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Volume 3, Issue 8, April 17, 2007

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Governor Ted Strickland Stops as Lakewood Senior Center To Propose” Senior Citizen Property Tax Relief

What Govenor Strickland is proposing is a dramatic expansion and simplification of the homestead exemption property tax relief program. This will increase the number of recipients of homestead relief from 220,000 to 775,000 (about one quarter of all Ohio homeowners) and increase the amount of tax relief from \$70 million to approximately \$330 million.

This is in response to a disturbing trend: in 1980, at its peak, the homestead exemption provided tax relief for almost 375,000 elderly and disabled Ohio homeowners, or 70% of Ohio's total senior citizen homeowner population at that time. By 2004 the number of homestead exemption recipients had fallen to 221,000, or less than 29% of Ohio's senior citizen homeowners. This erosion of the homestead exemption has placed far too large a property tax burden on Ohio's senior citizens.

Every senior citizen or permanently disabled homeowner will receive an exemption of \$25,000 on the market value of their home, regardless of their income. The complex income tests and differing exemption amounts under the current program are eliminated.



School districts and services funded through property taxes will not suffer at all. The state will pay for the additional property tax relief.

As under current law, the homestead exemption tax relief will be reimbursed by the state General Revenue Fund (GRF) to schools and to local governments, so that no local

community loses property tax revenue as a result of the expansion of the program.

This proposal will not be expensive to administer. By choosing to expand an existing tax relief program rather than by creating a new one, the proposal can keep administrative costs down by not requiring new forms, new

rules, and new procedures for taxpayers to apply for relief. In fact, existing homestead exemption application procedures can be simplified, because the proposal does away with the income limitations and the calculation of income to determine whether a taxpayer qualifies for relief.

In recognition of the fact that there will be many more applications than currently (775,000 rather than 220,000), and thus additional work for county auditors, the proposal includes compensation to county auditors in the amount of 1% of GRF homestead exemption payments to the county.



Mayor Thomas J. George, Councilmen Ryan Patrick Demro and Kevin Butler join Hayden Bish, Hugh Campbell, Daniel Crompton, Luke DeBaltzo, George Harkenrider, Blue Keough, Kyle Masters, Cooper Strachan, and Christian Styles from Cub Scout Pack 115 were recognized by City Council at the April 16 meeting for earning their Arrow of Lights awards. Most know that Eagle Scout is the highest rank a Boy Scout can reach, but many don't realize that the Arrow of Light is the highest award a Cub Scout can earn and that the badge is the only one that can be worn on their Boy Scout uniform. Earning this award is a fair amount of work for 5th grade Webelos. The boys must earn a minimum of eight activity badges including Citizen, Readyman, Fitness and Outdoorsman. Each boy that earns his Arrow of Light has learned a great deal about being a good citizen and having a good work ethic and they are to be commended

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Events & Notices

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

First Federal Of Lakewood Presents Donation To Cleveland Foodbank



Gary Fix, president, chief executive officer (CEO) and managing officer of First Federal of Lakewood presents donation to Julie Simmonds of the Cleveland Foodbank.

On March 29, Gary Fix, president, chief executive officer (CEO) and managing officer of First Federal of Lakewood, presented a \$1,900 check to the Cleveland Foodbank, as a result of its annual checking account promotion. It was the third consecutive year the organizations partnered for the promotion, with the 2006 donations spread between the Foodbank

and eight charitable organizations in branch communities.

First Federal donated \$10 for each checking account opened during a two-month period in mid-2006. The 2006 contributions totaled \$5,400, with \$1,900 given to the Cleveland Foodbank and the rest divided between the following branch community organizations: North Ridgeville Schools, Olmsted Falls Schools, Westlake Community Service Center, Strongsville Emergency Foodbank, Brunswick Food Pantry, Avon/Avon Lake Community Resource Center, Rocky River Assistance Program and Fairview Hunger Center.

“Year upon year, our customers embrace the Cleveland Foodbank checking account promotion and the positive impact it has on our communities,” said Fix. “This year, we were able to advance our contributions by donating to both the Cleveland Foodbank and local organizations in our branch communities.”

The Cleveland Foodbank’s mission is to alleviate hunger by providing food and support to agencies that feed the hungry in Northeast Ohio. The Foodbank solicits, collects, sorts, and distributes nonperishable food, fresh produce, perishable and frozen food, and prepared meals to local hunger centers and other nonprofit agencies. Visit www.clevelandfoodbank.org for additional information.

First Federal of Lakewood, with 12 locations in Northeast Ohio, has total assets exceeding \$1 billion. Founded in 1935, First Federal of Lakewood is a community savings and loan institution with a deep-rooted tradition of financial strength, stability and integrity. Visit www.FFL.net for additional information.

Lakewood/Rocky River Rotary Welcomes New Members



New Lakewood/Rocky River Rotary Club members Calvin Ratcliff, Matt Daugherty, Mark Dudek, Leslie Chamberlin, and John Waddell.

The Rotary Club of Lakewood/Rocky River held an orientation meeting in March for five new members at the Winking Lizard, in Lakewood. Joining the 110 member Club, were Calvin Ratcliff, retired sales and marketing executive of IBM Corporation; Matt Daugherty, Financial Planner, with Ameriprise Financial Services, Westlake Office; Mark Dudek, former Principal of Lakewood Catholic Academy; Leslie Chamberlin, District Executive Director, Lakewood Family YMCA; and John Waddell, Waddell & Associates, Architects.

Current Rotary President, Jim Lechko of First Federal of Lakewood Investments, welcomed the initi-

ates and provided background on the activities of the Club. The orientation covered the history of Rotary International, which was established in 1905, as the first service club, and the local club which was chartered in 1926. Rotary International has over 1.2 million members, and 32,000 clubs, in nearly 170 countries world wide. The Rotary International Foundation distributes grants totaling over \$95 million each year, for health and humanitarian projects around the world.

The Lakewood/Rocky River Club supports many community and youth organizations in the west shore area. This year its Foundation will award nearly \$33,000 in grants, for projects providing

service to handicapped, elderly, and disadvantaged youth, as well as programs promoting excellence in education in the area schools.

In addition, \$6,000 in college scholarships will be awarded to deserving seniors in local high schools. Additional scholarships are given through Speech, Music and Art Contests conducted by the Club, in cooperation with the Beck Center for the Arts.

The Rotary motto is Service Above Self, and many club members participate in activities like the Thanksgiving and Christmas food distribution, the “Chili Open” fund raiser, distribution of dictionaries to 3rd grade students in Lakewood and Rocky River Schools, and support of the West Shore Career and Technical Education Program. On the international level, the club sponsors two Rotary Youth Exchange Students, who are attending Lakewood High School. This year the students are from Finland and Norway. A local young professional, sponsored by the Club, will participate in the Rotary Group Study Exchange program, which sends 500 teams around the world, to promote goodwill and understanding, through Rotary.

Annual donations from Club members go towards polio eradication, literacy, and clean water projects, in developing countries. A special Club Youth Fund provides items such as tennis shoes, and laundry equipment, to orphanages in Eastern Europe. Rotary members are expected to attend weekly meetings, participate in Club Committee activities, and attend club sponsored events.

The Lakewood/Rocky River Rotary meets every Monday, at noon at Umerley Hall, behind Rocky River City Hall. A new Lakewood/Rocky River Sunrise Rotary Club started last year, and meets at 7:15am, on Wednes-

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City Council

After Friday 13th Failed Coup

Council Will Try To Find Common Ground

FRIDAY 4-13-07

by Stan Austin - City Council Reporter

On Friday the 13th a caucus of four council members tried but failed to change council leadership.

During the past three years members of council have experienced at various times public frustration with each other and with members of the administration as they tried to cope and understand the nature of the legislative role.

This time four of the members targeted their anger at council leadership. Ryan Demro (Ward 2), Kevin Butler (Ward 1), Edward Fitzgerald (at large) and Michael Dever (at large) determined that council president Robert Seelie (Ward 3) was using his power to stymie or even prevent members from dealing with issues they felt were important. Their solution was to elect a new president, then reassign the positions of chairman of the committee of the whole and finance committee chair, all posi-



The Monday meeting of City Council was packed, Scouts, residents, and interested Observers filled the room.

tions which are currently held by Seelie. Their perceived authority to do this was in the charter which prescribes the procedure for organizing council and for a

majority to call for a meeting.

Members Nickie Antonio (at large) and Mary Louise Madigan (Ward 4) were not participants in these efforts at this time.

Also, noticeably absent in these machinations was the subject, Seelie himself. The four seeking Seelie's ouster have all publicly denied any connection with Seelie's absence and a hastily called meeting.

The call for a meeting was finalized on Thursday afternoon with the meeting time set at 5:30 P.M. on Friday. Upon hearing of this action Law Director Brian Corrigan advised that proper notification procedures according to open meetings, the charter, and state law had not been complied with. A posting under meeting notices went up on the city's website but efforts of wider public notifications and by whom are unclear.

At 5:30 the six members and an audience of about 30 assembled in the council chambers. After waiting for the arrival of a few members, Dever called the special meeting to order and called for the clerk to take attendance. Noting a non response from Seelie, Madigan made a motion to excuse his absence. Seelie, she said, was out of town on a pre-planned trip. His absence was excused.

Council member Butler then took the floor and described the serious financial crisis that the city is going to face. He then pointed out the difficulty council had during budget hearings in trying to cope with that issue. He ascribed that difficulty to Seelie who he contended cooperated too much with the administration, thereby thwarting councils' responsibilities.

Demro was next up and outlined many of his efforts to bring budget awareness. He also revealed the unraveling of an apparent agreement prior to the meeting to have four votes to remove Seelie as president. He did this by indicating that one of the four, without identifying the individual, had been "gotten to, by people in county government."

