

THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

Lakewood's Only Newspaper And Finest Website

Volume 1, Issue 7, September 20, 2005

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Katrina Brings Good to Lakewood

by Dar Wolnik

Help us by allowing us to build again.

You have noticed us on the roads, with Louisiana or Mississippi license plates and dirty windows. We look haggard and a little dazed when we stop for gas, and look around for fellow evacuees to share or learn information. Some of you stop and try to say something comforting, and it *is* comforting to know that people can step out of their busy, stressful lives to find money, clothes, shelter or a moment to listen. We are appreciative. Let me try to tell you how we feel.

We are at one of the worst moments of our state's 300-year history, a moment when all of us will have to decide how, when and where we can go forward with our lives. How many of us will ever go back? Where will we rebuild our lives? Can we get red beans or Creole cream cheese there?

You may think that finding red beans is a superficial need and ask yourself why that matters now. It matters because our food culture is a communal experience; red beans and rice on Monday unites us across economic lines. My friend Dave has hosted a red beans and rice Monday at his house for over nine years. Everyone is welcome, and anyone that loves the culture would know that.

At the Crescent City Farmers Mar-

ket, over 4,000 shoppers came each week to share the most vital community experience, gathering and sharing food. The farmers and fishers came from Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Washington, St. John, St. Charles and many more parishes to reconnect New Orleanians to their culture.

Those markets are mirrored in similar areas of Louisiana and Mississippi where farmers' markets deliver fresh food to their communities—satsumas, Creole tomatoes, mirlitons, sweet potatoes, shrimp, oysters, muscadines, and much, much more.

Almost all of our festivals revolve around food. Our farmers and fishers stayed put for the most part during this storm to save the food that feeds the soul and belly. Some will have lost almost everything; some will have lost their lives. Now, they have nowhere to sell their products with their community dispersed throughout the country and with two seasons to pass before the city is functional. They will stay and find jobs to tide them over until they begin feeding the city and state again when everyone returns. There is no question that the farmers and fishers will stay to save their way of life and ours as well.

We will have Mardi Gras again. It might be smaller and bittersweet as we look around the neutral ground and



Lakewood High students Rebecca Huffman on violin and Vicki Hamm on cello raise money for the Red Cross in downtown Lakewood.

realize families that have set up next to us for years have disappeared, but we will have it. Again, you might ask, why does that matter in the midst of all the work that must be done? We would answer, because it is our community. We gather for three weeks before Lent each year to celebrate life, and to honor our past. Mardi Gras is a family celebration, no matter what you have seen on the six o'clock news in years past. We gather on each other's porches and talk for hours while waiting for the next parade to pass. We wave to our friends who costume and ride the floats. We show our children and newcomers how

to eat Popeye's chicken on a curb, or share barbeque with folks sitting next to us.

So, realize that we have awoken a thousand miles from our lives, our community has been dispersed. We see neighborhoods destroyed that we know well and have friends, who we believe to have stayed to ride out the storm, missing. We mourn the loss of so many lives in our community and just ask that you let us have hope to rebuild. Don't ask why should it be rebuilt, or how can we go back. We will. New Orleans is necessary to the health and well-being of this nation.

Get the Insider's Perspective on the "Grow Lakewood" Report

LakewoodAlive launches its Fall Forum Series with a program dedicated to the findings and recommendations generated by the Grow Lakewood committee. The Grow Lakewood committee is a citizens' task force headed by Mike

Summers and comprised of 12 long-time Lakewood residents and leaders.

The committee was challenged by the Mayor and City Council to identify issues and potential solutions regarding the city's infrastructure, facilities

and economic development.

After nearly a year of conversations, meetings and work, the committee provided an initial report that indicates Lakewood is at a crossroad in many areas and that timely and responsible action is required to ensure an invigorating future for our community.

The participation of informed and engaged residents in making these important decisions is critical for Lakewood. LakewoodAlive invites all residents to hear the full report and participate in a dialogue with members of the Grow Lakewood committee on Wednesday, Sept. 28 at 7 p.m.

The free event will be held at Grant Elementary School. Parking lot must be accessed from Elmwood, additional parking at the Board of Education, 1470 Warren Rd. Grant school is directly behind the Board of Education's parking lot. For more information, visit www.lakewoodalive.com.



Part of the Grow Lakewood Committee discuss the upcoming LakewoodAlive presentation at Sullivan's Pub. Clockwise from lower left: Vic Nagalo, Mike Summers, Joe Stewart, Dryck Bennett, Ed Favre, Mark Timieski, and Ken Laino.

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Lakewood News

Dead Body in Metropark Ex-Roommate of Distasio

by Kenneth Warren

On Sept. 10 at 8:13 a.m. Metropark Rangers received a telephone call from a person who had been walking a dog in the Rocky River Metropark. The caller informed Metropark Rangers that a body was located in the park on the east side of the Rocky River.

Shortly thereafter Lakewood Police were notified and dispatched to meet Metropark Rangers in the park. In a remote wooded area, they found the dead body. An extension chord was wrapped around his neck.

The Cuyahoga County Coroner ruled the cause of death was suicide.

The dead body was Chris Nolan. Prior to Nolan's death, Rocky River Police had obtained a warrant for his arrest.

"The Rocky River Police had reason to believe that Nolan may have had some inappropriate sexual contact and/or conduct with juveniles," said Detective Philip Morron.

"An attorney said to have represented Nolan was contacted by Rocky River Police, advised a warrant existed and requested Nolan turn himself in."

"Nolan was a friend and probably had a relationship with Phillip Distasio," added Morron.

For a time Nolan and Distasio lived together in a Wooster Road apartment. At this Rocky River apartment Distasio's alternative charter school, "Class Cutters," would convene.

On Aug. 24 Distasio was arrested by the Rocky River Police and charged

with both corrupting another with drugs, a fourth-degree felony, and contributing to the delinquency of a minor, a misdemeanor.

Distasio is now being held in a Cuyahoga County facility in anticipation of additional charges. Bond has

been set at \$500,000.

Distasio's ideas on teaching children and his efforts to recruit students for an alternative charter school were the subject of an extensive analysis by Dan Slife, published in the Sept. 6 issue of the *Lakewood Observer*.

Local Arab Women's Group Raises \$300 for Hurricane Relief

by Victoria A. Policard

LAKEWOOD—They go to The Arab American Women's Organization (A.A.W.O.) meetings for various reasons: to seek relaxation, to hear a guest speaker, to receive and give help with language and cultural challenges—and their chance to make a difference in the community they live in.

"All the ladies are open-hearted, they said 'how much do you need,'" the A.A.W.O. founder and Lakewood resident, Nahida Farunia, said of her efforts to collect money for Hurricane Katrina victims. "One woman liked the idea and told her husband, and he loved the idea and collected from his friends!"

The victims of Hurricane Katrina may not exactly be neighbors, if you think in literal terms, but they are a community of people in need. A theme that's familiar to the women in the A.A.W.O., most of whom are

immigrants that hail from places like Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Libya. Farunia said she understands the critical need to aid people who can't help themselves, even if it's in small ways.

The \$300 that was raised will be donated to The American Red Cross from the City of Lakewood. Farunia said that giving the hurricane donation to Lakewood City Hall was also a way for her group to say "thank you" to the community of Lakewood for their support of the A.A.W.O., now in its third year.



photo by Rhonda Loje

Hot Off The Deck

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Topics	Replies	Author	Views	Last Post
Observer 3rd Biggest in County!	0	Jim O'Bryan	35	Sat Sep 17, 2005 10:12 am
Observers Grow To 250	0	Jim O'Bryan	35	Sat Sep 17, 2005 9:33 am
Section 8 in Lakewood	12	john crino	236	Sat Sep 17, 2005 8:37 am
Issue 14	2	Thomas J. George	94	Wed Sep 14, 2005 4:01 pm
Fire Department Overtime	1	Bill Call	133	Fri Sep 02, 2005 6:49 am
WiFi in Lakewood	57	Bryan Schwegler	1825	Tue Sep 13, 2005 8:55 pm
Will Lakewood City Council follow Santa Cruz CC lead?	0	Donald Farris	51	Mon Sep 12, 2005 12:14 am
Tax Incentives for Fixing Up Lakewood Homes?	8	Janet Popielski	168	Sun Sep 11, 2005 1:48 pm
Observer Now A Teaching Tool!	0	Jim O'Bryan	44	Wed Sep 07, 2005 9:04 pm
National				
New Orleans Blog - Best we have seen	9	Jim O'Bryan	161	Thu Sep 08, 2005 12:15 pm
GWB is responsible for New Orleans	58	Donald Farris	760	Sun Sep 18, 2005 8:09 am
Roberts nomination	8	Stan Austin	95	Fri Sep 16, 2005 6:34 pm
NOLA Reconstruction; old school-new school-feeding frenzy	1	Stephen Calhoun	13	Fri Sep 16, 2005 7:56 am
One Nation, under a conservative Christian God	0	Jeff Endress	22	Fri Sep 16, 2005 7:33 am

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The *Lakewood Observer* is looking for people, ages 18–100, to get involved in the paper and the city. We are looking for volunteer writers, photographers, designers and illustrators to help with the production of the paper. It does not matter if you are a professional or amateur, our editorial staff will be glad to help.

If you are interested, e-mail to: publisher@lakewoodobserver.com

News releases—If you have information on an event, organization, program or news on *anything* that has to do with Lakewood, send it to: city.editor@lakewoodobserver.com

Calendar of Events—To appear on our calendar of events, e-mail: events@lakewoodobserver.com

Newsies/Delivery People—The *Lakewood Observer* is looking for people that would like to help deliver the newspaper. If interested, e-mail: delivery@lakewoodobserver.com

We need you to get involved! If you have or know of a story, we want it!

THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

Your Independent Source for
Lakewood News & Opinion

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Lakewood City Hall

Pounding Drums Soothe Yorktown, Air Conditioners, Others Irritate

September: Lakewood’s fall flower pops up on tree lawns everywhere—the “I Brake For Kids” signs. Drivers proceed with extra caution as they learn the new crossings and routes of the kids going to school. The pounding of marching bands’ bass drums brings new hope to athletes and students for a great year.

And so too, Lakewood City Council returned to work after an August recess. Council President Robert Seelie gaveled the meeting to order at 7:38 Tuesday night. The anchor of any good council is its clerk—Mary Hagan filling that spot for Lakewood’s City Council, but Hagan was on vacation. What to do? Fill the spot with an equally able temporary clerk, Mary Ross Coleman, the Assistant Clerk of Council. That action required a roll call vote, which went smoothly, although it was rumored that at least one council member was, in good nature, going to “question” the appointment.

Over a year ago Council member Denis Dunn (at large) and Mayor Thomas George initiated the Committee for a Greener Lakewood. Its mission is to develop policies and implement practices that will encourage positive environmental actions towards a more sustainable community. This year’s Go Green Awards were the first item of business.

One residential recipient, Mr. and Mrs. John Bentley, Jr., and three commercial recipients, Nature’s Bin, Phoenix Coffee House and Dynasty Deconstruction, accepted Council’s resolution in front of an appreciative audience.

Council then turned its attention to upcoming charter issues, which will appear on the October and November ballots.

Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting Issue 14 on the Oct. 4 ballot, allowing for greater flexibility in how fixed millage is spent. Three charter issues that will appear on the November ballot also received unanimous support from Council. Mayor George pointed out that all of these issues, the result of over a year of work by the independent citizen’s Charter Review Commission as well as extensive Council hearings, will be the object of an informational campaign directed at Lakewood voters.

Over the past several decades, an increasingly sophisticated Lakewood citizenry has insisted on access to and participation in its city government. One avenue for this civic activism is through City Council. Appropriately, Council’s customs and procedures have evolved over the years to meet this citizen involvement, reaching the point where Lakewood has the benefits of a small New England township meeting side by side with the modern political machinery necessary for a large city.

Two techniques of involvement were on display at Tuesday’s meeting.

