was

the platform for the best profile photos. Other media people seemed to know about the cut riser without instruction.

We had about a four hour wait until Obama made his appearance. We ate chocolate chip cookies, burnt hot dogs, and drank overpriced Pepsi (No Coke.). As the crowd filled the hall, and waited for Obama, they did "the wave", chanted various slogans, and moved to the music over the P.A. system. The music was as diverse as the audience. Among others, I heard James Brown, Garth Brooks, Bon Jovi, and Aretha Franklin.

Groups of people streamed ahead of us to go to the seats on risers directly behind Obama's platform. We kind of wondered who they were, but we managed to talk to one later. I asked the young man how he happened to get such a good seat. He said, "I don't know. They just picked me." They had painted a backdrop with handpicked humans. Cool.

Campaign workers handed out "CHANGE WE CAN BELIEVE IN" and "KEEPING AMERICA'S PROMISE" signs that contrasted with the homemade signs that said "YES WE CAN" and "SI SE PUEDE".

The rally began in the waning hours of an extended campaign day. Everything that happened that day had to be perfectly planned and managed in different locations, and in perfect sequence. I was already impressed by the setup in the hall, the staff, and attention to detail. In contrast to the Clinton and McCain campaign management problems, Obama's well-oiled machine reflects the persona of his presidential aspirations. I'm now aware that Barack Obama can hire and manage professionals. This carries some weight with me.

There were a few "warm up acts" that included a young woman that did a fantastic a cappella national anthem, some cheerleading speakers that yelled, "Are you fired up?" The cheerleaders also led chants of "Yes, we can!", three volunteers that did "the Obama dance" (Jump On It), and Cleveland Mayor, Frank Jackson.

Near the stage was a V.I.P. section for seating local elected officials, including Lakewood Judge Pat Carroll, and Mayor Ed Fitzgerald.

When the groups of media arrived, they more than doubled our press area. They rushed to set up cameras, microphones, and computers before Obama entered the hall.

OBAMA! Obama entered the nearly full hall to a thunderous crowd. They were on fire with unconditional support for their human instrument for change.

As Jim and Ivor worked the entire room with cameras, I found a comfortable place to just watch and see what magic this Senator from Illinois embodies. Ironically, I chose the worst location in the hall for sound. My rock



Democratic Debate at Cleveland State University, February 26, 2008.

and roll ears couldn't pick out every word he said, but I've heard him on TV and radio. I didn't need to hear every word. I wanted to see the rabbit come out of the hat. I wanted to see him guess what card was missing from the deck. I wanted him to levitate the sign language interpreter. I at least wanted to see him strut the stage like Mick Jagger.

That is not what I saw. I'm not even sure that the faithful followers saw what they expected. I've seen management. What else can he show us?

Obama's demeanor surprised me. He is a man that appears to be totally comfortable with himself. He spoke for an hour and a half, with no notes or prompts. I know he has a stump speech that he uses with some modifications everywhere, but it sounded fresh.

His speech is soothing, but the audience responds loudly. He is completely confident, but without a hint of arrogance. He neither hesitates, nor hurries through any part. He points at the crowd with his index finger, eschewing the politician thumb point. While others look silly, trying to be more polite by waving their thumb, he is pointing his finger at YOU, yeah you, in an inclusive "I am with YOU," or "I care about YOU," kind of way.

There is some show. Some is initiated by Obama, and some is initiated by the audience. A spontaneous yell of, "We want change!" from an audience member initiates a chant of the same from the rest. Obama waits patiently, enjoys the moment, and starts up again right on cue. Obama runs out a string of "We can't wait for..." items in rapid succession. The crowd starts chanting, "We can't wait!" When Obama says, "Say yes, we can." The crowd happily complies.

Obama, in a way that is reminiscent of Kennedy's "Ask not..." speech, asks his audience to take responsibility. "All these things are possible, but they depend on you." "Change in America is hard." Among other things, he lists schools as hard to fix, and consistent with his statement that change is not from the top down, but happens from the bottom up. He asked parents to

turn off their TV sets while their children study, as one of the many ways to fix schools in America.

Obama walks his platform casually. Sometimes his eyes almost shut while concentrating on his words like a singer wanting to deliver a 1930's standard in just the right way so that you not only hear those lovely lyrics, but you feel them the way they were intended. Other times he stands still, with one hand in a pocket, while he seemingly speaks directly to each member of the audience and looks each and every one of them straight in the eyes.

I watched Obama as the crowd cheered and clapped. He pointed the microphone at those standing in front of him and swept his arm across them, as if he could make each one of them louder than they already were. As he then turned, the smile grew on his face.

"Hope" and "change" were the themes of the night. They made me think of the 43 year old Kennedy speaking of a "Whole new generation of Americans..."

Do we want our president to be an expert, or a leader that can rally and unite people for the common good? How does either affect our position in the world?

I'm not convinced that Kennedy was a great president, but I do know that his shining moment was when HIS style and demeanor made cooler heads prevail in the Cuban missile crisis. Without his thoughtful leadership, communication with adversaries, and his patient resistance to aggressive generals that favored a nuclear response, our world would be a very different place today.

Obama left the stage while the P.A. blasted Stevie Wonder.

"Ooh, baby.

Here I am, signed, sealed, delivered.

I'm yours.

Here I am baby.

Oh, you've got the future in your hand.

Signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours."

Lakewood Observer

The Political Left Speaks:
Re-Imagining The New Deal, Neoliberal Style

by Nadhal Eadeh

The Wolstein Center at Cleveland State University was home to the 2008 Democratic Presidential debate last Tuesday, February 28. Issues ranging from economy, war and health care as well as other issues of national significance we covered during the debate. With my press pass in hand, amid LO photographers capturing presidential images at a rapid pace, I sought to bring LO readers clarity on our foggy economic situation. We strolled into the “spin room”, searching for potential interview opportunities. Of course, being a small independent media outlet did not help in this regard, when compared to the titans of the corporate media. Much was debated on stage between Senator Clinton and Senator Obama; but the issue of the coming U.S. financial crisis, or recession, did not surface. As the debate ensued, and the talking heads fired one question after another, I decided to create my own frenzy by talking to the political elites myself. The topic was the \$150 billion tax refund.

With the economy stalling and heading into a recession, President Bush and Congress have passed legislation that offers minimal rebates to taxpayers. With the war economy being financed by foreign debt holders, and consumer debt and housing foreclosures on the rise, the House of Representatives felt obligated to give American families a tax break. But were they really tax “rebates”? In a series of exclusive LO interviews with the political elite of American society, I inquired with a sense of conviction to get the most practical answers.

Jesse Jackson, former Presidential candidate and one of the founders of the Rainbow Coalition remarked in a brief interview that “the rebate is irrelevant”. Jackson exclaimed, “If you’re three months behind on your house note and facing foreclosure all that the rebate can do is get you a product at Wal-Mart which was most likely made in China.” He added, “ We need a stimulus that reinvests in building roads, bridges, sewers and schools. We need to put America back to work so people can generate revenue, be productive, send their kids to college and pay taxes.”

Indeed, the once prosperous United States has devolved into a manufacturing wasteland where jobs are scarce and often pay lower wages. Cleveland, for example, used the Steelyard Commons to ameliorate joblessness and poverty. Thus far, the effects of economic growth have been minimal. The patchwork of service sector jobs often provides unstable income with little or no benefits. Take a look around the Cleveland area, everywhere one drives the strip malls and shopping centers that mimic Crocker Park permeate the Northern Ohio landscape. When and where does it stop? Economic develop-



Citizen journalist Nadhal Eadeh interviewing the Reverend Jesse Jackson



Nadhal interviewing Senator Sherrod Brown

ment in a region with no capital is the issue at hand. What will a \$600-\$1200 check do for under or unemployed individuals in a region that is sinking under the competitive pressure of the global economy? Maybe you can buy a flat screen TV at Wal-Mart, Target, and even pay off some Credit Card Bills.

The level-headed know that the situation is critical. With the infrastructure of the urban core decimated and poverty in the region growing, what is the solution? Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama, or even John McCain? Anyone? When will the depths of these issues be explored and articulated by courageous politicians?

The perennial issue in American society is corporate power. Rarely discussed in the middle class milieu, and more rarely evoked by the mainstream media, corporate power in America is growing and has had a debilitating effect on the American political process over the last fifty years. In a recent New York Times article, journalist Paul Krugman notes that “ In the current election cycle every one of the top ten industries making political donations is giving more money to the Democrats. Even industries that have in the past been overwhelmingly Republican, like insurance and pharmaceuticals, are now splitting their donations more or less evenly. Oil and Gas is the only major industry that the GOP can still call its own.”