Fitzgerald then recounted his actions over a three year period to put his stamp on the budgeting process and how he felt that council was not able to fulfill its duty because of heavy handed

suppression.

That, then, was the case as presented by Butler, Demro, and Fitzgerald.

Nickie Antonio asked to take the floor. To the issue she said "This is the most incredible piece of theater I've seen in my lifetime." She indicated further that they are approaching the end of their terms and can elect new leadership next year. She then asked, "So now if we elect new leadership we will all of a sudden be able to work together? It's still the same seven of us."

Antonio directly asked Dever what his intentions were. He replied "I believe in giving people a second chance." Apparently that meant he was no longer going to vote for Seelie's removal as president.

Fitzgerald then nominated Butler to chair the committee of the whole. Calls came out from the audience requesting public comment. Dever ignored the request and called for a vote on the motion to name Butler as committee of the whole chair. The vote was Butler, Demro, Dever, and Fitzgerald yes, Antonio abstain, Madigan no. Dever banged the gavel and the four yes votes departed from the council dais and the chambers.

Antonio and Madigan remained to listen to citizens who felt they had a right to be heard.

MONDAY 4-17-07

Yogi Berra famously said, "It's not over 'til it's over." And so it is with the continuing debate over council leadership. Council tonight did not address in its regular agenda any of the issues that were discussed at the Friday the 13th special meeting.

While the council report will return to addressing some of the important and traditional docket items in the May 1 issue, including Cub Scout honors recognition, a belated mention of Building Commissioner Charlie Barrett's retirement, and the ever present street repair issues, several significant carryover issues emerged from the Friday meeting and are sure to consume council attention in the next several months.

The first is a law department opinion as to whether or not the April 13 meeting complied with open meeting rules. The second is the continuing tenure of Robert Seelie as council president. The third is changes in the chairperson of the finance committee and committee of the whole. And fourth is the issue of public comment.

At the Friday meeting acting president Dever did not allow public comment. Members Antonio and Madigan objected to that posture and as a result, Madigan is introducing legislation to change the ordinance which says that the council president "may" take public comment and change it to "shall."

Keep up to date with the discussion on the Observation Deck.

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for a tour of our campus.

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Join the Discussion at: www.lakewoodobserver.com

Lakewood Public Library

Can't get to the Library? Not a problem!

by Eve Klodnick

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A Sincere Thanks



On behalf of Lakewood Public Library, I want to thank the Cox team for their hard work at Main Library on Wednesday, April 11. In preparing for Phase Two of the renovation project and the evacuation of the existing library, Gregory Christian and our Maintenance Services staff were taking down shelves. With the offer of helping hands, Greg swiftly

put the Cox Team to work. When I passed by, the Cox Team had broken into a sweat. These are immensely busy days at Main Library with packing and shelving-take down. We were delighted with the show of support and pizza.

Kenneth Warren
Director
Lakewood Public Library

Library Events Calendar

Thursday, April 19

BUSINESS BOOK TALK WITH TIM ZAUN AND FRIENDS

Attention movers and shakers! This business book club will keep you up-to-date on the latest ideas floating around in the business world and put you face-to-face with like-minded Lakewoodites. Refreshments will be provided!

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything
by **Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner**

In this book, Levitt and Dubner show that economics is, at root, the study of incentives—how people get what they want, or need, especially when other people want or need the same thing. 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Friday, April 20

The Lakewood Public Cinema

Digitally projected masterworks roar to life in stereo sound. Don't be late or you'll miss the cartoon! Bring your own candy, popcorn and pop—and bring a friend! Call 226-8275 ext. 127 for the titles. We can't name these movies. (Just ask the lawyers!) We can, however, describe them...Legendary Rock Concert Film (Not Woodstock) 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Saturday, April 28

Classic Science Fiction Trilogy All-Day Marathon

Begins at 1:30 and going all day in the Main Library Auditorium

Sunday, April 22

Willy & Me

Willy Earle and Patricia Winfield perform original songs sprinkled in with music by the likes of the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers and Robert Johnson. Presented by the Friends of Lakewood Public Library. 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Sunday, April 29

Flamenco Guitar

Stuart Vokes illustrates the lively history of flamenco music through its Andalusian, Islamic, Sephardic and Gypsy cultures, with skilled hands and his trusty guitar. Presented by the Friends of Lakewood Public Library. 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

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Lakewood Healthcare

Life's Lessons: Breast Cancer Awareness

by Justine Cooper

Instead of quoting Breast Cancer statistics, as the important Awareness Walk approaches, I hope the sharing of one statistic is enough. This is dedicated to all the survivors, the families that have survived the ones whom have been called Home, and the Angels that walk the earth to bring awareness to the rest of us.

When I was 24 and a single mother of a baby boy finishing my college degree in Philadelphia, I met another young single mother. This new friend, Michele Coleman, was full of life and laughter and optimism that were contagious. There are friends in life, there are friendly acquaintances, and then there are Soul Sisters. Soul Sisters are the kind of friends that you immediately feel like you've known forever.

When I think back to those days, each of us caring for our young sons; both caring for other children so we could stay with our own, and taking classes full-time on weekends and evenings, I smile with warm memories. It

was the first time in my life that I lived in the Now, enjoying the present while focusing on the goal of graduating. Life would start when we had our degrees and began a career. Then we would be someone our sons would be proud of. We enjoyed the parks with our kids, the play dates while studying, the week we spent in a little cottage at the beach with our tax returns. We had a lot of ups and downs, always broke, but we were happy; and more importantly, our sons were happy.

Soon after we both graduated ready to start our new lives, Michele called me one day in hysterics, "They found a lump in my breast!" I still remember the exact spot I was sitting when she said that. I calmly replied "It's OK. It is just a lump. I am sure it is nothing." I truly believed that too. She was young and healthy and so full of life, nothing could touch her, not cancer. The couple of years that followed all run together. I remember her fiancée leaving after she got sick. He wasn't strong enough I guess. All of the difficult things we went through before

this meant nothing now. I remember months of testing, of procedures, of chemotherapy, of prayers, of hope. I never lost hope. I just refused to believe that God would ever take this devoted Catholic girl so young, so beautiful all the way through.

I watched as she had chemo strapped to her belt, so she could still walk around and care for her son, who was an even more gentle spirit than she. I watched as she lost her hair, but don't remember her complaining. She picked new wigs like picking a new spring wardrobe; she wanted to see if blondes had more fun. I moved back to Cleveland and we talked on the phone for hours about everything in life. She dated occasionally, and took up drum lessons. She continued to have fun, while waiting for a possible bone marrow transplant.

After a year and a half I moved back to Philadelphia. I could not wait to see her. When she walked in I barely recognized her, she was so thin. I hid my shock and embraced her. She still looked beautiful and was full of life,

but seemed so frail. I still knew she would bounce back any day. The next several months ran into each other, but I remember her last hospital stay like it was yesterday. By then it had spread to her brain, and I started to understand the reality, although ten years later I am not sure I still understand it fully.

I would visit her after work with my son who also loved her. He would sit for hours drawing her pictures and telling her she looked beautiful. She cared so deeply for her son that she wrote cards for her him for every occasion until he was 18, maybe longer, birthdays, graduation day, etc. She kept her humor until her final days, with the hospital staff, with her family and friends, with everyone she touched.

One day sitting at my desk I felt the most calming peaceful feeling pass through me. I knew it was Michele. I waited at home for the call, and got it. I still remember falling to floor in sobs when my son walked in and we held each other. The funeral was filled with friends and family and even the hospital staff who took care of her. She touched them that much.

I still feel Michele's presence. I can hear her laugh too. On the days I find myself complaining about something that seems big I hear her say, without judgment, "Let it go. At least you are there. Live. Feel. Enjoy the moments, they are what is Real!" I am done questioning God. I feel so grateful that He allowed me to experience His gifts through Michele. When I get stuck in something petty or unimportant, Michele whispers to me "Be joyful today. Don't wait!"

Today is our life. We are something to our children. Maybe everything, as I know they are everything to us. You don't need a degree or a title to Be. The title "Mom" supersedes any other title. The beat up car won't matter ten years from now, neither will the ten extra pounds that your children don't see, or a messy (and lived-in) house. In sharing Michele's spirit with our new Wellness Section, it is my hope to share her messages of living in today, enjoying the small moments that are the only moments that matter, and loving yourself the way you are today, because we are enough as we are.

Ask Michele's son what he remembers. My guess is only love. Love never dies. As he is getting ready to graduate high school, it is that Love that sustains him, and will continue to follow him everywhere he goes.

To all the ladies, please get regular check-ups and mammograms! Live for today and plan for tomorrow!

Historical Society

Lakewood Historical Society Announces Appointment of Educator



Stephanie Sheldon (Educator) and Amanda Francazio (Curator)

The Lakewood Historical Society is pleased to announce the appointment of Stephanie Sheldon to its new educator position. Her responsibilities include overseeing docent training and staffing

for the Oldest Stone House Museum, arranging school and group tours, acting as liaison for the Society's popular Ohio Heritage summer camp and developing new educational programming.

Stephanie's degree in anthropology and her experience as a children's librarian at the Lakewood Public Library make her uniquely qualified for this position. A Rocky River native, Stephanie and her husband have been Lakewood residents for eight years. With two young children and her Early Childhood PTA involvement as a newsletter editor, Stephanie will bring a fresh perspective to programming for families with children.

Would you enjoy learning more about Lakewood's history and sharing your knowledge with others? Are you willing to spend a few hours a month stepping back in time to show visitors through John Honam's house and to tell them what life was like for the early settlers of Lakewood? If you answered "yes," please contact Stephanie Sheldon to find out more about volunteering at the Lakewood Historical Society's Oldest Stone House Museum, and discover how you can help preserve and raise awareness about Lakewood's history.

The Oldest Stone House Museum is located at 14710 Lake Ave. Please call 216-221-7343 or e-mail lakewoodhistory@bge.net for more information.