Stan Austin, City Council Reporter

The first is to have a Council member champion an issue or be an advocate for a problem. Council member Edward FitzGerald (at large) proposed a systematic way of dealing with nuisance problems. He cited the Yorktown Motel, Calanni’s Auto Repair, and the Lakewood Center North Building as examples of nuisances. Annoying air-handling equipment is the complaint for that building. With the prompting of FitzGerald, many residents of the affected streets of Belle, St. Charles, and Warren Road, voiced their complaints of excessive and irritating noise. It seems that the nudging from different directions is compelling Law Director Brian Corrigan to move closer towards litigation to force corrective action by the building owners. Council member Ryan Demro (ward two) reemphasized his continuing involvement in this matter.

This citizen involvement occurred during the regular business agenda, allowing for input while an issue is being discussed before a vote is taken. Surprisingly, some city councils don’t allow for this.

A second technique, after all agenda items have been completed, allows anybody to take the podium and speak to any issue. All a resident has to do is to put his name down on a sign-in sheet at the beginning of the Council meeting. This allows for more spontaneous input without the orchestration required for the first technique, and can bring problems to quick attention.

At the end of the regular business on Tuesday, business owners occupying the buildings on the south side of Madison between Carabel and Mor-

rison complained about allocation of parking slots in a city-owned lot behind their buildings. The Richard Hilliard House condominiums are making repairs to their parking garage. They needed temporary parking off site. The Public Works Department determined that 12 slots in the city-owned lot behind those businesses could be reserved for the temporary use of the Hilliard House. The business owners complained that this preferred reservation of slots under permit with a towing penalty for non-permit holders was reducing or eliminating slots that they needed for their customers.

Complicating matters was Council member Demro. His efforts to ameliorate these conflicting demands apparently left confusion and misunderstandings between all affected parties. Public Works Director Tony Beno particularly took issue with some of Demro’s representations.

However, the solution was at hand.

Council President Seelie turned to Beno and the two aggrieved business owners and asked, “can you three meet tomorrow morning and resolve this problem?” They replied in the affirmative, and Seelie said, “do it, then.”

Finally, Mayor George, in a special additional appropriation letter, outlined the initial steps that Lakewood will take to help meet the needs of hurricane Katrina victims. The first appropriation request was to allocate \$50,000 in already provided federal funds to assist in housing costs for relocated storm victims. Planning Director Thomas Jordan has identified 15 available units in Lakewood’s three senior citizen housing buildings for this use.

Mayor George also requested an additional \$40,000 to pay for expected overtime costs if two fire fighter/paramedic teams from Lakewood deploy to the hurricane area. Their regular pay would be covered by FEMA, but overtime is expected here to maintain our staffing levels in their absence. Fire Chief Mroz indicated that two teams have already volunteered and are awaiting instructions.

LAKWOOD

21

21st CENTURY

Vote Yes On

Issue 14

"This flexible use of this millage will let us put more money to needed street rebuilding."

- Mayor Thomas J. George

"This is a win - win for the citizens of Lakewood."

- Finance Director Vic Nogala

"City Council unanimously supports this necessary charter revision."

- Council President Robert Seelie

"Creates more ability to fix our streets is exactly the kind of action Grow Lakewood recommends."

- Michael Summers, Chair of the Grow Lakewood Committee

Let's move our money where it is needed!

Paid for by the 21st Century Lakewood Committee, Mr. Stanley D. Austin Treasurer, 2067 Warren Road, Lakewood, OH 44107

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2005 Fall Forum Series

The Grow Lakewood Report

An Insider's Perspective

Wednesday, September 28 7:p.m.

Accountability & Efficiency

One City's Turnaround Story

Thursday October 13 7:00p.m.

Grant Elementary School

Parking can be accessed off of Elmwood.

Additional parking available at Board of Education

1470 Warren Road (Grant is directly behind BOE parking lot.)

Lakewood Schools

Lakewood Hospital Hosts Career Education for Area Students

by Victoria A. Policard

LAKEWOOD—They were all dressed in dark purple scrubs and seemed to be rushing into the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Lakewood Hospital on Monday, Sept. 12. Busy with patients? Not quite yet. They’re high school students from Lakewood High School and Westlake High School.

The students, along with Lakewood Superintendent Dr. David Estrop and Lakewood Hospital CAO Jack Gustin, introduced and spoke of their enthusiasm of a new program for high school students: Health Careers Technology at Lakewood Hospital presented by West Shore Career and Technical District. The learning program is designed to give interested high school students insight into the field of medical careers from practitioners in a professional environment. The program’s 16 enrolled students will spend three hours of every school day at the hospital during both their junior and senior years.

West Shore Career and Technical District’s programs are free to students in their last two years of high school who live in Lakewood, Bay Village, Rocky River and Westlake. The program is housed in Lakewood High School. The majority of the students participating in the program are Lakewood High School students. The program receives

funding from the state, Federal Perkin’s funds, school district contributions and grant money, according to their 2005 Course Catalog.

“The program teaches the latest in nursing technology, and students are eligible for up to six hours of college credit,” said West Shore Career and Technical District Director Linda

Thayer. “It has an updated curriculum that meets professional and state’s standards. It’s high-level, high quality career education.”

“I’ve always wanted to be an anesthesiologist, and this touches base with that,” said Megan Dresner, a Lakewood High student.

A typical day in the program might include: learning the hospital system, patient care techniques, rotations around the hospital, lessons in medical terminology, abbreviations and symbols, how to comply with insurance companies, learning about licensure and medical ethics, according to Thayer.

“I’m gonna be a paramedic, I’m positive,” said Lakewood High School student Ashley Faulisi. I can affect people and not have to do office work, she said with a grin.

Westlake High School student Samantha Kopak said, “I’m interested in radiology and excited to see if that’s what I want to do.” Kopak takes two buses each way to get to Lakewood Hospital from Westlake.

For more information on West Shore Career and Technical District’s technology-related programs, contact: 216-529-4163, or on the Web at: www.lakewoodcityschools.org



The Lakewood Family Room’s New Program: “Learn Through Play”

by Vincent O’Keefe

Imagine a place where parents could take their young children (from newborn to age six) to a rich, interactive environment designed to foster early literacy skills and school-readiness. Imagine those parents, many of whom might be on the floor, actively engaged with their children as they “learn through play.” Now imagine such a place being free of charge for Lakewood families. Thanks to the new Learn through Play program at the Lakewood

Family Room, 17400 Northwood Ave. (behind St. James Church on Detroit), this desirable scenario is now a reality.

Here’s how it works. As parent and child (or children) arrive at The Family Room, the child is encouraged to explore the environment independently, although the parent is always alongside ready to interact. The room contains a large variety of learning stations featuring arts and crafts, musical instruments, age-appropriate books, building blocks, puzzles, math problems, and science exhibits (including

one with live worms!). There is also a kitchen section and a laundry area that help children master household chores like washing surfaces and folding clothes. Finally, there is a section for newborns and infants involving mirrors, puppets, songs, and board books. Many of the areas include a list of suggestions for parents regarding the most effective ways to enhance their children’s future literacy skills. For example, building a child’s vocabulary and expressive ability are key goals of the program, so parents are encouraged to ask their children open-ended questions and to name as many objects as possible.

In addition to the helpful lists around the room, there is always at least one facilitator present for any questions parents may have. Lakewood residents Laurie Zubal and Angela Skourlis are facilitators. Zubal is working on her Master’s degree in Education with a specialization in reading; Skourlis also has professional experience in elementary education. It is important to note, however, that their role is not as teachers, but as resources for parents. Zubal explains that “early literacy is a key component to success in school.” Skourlis adds that their job is to “get the parents to play” so they can see how the interaction benefits their children.

One Lakewood parent who clearly sees the benefits of the Learn and Play program is Michael Dirse, a full-time stay-at-home dad who moved to Lakewood from California less than a year ago. He regularly takes his son, Julian, to the program and declares it has “validated” his notion that play is so important to children’s learning. He appreciates how the environment

is free of home distractions and fosters what he calls “play with focused objectives” that bolster his son’s motor skills, articulation, and self-esteem. In fact, the program has even changed the layout of Dirse’s own residence, as he has tried to mirror some of the best learning stations at home. For example, Julian learned much about shapes, colors, and textures from the laundry station, so now he and Michael fold clothes together, which has increased their communication dramatically. Dirse admits this technique can be more time-consuming than doing chores by himself, but it is much more rewarding in the long run, as he has noticed an improved relationship with his son. As Dirse explains, “there is more confidence between us” and, as a result, “we love going.”

Toni Gelsomino is the director of the Lakewood Family Room, which is part of the Division of Early Childhood, a branch of Lakewood’s Department of Human Services. She was instrumental in obtaining funding for the Learn through Play program through the Cuyahoga County Office of Early Childhood, Invest in Children. She is quick to emphasize that the new program is designed for the whole family, meaning that parents, not just children, have much to gain from the environment. Some *Observer* readers may be familiar with The Family Room’s many drop-in programs that provide support for all kinds of Lakewood parents, including nursing mothers, stay-at-home and working parents, single parents, teen parents, and parents of special needs children. But Gelsomino stresses that

see **Family**, page 19

Dictionaries from the Rotary Club



If your third grade child has a new dictionary in their hands this year, you can thank the Lakewood/Rocky River Rotary Club. This is their second year of a 10-year commitment which places new dictionaries into the hands of every single third grader in Lakewood and Rocky River private and public schools. Pictured: Dr. Kathleen McGorray, principal McKinley School, David Baker and Dr. Phillip Alexander. The dictionary was presented at the McKinley PTA meeting Sept. 13 in front of a group of parents. Thank you Rotary Club for your generosity.

Lakewood Sports

Rangers Run into Trouble on Road

by Mike Deneen

The 2005 Ranger football team took to the road for the second straight week on Friday, Sept. 9. The team traveled to North Olmsted to take on the Eagles, a Southwest Conference program that entered the game with a record of 1-1. The Rangers brought their strong running game to “the land of Great Northern,” as junior running back Nicco Maddaluna carried the ball 21 times for 207 yards. However, big plays made the difference for North Olmsted, which won 46-13.

North Olmsted received the opening kickoff and drove the ball 67 yards on nine plays to take a 6-0 lead with 6:50 remaining in the first quarter. On the ensuing Ranger possession, Lakewood punted after three plays. That’s when the big plays started. Eagle quarterback Peter Taylor hit Steven Price for a 67-yard touchdown pass, putting

North Olmsted up 13-0 with 5:03 left in the first quarter. The next Ranger possession resulted in a solid drive that ended with a punt deep into Eagle territory; however, Taylor broke free for a 76-yard touchdown run. The Rangers’ next punt was returned 65 yards for a touchdown by Timothy Murphy, giving North Olmsted a 26-0 lead midway through the second quarter.

Although Maddaluna had most of the carries and yardage for the Rangers, Senior Running Back Josh Wade completed the Rangers’ biggest run of the night. After having been contained for only one yard on six carries, Wade made a 68-yard touchdown run early in the third quarter to provide Lakewood’s first score. Wade went on to finish the night with 15 carries for 88 yards. Not to be outdone, Maddaluna provided a 53-yard touchdown run late in the third quarter to provide Lakewood’s other score.



Finding a hole during the recent game between Lakewood and Garfield.

Stadium Seating, Uniforms Reflect Lakewood Tradition

New at Lakewood Stadium this year are a few changes, but changes that people may find familiar. “We are going back to the purple-and-gold football uniforms, as well as spectator seating in the stadium the way it used to be,” said Dr. William Wagner, LHS Principal.

Years ago at Lakewood Stadium, Lakewood fans were seated on the west side with the Press Box and visitors

seated on the east side of the stadium. This year, along with the traditional uniforms, the fan seating will return to that set-up.

“First and foremost, safety and security will be improved. We will be returning things to the way they used to be, and it will improve getting people to the right seating areas,” said Dr. Wagner. Most stadiums have home seating on the Press Box side.



Sophomore Chelsea Mason spikes the ball in a recent game against Southview.

Calling All LHS Marching Band Alumni

Dust off your snare drum, grease your trumpet valves and join fellow Lakewood HS graduates as the LHS Alumni Marching Band performs at Homecoming 2005. The band will perform at the Friday, Sept. 3, football game.

Several dozen alumni performed at last year’s Homecoming game. “We had a terrific time and, in fact, several alumni have been meeting regularly with the hopes of creating an ongoing ensemble,” said Jim Pierce, LHS class of 1971, who is helping to organize the group. The LHS Alumni Marching

Band is conducted by volunteer Tom Selby, former LHS assistant marching band director. They participated in the Raise the Roof and 4th of July parades, and performed a brief concert on the Raise the Roof stage.