Even more shocking to consciousness is that leading Democratic candidates are receiving more funds from defense contractors than Republicans for only the third time in the last 15 election cycles. Of course the democrats were elected on an anti-war platform, that is, to get us out of Iraq, right? Consequently, the Neo-Conservative doctrine has infected the rhetoric of the leading Democratic presidential candidates. In line with the ideals of the Military Industrial Complex and their cronies, neither Obama nor Clinton have taken a strike on Iran off the table. Why not? Do they foresee a future, additional war that this country cannot afford to finance? It was Martin Luther King Jr., a beacon of the civil rights movement who argued during the Vietnam war “We are spending all of this money for death and destruction, and not nearly enough money for life and constructive development.... when the guns of war become a national obsession, social needs inevitably suffer.” Of course maintaining threats, whether real or imagined, is a great way to maintain defense funding.

After the debate I caught up with some prominent local political figures to discuss the stimulus package. Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, 11th district Congressional Representative, argued that she would have liked for the money to be invested into American Infrastructure. “I’m disap-

pointed in the package, we should have had something in there for unemployment, we should have had something in there for senior citizens.” Tubbs Jones added, “But you see Republicans have convinced people that the money is better in their pocket than collectively operating the government. We need to put America back to work and repairing infrastructure is one of the best ways to do it.” Moreover, Tubbs Jones argued in regards to the rebate that “the people who can least afford to spend money are going to be spending the money, and the people who do not need to spend the money are going to invest and it will pay off down the line.” She added, “One of the things we need to do is incentivize companies to do business in the United States, we need to incentivize them (companies) to put people back to work and we need to help people understand financial literacy as well.” Furthermore, she continues, “The dilemma is that people are trying to survive, they are not living anymore, they’re just surviving, a \$3.00 gallon of gas, milk, and a \$3.00 loaf of bread. We have to help out states, like Governor Straddling is focusing on bringing Ohio back.”

First term U.S Senator Sherrod Brown echoed the sentiments of Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, arguing that he “would have loved to have seen the money invested in infrastructure and alternative energy, and into green jobs. The President would have vetoed any bill like that. That is another reason why we need a new President.” Senator Brown argued that Presidential hopeful, and Arizona Senator John McCain would continue the Bush administration’s economic policies. Senator Brown argued, “ John McCain is really running for a third Bush term; the same tax cuts for the rich; the same job killing trade agreements; \$3 billion dollars a week in the War in Iraq, instead we are going to get something very different.” In the end, Senator Brown felt confident in the presidential contenders. “Barack or Hillary would have written an economic stimulus package that would have made a difference.”

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Lakewood Schools

Local Teacher Teaches In Istanbul

by Jenna Davis ,
Charlotte O'Toole ,
Tesla Burdette,
7th grade students
at Garfield Middle School

Mrs. Eiben, a seventh grade language arts and social studies teacher at Garfield Middle School, had the opportunity to visit a Turkish school in Istanbul. The school she visited is a sister school with Kent Sate University. As a matter of fact it is even named Kent State College (in Turkey college means school). Two Kent State professors have been traveling to Istanbul for the past three years to work with the teachers and share teaching practices. Kent State College is a private school that has been open for three years. The purpose of the school is to teach the children in both Turkish and English. Many of the students hope to attend college in the United States.

During her visit, Mrs. Eiben taught 5th grade. She found everyone to be very polite. The school had fewer school rules; for example, during recess the children could play in the halls or go outside. They don't leave classroom doors or windows open because they believe that fresh, chilly air will make you sick; therefore, the rooms were very hot. Their school subjects were similar to ours. They studied language,

math, science and history. After school the kids played soccer, which they call football. Some of the kids played instruments, and the boys liked American Smack Down (wrestling). The technology in the school was very similar to ours; some rooms had digital projectors and Smart boards. The computers were mounted into the desks, so that to see the screen you had to look down. The students learned to be fluent in two languages, and they had to speak, read and write in both languages.

Mrs. Eiben said she learned a few words of the Turkish language while she was there. For example, dur means stop, taxi means taxi, and tea is called chai. We wanted to know what the food tasted like. "Wow, the food is yummy and delicious!" Mrs. Eiben told us. "They have a lot of eggplant and the people eat a lot of grains and kebobs. If you want a taste of Turkish food and don't want to leave the country go to Aladdin's; the food is very similar."

One of the things Mrs. Eiben said she enjoyed about Turkey, besides the food, was their calls for prayer five times a day. The chanting call was played through speakers mounted on top of the mosques, and it echoed throughout the city. Mrs. Eiben described the sound as haunting and beautiful. She also enjoyed visiting some of their famous monuments, like the ancient wall that

surrounds the original city of Istanbul, the Blue Mosque and the Hagia Sophia. These ancient buildings are very ornate and beautiful. During her visit, Mrs. Eiben found the people are very nice,

friendly and helpful. She said she never felt nervous, because they make you feel at home, and that they didn't care that she was American. The best moment Mrs. Eiben had in Turkey was when she showed her fifth grade class pictures of us and the boys said, "Ooh, we love beautiful American women!"

LHS After Prom Fundraiser

Staff Writer

LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL AFTER-PROM COMMITTEE is having a PARTY at CLEATS Join the Senior Class Parents and Friends for food, fun and beverage to raise funds for the class of '08's After Prom Event. Cleats will donate 10% of each patron's bill to LHS's

After Prom Committee. Cleats - 14810 Detroit Ave. Friday, March 7, 2008 6:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. FYI: The LHS After Prom is funded totally by the senior parents and community contributions. The money that the senior class won from the Prom Raiders contest must be spent only on the Prom itself. Thanks for your support.

Lakewood Fiscal Strategy For 2008 And Beyond

continued from page 1

growth in programs or staffing levels.

The new Administration felt it was imperative that an outside, independent entity examine these projections, and the City elected to engage the services of the State of Ohio Office of the Auditor Performance Audit Section to test the reasonableness of these projections.

On January 31, 2008, the State Auditor's Office verified within 1.9% the reasonableness of the November estimated operating deficit of \$4.5 million.

The 2008 Budget Process to date has identified over \$2.5 million in cost reductions that do not impact collective bargaining agreements through staffing level attrition and operating expenditure cuts. The City of Lakewood has seven bargaining units or unions.

- Non-filling of currently vacant positions = \$1.7 million
- Operating expenditure cuts = \$388,000
- Reduction in transfers from General Fund = \$283,000
- No cost of living increases for non-bargaining unit employees = \$75,000
- Exploration of changes in health insurance programs for non-bargaining unit employees = \$50,000
- No perfect attendance bonuses for non-bargaining unit employees = \$40,000
- Engage in a Healthcare Claims Audit for healthcare cost recovery = \$60,000

Despite these cuts, the current budget gap is estimated to be \$2.1 million.

The City of Lakewood acknowledges that it must make critical investments in crime prevention and safety, economic development and technology to ensure fiscal strength and community viability for 2008 and beyond. The projected cost for these

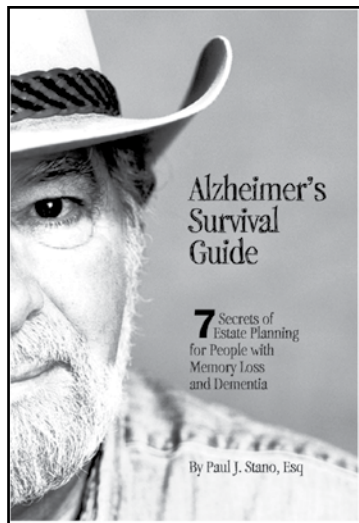
initiatives total \$1.1 million.

The addition of these initiatives to the budget would create a projected 2008 General Fund deficit of \$3.2 million.