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More News & Events

Lakewood State of the City & State of the Chamber Address

Please join the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce at Brennan's Party Center, 13000 Triskett Road, on April 20th at noon for the Annual State of the City and State of the Chamber Address. Enjoy a delicious lunch while listening to the Honorable Mayor Tom George highlight the city's past year, and the many opportunities and challenges Lakewood faces. Mr. Sean

Brennan, Chairman of the Board for the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, will address the current state of the Chamber and plans for the future.

The cost is \$15 for Chamber members and \$20 non-members. Reservations are required. Please contact Patty Ryan at the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, 216-226-2900 or email at pryan@lakewoodchamber.org.

Sale on the Grounds Hosted by the Lakewood Historical Society

The Lakewood Historical Society celebrates the first weekend of May by offering great bargains on antique, nearly-new and gently-used items at its annual Sale on the Grounds at the Nicholson House, located at 13335 Detroit Ave.

The festivities begin with the Preview Party from 7-9 p.m. on Friday, May 4. Guests get to shop early while enjoying appetizers and beverages. Admission is \$10 per person and reservations are required, as space is limited. Call 216-221-7343 to reserve your ticket.

The Sale is open to the public from



9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 5 and noon-3:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 6. All proceeds benefit the Lakewood Historical Society.

Dog Park Garage Sale Now Scheduled for Saturday, April 21

Due to Lakewood's inclement April weather, the Friends of the Lakewood Dog Park Garage Sale has been rescheduled for April 21. The event will raise funds for maintenance and supplies for the park. In the event of bad weather, the event will be postponed until April 28.

The Garage Sale will be held from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at 2225 Olive Ave.

in Lakewood. The sale features hundreds of interesting items, including some great Disney collectibles. If you would like to donate any items to the sale, contact Mike Deneen at 216-226-5536.

For more information about the Lakewood Dog Park or Friends of the Lakewood Dog Park, visit www.lakewooddogpark.com.



LHS Staff Mustache Contest Raises Money For A Good Cause

Lakewood High School raised \$2,848.43 for the Ronald McDonald House with their LHS Staff Mustache Contest. The picture shows the staff participants: Joe Lobo, Sean Wheeler, Chris Lamphear, Dave Hille, Brian Biermann, Shane Sullivan, Patrick McNichols, and Bill Wagner. FOUR of the participants had their heads shaved for donations. Jeff Posendek

served as the emcee of the assembly that was presented live in front of the juniors and seniors and simulcast to freshman and sophomore homerooms. (Thanks to Trish Hendy, Bill Langenhop, Doug Bunsey, Dave Gannon, and the Broadcast Communications class!) Congratulations and a big thank you to all who participated, donated, and supported this wonderful event!

LHS Will Host Open Wrestling Tournament April 28

Lakewood High School will host the "Last Chance Open" an all-ages wrestling tournament on Saturday April 28 beginning at 10 A.M.

Prior to the meet is a free clinic hosted by Alan Fried. Fried is a former OHSAA, NCAA and Junior National Freestyle Champion.

Wrestling will take place in seven divisions and trophies will be awarded for the top three finishers for ages 5-12. Medals will be awarded for the top three finishers aged 13-up. Entry fee for

the event is \$20 payable at the door.

Modified high school rules will be used for the event with sudden death overtimes in case of a tie. Ages 13-up will wrestle a pair of two-minute periods while younger wrestlers will contest 90-second periods.

Weigh-ins will be conducted from 7-9 A.M. the morning of the event

For more information contact Lakewood High School Head Wrestling Coach and tournament manager Vinnie Curiale at 216-509-7322

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Lakewood Sports

Hell on Wheels:

Burning River Roller Girls

by Mike Deneen

As every woman knows, life can be stressful. It can be difficult to cope with day-to-day pressures of life such as working full-time, being in a relationship or raising kids. One group of Lakewood women has found a unique way to channel its energy into one of America's fastest growing sports—roller derby. More than a dozen Lakewood women are part of the Burning River Roller Girls (BRRG), the Cleveland area's first all-female, skater-owned, flat-track derby league.

By day, these women work full-time jobs ranging from a chemist to bill collector. By night, they double as "derby girls" with skater names such as Ivanna Destroya and Sister Mary Cyanide. During competitions on the track, these women relieve their stress and aggravations while building friendships with their teammates. Each bout features fast and furious action with lots of bumps and spills.

The skaters come from all walks of life and participate for a variety of reasons. "I was always aggressive as a kid," says Sister Mary Cyanide, a rookie skater who joined the group last month. "I enjoy the camaraderie, the workout, the notion that skaters come in all shapes and sizes." Cyanide, a Lakewood resident, is not surprised that so many of the skaters are from Lakewood. "Lakewood is by definition a very open-minded, free-spirited, cool kind of place," she says.

Although Cyanide did not participate in organized sports much until recently, other skaters come to the program with previous athletic experience. For instance, Brandy Alderson plays infield for The Old Stand's co-ed softball team in the Lakewood recreation league. A chemist by day, she also skates as Dita von Bitch for BRRG. "It's a great way to vent frustration from the day job."

By projecting an image of strength and independence, the skaters feel they provide good role models for young girls. "I enjoy the workout and being a good example for young girls in Cleveland," says Scooter Trash, a Cleveland



Now that's team spirit!

Heights native who now lives and works in Lakewood. Scooter is assistant captain of the Cleveland Steamers, one of the four teams that comprise BRRG.

Many of the skaters are also moms. Amy Hawks joined the outfit a year ago and skates under the name Molotov Hot-Tail. "It helps me to keep my sanity," she says. Hawks' daughter, Willow, attends Franklin Elementary. Willow has become an unofficial mascot for her mom's team and has even earned the nickname Skater Snot. Another skater, Me-ow!, calls herself "a stay-at-home mom and roller derby glutton."

Despite all the bumps and bruises in the sport, the girls maintain a strong camaraderie off the rink. "Everybody gets along really well. What happens on the track stays on the track," says Dagny TagHurt. "The friendships that I'm developing are awesome," says Queen

Cobra, a Lakewood resident who spends her days working as a bill collector.

Each skater chooses her own name, drawing upon different inspirations. For example, Queen Cobra has an avid interest in Egyptian art and history. Krista Reverson, a Lakewood resident who works in an accounting firm by day, wanted something both dark and feminine. She chose the name Morgue'N.

The BRRG first came together during the spring last year and have practiced regularly in preparation of their inaugural season. The season begins Sunday, April 22 and lasts until September 22. Their first event, dubbed "Maiden Massacre," will be held from 3-7 p.m. at the North Olmsted Soccer Complex. Tickets, which are \$10 each if purchased in advance, are available at the Mission Boutique in Lakewood

and through the group's website. The Mission Boutique, located on Madison near Warren Road, is a major sponsor of BRRG. "Marty Lansky (store owner) has been awesome," says Scooter Trash, who works at The Mission. The rising popularity of roller derby has helped BRRG to land major sponsors, including national sponsor Pabst Blue Ribbon beer. What should fans expect to see at a BRRG event? Milfinator, a Lakewood native and alumna of Taft Elementary, sums it up. "Hot girls on roller skates kicking each other's asses . . . you can't beat it!"

For more information on tickets, joining the team or sponsorship, go to www.burningriverrollergirls.com.

Burning River Roller Girls 2007 Schedule

All bouts held at North Olmsted Soccer Complex

Maiden Massacre
Sunday, April 22, 3-7 p.m.

War by the Shore
Saturday, May 19, 6-9 p.m.

Rock n' Roller Brawl of Dames
Saturday, June 30, 6-9 p.m.

Blood, Sweat and SKATES!
Saturday, July 28, 6-9 p.m.

Miss Skates by the Lake
Saturday, August 25, 6-9 p.m.
(semi-finals)

The Battle of Lake Erie
Saturday, September 22,
6-9 p.m. (championship)

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Lakewood Community

Helping parents keep track of children's online activity:

Cox Partners with H2O to Keep Kids Safe Online

For several years, Cox has made keeping homes media safe a top priority through their Take Charge! initiative. Part of the program involves educating parents and caregivers about Internet safety. Most recently, Cox partnered with Lakewood's Help to Others (H2O) to teach kids about safe surfing. H2O held a Home Alone Workshop this past Wednesday at Lakewood High School and Cox worked with Lakewood high school students to teach Internet safety to kids in grades 3-5.

"H2O's Home Alone Workshop is an excellent way of teaching children how to be safe after school, before their parents arrive home," said Stacie Schafer, spokesperson for Cox Communications. "The Internet is such a valuable tool, but we want to help kids make smart choices when their parents aren't around."

In support of the Internet safety initiative, Cox sponsored a teen delegate to participate in a National Teen Summit on Internet Safety in Washington, DC with children's advocate and Take Charge! spokesperson John Walsh.

Samantha Reinbold, a Rocky River High School student, met with Walsh, and nine other teens from



Cox Communications teen delegate, Samantha Reinbold, teaches Lakewood students about Internet Safety at the H2O Home Alone workshop.

across the nation, for the summit in Washington, DC. Following the summit, Reinbold met with Congressman Dennis Kucinich to share her views on education for all ages on Internet safety.

Since returning, Reinbold has delivered the message to parents, school board leaders and Chambers of Commerce members. This past Wednesday, Reinbold helped Cox and H2O educate Lakewood youth to give

children tips on staying safe online. At the Home Alone event, Reinbold showed "Password Rap," a NetSmartz video featured on the Take Charge! web site. The video, set to a fun rap, teaches kids how to choose and keep a password safe between themselves and their parents.

"The kids really seemed to like the Password Rap video," said Reinbold. "The H2O event was a fun way to work with Cox to teach kids about Internet safety at a young age."