All Alumni musicians and auxiliary unit participants (flag corps, Rangerettes, etc.) are welcome to join in. The alumni band will rehearse at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 27, in the band room at Lakewood High School. For more information, contact the LHS Alumni Office at 216.529.4033.

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Lakewood Arts & Music

Interview with Bob Ignizio, Founder of Utter Trash

Introduction by Matthew Charboneau

Interview and Story by Dave Mooney

Public accessibility to computers has reached a societal critical mass of sorts. Nearly every major public library in the area offers some free public access computers or internet stations. Many libraries also offer seminars or classes in both basic and advanced computer use, ranging from e-mail and internet basics, to teaching PowerPoint, Photoshop, and personal web-logging. While not yet a household item, laptop computers have become more affordable in recent years, and increased number of businesses, college campuses, and municipalities offering Wi-Fi service have made ad hoc journalism and reporting a portable pastime. With the increased number of tech-savvy internet surfers has come a proliferation of online newsletters, e-zines (online versions of print zines; independent or underground culture magazines), web-logs, diaries, and chat groups. This overabundance of information has not only become daunting to navigate and keep up, but has also obscured the definition of what is and isn't "journalism".

Current Lakewood resident Bob Ignizio is the creative force behind the online magazine Utter Trash, a website dedicated to promoting underground music and culture through album reviews, interviews, and music journalism. The site is a good example of both the underground do-it-yourself spirit, and a proactive and constructive approach to profiling bands and artists who might otherwise pass under the radar of the mainstream media. The review and story subjects range from reviews of punk, metal, and hardcore bands, to exploring the current climate of local experimental music, to even admitting a fondness for and lamenting the extinction of cheesy 1980s hair metal bands. All of this is done with a tongue-in-cheek and irreverent attitude, impossible to characterize as self righteous or pompous. Bob Ignizio himself sums it up best with Utter Trash's tagline: "dumping garbage on the side of the information superhighway since 2002."

Below, *Lakewood Observer* writer Dave Mooney turns the interview table around on Bob.

Dave Mooney: How long have you been doing Utter Trash and how did

you go about starting it?

Bob Ignizio: I started Utter Trash in July of 2002, so just over three years now. My wife had started doing a website a couple months earlier (www.deadohio.com) and it didn't look that hard to do. I already had writing experience, having written for a couple of local music rags in the early '90s called Rox and Tab, but there really hadn't been anything like that for a few years. I checked online figuring somebody was at least doing an online equivalent. There were webzines out there, but none that covered the Cleveland scene. So I figured what the heck. I wrote reviews of some CDs I had bought recently, a few concerts I had been to, and some movies I had watched. Then I called my friend Alan who plays guitar in the Cleveland metal band Abdullah and interviewed him, and I went to a big punk fest and cornered the members of the now defunct punk band The Antisocialists and interviewed them. That's pretty much how it started.

DM: Were there any other zines that you modeled Utter Trash after?

BI: I have to admit I still don't look at that many other online zines. I modeled Utter Trash after the music zines I read in the '80s and '90s, like U.S. Rocker, Tab (the Akron Tab published by Ron Mullens, not the Cleveland paper), The Patrol, etc. I'm also a regular reader of two film related zines, Psychotronic Video (Mike Weldon publisher grew up in Lakewood) and Video Watchdog, and those influenced me as well.

DM: How do you compare doing an online zine to doing a print zine and which do you prefer?

BI: For the most part, it's not that different. Either way I'd still be writing the same stuff. I have to edit a little more tightly for the print version because I'm working within the constraints of the size of the pages, the number of pages I can afford to do, things like that. The biggest difference is in the cost and distribution. Hosting a website is relatively cheap, whereas doing a print mag can get pretty expensive. As for the distribution, with a website you just put it out there and do a little promotion from the comfort of your home and people will come check it out. With a print mag, since I can't afford to hire

anybody, I run all over town dropping off the mags. For the most part, I think I prefer the doing it online, but there's something satisfying about having a real magazine in your hands that you just don't get from a website.

DM: Do you have any advice for anyone who wants to start a zine?

BI: Write about things that interest you. No one who does a zine is getting rich off it, so just have fun. And on the technical side, make the damn thing readable! If every one of your pages is covered with sloppily pasted clip art and the text is an illegible scrawl, no one is going to be able to read it.

DM: How do you feel about the local music scene and who are some of your favorite local bands past and present?

BI: I think our music scene is as good as anyone's. There's a lot of mediocrity, but NE Ohio has kind of a tradition of eccentric, unique bands going back to the '70s when you had great groups like Rocket From the Tombs, Pere Ubu, The Electric Eels (all with members from Lakewood), Rubber City Rebels, The Pagans and Devo. There's also a really good experimental/avant garde music scene going on in Cleveland that's based around the Experimental Behavior (www.experimentalbehavior.com) website. I haven't checked this stuff out as much as I probably should, but what I've heard from Infinite Number of Sounds, Volta Sound, Humachine, and Colorforms was all really good (Editor's note—look for upcoming articles in the *Observer* on Lakewood's legendary punk band the Electric Eels, as well as a feature on the Lakewood-based Davenport Collective—of which Volta Sound is an important element).

DM: I understand you recently moved to Lakewood, where did you live before and why did you decide to move to Lakewood?

BI: I lived in Shaker Square for about 10 years. It was mainly because my wife was going to Case Western and that was close to school, and we liked the Shaker Square area. We moved because I got tired of having to drive half an hour just to get to an expressway entrance, a lot of the cool independent shops on the Square got driven out, and we could get more apartment for the money in Lakewood. I was in Lakewood a lot anyway, because of distributing the magazine and because I like to go over to My Mind's Eye Records and bug Charles. I'm originally from the Akron area, so I don't know or care about the whole east side/west side thing. I just liked what I saw of Lakewood, so here I am.

Bob hopes to get another print issue of Utter Trash out before the end of the year. In the meantime, you can order issues 1-3 for \$2 postage paid at www.uttertrash.net/print.htm, or just read everything online at www.uttertrash.net. Bob's musical project, Horror of 59 will celebrate their new CD with a release party, Saturday, Oct. 1, at The Beachland Tavern. Visit www.horrorof59.com for more info.

Who, What, When, and Where



The *Lakewood Observer* is dedicated to helping residents know their city, Lakewood, better than any city has ever known itself.

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Here is the contest; Be the first person to answer either, Who, What, When and/or Where and WIN!

Guys win a haircut at the Regal Beagle (worth \$25); women win a \$25 gift certificate good at Revelations Hair Salon. The next five people guessing right win their choice of *Lakewood Observer* gear.

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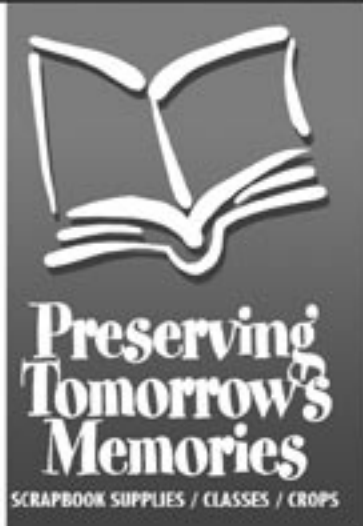
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Lakewood Library

Wireless Internet Access at Lakewood Public Library

The Lakewood Public Library has activated a Wi-Fi hotspot at Main Library (15425 Detroit Ave.). This free service allows library patrons to connect their Wi-Fi (802.11b or 802.11g) compliant laptop, PDA or other device to a high-speed Internet feed. Wi-Fi access is available on the first and second floors of the Main Library, as well as the outside front of the building. Madison Branch (13229 Madison) will also have a Wi-Fi hotspot activated later this month. Visit <http://www.lakewoodpubliclibrary.com/wireless/> for more information.

LPL Web Hosts The LHS West Shore Job Board

Local Businesses: NEED HELP? Employers are encouraged to contact the West Shore Career Development office at Lakewood High School to list employment opportunities. The West Shore Job Board online service details available employment opportunities in Cleveland and the western suburbs for students, as well as, adults. Both part-time and full-time positions are posted. It's absolutely free. Call 216-227-5962, or submit online at www.lkwdpl.org/jobboard. LET US HELP YOU GET THE HELP YOU NEED!

The Career Development office has also initiated the W.E. (Work Ethic) Project. Information is being gathered from employers in an effort to help students understand the concept of work

ethic and to reinforce employability skills. To complete our survey, please visit www.westshorecareered.com and select "Newsletter." You can help prepare our students for success now and in their future careers.

LPL Children's and Youth Services Launches "Prob-A-Palooza"

Kids kindergarten through grade eight make crafts and/or play games at Lakewood Public Library's Four O'Clock Club, held Monday through Friday at 4 p.m. at Main Library and Madison Branch. At Main Library, kids can also win prizes and learn about probability during Prob-A-Palooza featuring Doc Prob.

Upcoming Programs at the Library

OCTOBER SATURDAY NIGHT VARIETY "TALENTED KIDS"

Begin your Saturday night right with a variety of festivities and entertainments presented by local impresarios Sam Phillips and Tracy Marie. Performers are subject to change. Seating is limited. Doors open 15 minutes prior to the performance. This month, S.N.V. brings you another amazing showcase of local talent—this time with much shorter performers. Visit <http://www.lkwdpl.org/saturday> for the latest updates.

Saturday, Oct. 1 - Main Library Auditorium 7 p.m.

SUNDAY WITH THE FRIENDS THE LIFE & MUSIC OF HENRY MANCINI

Pianist Judy Strauss celebrates the life of Henry Mancini.

Sunday, Sept. 25 - Main Library Auditorium 2 p.m.

DON'T THROW THAT OUT!"

Make something new, reduce household waste and save money by reusing what you might have thrown out. The Gingham Goose Gift Shop and the City of Lakewood Recycling Department will demonstrate several reduce/reuse craft and gift projects. Space is limited. Please call (216) 226-8275, ext. 127 to register.

Saturday, Sept. 24 - Main Library Auditorium 4 p.m.

YOUR LAKEWOOD HOME - HOUSE: A MEMOIR

Home renovation author and Cleveland Heights native, Michael Ruhlman, wants to meet you, answer your questions and sign your book. This program is in partnership with the Lakewood Historical Society.

Wednesday, Sept. 21 - Lakewood Park Woman's Pavilion 7 p.m.

YOUR LAKEWOOD HOME - EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO RENOVATE YOUR HOME

The Cleveland Restoration Society will outline everything you need to know about planning a construction project, hiring a contractor and deciding on an appropriate bid. This program is in partnership with the Lakewood Historical Society.

Monday, Sept. 26 - Main Library Auditorium 7 p.m.

PARENTING IN LAKEWOOD - CAREER PATHS:

Introducing Your Child to the Ohio Career Information System

Learn about the Ohio Career Information System, an extensive database filled with information on rewarding careers for your student and advice on how to help them succeed.

Tuesday, Oct. 4 - Main Library Auditorium 7 p.m.

FUTURE TOOLS: LISTENING TO THE CITY -THE CITY THAT KNEW ITSELF BETTER THAN ANY OTHER

Stephen Calhoun presents a galvanizing vision for the pursuit of transformative knowledge via the exploration of everyday urban life.

Introduction: 4 p.m.; Experiential Warm-up: 'dance of opposites' 5 p.m.

Brainstorm: "How to set the world record" 5:30 p.m.; Discussion: 6-7 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 25 at 4 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

YOUR LAKEWOOD HOME - HEALTHY HOMES

Sandra Santoro from Mold Across America will discuss the potential health hazards posed by chemicals and biological contaminants commonly found under the sink, in the furniture and within the structure of your home.

Monday, Oct. 3 - Main Library Auditorium 7 p.m.

WHAT WAS HEARD?

First, participants debrief in a collaborative dialogue the results of their own investigations and encounters during the previous three weeks. Second, Mills and Calhoun moderate a panel and participant discussion oriented around the twin themes of self-knowledge and civic transformation. The panel discussion engages its members and attendees in a free-flowing exploration of possibilities evoked by participants' knowledge, discoveries and insight.