- Cooperation between City Administration and City Council
- Exploration of Shared Services such as the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, and Healthcare Insurance Consortiums
- Inclusion of Collective Bargaining Units/Unions in Decision making and Renegotiation of Agreements
- Personnel Cuts in Areas Not Identified as Core Services
- Unilateral Operating Cuts and Service Consolidation
- Community Working Groups in the Areas of Law Enforcement and Technology
- Technology Audit
- Performance Audit Conducted by the State Auditor's Office
- Demanding Efficiency and Merit through Programs such as the Current CitiStat Program
- Cooperation with Community Partners such as Lakewood City Schools, Lakewood Hospital, Religious Institutions, Block Groups, etc.
- Exploration of Outsourcing such as Parks Landscaping, Custodial/Maintenance, and Technology
- Exploration of Non-profit Delivery of Current Services

After what will admittedly be a difficult process, we believe within the next two years, the City of Lakewood will achieve:

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- National Model in Public Safety
- Aggressive Foreclosure and Housing Posture
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Lakewood Sports

Lakewood Freshman Girls Basketball Season

by Carol Richardson

The Lakewood girls freshman basketball team overcame limited numbers on its roster to post a 10-10 record that included a pair of forfeit wins against Fairview and Brush. This break-even mark was made possible by Lakewood's winning four of the last five games, including the last two against Northeast Ohio Conference foes Medina and Mayfield.

The Rangers, coached by Jim Stahlheber and assisted by his daughter, Annie, who played with Lakewood's state semifinal team in 1995, concluded the season with eight players in uniform.

"The mark of a good team is to improve as the season goes along and to do better against opponents who you have already played," said Stahlheber.

"This year we did not lose a game to a team we beat in the first round. Considering the ever-changing roster and illness, that is a good thing," he added. "I would like to play the Valley Forge, Parma and Elyria games again and I bet we would win all three this time around," he said of teams the Rangers played just once.

The Rangers lost those three games by a combined total of 13 points, including a 30-29 setback to Valley Forge.

Offensively, the Rangers relied on three players much of the time. Captain Mary Shannon led with 13.2 points per game followed by Brooke Williams at 6.1 and Kelsie Smith at 5.7. The trio took 55 percent of the Rangers' shots with each of the three shooting over 30 percent from the floor.

Chairwoman of the boards was Williams, who had 116 for the year with Shannon coming in second at 99. Shannon, the tallest of the Ranger freshman at 5'9", also made it to the free throw line more than any other Lakewood player, shooting a team-best 59 percent off 78 tries.

Captain Missy Richardson led the back-court for the Rangers, adjusting to a move to point guard and leading the team with 22 assists. Richardson, one of three Rangers to play in all 18 games along with Williams and Samantha Cross, also paced Lakewood with 42 steals while averaging 3.2 points per contest.

Peggy Sue Johnson was solid on the boards for the Rangers with 5.0 boards per contest. Johnson played 13 games with a 3.5 points per game average and also started for the junior varsity team,



She has been solid on the boards for the Rangers with 5.0 boards per contest.

Williams showed improvement throughout the season and was very effective for Lakewood, getting steals off the back-end of the Ranger press on defense and worked well on the give and go play on offense with Richardson and Shannon.

Smith's physical play in the low post play for the Rangers proved valuable, as she collected 72 rebounds and

added 28 steals.

Leah Ellins played in 15 games with a 1.3 points per game average and showed good fundamentals with quick hands that provided 25 steals.

Cross came off the bench and had 11 steals while adding 1.0 rebound per game. Another player off the bench was Tiffany Fisher, who scored 1.2 points and nearly one steal per game contest.

Emmalee Reinhart missed much of the season with a stress fracture and had limited minutes in the four games she did play.

Before being called up to the varsity team over Christmas break, Christine Bruno shot 37 percent from the field and scored 7.6 points per game in seven contests, averaging 4.9 boards each time out. Coach Stahlheber was pleased to say they learned to play basketball and learned to play better as a team. Lakewood can expect much from this Freshman class next season.

Rangers Win Sectional Crown

by Todd Shapiro

The Lakewood Rangers boys basketball team ended the first year of the coach John Silva era as sectional champions defeating Grafton Midview 48-41 to bring home the sectional crown before losing to crosstown rival St. Edward 63-48 in the Brecksville-Broadview Heights District Semifinal.

Lakewood entered tournament play as losers of six of their final eight regular season games but quickly regained their winning form against John Marshall. Forward Joseph Mastrodonato led all scores with 15 points as the Rangers cruised to a 66-35 victory. Junior Jay Toole came off the bench to score eight points in the fourth period, nearly equaling his scoring output for the entire regular season. Pat Barrett and Kevin Knab each scored 11 points in the win.

The Rangers used stifling defense and timely 3-point shooting to come from behind to beat Midview. The Middies held a 23-20 halftime lead but Lakewood out-scored them 14-4 in the third period to take a 34-27 lead. Barrett led the Rangers' offensive outburst by draining a pair of 3-point shots. Barrett and Junior Dan Shannon were Lakewood's main outside shooters all season, each averaging more than one 3-pointer a contest. Knab, a 6'6" senior, grabbed 10 rebounds in the victory as

the Rangers held Midview without a field goal for the first 12 minutes of the second half. Knab has been a leader for the Rangers on both ends of the court, all season, averaging 15.1 points and 7.3 rebounds in the regular season.

After earning a first-round bye as the top seeded team, St. Edward easily disposed of Parma 62-30 to improve their record to 17-4 and set up a rematch with Lakewood. On December 15th the Eagles defeated Lakewood 42-28 at Lakewood High School. St. Ed's jumped out to a 20-13 lead after the first period and extended the 37-21 at the half by going on a 9-2 run after Lakewood coach John Silva was assessed a technical foul. Lakewood used their defense to key a second half run cutting the deficit to eight at 45-37 with 7:23 remaining in the ball game. Joshua Reagan came off the bench to lead the Rangers with 15 points. Despite not starting a game all season Reagan was second on the team in scoring, averaging 9.5 points a game. Mastrodonato had 4 steals in the losing effort for Lakewood.

The Rangers ended the season with an 11-12 record more than doubling their win total for the previous two seasons.

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Society's Child

Lakewood Hospital And Player's Tony Romano Serves It Up!
“ Flavor’s Of Health ”

PLAYERS

by Jennifer Scott
photos by Rhonda Loje

Player’s on Madison and Lakewood Hospital brought their best to the table last Monday evening. Tony Romano, executive chef at Player’s, and Carolyn Bouquot R.D., L.D. the hospitals clinical nutrition manager worked together to create a four course menu that consisted of natural, organic ingredients. Gary Lucarelli, owner of Player’s said Player’s has strived for years to serve healthy, delicious food. Gary was pleased to work with the hospital to

help kick off its new program, “ Flavor’s of Health.”

A sold-out crowd arrived on the cold February eve to enjoy a heart healthy meal. The hospital described the ingredients in the preparation of each dish. Every diner was given an ingredient list and nutrition fact sheet to take home.

I would like to thank Jack Gustin, president of Lakewood Hospital, his staff, and the staff from Player’s for putting on another fine event.



Susan Grimberg (Community Health Manager, Lakewood Hopital), Carilyn Bouquot (Clineical Nutrition Manager-AUI Food systems for Lakewood Hostpital), Gary Lucarelli (Owner of Players on Madison) and Jack Gustin (President, Lakewood Hospital)



Nora Hurley (Lakewood Law Director) and Keith Hurley.



Besty and Charles Shaughnessy, Bill Grimberg, Mary and David Osburn.



Tony Romano, executive chef and his creative staff behind the scenes.



Chuck and Cathie Drumm and Mary Anne and Byron Crampton



Anne Kuenzel, Karen Campbell and Kurt Kuenzel



Judi Balcerzak, Shellie Sedlak, Phyllis Fannin, and Susan Wagner

Lakewood Observer

City Finances Presented At Lakewood Alive Meeting

continued from page 3

it in the bud or wait to the last minute and make dramatic adjustments.

He expressed his belief that the past administration is culpable for the current city financial situation because the administration “holds the power” instead of the city council. (For those of you unfamiliar with the budget process, the administration generates the budget and provides this to council for their approval after countless hours of debate.)

The mayor went on to outline his plan of action: put everything on the table, establish a political team based on merit and form a better relationship with city council. Once this was accomplished, the administration could generate numbers that everyone, including the council and labor unions, would agree upon. This was important so there would be no suspicion on the part of unions as to the true financial condition of the city.

The city also contracted with the state to audit the books and found their

estimate was within 2 percent of those generated by the city.

He perceives the city to have a \$3.5 to \$4 million deficit. Although the individual employees are not to blame, the cost of employees has been a major factor in the financial imbalance. Current budget numbers are unsustainable because the city is both providing more services and paying more to get the job done.

In reaction to these problems, the administration has had to examine the viability and cost of each department, except police staffing levels, in order to control costs.

Cost-cutting measures already undertaken have been imposed upon non-bargaining unit employees, such as passing on higher health care costs and reducing statutory benefits. Preliminary negotiations have been started with the unions representing city employees, and he stated that if concessions are not made, there will be significant layoffs. The goal is an additional reduction in expenditures by about

\$2.5 million over the cost-cutting measures already in place.