Thanks to Cox, parents are learning more about Internet safety as well. In addition to the Take Charge! web site that is full of information to help parents, Cox is helping parents by arming them with a new tool that makes it easy to monitor children's online activity with daily web surfing reports. These web history logs show domains or websites that children have visited or attempted to access while in the

household, and flags web sites the parents have deemed inappropriate by the customizable filter settings. "Children are very technologically savvy and can make it hard for parents to retrace where they've been online," said Stacie Schafer, spokesperson at Cox Communications Cleveland. "But the new web history feature is one more way parents can stay on top of the web sites accessed by their children and it helps open the lines of communication." The web history reports can be created for multiple children and sent via a daily email to one or both parents' cox.net account. The web history report lists the pages each child has tried to access and which sites were allowed and/or blocked based on the filtering levels. Cox has offered customizable filtering levels for all children in the household since 2004. In addition to the daily e-mail, parents will be able to use the Security Suite software to access web history information in a number of formats. For example, web history can be viewed for all users or individual users, for all recorded sessions or specific browser sessions. The Take Charge! site also includes downloadable contracts for parents and kids, help with communicating with kids about the importance of staying safe online, a list of hundreds of acronyms kids use when chatting, and more. For more information, visit www.cox.com/takecharge.

Cox Digital Cable customers can also learn more about media safety On DEMAND. Customers simply tune to Cox Channel 1 and choose "Cox Connects" for a wealth of information on the Take Charge menu. For more information visit www.cox-cleveland.com or 216.535.3500.

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Lakewood Community

Cox Communications Says Thank You With Cox Day in Lakewood:
There is Such a Thing as a FREE Lunch!



Mary Coleman & friends enjoy a free lunch at West End Tavern



Last Wednesday, April 11, nearly 50 Cox Cleveland employees blanketed Lakewood to spread “random acts of kindness throughout the city” for Cox Day in Lakewood. For nearly 30 years, Cox has been committed to service and community involvements in Lakewood, but the company wanted to honor the city with one great day, and try to touch as many residents as possible.

Cox employees live and work in Lakewood, so Cox Day in Lakewood was also a way to let Cox employees get involved in giving back to their own City doing something special for customers and neighbors.

“We appreciate our Lakewood customers and it was a thrill to honor them with one great day full of random acts of kindness,” said Stacie Schaffer, Cox spokesperson. “The response was fantastic from residents and business owners alike. Our employees care about our customers and were proud to surprise the Lakewood community with Cox Day in Lakewood.”

Cox employees left Lakewood residents with a feeling of Cox’s commitment to the community. The random acts of kindness included surprising residents by picking up their tab for lunch, paying for their gas, paying for the first adopted cat and dog at the Lakewood Animal Shelter, carrying groceries for senior citizens at Nature’s Bin, giving away a Cox bundle of Cox Digital Cable, Cox High Speed Internet and Cox Digital Telephone to the first bundle of joy born at the Lakewood Hospital, giving gas cards to customers in the service center at Spitzer Jeep, randomly giving a Candy Bouquet to an unknowing resident and passing out water to people at the YMCA.



Cox buys lunch for The Burke family at India Garden



Cox employees provided complimentary coffee at the Phoenix.



Providing an unknowing resident with a Candy Bouquet



Cox paid for the first adopted cat & dog at the Animal Shelter



Handing out bottled water at the Lakewood YMCA



Helping with groceries at Natures Bin.

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Lakewood Observer

The Beauty of Ballroom Dancing

by David Skolyak

As a professional dance instructor, I am often asked, Can anyone ballroom dance? Statements like “I always wanted to learn ballroom dancing,” are quite common, usually followed by fears spoken or unspoken of looking foolish, of social intimidation, or general clumsiness. But to answer the first question, let me tell the story of a couple who came to me several years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Hillar came to my studio one day in 1986. I ushered them into my office, and must admit I was taken aback at Mr. Hillar’s gait as I sat them across from my desk. Mr. Hillar, it turned out, had developed polio in his youth. His prognosis was that he would never be able to walk normally again. But through years of struggle, he overcame that disability, though his left side was visibly affected, causing him to drag his left leg rather than place it as he walked. He became a chemist and worked for the Painesville Water Treatment Plant. They had seen me do a segment on Good Morning America that was televised here in Cleveland years ago. This was when I had my studio in Chardon, Ohio. By that time in my life I had taught for several years beginning with the Arthur Murray studios located in Cleveland over the Palace Theater. I had taught hundreds of different students, includ-

ing blind and even deaf students. I had graduated the Bronze, Silver and Gold Standards of American Style Ballroom Dance and was certified in the International Bronze Standard making me eligible to judge as well as teach. I had competed and performed in several dance shows; nothing at that point could surprise me.

Mr. Hillar – Clarence – went on that day to tell me of how he overcame his many struggles, but the one dream he and his wife Margaret both had was to be able to dance. They had taken lessons at another studio and were taught,

For some, dancing can be a struggle, and for others it might come easily. Even for those who find it a struggle, think about the satisfaction of conquering those fears.

because of his impairment, for him to lead with his right foot instead of his left. She was taught to follow beginning with her left foot instead of her right, so she could follow his steps. Being taught in that fashion, it was obvious they would have severe difficulties following normal dance patterns. Moreover, dancing with other people would be almost impossible, since all ballroom dancing consists of the man always starting with his left foot and the lady with her right.

I took them to my ballroom, put on a Foxtrot, and asked them to dance for me based on what they were taught.

They held each other properly, their posture was relaxed, and they began to traverse the floor. Their timing and syncopation were good, but there was a visible struggle as he started with his right foot and all the patterns were done just opposite of what they should have been.

They told me later how they enjoyed going to the Painesville Township Park Pavilion on Saturday nights to socialize and dance, but every time they tried to dance with others he would inevitably step on his partner’s feet or she would get stepped on. I saw

there would have to be a lot of effort involved in correcting their dilemma. I also knew that, despite their intelligence and genuine warmth, I would have to be firm in my manner of teaching to overcome the technique learned from their last studio. I started my lesson with the Hillars with the foxtrot, thinking it would be easiest for them. I began by making Clarence walk toward me, starting with his left leg. He would take a few steps, then I would stop him. He would throw his left leg forward with such force that I could see he would be banging into his partner when he would dance, so I made a point of having him control the force of his beginning step. Over and over I had him practice walking beginning with his left foot. Once I felt he had mastered tempering his stride I started teaching him the correct foxtrot pattern. Forward, forward, side, together. Left foot, right foot, side, together. Over and over I challenged him.

Once I felt he had his footwork down I worked with Mrs. Hillar. As a registered nurse who owned a Christmas tree farm on the side, she was not averse to hard work. Teaching her the proper following technique and getting her to use her right foot to start was easy. It was more a matter of having her correct past habits. Soon, they were dancing a foxtrot, together, the proper way. Over the next several

months I had them dancing rumbas, tangos, and waltzes; later they moved into cha-chas, swing, merengue, mambo and salsas.

Then, one day, it happened. I would open my studio on Sundays for any of my students who wanted to come in and practice. I walked from my office to the ballroom one Sunday and saw the two of them dancing. It was early and no other students were there. I was taking inventory of my records (you know, those round things that went the way of the dinosaurs). I happened to look up and saw Mrs. Hillar holding tight to her husband, crying. I thought maybe he stepped on her, causing her pain. I rushed to them and asked what was wrong, was she alright? Then I noticed both of them had tears in their eyes. He looked at me, voice quivering, “Dave, last night we went to the Pavilion,” he said. “For the first time, in public, we did a Tango, together. It was wonderful. Our dream has always been to be able to Tango. Not only did we Tango but friends came up to us and actually complimented us. It was so beautiful to have been complimented on our dancing. Not only that, but I actually had women coming up to me for the first time ever and asking ME to dance with them. Not one time did I step on anyone nor did my wife get stepped on!” Ok, I have to admit, at that moment I also got tears in my eyes. I was so happy for them.

The point to this story is yes, anyone can learn to dance, to express themselves on a dance floor. Maybe we won’t be invited to Dance With The Stars, but how many of us would want to be? Dancing is a beautiful way of two people moving as one. It is a wonderful way to relax, and enjoy people’s company. For some, dancing can be a struggle, and for others it might come easily. Even for those who find it a struggle, think about the satisfaction of conquering those fears. Maybe we won’t all be Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, or Gene Kelly, but then again, they are not holding our wives, husbands, boyfriends, girlfriends in their arms and telling the world “Look, this is my dance partner, see how lucky I am!”



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Chef Geoff

Mushrooms and Counterintuitive Mathematics

Addition by subtraction. These are mutually exclusive terms, yet it is a statement that we hear frequently, generally in relation to a fall Cleveland sports team that finds it necessary to release non-productive players. Taken literally, this contradiction defies logic. How can we increase something by subtracting from it? But, we also know that sometimes the removal of an element increases the value of that which remains. In the sports arena, the removal of a disgruntled and disruptive player may reduce the number of personnel on the roster, but may well increase the harmony and performance of the team as a whole. There has, thus, been an increase in quality by virtue of a decrease in quantity.

The same holds true in our culinary endeavors. Virtually any recipe for soup or sauce asks the cook to “simmer the liquid until it is reduced by half.” By following these directions, we are “adding” by way of concentrating flavors through reduction (due to the evaporation of water). Sometimes those instructions are abbreviated with the simple direction to “reduce the liquid by half.” To clarify, such a reduction is to be accomplished by boiling or simmering until the concentrated remainder is half the volume of the original (beginner and novice cooks: do not pour half of the liquid into the sink). The water content being eliminated dilutes the flavors as well as the consistency of the preparation.

In virtually all foods, water is a significant portion of the mass. Thus, as we dry jerky, fruits, and vegetables, we not only reduce their water weight significantly, but we also concentrate the flavors. So, even though the statement “addition by subtraction” would seem counterintuitive, it is nevertheless a truism as we add flavor and consistency by subtracting water or other liquids.