Sunday, Oct. 2 at 4 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

LAKEWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION FUNDRAISER - AN EVENING WITH LOUNG UNG

Support the Lakewood Public Library Foundation and enjoy an evening of literature and refreshment with Loung Ung, author of the critically acclaimed *First They Killed My Father* and the new smash hit *Lucky Child*. Tickets are \$35 per person and may be purchased at the Main Library and Madison Branch Circulation Desks. Copies of the books will be on sale at the event for signing.

Monday, Oct. 24 at 7 p.m. at Beck Center for the Arts, 17801 Detroit Ave.

TECHNOLOGY CENTER COMPUTER CLASSES

E-MAIL BASICS

It's not too late to join the e-mail revolution. Keep in touch with friends and family.

Saturday, Sept. 24 at 3 p.m. in the Main Library Technology Center

JOB HUNTING ON THE INTERNET

This hands-on tour of career-related sites will show you how to find a job using the Internet.

Tuesday, Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. in the Main Library Technology Center

SHARPEN UP!

Make the Library your partner in learning. Learn effective homework strategies using electronic and print resources. To register, please stop in or call (216) 226-8275, ext. 127.

Wednesday, Sept. 28 at 7 p.m. in the Main Library Technology Center




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Sunday 12-6pm

Lakewood Events

Lakewood to Host Loung Ung: Survivor, Author, Activist

by Vincent O'Keefe

Loung Ung, an internationally acclaimed memoirist and survivor of Pol Pot's Cambodian genocide, will appear at the Beck Center for the Arts on Monday, Oct. 24 at 7 p.m. The program is sponsored by the Lakewood Public Library Foundation. In 2000, Ung published *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers*, a national bestseller and National Book Award winner. This memoir detailed her family's brutal ordeal of living under the Khmer Rouge until she was age 10, when she emigrated to the United States with an older brother and his wife. In 2005, she published *Lucky Child: A Daughter of Cambodia Reunites with the Sister She Left Behind*. The second memoir explores her fascinating, and heart wrenching, experiences as she tries to put the childhood traumas behind her, assimilate to a foreign culture, and negotiate the guilt and pain of remembering family members killed or left behind in Cambodia.

In my recent interview with this now Cleveland-based writer, Ung was very personable and energetic about literature: "I love books and storytelling." Her passion for storytelling is evident in *Lucky Child*, for it is a memoir of striking narrative techniques. In the opening lines of the Preface, Ung plunges readers into her stark reality: "From 1975-1979—through execution, starvation, disease, and forced labor—the Khmer Rouge systematically killed an estimated two million Cambodians, almost a fourth of the country's population. Among the victims were my parents, two sisters, and many other relatives" (xi). Later in the preface, she emphasizes the toll that such persecution had on her psychology: "At the age of eight, I was an orphan so lost, hurt, and full of rage that I was pulled out of the children's work camp and placed in a child-soldier's training camp. While children in other parts of the world went to school to learn and make friends, I was taught to hate and hurt" (xii). She also reveals the irony behind the memoir's title: her older brother Meng only had enough money in 1980 to take one of his four surviving siblings out of Cambodia with him, and he chose Loung because she was the youngest.

Of the siblings unable to leave with Meng, Loung was closest to her sister Chou, who was two years older. From 1980 to 1995, these sisters were unable to communicate with one another, and Loung spent her teenage years in Vermont while Chou continued enduring life in Cambodia. They were finally reunited in 1995, and have since reconnected as extremely close sisters. In our interview, Ung noted that she and Chou have always had "almost a psychic connection." As a result, Ung decided to write her second memoir



Author Loung Ung

from both her and her sister's points of view, with each chapter alternating between first-person narration by Loung in America and third person narration of Chou's life in Cambodia. The chapters on Chou's life are based on their conversations and interviews since 1995. This exploration of parallel lives is divided into three sections, with section one focusing on 1980, their first year of separation. Section two covers 1983 to 1986, and section three focuses on 1989 to 1995. Significantly, however, every chapter is written in present tense, which adds to the immediacy of their many difficulties and triumphs as teenagers. The book concludes with an epilogue written in December 2003.

After the preface, Ung includes a family tree of her extended family, which sets the tone for the rest of the memoir. *Lucky Child* is about her entire family in both Cambodia and the United States, not just limited to her consciousness. Inevitably, the tremendous void created by the death of her parents always looms over the story. Poignant reminders of their absence fill Ung's world as a 10-year-old child. In fact, even her age is open to question without the authority of her parents. Upon their emigration, her brother Meng "is not sure" of her age (6), and the Khmer Rouge destroyed all the family's birth records when they invaded the city of Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975. As Ung explains, "Without the papers, Ma and Pa were our only memories of our entrance into the world, but now they're gone, too" (7). She continues that when Meng was pressed to pick a new birthday for his youngest sister's refugee papers, he chose the invasion date of April 17, and in the process "made sure I will never forget Cambo-

dia" (7). In addition to having no birth records, Meng and Loung also possess no photographs of their parents or siblings when they leave Cambodia. As a result, the child Ung explains "my face is now the only image I have to remember them by" (23). When she looks in the mirror, "my hands pinch and pull at my features to bring forth Ma's nose, Pa's eyes, Keav's (a deceased sister's) smile, and Chou's lips" (22).

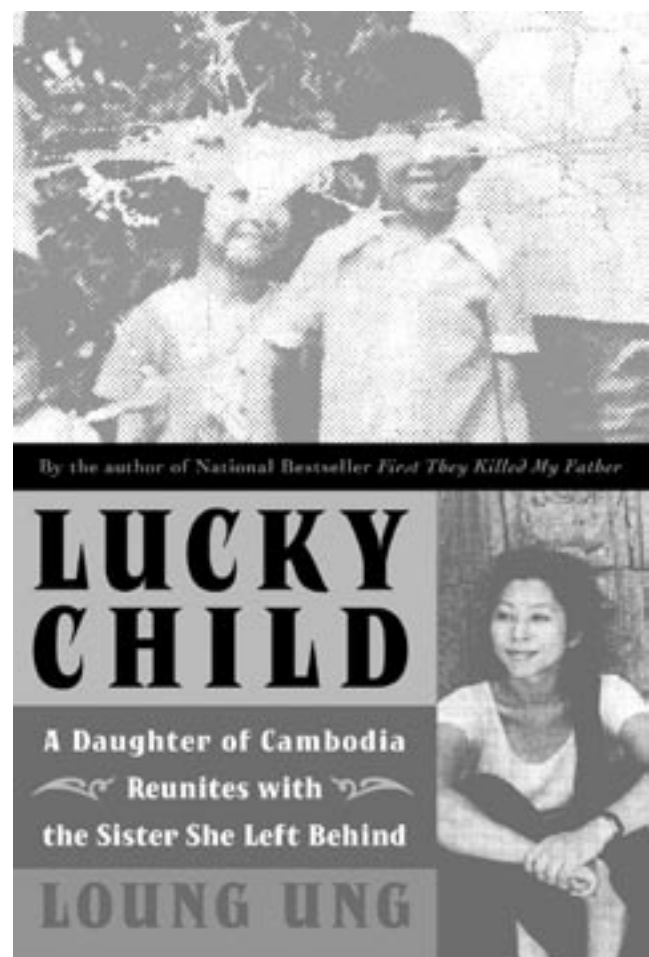
Beyond an overwhelming sense of loss at age 10, Ung has the daunting challenge of entering a new culture knowing little of its language and customs. Meng, his wife Eang, and Loung end up in the United States through a sponsorship

by Holy Family Church in Essex Junction, Vermont. They move into a small apartment and Loung spends the summer watching American television and trying to quell the rage and anguish that plagues her everyday: "In my mind the war rages on, even though I know I live in a peaceful land" (69). When she attends her first 4th of July fireworks, her mind flashes back and her body dives for cover out of habit. As she explains, "Suddenly, I am outside of time and space and in a world where Cambodia and America collide, with me stuck somewhere in the middle ... I breathe as pictures of Cambodia and America are superimposed one on top of the other" (31). In a later chapter, an older Loung reasserts that the nightmares, rage, vengeance, and guilt are constantly with her as a result of the Khmer Rouge oppression: "It's always with me, in the ***** of a low-flying plane, the boom of fireworks, the cry of a child, the hums of a mother, the hands of a father, and the rumbles in my stomach. And I'm sick of it all. I'm tired of waiting for the pain to heal. I want it cut out of my body" (179).

Despite the unavoidable intensity of Ung's plight as a child survivor, *Lucky Child* contains a large amount of comic relief. Many humorous moments involve her trying to learn American customs and vernacular as an adolescent in the 1980s. One of the many amusing incidents is her euphoria upon her first Halloween experience in Vermont: "I remember years of begging Ma for candies. Here they give it away for free! I love America!" (79). All the while, Meng and Eang call after her: "Remember, no begging. We are from a good family!" (79). Another memorable moment is her excitement over the first snow she perceives on the ground. As she screams "Snow! Snow!" and attempts her first snow angel, a lightly dressed neighbor girl in sneakers replies: "No. Frost, frost" (82).

In addition to frequent humor,

see Ung, page 19



Minding the Issues

Nox Vox Populi: Kevin O'Brien's Universe

by Gordon Brumm

Like most people, I have a fairly casual attitude toward op-ed columns and letters to the editor in other publications. I read them and pass on. But occasionally a piece will appear that is so noxious it must be challenged and dissected. Kevin O'Brien's column in the Aug. 10 *Plain Dealer*, on the occasion of the memorial for troops lost in the Iraq War, is such a piece.

O'Brien's strange thinking appears in his very first sentence, wherein he states that our fallen troops were killed by "cowards." This is hard to understand. By what reasoning can we apply the term "coward" to suicide bombers? Call them evil—no argument. Call them cruel—no argument. But cowards? O'Brien devotes 10 paragraphs to praise for American troops who laid down their lives, but he terms their opposite numbers "cowards" for doing the same thing. It doesn't make sense, especially since the claim seems to be a useless one. Even if true, it adds nothing to the argument (such as it is) on behalf of the war. So why make the claim? I'll get back to this later.

The main thrust of O'Brien's column is criticism of the protestors who were at the memorial. He quotes just two messages delivered by the protestors: "Drive out the Bush regime" and "Our boys have gone to war for a lie and under false pretenses." On the basis of these messages, he claims that what the protestors really mean to say is, in his words, that "our military men and women are fighting so that evil will triumph." From there he goes on to say that any such protest deeply harms the U.S., because it displays a lack of resolve. ("Resolve" is key for him.) He says that "our only real choice" is to be active or passive—to "take the war to the enemy" or to "wait for the enemy to bring the war to us." He asserts that we can't leave Iraq immediately, but the reason he gives is not that precipitate withdrawal would create a chaotic situation for terrorists to exploit, but rather that it would embolden the terrorists to "seek us out and pick us off" (an echo of the "We're fighting them over there so we don't need to fight them here" mantra).

O'Brien makes a number of other noxious statements which you can track down if you care to, but what I wish to pursue are his basic points, expressed in his blanket reference to "the enemy" (identified as "the forces of radical Islam") and his claim that our "only real choice" is to act or not to act. These make up a view that O'Brien shares with other Bushist proponents of the Iraq War.

This view is so superficial and so obtuse—so much at odds with the facts we see around us, if we take the trouble to look—that O'Brien seems to be living in another universe.

O'Brien's is a block universe—there is no cause and effect, there are no distinctions, no gradations or complexities, no change through time, but only an eternal battle between Good and Evil.

For O'Brien, the story of the Iraq War is not a narrative but a morality play, in which the Good Guys are eternally good and can suffer no flaws except failure of will, while the Bad Guys are eternally evil, no other explanations allowed.

And this, I believe, is why apologists for the War like to call terrorists and insurgents "cowards." They want to do away with any attempt to explain, in terms of political or social context, why the terrorists or insurgents oppose us, and so they ascribe the terrorists' or insurgents' behavior to unchanging traits of character. On this view, terrorists and insurgents are cowards by nature, now and forever, and that (along with other unchanging traits of character, perhaps) is why they do what they do. Apologists for the war can forever avert their eyes from any

over there and as a result we will have to fight *more* of them over here. For Iraq is a recruiting ground and a training ground for terrorists. This is easy to understand: The chief motivating force in terrorism is humiliation, and nothing could be more humiliating for a devout Muslim than seeing a Muslim country conquered by a Western power. In this respect, the Iraq War is analogous to the struggle of the Afghans against the Russians in the 1980s, a struggle that spawned and spewed forth bin Laden and his ilk. Who knows what future terrorists are being spawned now in Iraq, to be spewed forth later?