Although drastic reductions are necessary for those employed by the city, inanimate objects in this budget have fared better. A number of capital projects have been spared the budget axe.

He also teased the audience with a plan to be announced by mid-March that would increase the number of police on the street using more full and part-time officers.

The long-term budget wish list includes a health care consortium,

regional fire service, a new jail on Berea Road, public and private partnerships to control costs in human services and citywide implementation of CitiStat.

He stated in closing that he feels that his job is “to make everyone hurry up” to solve these problems which at least must have triage by the March 31st budget deadline. He understands the frustration the public feels and asks that he be given him the benefit of the doubt, that he’s doing the best that he can and doesn’t want to make any of these cuts.

Lakewood Home Show Schedule of Events

The Lakewood Chamber of Commerce and the Lakewood City Schools Community Education and Recreation Department would like to announce the schedule of speakers for this year’s Lakewood Home Show.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Home Show at Harding Middle School in Lakewood, 16601 Madison, on Saturday March 8 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday March 9 from 1 p.m. through 5 p.m. Offers on the back of tickets for the LAKEWOOD HOME SHOW add up to more than the admission price of \$5 (parking is free and kids under 18 are free). Tickets are available now online and at the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, 14701 Detroit Road.

Schedule of Events: Saturday, March 8, 2008

10:00 - 12:00 Antiques Identification with Ken Yenke (the Yenke Peddler), Nancy Kretschmar (Vintage Faire Unique Antique & Vintage Design Shop) and Joanne Rodgers (President of the Western Reserve Depression Glass Club)

- 11:00 - 11:30 Designing With Annuals - Kevin O’Neil
 - 11:30 - 12:00 Kevin O’Neil Q & A Session
 - 12:00 - 12:30 Your Environmentally ‘Green’ Home - Jim Engler
 - 12:30 - 1:00 Your Revitalized ‘Old’ Home - Jim Engler
 - 1:00 - 1:30 Lead in the Home - Jim Engler
 - 1:30 - 2:00 Jim Engler Q & A Session
 - 1:30 - 2:00 Sherwin Williams - Decorating Kids Rooms (Entryway)
 - 2:00 - 2:30 Harding Middle School Strolling Strings
 - 2:30 - 3:00 Home Buying Seminar - Ray Antonelli
 - 3:00 - 3:30 Ray Antonelli Q & A Session
 - 3:30 - 4:00 Garfield Middle School Strolling Strings
- Sunday, March 9, 2008
- 1:30 - 2:00 Feng Shui - Kristine Pagsuyoin
 - 1:30 - 2:00 Sherwin Williams - Decorating Kids Rooms (Entryway)
 - 2:00 - 2:30 Your Environmentally ‘Green’ Home - Jim Engler
 - 2:30 - 3:00 Your Revitalized ‘Old’ Home - Jim Engler
 - 3:00 - 3:30 Lead in the Home - Jim Engler
 - 3:30 - 4:00 Home Buying Seminar - Ray Antonelli

Major sponsors of the Lakewood Home Show include Slife Heating and Cooling, Sun News, Valpak, West Life News, West Shore Magazine, Cox Communications, Dominion East Ohio, Lakewood Hospital, The Lakewood Observer, and Madison Avenue Car Wash. You will find discounts on your tickets from the Show’s Ticket Sponsors Nature’s Bin and Walgreens. The Home Show is a family friendly show with something for everyone.

For more information visit www.lakewoodhomeshow.com.

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Contacts: Lakewood Chamber of Commerce

Kathy Berkshire (216) 226-2900 kberkshire@lakewoodchamber.org



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Secret Shopper

Wobblefoot Ltd., Lakewood's Hidden Gem

by Justine Cooper

Lakewood is known for its unique stores and amazing art. One of the galleries that Lakewood is proud to call its own is **Wobblefoot Ltd.**, 1662 Mars (right off Madison). This off-the-beaten path treasure is sure to delight any art lover! When I first meandered into this hidden gem, I was amazed at the art that adorned the walls! After meeting owner Tubal Cogar, back when he joined Madison Avenue Merchants' Association (MAMA), I felt I had an instant friend. His warmth and charm filled the gallery, along with famous and accomplished artists' works!

Tubal opened his gallery doors in Lakewood in May of 2004, after 13 years in Avon Lake. When I asked him why Lakewood, he replied, "this community is just a better place for art". He loves the "artsy" feel of Lakewood, and loves collaborating with other area businesses in MAMA. In fact, he is such an active member, he opens his doors monthly for the meetings, providing refreshments, ideas, and a willingness to work together to develop the area for all businesses. Because of the connections Tubal has with artists around the country, as well as customers, he does an array of business over the internet from all over the world.

While talking with Tubal, I was shocked to learn that his background is actually in the army! He retired after 21 years in the army, and in "retirement" runs a successful gallery! When asked what encouraged him to make that switch, he said it was the encouragement of his wife to promote his first children's book "The Journeys of Wobblefoot", which was illustrated by Tim O'Conner. This book is a real treat for children and I highly recommend picking one up for a very special gift, personally signed by Tubal! Wobblefoot Gallery is also known for framing your precious art and boasts professional results for affordable rates! In addition, all art comes with a certificate of authenticity by the artist.

The artist featured currently at Wobblefoot is Blenko Glass, in which Tubal recently received his first shipment! He was shocked that I had not heard of Blenko Glass and proudly told me how William John Blenko, born in 1854 in London, went into business for himself making glass, primarily window panes. He came to New York in his thirties and then landed in West Virginia, built a furnace to blow glass, and started Eureka Art Glass Company. Blenko expanded from making stained



Tubal Cogar with a small sample of the exclusively-signed Blenko Glassware

glass windows to hand crafting beautiful pieces of glass tableware, for a line called "Blenko". Blenko-ware is made using the same methods and tools that the master craftsmen of Europe used hundreds of years ago. From this very detailed skill, thousands of beautiful art pieces are created! Today the Blenko "factory" sits on 26 acres and 80,000 square feet with furnaces that can never be shut off! Of course Tubal made the field trip himself to see and select the glass! Many pieces are under \$100 and

make extraordinary gifts for art lovers, or the loved one who has everything!

When asking Tubal what he wants people to know about Wobblefoot, he replied "It's free to look and open to the public" with a big smile. I encourage you to pop in and meet Tubal, check out his book, and peruse his art collection! Don't miss him at MAMA's art walk coming this Spring, and visit him at his website, www.wobblefoot.com.

Hours: Tues-Thurs 10-5; Sat. 10-3; 216-226-2971.

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Pulse Of The City

A Tale Of Two Diners

With apologies to Charles Dickens, this story could also carry the title of his story about two cities, because our story today does, in fact, involve the two cities of Lakewood and Cleveland.

The Cleveland area is unique in that we have 17 independent mini-cities sitting around, or right next to, a core metropolis, with many having their own fire, police, sanitation, and other services. From time to time the economic bean-counters like to remind us that this duplication of all of that administration and city services is probably unnecessarily expensive, and that we all would do better if we unified and “regionalized.” On the other hand, each of our neighboring towns carry their own unique flavor, independence, and perspective, and this makes for quite an interesting “region” to live in.

Therefore, the phrase “expensive and worth it” comes to mind, at least to mine.

Anyway, this is a tale of two diners: one in Cleveland and one in Lakewood, owned by two dedicated and fantastic guys who happen to be brothers. They’re not expensive places either, and oh yeah, this writer feels that their food is worth every dime of your money!

George and John Pasalis are brothers who own two diners. John owns John’s Diner, at 18260 Detroit Avenue on Lakewood’s West End. His brother George owns George’s Kitchen, at the intersection of Triskett and Berea Roads in Cleveland.

by Gary Rice

Now, to me, a good diner represents the essence of the pulse of a city. You won’t find fine linen tablecloths and napkins, or someone outside ready to park your car for you. What you will find is good, stick-to-your-ribs food, and plenty of it; and, in the case of these two diners, you’ll find almost unbelievably good prices these days. A visit to either of these diners is like a visit to the heart of humanity in our two cities. People from all walks of life scarf down those incredibly delicious and legendary blueberry pancakes at John’s. For those of you with a big appetite, I would invite you to just TRY and eat all of the mouth-watering moussaka that will come to your booth at George’s! A moussaka is a type of Greek shepherd’s pie, having eggplant, ground beef, potatoes, and bechamel (white cheese) sauce.