There is a preparation of mush-

Jeff Endress



Duxelle: Before and After

rooms known as Mushroom Duxelle which is the epitome of addition through subtraction. Mushrooms of all types are, of course, fungi and, as such, they soak up and retain liquid like a sponge. The proper removal of this liquid can cause a dramatic increase in the otherwise mild taste of a given fungus. In addition, we can also change the state and texture of the mushrooms through this technique, converting the fungi into a coarse paste. This final product has many uses, including but not limited to, as an addition to sauces, a thickening agent for soups, a simple spread as a base for a bruschetta, or as a substitute for foie gras in the classic preparation of Beef Wellington.


The amount of the resulting end product represents a dramatic decrease from the initial mass. An initial pound of mushrooms (two or more cups, chopped and sliced) will result in perhaps four ounces (a scant half-cup) of mushroom duxelle, but, with the intense increase in flavor, much less is needed. Some cookbooks and recipes advise that, when making mushroom duxelle, the mushrooms should be finely chopped, mounded in a cloth, and wrung until the all of the water is squeezed out. Then, the resulting pulp is sautéed with a bit of minced onion and salt and pepper until the remain-

ing moisture has evaporated. While this certainly represents one way to subtract from the original mass, it is much the same as the novice cook who reduces the stock by throwing half down the sink because with the squeezed out water also goes much of the flavors.

Thus, although it may take a bit a longer, my preferred method to prepare the duxelle is to, after washing and cleaning, finely chop the mushrooms and sauté them in a tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil with a teaspoon of finely grated onion over medium heat. After three or four minutes, the mushrooms will begin to release their moisture until there is a thick soup-like substance. Cooking this uncovered will eventually reduce the liquid, leaving behind the flavors that the water contained and resulting in the stiff,

paste-like duxelle. To add additional complexities of favor, a bit of sherry or other wine can be added as desired. Once prepared, the duxelle can be refrigerated for up to a week or frozen for months at a time ready to be used as a flavoring agent in sauces, soups, or simply tossed with pasta and olive oil.

Because there is such a vast array of mushrooms readily available, the flavors that one can create using this basic recipe are quite varied. Your standard white, button mushroom is milder than most and the resulting duxelle product will likewise be somewhat milder than other varieties. Crimini mushrooms, Portobello mushrooms, and even “exotics” such as Shiitake, Oyster, or Lobster will each impart their own unique flavor to the end product (although, frankly, with the cost of some of the more exotic mushrooms, you may not wish to see them reduced to a paste, but would rather that there were whole slices appearing in your soup or sauce). The preparation process is so simple and, beyond the amount of time necessary to cook away the liquid, is not affected by the quantity being prepared. In my opinion, as long as you are going to make it, make a lot. I have found that it can be a wonderful starting point for any hors d’oeuvre (it’s a great cracker topping!). It is also wonderful on sandwiches when used in the place of mayonnaise, mustard, or other standard condiments.



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Pulse Of The City

It's Just Not Fair!

The time? About 1956. The place? The family's combined music and play room. The lesson learned? Well, not about music, at least not this time.

The general facts of the case are fairly straightforward, although I'll take a bit of journalistic license with the particulars, as 51-year-old memories tend to fade somewhat.

Some friends were coming over to visit my parents, and they had children of their own. As a five-year-old "only child," I had a pretty attractive toybox. There was this Army plane that personnel and vehicles could go in and out of, along with a great fort where little plastic cowboys and Native Americans could do battle. Along with these treasures were perhaps twenty or more other toys, nestled in their proper places in that veritable treasure chest.

I had been well-trained to take good care of my toys, and I did so. Anticipating the arrival of our company, my mother had given me a good talking-to about sharing these toys with our guests when they came over to play.

When they arrived, all went well when we went outside to play ball. Even over milk and cookies, everything seemed to go just fine.

Then, the children saw my toybox. In an instant, they were transformed from smiling, polite youngsters into something akin to wide-eyed, screaming banshees. I learned later that these children had few toys, and therefore did not know how to handle them. At least, that was the story I was told later.

Before you could say "Fort Apache," mine was history. In no time, these unruly children ripped into my precious toybox. Before long, that toybox resembled London after the Nazi bombers got through with it. I can't even bear to write about my toy plastic Army plane, except to say that it really was not designed to fly.

For trying to be a good host, I was left with a pile of broken toys. Like children have said for years, I must have looked up at Mom and said those immortal words: "It's just not fair!"

As we all learn, sooner or later, life is not always fair. Things happen that we cannot begin to understand. Whether it's a young child getting can-

Gary Rice



One of Gary's 1950's toys.

cer, or an airplane (whether real, or toy) dropping out of the sky, the fact remains that things happen from time to time that just do not seem to be fair.

As the years rolled by, I learned more about the fairness doctrine, or rather, the lack thereof. In school, you learn quickly about in-crowds and outcasts. In athletics, one also learns all too quickly who's picked first, and last, for a ball team. Stand-up spelling bees also quickly separate the birdies from the bugs.

As we all know as adults, all of us are birdies, or bugs, depending on

our abilities. Ask me about guitars? I suppose I'm a birdie. Ask me about calculus? I'm probably a bug.

We all have our strengths and our not-so-strong points. During the school years (and especially these days), I'm not sure how much they emphasize that point. With our present state and national school philosophies (where virtually everyone has to pass proficiency tests by graduation), little allowance for individualism in learning seems to be permitted.

Fair? Not by a long shot, at least

in my opinion. Whether we like it or not, there will always be birdies and bugs, lions and lambs, and of course, you and I.

The real question, it would seem, is how we approach the concept of fairness. Money, opportunity, who a person knows, and of course, the ability to apply knowledge gained will always make life seem less than fair to those who in some way fail to measure up.

I, for one, am of the opinion that this "perception of unfairness" is one of the roots of our problems in this world. If people think that they are not being treated fairly, a situation exists that should not be taken lightly.

Anywhere that economic, political, religious, or social imbalances exist in the world, it seems that violence and strife follow. To be sure, it's a have and have-nots situation, but it really is more than that. No one wants to be seen as playing second fiddle, unless they are in the orchestra and are being paid to do so!

Respect and fairness are values that have been historically taught to youngsters around the world. At least, I hope so. Unfortunately and all too often, those same young people discover that life is just not fair, just as I did. And that can become a recipe for disaster.

The Buck Stops Here

Leisure Is A Performance

Robert Buckeye

At one point, I had my car serviced by a mechanic who left the town I lived in to return home and open a garage in his home town. I followed him home, as it were, because he was such a good mechanic. I would arrange my schedule to wait for the car until work was completed, and I had an opportunity to see what his day was like.

He began work at seven a.m. and did not finish until eight in the evening, sometimes nine. Thirteen, fourteen back-breaking days it would seem, but they were not. His work was folded into the life of the village. Everyone who

stopped for gas, left a car to be worked on or picked up a paper and coffee would take a moment to talk, pass news along, wonder about Jones, worry over Newton, laugh at Smith. He was not tied to a rigid schedule, as he would be at a lathe in a factory, but was free to participate in the life of the community while he was at work. He was judicious in how long he talked. He would not have had the reputation he had otherwise. He may be tired at the end of his work day, but it is of a different order from the fatigue of the factory worker, whose work is distinct from his life at home.

In contrast, my roommate in college, kept as rigorous a weekly schedule as the factory worker did. On Fridays, for example, he might put down classes in the morning, library in the afternoon, work out at the gym at four, dinner in the dorm at 5:30, and then, FUN, 9-1. Only rarely did he depart from his schedule.

Today we work so hard to have fun. We must prepare for it, schedule it. We need skis, fishing rods, an RV, airfare, cruise tickets. We need to plan an itinerary, check out highways, motels and hotels, historic sites. It costs money, and we must save money for weekends and vacations. In some way, we want to be seen by what our leisure is. We can't put our feet up on the porch railing and watch the day go by. We need to go to Cancun, Paris, a lake in northern

Ontario, a ski resort in the Rockies. We need to ski, lie on a beach, see the Eiffel Tower. It is not leisure unless it has been licensed, as it were, as a legitimate pleasure (that is, commercialized).

The leisure the mechanic takes between cars is part of life in the village. The leisure the family which goes to Cancun takes is a break – a rupture if you will – from life at home. For two weeks, their lives are not what they are, even if their trip may have reverberations back home. The family next door may not be able to afford Cancun. But what, you may ask, is wrong with a vacation in Cancun or Paris?

We insist on individual freedom. We can do what we want, given our capabilities and resources. At the same time, we want community. We want to be part of a group, a party, church, organization, town, not be alone (the pursuit of pure individuality leads to isolation). We do not see to what extent legitimized leisure is a mark of difference. Leisure is a performance, Thorstein Veblen writes, and the thing performed is class. It underscores not only how we define ourselves but also where in the community we stand. We think we are on vacation, enjoying ourselves. We do not see that the individuality that our leisure establishes makes it less possible, so it might seem, to be part of community.



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Lakewood Perspective

Don't Just Punch the Clock

I won't go into all of the details, but I was unexpectedly faced with the need to contemplate my career path last week. And, while I don't think anyone still expects to get that gold watch after holding the same job for the same company for their entire career, I wonder if people put as much thought into their jobs as they should.

Aside from the ever present problem of job security, I'm troubled by the number of times I meet a person who's unhappy with his/her current position yet not only continues to be employed there, but often works hideous amounts of overtime. Unfortunately, for most, the solution may not be as simple as just moving on.

Consider the following equation: $((1+4+1+4+1) \times 5) / ((24-8) \times 7) = 0.49$

Now review the above equation taking into account the following information...