(And by the way: U.S. deaths in Iraq are approaching the 2,000 mark, and climbing. So the War promises not to prevent a duplication of 9/11, but rather to *produce* a duplication of that calamity.)

O'Brien's strange thinking appears in his very first sentence, wherein he states that our fallen troops were killed by "cowards." This is hard to understand. By what reasoning can we apply the term "coward" to suicide bombers? Call them evil—no argument. Call them cruel—no argument. But cowards?

suggestion that our enemies' behavior is connected to the historical relationships between Islam and the West, or to U.S. policies, in particular to U.S. warmaking.

But let's look at our own universe, a universe in which there are effects and causes and explanations, in which we must recognize complexity and distinguish issues. In our universe there are truths about the Iraq War that do not appear in O'Brien's super-simplistic universe. (If these are boringly obvious, I apologize. They clearly are not obvious to O'Brien.)

(1) The Iraq War was not forced on us by the terrorists, but rather was a war of choice initiated by Bush. He manipulated the intelligence and he manipulated the Congress in order to achieve his aim of seizing Iraq.

(2) The Iraq War is not part of the battle against terror. Rather, it is a serious impediment to the battle against terror. It diverts resources (and not only material resources but also human resources, such as interpreters) from the worldwide battle. In particular, it takes away from our efforts in Afghanistan, where things are not going as well as the administration would have us believe.

Nor are we fighting the terrorists over there so that we don't have to fight them here. Rather, we are fighting them

(3) Furthermore, there is no justification for the Iraq War. One rationale after another has been stripped away—WMD, support for terrorism, the desirability of spreading democracy—until there is only one left, namely, that we have freed the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein's barbaric rule. If this is the justification for invading Iraq, then at the very least the war was waged under false pretenses. But let's set that aside and get to the substance—the contention that the war is justified, if only in hindsight, because it achieved the overthrow of Saddam. (Exactly how much of a blessing that will be for the Iraqis remains to be seen, but let's set that question aside also.)

If the sole justification for the Iraq War was to give the Iraqi people their freedom from Saddam—if that was the only reason, without our thinking being influenced by other pretended reasons—then it cannot stand. To begin, why Iraq instead of one of the other barbarous governments around the world—for example Myanmar (aka Burma), which by all accounts has a government at least as oppressive as Saddam's? Suppose Bush proposed invading Myanmar, purely and simply to free its people from oppression—don't you think the American people would balk at that? It is wrong, on principle, for one government to unilaterally

overthrow another simply because the latter is deemed to be oppressive. It is unconscionably arrogant and morally reckless for one country to play God, arrogating to itself the privilege of deciding which governments deserve to exist and which do not. Proof lies in the precedents such an invasion would establish, both for our own country (Myanmar today, Venezuela tomorrow?) and for other countries (we invade Myanmar today, Russia invades Ukraine tomorrow?). No, the end does not justify the means in this sort of case, even though the invading nation is well-meaning (or perhaps because it is well-meaning). And if it is morally wrong to unilaterally invade Myanmar simply to topple its government, so also for unilaterally invading Iraq.

Furthermore, from a practical point of view the Iraq invasion was wrong for reasons that are only too evident.

In short, if we ask what is the cause of the Iraq War, the answer is Bush's unjustified decision to invade. Bush is responsible for the war and all the evils that have followed and will follow from it. For this he must be held accountable, lest his evil influences persist, and holding him accountable is just what the demonstrators whom O'Brien denounces were trying to do.

But this still leaves the question of what to do now. And to this there is no good answer. Bush has led us into a terrible situation in which staying is a bad choice, yet leaving is even worse—which is to say that he has led us into a quagmire. If we stay in Iraq we can look forward, for several years at least, to the same strife and bloodshed we see now; the prospects of Iraqis managing their own security are unpromising at best, and who knows what kind of government will emerge from their new and imperfect constitution.

But if we do not stay, the prospects are even worse. The country will probably descend into a chaos in which Islamic radicals will thrive and a group reminiscent of the Taliban in Afghanistan may well come into power.

Let me repeat: This quagmire is not built into the nature of things. It is not the result of the unchanging evil nature of terrorists, as in O'Brien's universe. It is the result solely of Bush's decision to invade along with his inept handling of the war.

So what do we do? In an ideal world, Bush would appear before the United Nations to humbly apologize for his war of aggression and to appeal for international support which would spread the burden and possibly broker a solution.

This of course will not happen. So as far as I can see, we will have to stumble along on the same path and pick up the pieces, while day by day our frustration, rage and despair burn ever deeper into our consciousness the conviction that Bushism must be repudiated and removed from our public life, partly in 2006 and totally in 2008.

Lakewood's 18th Community Festival

Photos by Rhonda





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Loje, Photo Editor



Lakewood Business

Informing the Community: Times Square Comes to Lakewood

by Casey Ryan

If you are one of Lakewood’s 56,000 residents, you have probably seen First Federal of Lakewood’s scrolling sign at the northwest corner of Detroit and Warren Avenues. The sign wraps around the corner of First Federal of Lakewood’s newly renovated world headquarters building, running at 60 characters per second for 18 hours a day, shutting off at midnight and re-starting at 6:30 a.m.

“We are Lakewood’s community bank,” says Gary Fix, First Federal’s chief executive officer and managing officer. “The sign reinforces our presence here in downtown Lakewood.”

The building First Federal of Lakewood occupies was built in 1928. First Federal started in 1935, celebrating 70 years in business this year. The company boasts more than \$1.1 billion in assets, offering all major financial services including savings, checking, conventional and alternative investments, mortgage services, and others. First Federal has 10 locations, with an 11th opening in Brunswick in October. Their emphasis, states Fix, is on customer service.



Gary Fix and David Shaw stand in front of First Federal of Lakewood’s freshly renovated building with sign.

“Our motto is ‘We’ve Been Here. We’ll Be Here,’ and it is especially true for the citizens of Lakewood,” Fix emphasized.

As part of their continued growth, First Federal of Lakewood recently put \$2.9 million into renovating the building in downtown Lakewood. Although

the building is over 75 years old, the renovation gives First Federal state-of-the-art capabilities in today’s financial market, and the interior hums with the quiet intensity of modern banking. Outside, the sign relentlessly rolls along.

“We wanted to give it a Times Square type of feel,” says senior vice president and secretary Dave Shaw.

Steve Nogle, vice president and MIS director for First Federal of Lakewood, says Daktronics, the same company that designed the multi-panel scoreboard at Jacobs Field, designed the sign.

“All three panels are synched to run seamlessly,” Nogle said, “and there are thousands of lights—red, white, green, blue, magenta, and cyan, I think.”

First Federal’s marketing department controls the programming of the sign and its content. The sign usually runs stock prices, time and temperature, First Federal’s own promotions, and upcoming community events. Any events posted on the sign must be community oriented and non-profit, said Fix. Past announcements have been for the Arts Fest, the annual Christmas lighting ceremony, and the Ambulance Chase charity run.

Nogle added that the clock is linked to the national atomic clock, so if you are running late and pass it on your way, you’ll know exactly how late you are.

“It is 100 percent accurate,” he said with a laugh.

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Chef Geoff

Culinary Calamities

No matter how skillful or experienced a cook, everyone has experienced a gastronomic guffaw, a culinary calamity or a dinner downfall. These events can be as simple as burning the bagels or as complex as shriveled soufflés, but they all have a number of things, besides being left hungry, in common. In my experience, there are three principle causes of these potentially embarrassing episodes.

Recipe misinformation: Sometimes, the disaster really isn't your fault. All the kitchen gear operates properly, you have carefully followed the recipe, you're familiar with the techniques and, nevertheless, the end product simply is inedible because the recipe contained errors. This is usually a problem associated with recipes provided by friends and family who either created errors in transcription, or failed to note important "fixes" that they had incorporated into an old family favorite.

The problem is well illustrated by a Christmas cookie debacle which befell me soon after my marriage. My mother-in-law always made "Cinnamon Stars" for the holidays, and they were a favorite: a meringue and ground almond cookie, both chewy and crunchy. We were provided with the family recipe, but when it came time to roll out the dough, we had a bowl of sticky, gooey sludge. It clearly wasn't thick enough, and yet, we had specifically been told that the cookie was virtually flourless. The recipe called for only two tablespoons of flour. Several long distance phone calls later, the truth of the matter surfaced: "Well, sometimes you have to add some more flour." Little did we know that for as long as she'd been making those cookies, she never used less than a cup!

Given the level of proofreading and kitchen testing that goes into cookbooks, the chances of recipe misinformation are slim. The same generally goes for magazines and newspapers. But, if you're exchanging recipes, it might be wise to inquire as to any "instinctive touches" that may have a large part in the eventual product.

Equipment and ingredient malfunction: Technology is wonderful, but only when it works. As our kitch-

by Jeff Endress



ens have become more technologically advanced, there are many more things that can go wrong. Broken convection oven fans, frazzled self-igniters, automatic timers that fail to turn on (or fail to turn off), out of whack thermostats ... the list can be as long as the number of appliances in your kitchen. Usually, with equipment failure, it is a one-shot event. Once you realize that the problem exists, you can adjust accordingly. But that doesn't ease the pain of discovering shortly before dinner that the oven igniter is a dud, and the roast is really rare.

Ingredient malfunction is a bit more insidious. Everything looks fine, but with the first bite of that juicy steak, you realize that the beautiful marbling only disguised an intricate network of inedible gristle. Or, as you add the milk to the cake batter, you discover it has inexplicably curdled. The fresh yeast (that you didn't bother to proof) has about as much zip as a BMW Isetta.

About the only thing that can be

done is to both throw out the offending ingredients and begin anew or head off to the West End for dinner. A notable ingredient failure still haunts me to this day. I rely on *The Joy of Cooking* and never have had a typo or recipe misprint. So when I followed the recipe to a tee, step by step, and produced Mousaka that even the dog refused to eat, I could only assume that the fresh spring lamb I used was actually an aged piece of mutton. You can avoid most of the issues associated with ingredient malfunction by always checking ingredients before adding them to the recipe

Pilot Error: The most common kitchen calamity might best be described as "pilot error," that is, we

fail to check the timer, leave the toast in too long, mis-measure or somehow fail to follow the directions. Directions are there for a reason, although some of us have a tendency to view them as merely suggestions or guidelines.

In some instances, measurement is very critical, and failure to properly measure can lead to undesired results. While bread machines are a wonderful addition to the kitchen, failure to accurately measure the ingredients can leave one with a loaf of bread more suggestive of a cannon ball.

In other instances, a measurement failure may merely result in a product which either does not taste or appear as it should, but may be otherwise acceptable. Likewise, cooking times and temperatures can mean the difference between a charred loin of beef and a juicy, flavorful roast. High heat will cause some thickening agents, such as cornstarch, to break down. Cakes and cookies may appear golden brown, but be raw in the center. These are avoidable outcomes. Be mindful of your cooking times and temperatures.

Before embarking on recipe modification, be comfortable with the original and knowledgeable of what any planned substitution is intended to accomplish. You can't deep fry in sesame oil, and even although cinnamon looks very similar to cumin, they are not interchangeable. For the first Thanksgiving I prepared, I simply didn't understand that a frozen 20-pound turkey really does take two days to thaw. I did learn, however, that allowing it to bob in a lukewarm bathtub does speed the process considerably.

Do not prepare a new recipe, or use a new technique for the first time when entertaining. It is a recipe for potential disaster. I know that Rachel Ray can do it in 30 minutes (keeping in mind she does have a full staff), but it just might take you a bit longer. Try it out on the family for practice—if it's successful, they will appreciate the new dish, and if it's a flop, they'll probably forgive you.

Kitchen Contest #2



What is it?

Be one of the first three readers to send in what this kitchen device is and win a collectable *Lakewood Observer* T-shirt! Send your guess to Lakewood Observer-Contest, 14900 Detroit Ave. Suite 309, Lakewood, OH 44107.