Technically, I suppose, the word “diner” probably comes from the old railway dining cars where food was served during train travel. In the mid-twentieth century, it became popular for entrepreneurs to find some of the old railroad cars and convert them into eating establishments. The now-defunct Tony’s Diner, on Lorain Avenue and West 117th Street, became famous as a kind of “home base” at the start of now-Congressman Kucinich’s political career.

Diners were especially popular in big cities as a meet-and-greet location for a community.

As far as John’s Diner goes, it indeed started out as a used boxcar from the Nickel Plate Railroad. The business began as Still’s Diner. First located behind the old street car barns on Lakewood’s far West End, it was moved to its present location in the 1950’s. John Pasalis took over its operation in 1976 and continues to operate it today, along with his family.

This diner retains a classic dining car look, having a marble counter, metal stools, blue tile, and dark wood throughout. An extended booth seating area, beyond the diner proper, allows for intimate conversation and a fun, “period” atmosphere.

Patrons enjoy a wide variety of reasonable breakfast selections, having generous portions served efficiently by a friendly staff. Lunch and dinner items for John’s include great chicken, tilapia, and Swedish meatball dishes, as well as deli and specialty sandwiches, along with delicious salads. Fried dishes are prepared with vegetable oil. Soup selections are included with the dinner entrees.

Over at George’s Kitchen, similar great meal selections await you. George’s is larger than John’s, and combines booths with a counter and open

seating. The atmosphere is welcoming, and the service is first-rate. Breakfast, lunch, and dinnertime servings are generous and served quickly by a great staff. Specialty dishes include their Greek Chicken with lemon sauce, and the Soutzoukakia (Greek meatballs). A different dinner menu comes out daily. On Thursdays, their legendary bean soup is worth every bite! Fortunately, their scrumptious chicken soup is offered daily.

Often, you’ll have the chance to meet John or George in person at their respective establishments. Both men have the pleasure of having family members working with them in their restaurants, and that probably helps them to maintain a high standard of quality and service.

Today, the classic diner is becoming an endangered species. More and more diners are giving way to chain-operated fast-food restaurants. I truly feel fortunate that we have a couple of classic family-owned diners in and near Lakewood.

Contrary to what some people feel, we are indeed connected to our neighbors in the cities around us. They have much to offer to us, and we to them. Hats off to these two brothers and their families for helping to enhance the pulse of both our Cleveland and Lakewood cities.

Now let’s see...where was I going for lunch? Decisions, decisions...



John, and his place



George, and his place

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Lakewood Observer

Guitar Heroes Wanted To Fight Leukemia/Lymphoma

by Fiona Horning

H2O “Help to Others” youth volunteer program has exciting news! H2O is holding a “Guitar Hero” Video Game Tournament at Lakewood High School and you’re invited. H2O’s “Guitar Hero” tournament is being held on Saturday, March 8th, in the Lakewood High School East Cafeteria from 11am – 1pm.

H2O is a program of the City of Lakewood, Department of Human Services, Division of Youth. The kids in H2O came up with this fundraising idea. We really wanted to do something to benefit the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society.

The requirements to play are simple. A \$6.00 entry fee will guarantee you a minimum of two games against an opponent. Every time you



win, you’ll move up the tournament bracket. If you get shut out, you’ll be assigned a consolation round with another player at your level. The tour-

nament will use “Guitar Hero II” games on PS2 stations. Players can decide to play on one of these levels: medium, hard, or expert.

Admission to the event is only \$1.00 if you want to come and watch this exciting contest. The tournament is open to all Lakewood residents in grades 6-12. Players must pre-register by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, March 7th. Registration forms are available at the following locations: Garfield and Harding school offices, Lakewood High School - H2O Office, Lakewood Division of Youth – 12900 Madison Avenue, and Lakewood Community Recreation and Education Department – 1470 Warren Rd.

Refreshments will be on sale at the event. Cash prizes will be awarded to the winner of each level: \$15.00 - medium, \$25.00 - hard, \$50.00 - expert. So fill out your forms to rock and gather all your friends. We hope to see you Saturday, March 8th at Lakewood High School!

Local Doctor Becomes CCLAS President

by Mike Deneen

The new year marks a new era for the Citizens Committee for a Lakewood Animal Shelter (CCLAS). The organization, which provides volunteer and financial support for the Lakewood Animal Shelter, has elected a new president. Lakewood resident Jennifer Deselits will serve in the role, taking over for former president Catherine Butler.

Deselits, a wife and mother of one three year old son, is excited about the job. She grew up on the East Coast (Washington DC, New York and finally Baltimore) before moving to Lakewood in 2003. She has an extensive educational background, earning a Doctor of Pharmacy from University of Maryland before moving to Cleveland to complete her psychiatry residency in 2002. After residency she was hired by the Louis Stokes VA medical Center as a Clinical Specialist in Psychiatry. She is also a Senior Clinical Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at Case Western Reserve University school of Medicine.

During residency she met my husband Rodney who is a mechanical engineer and native of Twinsburg. They married in 2003 and bought a house in Lakewood where they live with our three year old son Sebastian and three

beagles; Sigmund, Albert and Lady.

Deselits has always been interested in working with animals. She couldn’t have pets as a child, but grew up riding horses. She strongly believes that humans are meant to be the custodians of our environment. That responsibility extends from keeping our oceans, rivers, lakes and air clean, to being benevolent guardians of the creatures that we share the planet with. In a country wealthy enough to have whole department stores dedicated to pets, it should never be that humans or critters go hungry or homeless.

She has laid out some clear goals for CCLAS in 2008. The group will advocate for the shelter in the city’s upcoming budget planning. CCLAS will continue its fundraising efforts in order to sustain the current spay/neuter program that has been such a success over the years. She plans to continue working with Friends of the Lakewood Dog Park on both funding and animal safety issues. In addition, she hopes to continue the group’s successful affiliation with H2O. During the past year, H2O youth volunteers have staffed the Annual Dog Wash, hosted a Spaghetti Dinner, and baked and sold homemade dog biscuits. The partnership has been a success for both the shelter and H2O. Deselits hopes in the coming year we can forge



“Blue” is a male Black Lab mix with 1 blue eye and 1 brown. Blue is 1 and 1/2 years old, not neutered, a little shy but very sweet.



Cat#43-Gray domestic short hair tabby, female 7 to 8 months old, very friendly. Cat#34 - Orange, brown and black domestic short hair tabby, female 9 months old, very sweet.

partnerships with other Lakewood organizations like Mainstreet and LIA.

Deselits hopes to fill the shoes left by former president Catherine Butler. “She has done so much for this organization and I hope I can live up to her legacy,” says Jennifer. To learn more about CCLAS and its programs, visit the “Pet Talk” section of the Lakewood Observer website www.lakewoodobserver.com

Foster Homes Needed For Kittens!

CCLAS is making an appeal for its greatest need, foster families. Before the spring kitten boom it desperately need to identify folks who are willing to foster pregnant cats until they have delivered and weaned their litters. This is not a life long commitment, and it is a beautiful experience. Please contact the Lakewood Animal Shelter at 529-5020 for more details!

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Chef Geoff

Big Apple, Small Grocery

Sometimes, the things that I write come back, full circle. So it was after having penned a peice last spring, after a long weekend in the Big Apple. I had written a column that focused on my perception of an absence of grocery shopping opportunities in Manhattan. My focus was the absence of my normal trip to Heinen's on Saturday morning and the lack of a "supermarket" presence that had led me to an entirely mistaken conclusion about food procurement. My host, Jeff Burney, had read that column and protested, "Really Jeff, we have grocery stores. You buy canned soup, even frozen Stouffer dinners, just like in Lakewood". My reaction had been, a somewhat dismissive, "Next time I'm there, you'll have to show me," after which I forgot the incident. But Mr. Burney, being the astute young Wall Street banker that he is, apparently did not.

Once again this year, my camping compatriots and I made that foray into New York City, once again as the house guests of Jeff Burney (now in his sumptuous midtown apartment). One of the activities for the weekend would dispel my misplaced notions of Manhattan grocery shopping, as we were charged with providing the makings of an evening "thank you" cocktail party. Since Jeff had put up our gallant crew

of middle-aged campers at the sacrifice of celebrating Valentine's Day with his charming girlfriend and also discommoded his roommates, catering a little cocktail party for them seemed the least we could do. What I found demonstrated to me how misplaced my original grocery impressions had been. But more than that, what I found in the middle of the city that never sleeps brought back my boyhood memories of the Lakewood of the 60's.