In the United States, the average full time employee's commute to work is approximately one hour, followed by a four-hour morning shift, an average lunch of one hour (usually spent at work), four hours in the afternoon, and yet another hour in the car to get home. Multiply that daily routine by five days a week and you get a total of 55 hours. Divide that by the 112 hours of non-sleep time per week (24 hours minus an average of 8 hours a night, seven days a week). And, it all adds up to reveal that the average person spends about fifty percent of his/her time (per week) in activities related to his/her work. Therefore, if you're one of the growing many that are dissatisfied with his/her job, it can mean that you spend half of your time unhappy.

What's worse, if you're not happy at work, I guarantee you that your negativity is not only affecting your work, but those who work around you, consequently making it harder for them to be happy at work. Also, with most, the disappointment ends up spilling over into your personal time. Time, as I've already shown, which is far too limited as it is. Am I the only one who sees this as a problem?

But, the solution to this problem is not as simple as one might think. If you quit, you may just find yourself in the same situation a few months down the road. So, the answer is not necessarily to change jobs, but to change your attitude towards work itself.

Too many people never realize that you don't have to love your job to be happy. The trick is to either like your job or like what your job provides. Put a different way, either love what you do or love why you do it.

Obviously, it would be great if everybody was in the first group. But, let's face it, that just isn't realistic. However, there's absolutely nothing wrong with the other option. It is perfectly acceptable to say: "Yes, I am just in it for the money," or "Yeah, the job sucks, but I get my afternoons off." I'm not sure how many janitors actually love what they do, but I suspect that a large number of them love the stability that

Bret Callentine

the job provides and cherish the other things that accompany that particular type of employment. In general, it's a less stressful environment than most. You are generally left alone in your tasks. You work a lot with your hands.

Too many people never realize that you don't have to love your job to be happy. The trick is to either like your job or like what your job provides. Put a different way, either love what you do or love why you do it.

And, in many cases, your hours can be quite flexible.

In other cases, some people find it very comforting to have a job that does not require much thought. Or, others may find that certain jobs have particularly helpful "perks," such as employee discounts or free meals. If you like to play sports, it's not crazy to

your work and leave the rest for the other fifty percent of your time.

And, that is the other key. Those that do not particularly enjoy what they do should not spend any more time than they already do thinking or worrying about it. If you love your job, it's great to come home and share your day with family or fiends. However, if

When In Rome

by Chris Serger

A quarter millennia before the birth of Christ, the Roman Republic was not much older than ours was on that fateful Tuesday morning six years ago. In 264 BC, a century-long struggle between Rome and Carthage began due to a local dispute over a small parcel of land on the Mediterranean: not Israel, but Sicily. Replete with sweeping naval battles, war elephants, legendary generals, and the two great powers of the day, the three Punic Wars were destined to reverberate across the ages--and they have not disappointed.

In his book on the subject, Adrian Goldsworthy writes, "Only the Romans viewed every war as a life and death struggle, refusing to consider defeat while they had any means of carrying on the fight, and always pursuing total victory." To Rome, the war with Carthage, while started over a local land-grab by a Sicilian tribe, became one of national pride and a chance to solidify its position on the world stage. With the conquest of the Italian peninsula, Rome was now the prime threat to Carthage's hegemony. In the coming clash, Rome expected "total victory or their own annihilation," writes Goldsworthy.

After 23 years, the First Punic War ended in Carthage's military defeat, but its will to win remained. In the years following her victory, much like America in 2001, Rome grew complacent in her belief that the surrounding seas ensured security. But like those planes flying into our buildings, those illusions were shattered in 218 BC, when a resurgent Carthaginian army led by Hannibal crossed the Alps into Italy along with a herd of war elephants. For the next two decades Hannibal's army would ravage Roman lands and Roman legions. After the battle of Cannae alone, some 60,000 Roman corpses

(including 80 senators) rotted in the sun. But in the face of this devastating attack on their homeland, the Romans did not submit. They rededicated. And in 202 BC, Rome brought Carthage to its knees--for a while.

With Carthage rising again in the mid-second century BC, Romans demanded that the risk of another attack on their homeland be permanently removed. Rome finally shattered Carthage's will with the destruction of its armies and capital city.

The parallels between the Punic and Iraq wars are many. Our Carthage is Islamism: a once great civilization that is resurging and threatening our security. We have suffered heartbreaking losses on our own soil and overseas. Constant adaptations are required to effectively fight the ingenious tactics of our enemy. And the struggle already appears that it will span generations.

There is one major distinction, however. Notwithstanding Rome's flaws, Romans instinctively believed their way of life was worth defending and propagating at all costs. They also believed that any threat, great or small, must be met with unbridled ferocity. There was a time in our history when our "shining city" shared this belief with our ancient, cultural cousin. It is increasingly apparent, however, that our wealth and our will are inversely proportional. In a country of abundance, the thing we most lack is that which will ensure the survival of that abundance.

Since taking power, Democrats on Capital Hill have all but confirmed this with what has become the Weekly Withdrawal Bill. The most recent version sets the dreaded "time-table." Pelosi & Murtha, Inc. are yet to find one that can pass muster, but they've only just begun. Throughout its history, right or wrong, Romans still

you're unhappy with your job, leave it at work. Learn to let go. Take pride in your work, always do your best, but when the whistle blows and it's time to go home, go and don't think twice about it. This becomes most critical with those that hold positions that require a lot of overtime. As I've already shown, half your time is spent at work, so think long and hard before taking, or even continuing, a position that infringes even more upon that percentage.

Once you've taken all of this in, it's time for one last step: put up or shut up! Realize that no job is perfect. But, strike a balance and accept that sometimes a job is nothing more than the price you have to pay to accomplish the things you want in your "free" time.

And, one last piece of advice, regardless of from where your motivation comes: always approach your work as if your job is on the line because, if you don't, more often than not, it will be.

wanted Rome to win its wars: if only to ensure the continued Romanization of the world. Sadly the same cannot be said of today's Democrats. The ideals of FDR, Truman, and JFK are but memories of a once great and confident party. American soldiers must now fight the Mahdi in Baghdad and Murtha in Washington.

With Hannibal, Carthage won legendary battles, but the indomitable will of Rome won the war, and history. Every year, we celebrate our freedom in a month named for Julius Caesar. A billion Catholics look to Rome for spiritual guidance. And millions of tourists flock to Rome to discover the roots of our Western ideals. Meanwhile, the ruins of Carthage lie below modern Tunis, which, until 1993, was headquarters of terrorist Yassar Arafat's PLO.

Regardless of how it began, we are in Iraq now. Anything less than total victory should be unacceptable to Americans. And those that place any obstruction in the way of that victory should be held to account.

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Minding The Issues

Buckley v. Valeo: Democracy's Roadblock

Gordon Brumm

Money, we are told, is the mother's milk of politics. If that is so, the political process is imbibing a toxic overdose.

Do I need to belabor the obvious? We are now in the middle of the 2008 "money primary," in which candidates vie not for the favor of voters but for the largesse of contributors, with the clear aim of amassing enough money to make their victory seem inevitable. (So much for "one person one vote.") One presidential candidate at least has dropped out not because his program was unworthy or even unpopular, but simply because he couldn't raise large amounts of money.

Already major presidential candidates have begun to opt out of the public financing program for the 2008 general election because the allowance provided them -- \$74.6 million in the 2004 election -- will be too small to allow them to compete. Officeholders facing election must spend inordinate amounts of time drumming up campaign funds. And of course, the original evil of campaign financing -- the need to cater to self-interested contributors, or in plainer terms, corruption -- is still present.

In short, campaign financing has perverted our democratic system. There was supposed to be a solution in the form of limits on contributions. Clearly that hasn't worked, even if we set aside the operations of the more or less independent "527" organizations.

The clear answer, it would seem, is to address the pathology directly by limiting not only the contributions to a campaign but also the campaign expenditures -- in other words, spending limits. After all, it is far more effective to turn the water off at the faucet than to prevent the water from seeping into the well.

But spending limits are off the table for one simple reason -- a Supreme Court decision titled *Buckley v. Valeo*.

Buckley v. Valeo is a 1976 Supreme Court decision resulting from a challenge to the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended in 1974. ("Buckley" was New York Senator James L. Buckley, one of the plaintiffs. "Valeo" was a federal official representing the government.) In its decision, the Court separately addressed the various provisions of the Act relating to federal elections.

The Court upheld several provisions, including limits on individual contributions and the awarding of public financing.

However, it struck down spending limits on the grounds that such limits violate freedom of speech and association as guaranteed by the First Amendment, without serving a public interest (specifically, prevention of corruption) strongly enough to overbalance that violation. The decision stands as precedent, and that is why campaign spending cannot be limited.

On the same grounds, the Court struck down a limit on a candidate's spending from his or her own personal funds.

The *Buckley* decision has some perverse consequences. For one, it prescribes that wealthy persons cannot altruistically give their own money to someone else's political campaign, beyond a limited amount, but allows them to spend as much as they wish on their own campaigns.

Another perverse consequence of *Buckley* is the twist it gives to freedom of speech. Freedom of speech or press, as traditionally construed, is the prohibition against government interference with a person's speaking out. It takes no notice of the fact that some people -- those with much money or much power -- have the means to speak out much more effectively than others (giving rise to A. J. Liebling's sarcastic comment that freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one). In other words, freedom of the press applies equally in theory but not in practice, and this inequality has always been considered a flaw.

But *Buckley v. Valeo* enshrines this inequality in the law. The decision explicitly states that spending on communication through the media (for air time, newspaper advertising etc.) is an integral part of speech, and therefore everyone must be allowed unlimited freedom to spend whatever amount of money they wish on propagating their ideas. Unequal enjoyment of freedom of speech is no longer seen as something to be regretted, but as something to be protected.