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The Buck Stops Here

“A Poetry of Essential Service”

Events in New Orleans after Katrina remind us of the truth of John Dos Passos’s assertion in his trilogy, U.S.A., that “we are two nations,” and have been, perhaps even from the beginning. Those in power do not care about those without power. Writers, musicians, and artists may serve power as much as anyone, but those who have not gone along may galvanize us in ways no one else can. “How much history can be communicated by pressure on a guitar string?” Robert Palmer asks. “More than we will ever know,” Greil Marcus answers. The storyteller, singer and artist may become the voice of the people and their response to events is always a needed counterhistory.

In Cleveland, d. a. levy, our ’60s poet laureate, titles one of his books, *ukanhavyrfuckinciti bak*. Cleveland is “the last medieval frontier, where machines have been built “to colonize yrsel,” he writes. Chrissie Hynde and the Pretenders tell us, “My City Was Gone.” In “Light of Day,” Paul Schrader’s film about rock music in Cleveland, Michael Douglas teaches his nephew (Joan Jett’s son) a song beginning, “You got no place to go.” R. B. Kitaj’s painting, “The Erie Shore,” shows us a doctor in red-striped Uncle Sam pants and a nurse in a rowboat in polluted Lake Erie, a naked torso of a bound woman at the bottom of the boat.

The poet Pablo Neruda tells the story of a coal miner coming out of the mines in the mountains of Chile, “as if rising from hell,” Neruda says, and greeting the poet with the welcome, “I have known you a long time my brother.” The folk singer, Victor

by Robert Buckeye

Jara, imprisoned in a stadium in Santiago after the overthrow of Allende, is told to play his guitar after Pinochet’s troops have chopped off his hands, and he does so, singing them down. The writer, singer and artist may not only ask questions of power but also may help sustain us and give ourselves hope in the face of it.

“We don’t give advice,” the Cleveland band, Devo, says in an interview. “We just offer information/it’s important and relevant ... it’s information people should be aware of ... it’s what’s happening in the world/it’s the sound of things falling apart ... a need for people to work together rather than to carry on with their individual consumerism and their waste of energy on a planet that is shrinking.”

“When someone asks to see my diploma,” levy writes, “i point to the sky.”

Kitaj’s painting, “The Ohio Gang,” is a counterforce to Mark Hanna’s politically corrupt Ohio Gang of the 1920s. The Black Maid in the painting is, Kitaj writes, “an American tragedy which struck me as a child in Ohio and never ends. She deserves a memorial of her own as big as Lincoln’s.”

When Charlie Sheen comes out of the bullpen in the ninth inning of the decisive game against the Yankees in *Major League*, the song, “Wild Thing” (first played by Joan Jett and the Runaways), accompanies him to the mound and reverberates over Cleveland to those watching the game on television or listening to it on the radio. Earlier, a

black youth and a white one high-five one another when they see they are both wearing Wild Thing tee-shirts.

“I’m trying to live my life by an idea,” Joan Jett tells her brother, Michael Douglas, in “Light of Day.” “Rock and roll is an idea.”

Words, Norman O. Brown writes, summarizing Freud, are a halfway house to lost things. The writer brings them back to us. The singer keeps them alive. The artist makes certain we do not forget.

“A poetry of essential service,” Eliot Weinberger writes. “A poetry that ratifies the social contract of language. A poetry that describes its world, its history, its cosmos. A poetry of celebration and condemnation of the stuff and the way of the world. Song, narrative, speech: people talking to the gods and to each other.”

Lakewood Observer Takes Gloucester’s Poet Laureate

“Out of the Solar System”

Dear Editor:

WHAT A BUNDLE OF THE Future in action!

The 3 issues of the Lakewood Observer leaped in the vessel of the Community DREAM, WRITING I have never seen before outside my head,

That City at last in its natural element in giving the creation the chance it is dying for in your city living, the magic oil in one for all all for one,

Lakewood is the MAP ROAD for the USA and just in time

Keep in mind when ready a movie of the creative process That could rain upon the dry cities of America,

I didn’t know Robert Buckeye was a citizen there,

A movie would rain a spirit upon the Cities locked in deadly Routine,

I can feel the energy emanating from the 3 separate dates of The numbers,

I can see the Spirit being absorbed by little knowing people At the edge of the greatest news so far, about how to put Democracy in practice

The very thought takes me out of the Solar System!

Vincent Ferrini
126 East Main Street
Gloucester, MA

Lakewood Mail

Dear Editor,

It was very interesting to hear what you know concerning Kenny, and the story brought back memories of Kenny.

I remember his, “Do you want to wrestle?” to people who were walking by.

I hope that you are able to find out if he is still living and what happened to him later in life.

Please let us know.

Sincerely,
Helen Drewing

Helen,

Kenny, who grew up in a duplex at the corner of Riverside Drive and Crest Lane, moved into the apartments on the corner of Riverside and West Clifton when his father died.

Kenny lost his job at Miller’s Dining Room after the fire and went to work at Otto’s Hofbrau House in Rocky River. He lived in a apartment not too far from where I now live. I know that he no longer lives there. If anyone knows, please write in and share the information.

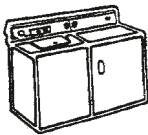
Jim O’Bryan



Observer Advisory Board member Ken Warren shown opening mail at the Lakewood Observer. This five-page letter came from a supporter of Brother Petty.

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Lakewood Space

Walking Through Space with Frank and Ken

by Stephen Calhoun

In early July, I took a walk with Ken Warren and Frank A. Mills. Frank served as our mentor, for we walked in accordance with his style of open-minded discovery. Frank told us to approach our walk as if it were a journey. We were to do so with sensitivity to whatever it was we might encounter, to allow what emerged to emerge fully, and, in taking a fresh look at familiar terrain, to allow our imagination “out to play.”

What follows is a reconstruction of highlights drawn from cryptic notes. Most of these impressions are those of the author with a few exceptions.

Ken suggested that we investigate the retail strip between Mars and Lakeland. Fortunately one of the points of walking with Frank is to subvert the possibility of a well-laid plan so the imposing Masonic Temple drew us to it. My attention was captured by the fenced off patch along its western side. For what reason the 80-by-15-foot swath of grass was enclosed by a link fence topped with barbed wire at both ends, a locked gate at the Detroit end, eluded us. Here was a grassy spot few persons could lay, walk, and play on. I thought to myself, ‘few people will ever get to go on it!’ We agreed this plot was part of the Temple’s property, could sense it was an odd borderlands, and, somebody remarked it constituted Lakewood’s smallest and most hermetic park.

Leaving this bit of mystery, we briefly investigated several large concealed rocks hidden underneath a hedge at the edge of the sidewalk fronting the old retail strip. Frank took off to see if similar rocks marked the Temple’s property boundaries. But, no, these rocks were in their place for unknown reasons.

We walked down the sidewalk. I noted children had made footprints in fresh concrete at the point the sidewalk and brick work were refurbished in the not-too-distant past. Ken shared with us what he knew about the strip’s history. He spoke of its being a prototype of shopping ideals no longer operative. Yet, here were stores, restaurants, hanging on and surviving, ideals be damned.

We entered the drug cum variety store at Ken’s suggestion. We snaked up and down the store’s aisles. Frank noted that the store was closer in style to olden five and dimes than it was to the crisply structured environs of modern suburban merchandisers. I was attracted to a rack of hideous ties. I couldn’t understand why, in a world of cheap knock-offs of whatever is the hot trend, that a rack bulging with anti-fashion could still be possible. Ken reminded me, “somebody must like them.” Frank remarked how convenient the few conservative ties were.

“Convenient to whom?”

“Look they clip on. You can run in here and put on the finishing touch



before your first big job interview.”

In the rear of the store, there was an impressive display of products pertaining to sex. It covered all the bases and problems in every range of age and gender. The assembly was marvelous and forthright. I stated it was superior to anything that could be found where I live: Cleveland Heights. Across from it was a wire rack full of paperbacks concerned with health. All three of us noted it was stocked with the familiar cast of characters yet also included a substantial selection of books about alternative medicine, self-help, and about what might be called the counter-culture of well-being.

We spent a significant amount of time with our attention drawn to the, (we estimated,) six or so acres of Kaufman Park, its grove of locust trees, its odd little putt-putt golf concession,

its borders with the backyards of Lakeland Avenue and the train tracks to the north. Ken and Frank chewed over a number of ways this expansive sweep of under-utilized land might be maximized by more than the athletes who take over the ball field, and the rare few who take advantage of the putt-putt course. On this day a crew was playing Ultimate Frisbee in the outfield.

Our dialog about development potential started out conventionally and ended up staking out ambitious visions. Frank wondered how a residential neighborhood might be built on the back lot grid. This followed from imagining how to open up the space to more people and how to humanize the open acreage. We tossed about a number of visions for this. Ken described how the area might function if it was centered upon educational and cultural possi-



bilities. We all thought this would be very fine and we noted a campus would fit the space beautifully.

Ken took it farther, prompted by Frank encouraging us to run with our ideas. He thought out loud about how the houses on Lakeland and Arthur could become part of or make room for a development at a scale able to transform the large square block and, with it, the entire neighborhood. To this grand plan, we tossed in the three churches to the south for good measure.

Next we shuffled back up the swale onto the tongue of the dead end of Arthur. Frank was fairly sure Arthur once cut all the way through judging from the disruption to the run of curbstones created when the parking lot was created.

We followed the south fence of the tennis courts behind the workmanlike addition to the church. Clearly, before the tennis courts were built, this was a working side of the church’s administrative offices. But, now unused doors and steps leading nowhere were evidence of what must have been an abrupt drastic change. Frank pointed out a concrete pad used at some point for shuffleboard. Now partly overgrown, it too was forced into disuse by the tennis courts. Frank noted the mash of architectural styles and implicit history at the top of Arthur and Detroit. It is true, you don’t see metal Quonset style utility buildings much anymore, let alone see them downtown.

We didn’t spend a lot of time lamenting the corner robbed of any real life by the phony pueblo-style drive-thru and insipid Mexican menu of the well-known restaurant. Frank fingered another similar eating establishment down the street as being guilty of the same wanton architectural crime and misuse of prime Detroit Avenue frontage.

We turned to the west and walked some more. My recollection can’t do justice to our musings. Still, in such smart company and with the aid of Frank and Ken’s fresh eyes, what I enjoyed the most in this first half of our walking was the unraveling of history and the weaving of possible futures. There’s a lot of history concealed in small details. It seemed to me history gets heaped upon other histories. One has to twist one’s way into the grain of Lakewood’s layers step by step.

As for the future? In an eerie way, it’s concealed too. Frank’s onto something. It’s the slow imaginative walk through those layers, kind of like kicking through dry autumn leaves, which starts to reveal something about what could happen next, what the future could be.

Frank A. Mills and Stephen Calhoun will present a series of programs in the Lakewood Library’s Future Tools series during September and early October. If you’re interested in walking and visioning, stay tuned for more details about how you can take part.

Lakewood Eats

The West End: A Legend Turns 20 Years Old

by Bob Bond

Lakewood is a city full of wonderful taverns, bars and restaurants. The array of food types affords you opportunity to sample cuisine from many parts of the globe and diversified cultures. One of the more popular and steadfast establishments is The West End Tavern. For nearly 20 years The West End has honed its food and spirits offerings keenly to provide something for everyone while performing this feat stylishly.

The décor is cozy and warm with tin ceilings, storefront windows, wooden booths, soft intimate lighting and, of course, a comfortable bar where a cast of regular characters reside each day of the week. The West End will appeal to the younger crowd for casual drinks and meeting people. More mature neighborhood folks meet there to see each other and visit with local politicians and business people.

The West End serves great tavern food throughout the day beginning with lunch and continuing through the dinner hours. The lunch menu is built around an excellent selection of sandwiches (their burgers have been voted best in town in many reviews over the years) and entrées that will satisfy everyone's appetite.

There are creative appetizers and salad selections and the soups are excellent. The Black Bean Chili is one favorite, prepared like no other, and we recommend you get it with the sour cream and green onions; it is to die for.

Dinner offerings include hand-trimmed steaks as well as seafood selections. Please be sure to check out the daily specials; they offer a fresh change from the daily fare. Our favorite entrée—believe it or not—is the home-made meatloaf. Yes, meatloaf. The West



Kelly presents what could best be called "Not your mother's meatloaf."