Before the Super Walmarts, the gigantic Giant Eagles, and other monster grocery stores, we had much smaller, often neighborhood groceries. Even those that were huge for their time paled in comparison to the standardized store to which we are accustomed. The Rego Brother's store on Lakewood Heights is an excellent example of such a store, now abandoned by the mega groceries due to its small footprint. But the stores that I have in mind were even smaller. I'm certain that there were a great many of them, but as a child, the ones I frequented were Sinagra's at the east end of the strip across from the YMCA, and Pallack's, where Player's is now located. These were the places that I visited with my mother on shopping excursions (although frequently Al Pallack came to

the house. They delivered in those days). The endless aisles of seemingly endless choices were absent. But there was always what was needed. The meat counter may have lacked the array on display, but no matter, what you wanted would be cut to order. While the selection of bread was limited, we also had a good number of neighborhood bakeries where the aroma of fresh bread wafted out to the street. The dairy counter was small, but most of what we needed was delivered by the milkman. Those great little corner groceries are gone. Instead of a dozen or so stores, Lakewood now has three. I guess we've progressed. But, strangely enough, NYC has not. More than likely, spurred by the significant costs of Manhattan real estate, those New Yorkers still have what we have discarded.

In the process of gathering supplies for our New York catering adventure, we stopped at a number of gourmet specialty shops; a cheese shop, a bakery, a sausage shop, and a couple of delis. All were very interesting, but not really grocery stores. I was aware of the existence of these places, and similar places like Balducci's, but I still hadn't seen a regular old grocery store. We loaded up on some cheese, breads and sausages but were still in need of some fresh


produce, salad dressing, miscellaneous grocery store stuff. Then, we found ourselves at the Gourmet Garage, and I was whisked back to Pallack's. Or Sinagra's. Small, even tiny by our standard of a grocery store, and yet everything was there...and then some. Prepared foods, sauces, pickles, soups and oils, a custom meat counter right alongside cans of corn and heads of lettuce. All packed into a space about the size of a Convenient Store (or a Sinagra's). I found it highly ironic that the cost of Manhattan real estate had resulted in the preservation of the markets which ceased to exist here. It represents an interesting paradox: The largest, most densely populated city in North America has grocery stores that are a throwback to suburban groceries we had in Lakewood fifty years ago. I had traveled to Manhattan to visit the big city, and had found, instead, my small town roots. And I had initially missed the observation on my first visit because I was focused on what our grocery stores had become and, not seeing a mega Super Duper Food Giant, had decided that there was a lack of groceries. I had forgotten the personal service and customer familiarity of our corner stores. And then there was the final irony. These small throwback corner groceries delivered. No doubt Al would be proud.

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Lakewood Perspective

An Independent Thought On Collective Health Care

by Bret Callentine

I'm going to let you in on a trade secret. The very nature of writing for this paper means that I have to be a little bit psychic. You see, while you're reading this article today (and by "today" I mean at least March 4th), I'm actually writing this article almost two weeks ago (February 22nd). To have my article published properly, the volunteer army of editors, designers, and printers need to have it submitted about a week and a half in advance of the date of print.

The reason I bring this up is to further accentuate the following statement: I have no idea who I will be voting for in the primary election. You see, not only do I not know who I'm backing, but I know for sure that there is no way I'll figure it out over the next week and a half between today (the day I'm writing this) and today (the day you're reading this).

Confused yet? So am I.

The problem is this: even when there aren't differences in opinion between myself and each candidate, there are issues of trust that need to be overcome. Let's just say that between the major candidates that remain, I'm not filled with a whole lot of confidence that they'll even stick to their

campaign promises, let alone affect positive change when they do. That's why I'm glad that no one is counting on my endorsement to help them make their own decision. It kind of takes the pressure off of things for me.

However, despite the passing of the Ohio primary, we're still faced with a major decision in the fall. Therefore, while I'll make no pitch to sell you on any one candidate, I thought I would think out loud on a few of the issues that bother me.

Take health care for example. I hear just about every candidate suggest that all Americans should have access to quality health care. But if you think about it, haven't we already accomplished that? Despite what Michael Moore would have you believe, Americans have access to the finest doctors and medicines in the entire world. Want proof? Ask yourself, where do the wealthiest people in the world (Saudi Sheiks for example) go

for complicated medical procedures? When the most powerful people in the world (say, a high-ranking Russian official) need treatment, from what country do they fly the specialists? It sure isn't Cuba. No matter what a candidate tries to tell you, the problem isn't access itself, rather, it's relative expectations of attainability.

That said, my main concern is this: when was the last time services got better, easier, or cheaper after the government took things over? If you want a look at government-run health care, look no further than the Veterans hos-

pitals. If they have n't been able to run those successfully, then how does expanding their respon-

sibilities make things any better?

As I said, the problem isn't that there is a lack of quality care out there; it's that, apparently, not everyone is comfortable in how they get it. So the last thing I want my government to do is start interfering with the parts of a system that are working just fine to try to change the parts that aren't. If the brakes go bad in your car, the last thing you want the mechanic to do is start tinkering with the engine.

That said, we're still left with the problem at hand: how we make it possible for someone earning minimum wage to get the same level of care as a corporate CEO. But that's where I've got news for you: It's not possible. I know a lot of you are still holding onto the dream of some utopian society where everyone shares equally the fruits of collective labor. But let's face it, that's just not a reality.

The real situation is this: even IF the government institutes a state-run health care system, someone somewhere will find a way to develop a system of private doctors and private hospitals, where anyone with the extra money will be able to skip the lines of the regular hospital and not have to deal with the government red tape.

With the power of wealth behind them, they'll quickly draw out many of the best doctors, most talented surgeons, and top-of-the-line staff to fill their needs. Leaving the average person once again in the position of having access only to what's afforded them.

Likewise, if you continue to increase the tax burden upon the rich to pay for the poor, the only thing you've done is made more people poor. While it seems like a simple redistribution of wealth, let's face it, the "haves" will always find a way to have, sometimes to the direct detriment of the "have-nots". But before you get all indignant, tell me, when's the last time you saw a story about a poor person who won the lottery and immediately shared all the money with his neighbors so that everyone got a little? I'm not judging right or wrong, I'm merely trying to admit to the reality of what we're dealing with.

Let's face it, we are a society of 'star-bellied Sneetches' from the Dr. Seuss story. Maybe not all of us fall into this category, but certainly enough to keep the system in a constant state of bitter resentment. And just like in the story, the only way to overcome it is to focus on what we have, instead of what we lack.

I must admit, I make a modest living; my family is by no means either rich or poor. As such, when it comes to health care, I'm afforded certain liberties that others might deem a luxury, while still having to navigate obstacles some others might avoid all together. The real issue is that I don't overlook my blessings and I hold no grudge against those who have what I do not.

I don't see the level of care that I receive as inadequate simply because someone else can afford better, just like I don't consider my needs extravagant just because there are some who have less. While it might not be as flashy, my Chrysler still gets me to work just as well as my neighbor's Mercedes Benz. And while somewhat more time-consuming and less comfortable, taking the bus still gets the job done. The issue isn't necessarily the transportation, but assuring that everyone has the ability to reach a relatively common destination.

In my opinion, this country already has more than adequate health care, and the areas we need to focus on are not in increasing expenditures, but enhancing the benefits. The answers to those challenges don't lie in the hands of the government, but in the efforts of the people.

You want shorter lines in the emergency room? Well then, stop using it for ordinary illnesses. You want less expensive treatments? Then stop waging lawsuits when treatments fail but your doctor didn't. You want cheaper medication? Then be prepared to sacrifice quality for quantity.

We certainly have more than a few deficiencies in our health care system, but I'm looking for a candidate who understands that government influence isn't one of them.

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Conservation Corner

The Plastic Plague

Since their introduction in the eighties, plastic grocery bags have become ubiquitous, not only in grocery stores and your homes, but also strewn across the landscapes of cities and floating in the world's oceans. Because of their widespread presence as litter in trees and on streets, they are often referred to as "white pollution" in China, the "national flower" in South Africa, and the "national flag" in Ireland.

It is estimated by the EPA that between 500 billion and 1 trillion bags are consumed per year worldwide. This breaks down to between 1 and 2 million bags per minute! Meanwhile, an estimated 5 to 10 billion of these bags ends up as litter outside of landfills, potentially clogging gutters and sewer pipes, causing other damage along with their unsightliness, and less than 3% are recycled. Here in the US, we use around 12 million barrels of oil to produce the 100 billion bags we consume each year.