Two challenges have been mounted to the *Buckley* decision, both unfortunately unsuccessful. In 1997 the state of Vermont passed a comprehensive campaign finance reform law which included limits on contributions. The law was upheld in the U.S. Court of Appeals and in 2006 went to the Supreme Court, which struck down the spending limits by a 6-3 margin (*Randall v. Sorrell*).

The city of Albuquerque passed a similar law in 1974. It was struck down by the Appeals Court in 2004 (*Homans v. City of Albuquerque*), and the Supreme Court refused to review it.

I have pointed out the pernicious effect of *Buckley v. Valeo* in disallowing spending limits, and I have suggested that its reasoning is suspect. This brings up three issues: Are spending limits (which require overturning *Buckley*) legitimate and constitutional? Is there a reasonable chance that the Supreme Court will overturn *Buckley*? And if so, will spending limits work in practice?

ARE SPENDING LIMITS LEGITIMATE AND CONSTITUTIONAL? The spending limits are constitutional if the Supreme Court says they are constitutional. The Supreme Court in the *Buckley* decision said they are not. But was that decision legitimate -- well-reasoned? Or does it deserve to be reversed?

The Supreme Court asserted two

key points: Spending limits violate the First Amendment; and the harmful effects of prohibiting spending limits are not weighty enough to outweigh that violation (though the Court came to the opposite conclusion in the case of contribution limits).

On both counts, I (and many others) suggest that the Supreme Court's arguments do not stand up to analysis.

On the first point: Freedom of speech guarantees everyone -- pauper and billionaire alike -- the ability to speak out without restraint or retribution. All that is necessary to exercise this right -- for both pauper and billionaire -- is that they wish to assert their opinions.

But the ability to speak out is not the same as the power to propagate one's opinions widely; the two acts proceed from different circumstances and they issue in different effects. The pauper, in his meager circumstances, can propagate his ideas only by telling his friends or whoever will listen while passing within the sound of his voice. He could not reach the far corners of the nation no matter how much he wished to. The billionaire could.

So the First Amendment's protection extends to the act of speaking out but not to the distinct act of propagating one's speech or the speech of others.

The same conclusion is supported by consideration of the purposes that lie behind the Constitution. The proper purpose of the First Amendment is to assure the free exchange and examination of ideas, especially political ideas. Giving First Amendment protection to unlimited spending is not essential to this purpose; indeed the fruits of unlimited spending -- attack ads, 20-second oversimplifications, etc. -- do more to clog and distort the free exchange/examination of ideas than to facilitate it.

On the second point -- that the pernicious effects of unlimited spending are not sufficient to outweigh the violation of the First Amendment -- the Supreme Court's reasoning is either misguided or outdated. The Court distinguished contribution limits from expenditure limits: Contribution limits, they said, are constitutionally permissible because they guard against the harm of corruption. (If special-interest groups can contribute only a limited amount, they won't be able to corrupt the candidates.) Spending limits, by contrast, provide no such protection. Hence the distinction.

But this distinction is without a difference. Special-interest groups have found ways to by-pass contribution-limits, and in addition all the evils outlined at the beginning have cropped up. So the failure to limit spending is at least as pernicious as the failure to limit contributions. (In fact, we need both kinds of limitation.)

IS THERE ANY CHANCE THE

SUPREME COURT WILL REVERSE BUCKLEY? Yes, and possibly a good chance, notwithstanding the recent Vermont-case setback. In that case, the majority justices did not present a united front; two of them argued merely from *Buckley* as a precedent. And precedents aren't iron-clad; *Brown v. Board of Education*, for example, overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the decision that authorized Jim Crow laws.

Furthermore, as I've just described, spending limits failed to gain approval in the *Buckley* decision because they failed a balancing test -- they failed, in the justices' opinion, to be important enough to outweigh their (alleged) violation of the First Amendment.

But Supreme Court justices read the newspapers, it is said, and they must realize that circumstances have changed. With the evils of campaign financing skyrocketing out of control, we can hope the justices will recognize that unlimited spending now contributes at least as much to the evils of campaign financing as unlimited contributions do. This means that spending limits will meet the balancing test, and the Court has reason to overturn *Buckley*.

WILL SPENDING LIMITS WORK? At the very least there's a good possibility that spending limits will work in conjunction with contribution limits. It's worth a try. Indeed, as far as the candidates' campaigns themselves are concerned, spending limits can hardly fail. If campaigns face effective limits on their spending, they can't possibly use any more money beyond the limit and they can't possibly need to raise more.

There remains the possibility that so-called independent organizations would spend unlimited amounts of money to campaign for their candidates. If that were allowed to occur, all the evils of the present system would reappear on different terrain -- candidates would spend inordinate amounts of time begging for contributions to these independent groups, etc. The remedy is clear: Limit the amount of money that any organization can spend on political campaigning to a very small amount -- perhaps enough to pay for a few mailings, no more.

With spending limits imposed on all partisan organizations, the media would bear more of the burden of disseminating political information. And that is how it ought to be, for the media at least purport to aim for objectivity. Of course there are the blogs, but they require no financing, or if they do they will be subject to regulation.

A final note: Other possible solutions are: 1) Requiring the media to provide free air time and advertising space to candidates. That seems too much to ask.

2) Public financing. This is

continued on page 17...

Lakewood Arts & Music

Concert Calendar

bela dubby (13321 Madison Ave.)
Saturday April 21- Bears and the Alice Rose. Bears have been attracting a lot of attention with their recent “Shortest Day of the Year” EP, a fine collection of indie pop. The Alice Rose of Austin, TX write some pretty catchy pop tunes as well. This is an all ages show and starts at 9:30 p.m.

Saturday April 28- Cleveland psych rockers Volcanos Awake (sic) with Lakewood’s equally trippy (and noisy) Ohm’s Law. Kenny K will ease you into things with an opening set of acoustic guitar music. This is an all ages show and starts at 9 p.m.

The Hi Fi Concert Club (11729 Detroit Ave.)
Saturday April 21- The “North Coast Crew” takes over the Hi Fi with At No End, King, Hiroshima Suntan, Backward Seven and lone Buffalo band Three Minutes of Hate, laying down the angry metal. Show starts at 8 p.m. Admission is \$6 for 21 and over, \$9 for 18-20.

Saturday April 28- Modern rockers Audible Thread with special guests Test Pilots and Rosella. DJ Tim Long will also be spinning. This is an all ages show and starts at 8 p.m. Admission is \$8 for 21 and over, \$10 for under 21.

The Phantasy Niteclub (11802 Detroit Ave.)
Friday April 20- Pandemik records presents an evening of Cleveland hip-hop with Vincenzo, Garbs Infinite, Beat Effeck, State of Mind, S.I.R. and Proph. Doors open at 9 p.m., show starts at 10. Advance tickets are \$10 at all ticketmaster outlets. This is an 18 and over show.

The Winchester Tavern (12112 Madison Ave.)
Friday April 20 and Saturday April 21- Molkie Cole. Molkie Cole were a popular Northeast Ohio band in existence from 1972 until 1980. Known for their wild stage shows, the band toured extensively and released a self-titled album on Januse Records (formerly the Chess label) in 1977. Saturday’s show is sold out. All ages. Show starts at 9:30 p.m. Admission is \$20.

Wednesday April 25- David Lindley. Lindley is best known as the guitarist for Jackson Brown’s band, but he’s played with so many well-known artists, it’s hard to list them all. In addition to playing on 10 Jackson Brown albums, he also recorded eight albums with Ry Cooder, seven with Warren Zevon and four with Rod Stewart. And that’s just the tip of the iceberg. He’s also had an extensive solo career ranging from rock to world music. All ages. Show starts at 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$12.

Spilled Ink

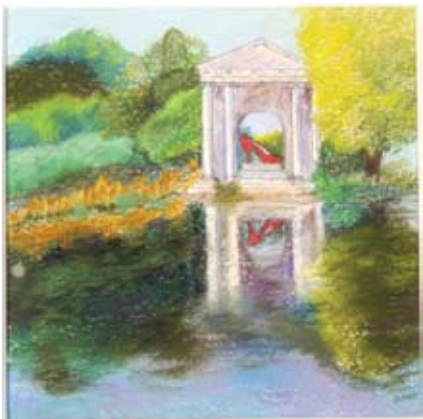
Minding the Issues continued from page 16...

a good idea, and there is currently an effort in the Senate to revive the plan and extend it to Congressional elections. But as long as Buckley v. Valeo is in place, public financing would require virtually unlimited funding. For if candidate A accepted public financing, he or she would have to receive an amount that matched dollar-for-dollar any amount raised by candidate B who used private fundraising. (Otherwise, candidate B might well raise more money than public financing allowed – just as is happening in the present election cycle.) There seems to be vir-

tually no chance of this kind of plan getting public support, especially in view of the vast rejection of the check-off for public financing on income tax returns. Let us hope that Buckley v. Valeo soon joins Dred Scott and Plessy v. Ferguson, among others, on the garbage pile of rejected Supreme Court decisions. Our democracy may not be able to withstand being in its clutches for too much longer.

One major organization providing additional information on Buckley v. Valeo is the National Voting Rights Institute, www.nvri.org.

“Works on Paper” on display at Beck Center through April 29



Stan H(left) and Classic Reflections (above)by Ann Caywood Brown

The Beck Center for the Arts is proud to present “Works on Paper,” an exhibit by Ann Caywood Brown on display in the Beck Center’s Music-Armory Building now through April 29. A reception with the artist will be held on Friday, April 20. The exhibit and reception are both free and open to the public.

Brown’s pastel and mixed media exhibit showcases her interest in landscapes. “Landscape elements fascinate me,” said Brown “My pastels are recollections of special events or places, remembered as land and skiescapes. Polaroid transfers allow me to manipulate the scenes depicted in my pastels in a smaller format and with new elements.”