End puts a mean twist on this American classic; it is served stacked with a generous slice of homemade mashed potatoes, topped with brown gravy and finished with a huge crispy fried onion ring. It is surrounded by a side of fresh steamed broccoli. This dish will satisfy the biggest appetites.

If this isn't enough to pique your interest, check out Sunday Brunch. The Brunch menu selections include some original and pleasing ways to slide into your Sunday morning. Try their Eggs Benedict Royale, a standard gourmet favorite except the Canadian bacon has been replaced by a savory sirloin steak. A vast selection of Omelets, stuffed French Toast with luscious

cream cheese, and a host of other breakfast selections that will leave you satisfied enough to go home and take a nice Sunday nap. As an added adult treat, The West End offers one of the only Bloody Mary Bars in the area. You can make your Sunday eye opener to your personal taste. The Bloody Mary Bar begins with Zing Zang, a gourmet Bloody Mary mix. Then you add all the ingredients to make your Bloody Mary one that you will enjoy—all accoutrements are available.

In addition to a complete selection of all the premium high proof usual suspects, The West End offers an ample wine list. This includes a selection of half bottle choices, and they pour those

juicy McManis Vineyards Cabernet and Merlot by the glass. Beer selections are impressive and abundant. Bass Ale on draft is one of the popular choices.

The prices are fair, the staff is friendly and skilled, and the West End delivers. Highly recommended for lunch, casual dinner, drinks, and good times.

Hours:
Food served Monday through Friday 11:30 to 10 p.m.
Saturday 11 to 10 p.m.
Sunday 9:30 to 10 p.m.
The bar is open until 2:30 a.m.
The West End Tavern is located at 18514 Detroit Ave., (216) 521-7684.

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LAKEWOOD

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Garden Watch

Humus & Plant Sale/Free Seed Exchange

by DL Meckes


From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 1 at Lakewood Park (Rain date: Oct. 8)

- Leaf humus, a natural fertilizer that improves soil structure and produces healthier plants, sells for \$2 a bag (approximately one bushel).
- Winter hardy pansies will be sold at \$12 for a flat of 36. (This is a really good deal for pansies.) We will be taking advance orders for specific colors. Order forms will be placed at the libraries and on the City's website, www.ci.lakewood.oh.us and click on City News & Events and go to October Calendar. The form should be on the website.

Proceeds from these sales support the KLB Adopt-A-Spot program, the student summer gardening program, and the tree stewardship program. The proceeds also support the Beautiful Home and Business Award Program. The winners will be announced in September. For more information, please call Barbara McGinty at 216.529.6170 or e-mail recycling@lakewoodoh.net.

Free neighbor-to-neighbor seed and plant exchange

- Put seeds in envelopes.
- Label the envelopes with the name or type of plant, growing conditions, height, color, invasiveness (or "free seeding").
- Bring plants in plastic bags (or containers you do not want returned)
- Label plants with the name or type of plant, growing conditions, height, color, invasiveness or "free seeding."



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Alternative Lakewood

Alternative Education at Its Finest

by Lynn Rodemann

Imagine a school where every child is excited about learning. Imagine a school where your child is allowed to learn about anything they want and are encouraged, in fact, to do so. Imagine a school where there are no bullies, no corporate vending machines, no one who feels stupid or behind, a school where connection is made between the subject and real life. Ever hear this from your child or out of your own mouth: "When am I ever going to use fractions?" or "When am I ever going to use Shakespeare?"

Imagine The Albany Free School. Others know it as the unlearning school. But don't be confused by the term unlearning, it doesn't mean that there is no learning. In fact, there is more learning there than you would get out of a textbook and a work sheet.

Founded in 1969 by Mary Leue, the Albany Free School is the oldest inner-city, independent, alternative school in the United States. The school was born when Mary returned from England with their children and her husband, Bill, a professor of philosophy who had been studying at Oxford while on sabbatical from the State University of New York. Their youngest son, Mark, was miserable in his fifth-grade class at one of Albany's "better" public schools. Mary made an effort to address the problem with both teacher and principal, but with no change forthcoming, Mark finally refused to go at all and asked his mother if she would instead teach him at home.

A few weeks later, Mary ran into a friend who had three children suffering in another of Albany's finest schools. She begged Mary to take them on, too, and Mary agreed on the spot, not wanting Mark to be isolated alone with her at home. Thus, the Albany Free School was formed. Suddenly, four students became seven, two teachers climbed aboard, and the need for a building was obvious.

A rapid and exhaustive search led to an inner city African-American church in the city's South End, which was moving to a larger building across town. The church agreed to rent their old building to the school for \$100 a month. This accomplished two things: It was about all Mary could afford to pay; and the location ensured that the school would be integrated both in terms of race and social class. The rest of the summer involved round-the-clock renovations and fund-raising, and in September, somewhat miraculously, the Free School was opened.

The Albany Free School is a community far more than a school—a safe, nurturing, open space where daily 55 kids, ages three through 14, eight full-time teachers, a cook, a steady stream of interns, volunteers and visitors, as well as a number of goats, chickens, rabbits, pet rats, lizards and goldfish work, play, learn and eat together. There are certain traditional school settings: rooms

have desks and blackboards; there are lots of shelves with books and teaching materials of all kinds; and throughout the building there is a state-of-the-art computer network, thanks to a very generous local business. Students are organized into homeroom groups more or less by age in order for them to have a space to call their own and a specific teacher to check in with during the day. The resemblance to "school" pretty much ends there. Noise overshadows quiet. Kids are moving about constantly and play is rampant. They do not have a curriculum. Classroom sessions that do take place are usually informal and last as long as the interest holds.

Here students share the responsibility with teachers for school policy and planning through a weekly all-school meeting, where students and teachers have an equal vote. Between council and all-school meetings, Free Schoolers quickly become fluent with the ins and outs of participatory democracy.

dren and they will learn." When you entrust kids with their education—which is not a thing, after all, but rather an ever-present action, they will learn continually, each in their own way and rhythm. There is absolutely no need to push and prod and fret over when a given child will master reading, the mainstream dictum notwithstanding. Children who truly possess the responsibility for their own learning invariably handle that responsibility in a sensible and mature fashion. Adult fear and anxiety, while understandable in these days of heightened hype over standards, only slow the process down.

As for discipline: Urgent problems are dealt with on a one-at-a-time basis by a student council held by anyone at anytime. The meetings are run by Robert's Rules of Order (subject must be debated and adopted by a consensus). They explore matters in whatever depth is necessary. When the issue is an interpersonal conflict, the meeting

segregate nor place them in competition against their peers. Instead, they invest faith in their integrity and ability, while placing them in a position of responsibility for themselves and the school as a whole—and paying close attention to their emotional growth.

A great feature of the school is its permeability. There are frequent exchanges between the school and the surrounding city, which they utilize as a "classroom" on a daily basis. Older students participate in a wide-ranging apprenticeship program. Apprenticeships range from area artists, actors, carpenters, chefs, archaeologists, computer programmers, and even pilots. They also spend time volunteering at local food banks, soup kitchens and child care centers. Some get active in local environmental and preservation issues. They also tend to a small organic farm on the block, where students learn the basics of animal care, composting, and gardening of flowers, herbs and vegetables.

They now own two tracts of land about 25 miles northeast of Albany, where students go for day trips and extended stays. One site, called Rainbow Camp, is a rambling former inn set on a small lake. Here they fish, swim, boat, take long walks in the woods, and spend overnights. The second site consists of an old farmhouse, barn and 250 acres of mostly forested land that was donated in 1995, where they are in the process of developing a satellite program for environmental study and wilderness activities. There they have already completed a 24-foot diameter octagonal "teaching lodge," as well as a high and low ropes course, both set deep in the forest. A small-scale maple sugaring operation is also underway.

When I saw the website for this school it appeared to be everything I could have ever wanted for my child. In a world of ADHD, standardized testing, breakdown of the family, and a non-existing sense of community, what is a mother to do? We all want what is best for our children, but what does that mean? Is there hope for our public school system? Or would integrating a system similar to the Albany Free School help so many children who are being "left behind"?

Are charter schools a good idea for Lakewood? Lakewood is losing \$600,000 a year to charter schools. I feel that creating a more natural learning environment, like the Albany Free School, either in Lakewood public schools or as a charter school, may make Lakewood more acceptable to those parents who send their kids out to charter schools in different cities, or at least give people an option in their own community. I know that it would make me want to stay.

My husband and I are currently planning a visit to Albany. We hope to be able to gain some skills to bring back home here to Lakewood schools. If you are interested, e-mail me at humanmilkmachine@hotmail.com.



photo by Dan Sife

The Rodemann family relaxing; Lynn plants a big kiss on Owen as Mike looks on.

There are no tests or grades, because they have discovered over the years that learning happens best when it happens for its own sake. They have realized, and experienced has confirmed, that a child's innate desire to learn is a far more powerful motivating force than any standardized grading system.

This isn't to say that there aren't plenty of ongoing, focused activities and projects. On any given day, students might be found writing poetry and short stories, creating books, magazines and works of art, rehearsing and performing plays, or learning French or algebra. There is daily reading and math classes for kids who choose to tackle their basic skills in a more orderly, directed way, and also classes in areas like history and science depending on student interest.

Their website states, "Trust chil-

becomes a supportive circle where real emotional healing takes place. They pay a lot of attention to the emotional lives of children because, as Joseph Chilton Pearce said, "Address the heart and the head will follow."

These kinds of schools have a reputation with students that are struggling academically and/or behaviorally. The system has failed to meet their needs. Thus an increasing number of kids are coming up as having been tagged with labels like ADHD and placed on Ritalin and other bio-psychiatric medications. Schools like these work effectively with these children without drugs of any kind. Their active, flexible, open-minded and individually structured environment renders the drugs unnecessary. Part of the reason why unlearning schools are successful with students-in-crisis is that they neither

Lakewood Fauna/Flora

Corpse on Lakefront Inspires Squirrely Haiku

by Kenneth Warren

When P.D. Punjabi, a Hindu devotee to Shiva began visiting Lakewood Park in 1998, he introduced a few Lakewood-ites to the practice of cosmic laughter yoga, a blend of deep breathing, stretching and stimulated mirth purported to reduce blood pressure and enhance the immune system.

After laughing with Punjabi in Lakewood Park for several summers, practitioners decided to extend their yogic postures and cosmic protocols beyond the emotional force field of brooding over the collapsing local economy. At the end of their workout they started including the Shava-asana, commonly known as the corpse pose.

Animals have been known to draw near practitioners of the corpse pose, whose minds attain a quiet, much like the surface of a still lake.

In Lakewood Park dry weather may be precipitating increasingly close encounters between thirsty creatures and still practitioners. While is difficult to identify with any degree of certainty the exact cause behind such close encounters in Lakewood Park, it has become known among adepts that in recent weeks two different species of warm-blooded mammal have attempted to make contact with two practitioners of the corpse pose.

At approximately 7:30 a.m. a young groundhog sniffed the hand of a 20-something Lakewood adept, who had

remained attentive and still lest the Shava-asana sink him into depression. Of course, it made intuitive sense to this Lakewood adept that the metabolic and symbolic associations of the groundhog would resonate perfectly with the level of consciousness registered through attention in Shava-asana.

“A groundhog holds the knowledge of metabolic control,” says Ted Andrews, author of *Animal Speak: The Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great & Small*. “Its medicine is that of going into the great unconscious to touch the mystery of death without dying.”

More recently, on June 13 at 7:15 a.m. a squirrel scurried across the neck of a 50-something Lakewood adept in the corpse pose on the lakefront.

“Squirrels can be quite sociable,” says Andrews. “They wrestle for play, and the are extremely observant and imitative.”

When National Book Award winner Clayton Eshleman received word in his Ypsilanti home that a squirrel had scampered over a Lakewood adept stretched out in corpse pose across the lakefront, he was inspired to write a spontaneous haiku.

squirrel on neck,
corpse alert.

Eshleman is a prolific poet and essayist, and the author of more than four dozen books. His profound attention to animals, the underworld and Paleolithic imagination is documented in *Juniper*

Fuse: Upper Paleolithic Imagination & the Construction of the Underworld.