These billions of bags endanger many species of wildlife, from whales, sea turtles, birds, and seals, to cows and goats who accidentally ingest them while grazing. More than 100,000 animals per year die as a result of plastic bag pollution; they are suffocated, trapped, starved, choked, or poisoned. For aquatic life, bags often appear to be jellyfish, a favorite food of sea turtles. As the bags degrade, they disintegrate into small pieces that absorb more toxic chemicals, becoming even more dangerous while appearing more edible, in this bite-size form, to sea creatures.

Unfortunately, plastic bags cost only around 1¢ to produce, making them so inexpensive that they are handed out excessively by store clerks (the average family is said to receive 60 bags in only 4 trips to the store). While, of course, many people use these plastic bags as trash bags around the house or as helpful assistants in cleaning up after their pets, many of us have continually growing piles of them with little chance that they will ever all be used.

When thrown out, plastic bags take up to 1,000 years to degrade, contaminating soil and water in the process. Re-using these bags is, of course, better than discarding them, but still wastes the non-renewable fossil fuels (oil and natural gas) that were required to produce them. Recycling, unfortunately, is not a very viable option for the majority of grocery bags, as it costs an estimated \$4,000 to recycle a ton of plastic bags that can then be sold for only around \$32.

Thus, many nations have taken steps to reduce plastic bag use among their populations, from Ireland to Australia, South Africa to Taiwan. In Ireland, for example, each bag is now taxed at approximately 20¢ (though this is expected to rise to 22¢). Since the imposition of this tax, plastic bag consumption there has been reduced by approximately 90%. Other nations

(and here in the United States, cities like San Francisco) have worked to ban their use/distribution altogether.

A smaller tax than Ireland's (perhaps a few cents) would certainly be motivational for those untroubled by environmental concerns here in the US. This is, though, not my only suggestion here, as it's not exactly an easy practical tip for immediate implementation. With reuse and recycling only marginally help-

ful, it falls upon us to reduce. Purchasing reusable bags, or even just making sure you aren't given superfluous bags on your shopping trips, can add up. For example, consider refusing a bag altogether if only buying one or two items.

Personally, I have gotten a lot of use out of reusable bags from EnviroSax (<http://usa.envirosax.com>). These bags are inexpensive, can hold more than twice what typical grocery bags do, and

roll/fold up neatly so that they can be kept on hand easily for use while out shopping. Similar products are available from organizations like ecobags (<http://www.ecobags.com>) and Reusable Bags (<http://www.reusablebags.com>), and many stores now sell canvas bags near the checkout. Once reusable bags become a part of your routine, consider frequenting stores where discounts are offered for using them and encourage other stores to incorporate such policies.

by Heather Ramsey

The Candidates Debate

by Peter Sackett

Taverns, as anyone who has ever been in one knows, are wonderful arenas for political debate. A gathering of friends and acquaintances, a couple of pints, and the free flow of information almost necessarily follows. With the presidential election in full cry, we thought we would share some insights from some of our readers and contributors. The following comes to us courtesy of Peter Sackett, who tells us this "debate" took place at one of his favorite haunts in Buffalo, N.Y. and where he was the primary responder.

Let's welcome our Candidate for President; sorry your opponent chose to stay away from the Truth Center. Let's get to the questions. Remember the rules: straight talk and only the truth.

Question 1: Tell the American people one benefit they have received from the attack on Bagdad in 2003.

A: Silence.

Question 2: Tell the American people what we are going to do about the immigration problem across America.

A. Well, it's not a national problem, it's different in each state. A fence makes no sense. Barriers are not what this country is all about. So, these 'illegal' workers get paid less; maybe they are taking some jobs from citizens who want them. I don't know for sure but those guys working on the outside stucco on the house in Tampa in the mid-July probably have a job for life. Same goes for the tomato pickers and the chicken handlers. Employment is bad all across the world, but we are still where everyone yearns to be. I think it will be that way for a long time.

Question 3: Our economy - good or bad?

A. Still amazingly vibrant for those with an education and some expertise. Bad for those without both of these; average for those with only one. High-risk mortgages were just that. The banks preyed where they could; the oversight committees at these lending institutions had the good old American dollar on their minds when they approved these loans. Stimulus packages are great for the politicians. But all of the smart economists will tell you it is nothing more than a waste of money. Recessions happen. Trends never stop

repeating themselves. The financial pundits of the world of television, the internet, and the radio have something to yell about for awhile.

Question 4: Bill.

A. I don't want Bill Clinton's third term. A woman would be fine for president, and good for us for letting it happen, but this lady is not the one to unite the country. This is Limbaugh's dream. It is a nightmare for the rest of us.

Question 5: No Child Left Behind.

A. Education is a local issue. Throwing money at it doesn't help. Teachers know best. Some schools need more money than others. As long as we have systems like the one in Ohio where everything is based upon real estate valuations, you are going to have an unequal distribution of funds to the schools. Want to help your children's school? Join the PTA and become a room parent.

Question 6: Global warming.

A. Time is running out for this generation of non-believers. We better hope our next group of so-called leaders run Green and stay there.

Question 7: Abortion.

A. A states rights issue, not a national issue. Let the Supreme Court say it and move on.

Question 8: Ethics in Washington.

A. Not a fair question. But let me say that it is all over the place. Money talks; everything else walks. We need all these power groups telling all the elected officials what is best for their constituents like Dorothy needs a new set of shoes to get home.

Question 9: Terms of Office.

A. I am in favor of a 6-year term for President. One term only. I also believe every political office needs a term limit. Judges should only serve two terms. Most people in this country could not name one person they voted for in an off-year election. Hell, most people don't vote.

Question 10: Guns.

A. I don't want one. Some people do. Guns kill. Each state should set the laws for their state. I see no need for a national policy.

Question 11: Space Exploration.

A. We have Mars right here in Washington, DC. Stop already.

Question 12: Estate taxes.

A. Again, let the states do it. The Federal Treasury has to find a different source of income.

Question 13: Revenue Sources; Income Taxes.

A. The current system is not broken. People cheat a lot. Most others try and find a way to do so.

Question 14: Race Relations.

A. If we look back, we are getting better. By 2100, we might have some peace and quiet in all the neighborhoods.

Question 15: Death by choice.

A. Oregon has it right.

Question 16: Technology.

A. Bill Gates and Stephen Jobs would be the best presidents and would be great choices for our generation. Put them in charge.

Question 17: Religion.

A. Everyone knows this is a personal issue. Stop complaining about someone else's choices. Leave everyone alone. Get the crooks off television. Close down Bob Jones University. **Question 18:** That State Flag in South Carolina. A. Not a local issue. Get that flag down on my first day on the job.

Question 19: Paper or plastic bags.

A. Easy. Paper.

Question 20: Health Care.

A., We all need it. Simple economics - if everyone needs it, it will not go down in price. Too many have-nots. We have some work to do and we better do it very soon. **Final Question:** Why should we vote for you? A. I am the only one who told you the truth. Thank you and Good Night from the Anchor Bar in Buffalo, NY.

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Lakewood Observer

Our Stimulus Checks

by Peter Sackett

Have you heard the news? Mail-boxes everywhere may soon be filled with checks from the US Treasury. Yes, you have won the lottery, George W. Bush/US Congress style. The concept is simple – we can purchase our way out of an economic slowdown and make the people in Washington look good. Only our elected officials in DC could spend time coming up with this plan, as they center most of their time on whether Roger Clemens should be sworn in before he testifies.

And, you know what else? All they want you to do with the money is spend it!! This is a free lunch and a lot more. Your federal government is about to spend \$250 billion dollars handing out checks to the taxpayers. Who hates the government now? George Bush should be your hero, right?

Not so fast.

Do you pay your credit card bills each month? Some of us pay only the interest charges as we fight to manage our overall debt load. This practice leaves the principal amount due unchanged. And, of course, we all still use our credit cards each month. So, the amount of interest-only payments never goes down. It is a secret all of us hate to think about – how to find the money to get past the interest charges.

It is no different for our federal government. Each year our government spends a lot more than they have to spend. So, they get more credit. A lot more credit. Let me give you some numbers.

The money for these so-called stimulus checks will be borrowed from foreign governments. \$250 billion dollars. And, you know what else? The budget for 2008, which runs to September 30, 2008, was \$250 billion in the negative before the stimulus package was agreed to. And, this figure fails

Most of the so-called economists have made it very clear that we are not going to spend our way out of this alleged crisis. Not one has said that the infusion of these funds will bring a quicker solution to what ails this economy.

to take into account any other projects Congress decides to pay for before the new budget year starts.