Brown’s involvement with the arts in Cleveland spans several decades and includes work with the Cleveland Artists Foundation, the Massillon Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Valley Art Center. This award-winning artist and former Beck Center teacher works primarily with ceramics and pastels. Her artwork has been displayed in galleries and exhibitions throughout the Cleveland area. Brown holds a B.A. in Art History from Case Western Reserve University and currently works as an independent curator, as well as a project coordinator with the Massillon Museum.

Exhibit hours are Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Beck Center for the Arts is located at 17801 Detroit Avenue in Lakewood.



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Lakewood Arts & Entertainment

Arts & Entertainment Watch

Did you know.... that the Lakewood Civic Auditorium's ceramic art façade "Early Settler" or Johnny Appleseed as many of us affectionately refer to this Lakewood icon was designed by respected artist Viktor Schreckengost? If you recall, Viktor Schreckengost (born June 26, 1906, in Sebring, Ohio) is the father of industrial design, a long-time teacher at Cleveland Institute of Art and creator of the Jazz Bowl, designed for Eleanor Roosevelt. His Early Settler sculpture is the largest freestanding ceramic sculpture in the world.

The unveiling in April, 1955 was part of Lakewood's Pride of Progress Month, and companion to the production of "Seeds of Progress". The title, "Seeds of Progress" is taken from the inscription cut in the granite in the outer lobby of the Civic Center which reads as follows:

"On this site a century ago

Ruth A. Koenigsmark



*Dr. Jared Potter Kirkland,
Lakewood's noted naturalist
Through ingenuity and courage
Successfully sowed seeds
Of agriculture of science -
The glory of the Ohio settler.
In this building
Lakewood Civic Auditorium*

*Let us sow seeds of culture -
Of speech of drama of song -
That all who enter
Will reap a harvest from ideas
Which are planted here."*

The inscription was written by students and faculty members back in the 50's when the details of the build-

ing were in the planning stage. Thus, "Seeds of Progress" and "Early Settler" serve to remind us of the uses and possibilities for this auditorium in sowing various seeds such as those of song, dance, performance and civic responsibility by spreading ideas and discussion.

With this in mind, is it time for us to pick up where we left off 50 years ago? Could we work together again to plant "seeds of progress" in our city in new and dynamic ways to celebrate Lakewood's Pride of Progress Month as they did so enthusiastically back in 1955? I am reminded of the quote from the Kevin Costner film Field of Dreams when he says "Build it and they will come". I am leaning toward the notion that if we put an action like this in place we might be pleasantly surprised at the outcome --- we have resounding talent in this city. Perhaps another vehicle to showcase this fact might be in order. What do you think?

Upcoming Arts & Entertainment Events

Beck Center for the Arts 17801 Detroit Avenue 216.521.2540 The Beck is currently seeking art submissions to be considered for exhibition during their 2007-2008 theater season which runs from September through August. Exhibits are needed for the Jean Bulicek Galleria in the Beck Center's Main lobby, the Galleria located in the waiting area of the center's Music Armory Building and for other possible exhibit areas. Exhibits typically last for four to six weeks, and are promoted to the community through press releases, website posting, newsletters, postcards, and other means of communication. Contact John Coyne at the Beck Center for more info.

beladubby 13221 Madison Avenue 216.221.4479 Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10 am - 10 pm, Friday and Saturday 10am-midnight.

Cleveland Artist's Foundation 17801 Detroit Avenue—inside the Beck Center **216-227-9484** Joseph B. O'Sickey, Menageries and Other Worlds: A Retrospective Exhibition 1941-2007 opened Friday, April 13 curated by William Busta. This significant exhibition surveys works of O'Sickey throughout seven decades — his sketches of India and Africa from

his years in the Army during the 1940s; advertising and design work from the 1940s and 1950s; continuing series of landscape, still-life and garden paintings; and recent work based upon circus themes. An Opening Reception with the artist is scheduled for Sunday, April 22 at CAF from 3-5pm and the exhibit runs through June 9, 2007. A catalogue of the exhibition is being published. Gallery hours are Tue-Sat, 12-5pm. Closed Sun & Mon

Local Girl Gallery 16106 Detroit Avenue 216.228.1802 Think Spring Benefit Auction Saturday, April 21 from 7pm-10pm. This is a spring inspired auction to benefit the "Friends of the Mentally Retarded." \$5.00 donation at the door and plenty of art to bid on!

Also at Local Girl, Spring Artist Exchange **Sunday April 22nd, 2007 11am-1pm** Is it time to do some spring cleaning? Ready to unload all those art supplies you haven't used in ages? Are you ready to get more supplies without spending money? Just want to donate them to the gallery to be used in classes, benefits, community projects? Come join Local Girl Gallery for an Artist Exchange. Bring in all of those items that are clogging your creative

"art"eries, but are too good to toss. Exchange them for items you can use to express yourself. And...

Meet your fellow artists, exchange ideas and perhaps put a face with the art you love to see and buy at Local Girl. Coffee, tea and cookies provided too. Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 12-5pm, Friday and Saturday, 12-6pm.

Pop Shop Gallery and Studio 17020 Madison Avenue 216.227.8440 The Butterfly Effect -- April 21st from 6-9pm. The Pop Shop Gallery is proud to present its first benefit show entitled The Butterfly Effect. This show in part with the Debra foundation (www.debra.org) will house many donated pieces by many up and coming artists to raise money for families dealing with Epidermolysis Bullosa. The name of the show is inspired by the nickname of the disease which is known as the butterfly disease. The Debra foundation is dedicated in finding a cure for Epidermolysis Bullosa. Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) is a rare genetic disease characterized by the presence of extremely fragile skin and recurrent blister formation resulting from minor mechanical friction or trauma.

This condition is not contagious. An estimated 1 out of every 50,000 live births are affected with some type of EB. The disorder occurs in every racial and ethnic group throughout the world and affects both sexes equally. This is a one night only show on April 21st from 6-9pm. There will be many raffles, silent auctions, and great art work available to raise awareness for EB. An after party will follow this event held at Mullen's (located next to the gallery). As a side note, gallery owner and artist Richard S. Cihlar is one of the butterfly children and has lived with EB for the past 26 years. Hours: Monday-Friday 4 pm-8pm, Saturday 2 pm-6pm.

Wobblefoot Gallery and Frame Studio 1662 Mars Avenue 216.226.2971 Wobblefoot's featured artist this month is Jim Stracensky. Hours: Tuesday-Friday 10-am-6pm, Saturday 10am-4pm.

MUSIC Open-Mic Night—Every Thursday **Merry Arts Pub & Grille, 15607 Detroit Ave., Lakewood 226-4080, 10pm**

Gallery, dance and music news and event information should be forwarded to gallerywatchgals@yahoo.com. Every effort will be made to include it in our next column.



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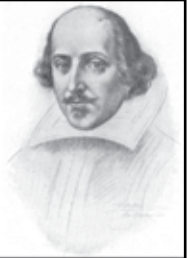
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Lakewood Real Estate

Noting our Neighborhood

Presentation is Key in Today's Market

by Val Mechenbier

Selling a home, especially in today's market, can be daunting. Buyers have many homes to choose from, so it's more important than ever to make your home stand out from the competition. Home sellers have had to adjust their thinking - their cherished home is now a product to be marketed. And like marketing any product, a home can be made more appealing through detailed preparation and merchandising, or "staging". Home staging prepares a house for maximum market appeal so it will attract potential buyers and sell faster than comparable unstaged homes.

Staging consultants look at a home through the eyes of a potential buyer. They provide recommendations after a thorough interior and exterior evaluation of the home. Some staging consultants provide additional services such as obtaining and scheduling contractors, supplying or shopping for decorative items, recommending paint

colors, arranging for short-term storage, planning garage sales, etc.

Research shows that buyers only spend 10-15 minutes looking at a potential home, and they often decide whether or not they are interested in the home during the first 10 seconds of their visit. The first impression is critically important. Staging consultants will make recommendations regarding the curb appeal of the home, emphasize the importance of having an inviting front door, a welcoming entry, and living spaces that are clean, neatly arranged, and well-lit.

Staging is about evoking positive reactions and eliminating distractions. The way people live in a home - with typical household clutter, personal photographs, pet items (and odors), excess toys, etc. - is separated from the way a home must be presented when it's on the market. Sellers who implement the recommendations of a staging consultant, keep their homes in their best showing condition and price realistically will likely reap the rewards of a quicker sale.

A Double Frame House Grows

A few physicians, under the leadership of Dr. C. Lee Graber, founded Lakewood Hospital in a double frame home on Detroit and Belle in 1907. The building was constructed so that it could be converted into a two-family residence in the event the hospital project went awry. Dr. Graber even

mortgaged his own home to obtain funds for the venture. In 1917 a new four-story brick edifice opened in front of the original structure, which was then used to house student nurses.

Excerpted with permission from the Lakewood Historical Society (Lakewood Lore, by Dan Chabek).

Realty Reality: **Questions from our Observer Readers**

by Maggie Fraley

Many readers have asked, “*When is the ‘best’ time to buy and sell a house?*”

It seems that the most common time that families prefer to move is summer, when school is out. Also, more people will shop for a new home in good weather. But for a less subjective look at the highs and lows, the Multiple Listing Service shows this pattern of home sales in Lakewood:

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
2005	30	43	55	42	39	39
2006	29	42	52	40	46	22

Lakewood Real Estate Information

(According to Multiple Listing Service)

by Andy Tabor

MARCH	2006	2007
Residential Closed	26	35
Residential Pending (Under Contract)	0	13
Multi-Family Closed	10	7
Multi-Family Pending (Under Contract)	0	10

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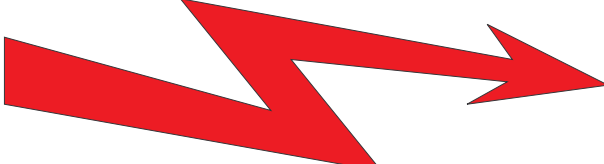
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