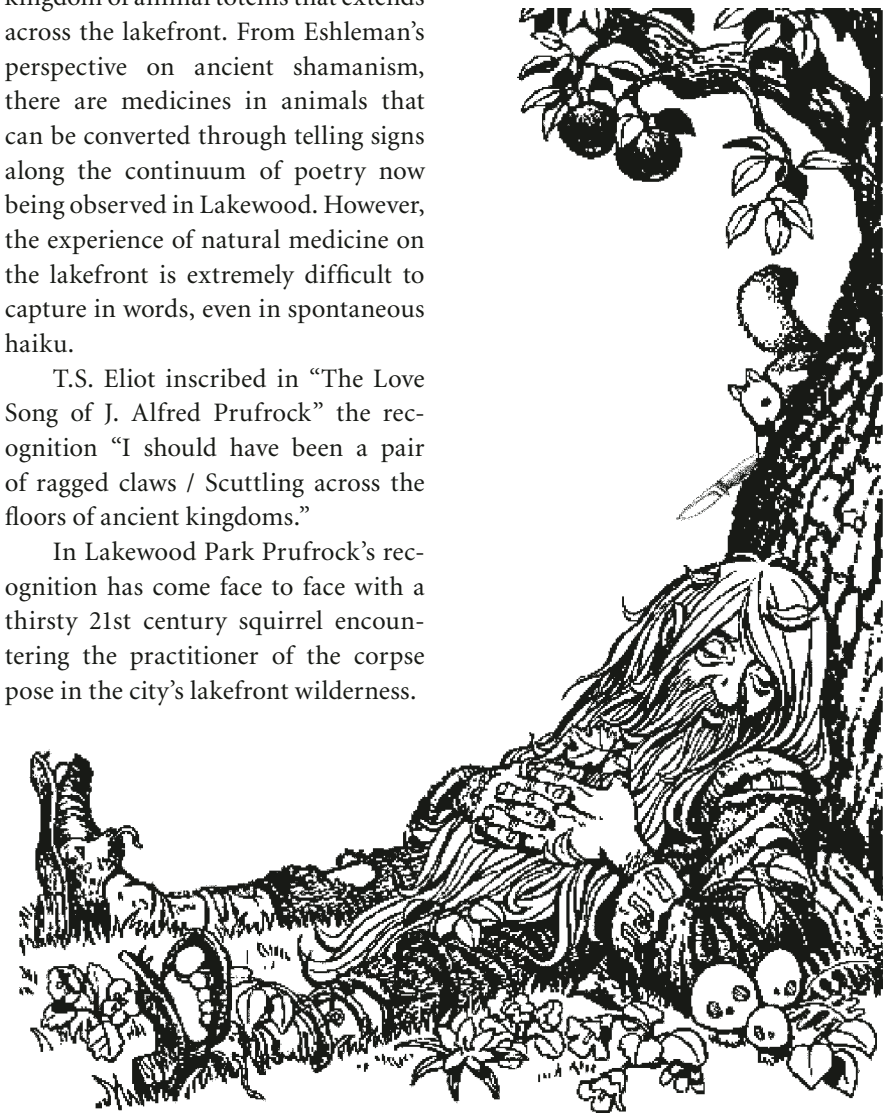
Eshleman’s spontaneous haiku claws back from the path of hyper-social modern stress toward the magical kingdom of animal totems that extends across the lakefront. From Eshleman’s perspective on ancient shamanism, there are medicines in animals that can be converted through telling signs along the continuum of poetry now being observed in Lakewood. However, the experience of natural medicine on the lakefront is extremely difficult to capture in words, even in spontaneous haiku.

T.S. Eliot inscribed in “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” the recognition “I should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of ancient kingdoms.”

In Lakewood Park Prufrock’s recognition has come face to face with a thirsty 21st century squirrel encountering the practitioner of the corpse pose in the city’s lakefront wilderness.

“Every squirrel is unique, and its medicine will be activated differently for everyone,” says Andrews.

In Lakewood Park no prescription card is needed.



Spilled Ink

Ung *continued from page 8*

the stories of many uplifting people in Ung’s life temper the memoir’s heavy subject matter. Specifically, two English teachers are singled out as positive influences by their encouragement of Ung as a writer. Each offers to help her write down her experiences as a way to begin healing herself and to inspire others. Perhaps the most pleasant, and poignant, surprise of the book comes mid-way through when readers discover a section of family photographs, beginning with two large images of her mother and father (recovered by Ung after 1995). The photos are from 1974 to 2003 and include many images of her extended family, complete with captions and anecdotes that simulate an actual family album. Clearly, Ung’s book is an intimate tribute to the entire family tree that opens the memoir. As she noted in our interview, “it is also a book for future generations of Ungs.”

Fittingly, *Lucky Child* culminates in the emotional reunion of Ung with her siblings in Cambodia in 1995. By



this point, readers cannot help but be deeply impressed with the family’s resilience. In Ung’s 2003 epilogue, each sibling’s story is updated for readers, including that of her brother Kim who after many years of hard labor has ended up with his own French pastry shop in Los Angeles called Max Bakery. The memoir ends in an inspiring tone reminiscent of Anne Frank’s diary, as Ung explains that she wanted to tell her father that “even though I’d witnessed the worst of man’s inhumanity to man, in my family and my life experiences I’d also seen the very best of man’s humanity to man” (264).

When asked what she hopes American readers might take away from her memoir, Ung replied: “I hope Americans realize how little it takes to make a difference.” She explained that she gets many letters of support for her writing, but always hopes those readers will “go out and do something to help others.” Her examples of taking action include befriending a refugee, helping such a person understand English better, or simply introducing him or her to the library. “What we do matters,”

she emphasizes, especially in a country as able to provide help as the United States.

Regarding her own activism, Ung is highly involved in several causes and charities. She is the national spokesperson for the Campaign for a Landmine Free World, a program of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation. She also lectures extensively around the world and assists the Documentation Center of Cambodia. She has been featured in dozens of major newspapers, radio programs, and television news shows, including ABC News “Nightline” and NBC’s “The Today Show.” For more information on Ung, her family, and her endeavors, readers can consult her website at www.loungung.com.

As she reflected on her evolution as a survivor, author, and activist, Ung articulated the complexity of her identity: “I feel I am many different people. On stage I’m often a vulnerable Cambodian child again. On Capitol Hill I’m a powerful American woman.” Ultimately, she declared: “I am a Cambodian-Chinese-American International.” Tickets for Ung’s appearance are \$35 per person and may be purchased at the Main Library and Madison Branch Circulation Desks. Copies of her books will be on sale at the event for signing.

Family *continued from page 4*

the Learn through Play program is much more interactive for parents than the drop-ins. “The drop-ins,” she explains, “are designed to break down isolation and build relationships among parents,” which are important functions. At the Learn through Play program, however, the emphasis is on parent-child interaction.

The Learn through Play program is available at The Family Room on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. and on Wednesdays from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. Gelsomino notes, however, that if some Lakewood residents desire more or different hours, it may be possible to change the schedule or add a Saturday session. If interested in the program (or in any other Family Room program), they should contact The Family Room at 216-529-5018. They could also consult the website at www.ci.lakewood.oh.us/. Gelsomino welcomes feedback from all Lakewood families, and her affirmative message to parents is clear: “Please come in. This is your no-cost opportunity for you and your child to be in a rich early childhood environment. The most important teacher of the child is always the parent.”

Lakewood Pets

Dogs Make the Last Splash at Foster Pool

by Mike Deneen



photo by S. Hanley



photo by Ms. Sandie King

Lakewood’s four-legged residents got their chance to enjoy a swim at Lakewood Park’s Foster Pool on Tuesday, Sept. 6, at the first annual Friends of the Lakewood Dog Park Doggie Dip. The event, which was held the day after the pool closed for the season, hosted over 200 dogs and their owners and raised more than \$1,200 for FLDP.

In a scene reminiscent of “Caddy Day” from the film *Caddyshack*, dogs were lined up 15 minutes before the event’s opening. Once admitted, most dogs headed straight for the pool. Many splashed in the shallow water on the platform, while some of the more adventurous swam in the deeper water. Although hunting breeds such as Retrievers and Poodles are most closely associated with swimming, dog of all shapes and sizes participated. In addition, many owners decided to join their dogs in the pool for one last splash before fall.

FLDP introduced the Doggie Dip as a way to raise money for maintenance of the Lakewood Dog Park, which opened in 2003. FLDP was looking for a fun, interesting fundraiser that would not replicate efforts of other local animal welfare organizations. Cooperation between FLDP volunteers, City Hall, the parks department and the recreation department made the event a tail-wagging success.



photo by Ms. Sandie King



photo by Ms. Sandie King

Turtle Turmoil During Lakewood Arts Festival

by Mary Bodnar

Turtles make great house pets and our beloved pet turtle Mo is no exception. At two years of age, Mo, a yellow-bellied semi-aquatic turtle, is full of personality (we swear, he comes when he’s called). He defies every stereotype of a slow moving reptile. Measuring at 6" from bow to stern and 5-1/2" from port to starboard (sorry, I’m a skipper), he clips along on dry land at an amazing speed when he is out of his aquatic environment. His speed and strength are quite impressive to people and even our predatorial cat and our aggressive parakeet stand back in respectful awe when he plows past them in the living room, busting through Lego castles and wooden block fortresses like any great warrior. My three children are constantly busy building new structures in an attempt to contain him.

He was last seen at the corner of Belle Avenue and Franklin Boulevard on the afternoon of Aug. 6—during the height of the Lakewood Art Festival. Festivalgoers from all around flocked to the scene when they heard about Mo’s disappearance. Lakewood passersby as well as many neighbors on Belle rallied to the cause, dropping what they were doing to join the search for Mo. For nearly two hours people and my desperate family searched. Under bushes, in the lawns, near trees, under cars, all the way down Frank-

lin to the gas station at Warren Road and Hilliard—Okay, okay, he’s not that fast—they were desperate, perhaps he had run out of gas? As each 15-minute increment passed and still no sign of Mo, we worried about the length of time he had been out of water. When we obtained him as a baby, we read up on turtles at the Lakewood Library. I remembered that one book had said semi-aquatics could be completely out of water for a little over an hour.

Meanwhile, I’m having the time of my life with a girlfriend at the Lakewood Art Festival, oblivious to my family’s pain. I was relishing the wonderful feeling of having just purchased a beautiful Raku pot from a potter, when I heard someone calling my name in the crowd. I turn around and see a woman from church. I knew immediately something was wrong by her face. She quickly fills me in about the events of the last 1-1/2 hours and the neighborhood’s gallant search for Mo, and about the state of my family. I feel a lump rising uncomfortably in my throat and desert my dear understanding friend at the Arts Festival. I begin to sprint back to the house, hurtling over obstacles in my path, catapulting over shoppers, all the while clutching my precious Raku pot. As I head up Belle Avenue from Detroit, I ask everyone I see if they’ve seen a turtle. Many say “no” with faces full of compassion. Others look at me like I’m a freak and



photo by Mary Bodnar

Mo, the wayward turtle, back home with the Bodnar Family.

in need of being locked up. By the time I reach home, my 10-year-old son is hysterical. My six-year-old son and eight-year-old daughter are depressed and exhausted from the search. My husband is sick to his stomach, assuming the worst. My neighbor and my husband confide to me that everyone is giving up. The search is over.

I watch as the last of the search party disbands, my husband goes in the house. I’m left alone outside with my three children. I ask Dillon once again, where Mo was last seen. At the base of one of the giant towering oaks in our front yard. I pray out loud, “God, my family is in absolute turmoil. Please let me think like a turtle. Where would I go if I was a turtle?” Suddenly I felt an urge to enter a leafy area between our

house and our neighbor’s. Later I was told that many people had searched that area before I showed up. As I was praying out loud, there was Mo, looking right at me. If his head had been tucked into his shell, I most certainly would have missed him. I gave a joyful shout and he had a glorious homecoming, none the worse for wear.

Since this painful but happy ending episode, we have had serious family discussions about turtle leashes, a bell on a collar around his neck or, quite plausibly, a bright red heart painted on the back of his carapace. To date, none of the above has transpired. However, my brain seems to be moving quite slowly lately and I’ve noticed yellow hexagons on my belly. Perhaps God took my prayer too seriously ...