And, where do you think our presidential candidates stand on the issue? Well, John McCain said last week, “The issue of economics is not something I’ve understood as well as I should.” Great. He also said that the time is ripe for spending restraints. Right. Senator

Obama says his plan for \$250.00 tax rebates will solve everything. Mayor Giuliani awoke in Miami to say that his time as Mayor of New York had equipped him to handle economic crises. Yeah, and Dorothy and Auntie Em’s house didn’t land on that witch.

Most of the so-called economists have made it very clear that we are not going to spend our way out of this alleged crisis. Not one has said that the infusion of these funds will bring a quicker solution to what ails this economy.

And, the honest ones have said that providing relief to those on unemployment is a better way of getting money out into the economy. Try and get someone from the Heritage Foundation to confirm that. On the other hand, soon-to-be retired Pete Dominici (R-NM) actually said he would like the stimulus to reach \$300 billion and that sending checks to those that didn’t pay taxes because of their minimal income wasn’t a bad idea. Too bad Bush didn’t agree with him.

Now, we have to return to the issue our national credit card debt and our interest payments thereon.

See if you can comprehend this set of numbers: the National Debt has continued to increase an average of \$1.48 billion per day since September 2006. The credit card debt of the US government is over 9 trillion dollars. Trillion. Some say that we also have a credit surplus from two sources – our social security trust fund has a little over \$2 trillion extra at the moment, and Medicare has a surplus of over \$3.6 trillion.

So, we have a \$3.4 trillion dollar debt, if and only if you let us use your surpluses to pay against it. Most economists use the 9 trillion dollar figure

as the correct one. Do you think we ever pay down that debt? NEVER. We spend over \$450 billion dollars a year just making the interest payments! Read that again - \$450 billion in interest payments.

Now, let me tell you where the money comes from. Every three months our government sells bonds. Believe it or not, the guys and gals who run the social security and Medicare systems, as noted above, are the major lenders back to the government. These two groups hold over 50% of the debt.

Our friends overseas hold the rest – Japan holds \$644 billion; China holds \$350 billion; the oil exporting countries own \$100 billion in our notes. I wonder where Saudi Arabia got the money to buy those bonds?

Of course, it goes both ways. A lot of American investors have made investments in foreign countries. But, Warren Buffett just noted in his famous annual letter to shareholders that 2007 marked the first time since 1915 that the net balance of this investment turned negative.

“Foreigners now earn more on their U.S. investments than we do on our investments abroad,” Buffett wrote to shareholders “In effect, we’ve used up our bank account and turned to our credit card. And, like everyone who gets in hock, the U.S. will now experience ‘reverse compounding’ as we pay ever-increasing amounts of interest on interest.”

“I believe that at some point in the future U.S. workers and voters will find this annual ‘tribute’ [of interest payment on the debt] so onerous that there will be a severe political backlash,” Buffett wrote. “How that will play out in markets is impossible to predict – but to expect a ‘soft landing’ seems like wishful thinking.”

In 2006, the government spent \$406 billion of your money on interest payments to the National Debt. Compare that to NASA at \$15 billion, education at \$61 billion, and the Department of Transportation at \$56 billion.

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Lakewood Business News

Building Self-Esteem Inside And Out

by Diane Helbig

We have, right here in our own city, a somewhat hidden treasure. She has never wavered in her belief in herself and others. She stands out for me as someone who truly believes in paying it forward. I think you'll find her story interesting and so, I'd like to shed some light on Litha Macon, owner of Roman Ricci Salon.

Litha moved to the Cleveland area in 1995 to be closer to her family. A hair stylist by trade, she left three thriving salons in Washington DC to make sure her mother was well cared for in her final days. In 1997 she was approached by a friend who suggested she buy the Mark Leonard salon in Lakewood.

She fell in love with Lakewood. According to Litha, she felt more comfortable here because Lakewood was like the community she had left in Washington. She likes the idea of so many storefront businesses and the opportunity it gives people to open a business on any scale. Litha enjoys the convenience of Lakewood – that she can walk to the library, the store, the park, and her shop! In addition, the residents of Lakewood welcomed her. She never had a concern about being an African American woman business owner in Lakewood. She'd been told by people that she'd meet resistance – she never did.

That's why, when the salon burned down just six weeks after she had taken ownership, she made the decision to open another salon and build it from the ground up. For two years she worked alone. She grew her business to include employees and at one point had as many as eight stylists working for her. She currently houses her salon, Roman Ricci, at 17309 Madison Avenue and is celebrating her 10 year anniversary!

Now, this would be a great story even if ended here. But that's not the end by a long shot! In 2003 Litha started coaching girls and women. As hair stylists tend to do, she listened well to her clients. She found herself offering them suggestions and advice. One of her clients asked Litha if she'd be willing to talk to her daughter in Florida. That started her coaching career.

Litha had dabbled in psychology courses on a college level but had never completed her studies. Her interest in helping others, however, never faltered. She found a real interest in helping girls and women develop better self-esteem, and a sense of self-worth. Litha believes this is a crucial issue that par-

ents struggle with. Many times they miss the cues and realize there's a problem when it's too late. This subject hits especially close to home as she raises her daughter, Price, now 10 years old.

As her salon clients began calling her at home, she started offering her coaching services to more and more people. In addition, the more women she works with, the more they tell their friends. She even has clients who schedule hair appointments for their daughters so Litha can meet them and get a sense of where they're at.

In a day and age when kids are growing up too fast, and parents are juggling a lot of balls, it's nice to know there's someone right here in our community who is making a difference in young women's lives.

As an extension of her coaching services, Litha is launching a Girls Social Group in February. This is a weekend program, meeting on Sundays from 3:00 – 6:00 pm at her salon. Litha set up this group because, as she says, girls need to learn to get along with each other. The format will be to work with a group of young women to help them discover their hidden talents, nurture their self-esteem and confidence. The goal is to help them learn how to make better life choices. Some additional outcomes will be better school performance and behavior, as well as learning how to compete with themselves instead of others. The group size will be 10 girls between 10-13 years of age. This is a four month



Litha Macon
program that will go through May 2008. Parents can contact Litha at 216-221-7994.
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Bumper Bowling Rocks Lakewood!

by Patricia Neligan Barley

Are the kids making you crazy? Does the weather have you blue? You say there's nothing to do; I say be creative! Quit complaining that it's too cold to take your kids outside and take the family Bumper Bowling at Mahall's Twenty Lanes!

My family and I recently met our friends there for an afternoon full of fun (and hilarious bowling of course)! Why hilarious? Well, when was the last time you took your toddler bowling? First, there are the shoes, ridiculously small but equally cute. The smallest sizes they carry are a 7, which fit both Ronan and Mia, the bowling toddlers, perfectly. And, unsurprisingly, even the lightest balls were a bit heavy and not so easily pushed down the alley without some assistance from mom or dad.

I think my favorite part was watching them jump for joy as they saw their ball actually knock over a pin. Oh, the delights of bumper bowling. The days of gutter balls are a forgotten thing of the past, at least for the toddlers (the adults still had a few of those going down). We were the only families there for about the first hour, which is a good thing because the actual interest in bowling waxed and waned while we were there, and Ronan and Mia spent a good fraction of their time either spilling popcorn on the ground or chasing each other around the unoccupied seats.

This actually worked out perfectly, as it gave us adults time to get a game in



Roger, Naila, Sasha, and Mia enjoying an afternoon of Bumper Bowling!

ourselves. My husband, Isaac, beat us all and was the only one to break 100. Hey, I didn't say we were good at bowling; I was simply giving you an idea of something fun to do. I was next up as far as scoring goes, with our friends Naila and Roger swearing they wouldn't invite us again until they practiced their game. Baby Sasha had a good time too and was happy to be passed off from one adult to the next as we took turns bowling, keeping score, and cleaning up messes! This

was not only a great way to spend a cold Saturday afternoon with family and catching up with friends, but it was also very reasonably priced. Each family only spent \$12, and that included the shoe rental and the games; popcorn sold separately.

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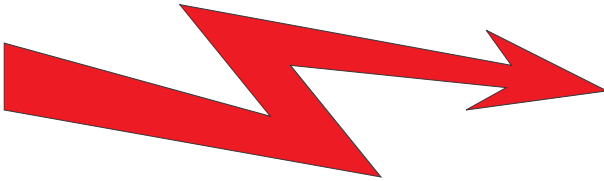
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