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Volume 5, Issue 1, January 13, 2009

Edward Favre New School Board President for 2008

John Kamkutis New School Board Member

by Jim O'Bryan

The Lakewood Board of Education has completed its interviews and review of sixteen impressive applicants for

the vacancy created by the resignation of W. Charles Geiger III. In compliance with state law and board policy, the Board appointed John Kamkutis to the vacant seat at its regular meeting on Monday, January 12, 2009.

The Board thanked all who applied and asked that they remain involved in the Lakewood City School District's ongoing initiatives. Their many talents are valuable and their willingness to serve is humbling.

As with so many in Lakewood's heritage, Kamkutis' parents immigrated to the United States and still reside in the Lakewood home they purchased 48 years ago. John is a

lifelong Lakewoodite, attended Roosevelt Elementary School, Harding Middle School, and graduated from Lakewood High School. He attended Bluffton College and has a degree in Business Administration.

John and his wife, Cindy, live on Marlowe Avenue with their two daughters, both Roosevelt students. Cindy is a high school advanced mathematics teacher. John is employed as a district manager for an insurance company, is active in youth programs and has coached on various levels in Lakewood for many years. He is a member of the Lakewood Youth Athletics Commission, and serves on boards in his church and mission organizations.



photo by Ivor Karabakovic

John Kamkutis gets sworn in by Rick Berdine as a Lakewood School Board member, as his wife Cindy, two daughters, and parents look on.

The Lakewood City School District welcomes John and urges all staff, and the community, to support and assist him in his new position.

"After spending long hours interviewing 16 outstanding applicants to fill the vacancy created by Chas Geiger's unexpected resignation, the Board unanimously, and without reservation, agreed to appoint John Kamkutis. It is also very impressive to see the outpouring of support for Kamkutis from his fellow applicants," stated board member Matt Markling.

Long time board member Linda Bebe recalls that "It was a difficult selection process. I was very pleased with the number and quality of applicants for the open school board seat; they came from a cross section of the community and had a wide variety of skills and experiences."

Bebe cites Kamkutis' history of lifelong community involvement and family ties, which she likens to those of Chas Geiger. "I'm looking forward to getting to know him and working with him over the next year," stated Bebe.

News of Kamkutis' nomination brought to the Lakewood Observer Observation Deck a round of congratulations from finalists.

Ryan Salo, one of the six applicants who went on to the final round, saluted Kamkutis, "I am sure you will do a fantastic job! I have heard nothing but great things about you and your commitment to the city and the schools."

Finalist Diane Helbig summed up her experience with the process on the LO Observation Deck. "I feel honored to have been included with such a qualified, dedicated group of individuals. The school system and the city are fortunate to have this level of involvement and commitment from its citizens."

Board President Ed Favre concurred. "I was very impressed with the caliber of the individuals who came forward. It is gratifying to see the outpouring of support for John and the Board's process that was shown at the meeting tonight and by fellow applicants on the Lakewood Observer Observation Deck."

Favre, who was just sworn in as President of the Lakewood School Board, also announced that he is running for re-election and will kick off the campaign at Around the Corner, Thursday, January 22, 2009, 5:30-7:30pm.



Ed Favre being sworn in as President of the Lakewood School Board for 2009

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LIVEWELL LAKEWOOD

by Paula Reed

Live Well Lakewood is a new volunteer-based community organization. The group was formed in October to promote healthy, active living in Lakewood, and is working with Mayor FitzGerald's Healthy Lakewood Partnership initiative.

Live Well Lakewood is also partnering with Lakewood City Schools and the Lakewood Recreation Department to offer indoor walking during cold, dark, icy winter evenings. Beginning January 5th, both Harding and Garfield Middle Schools will be open Monday through Thursday, 5-9:00 pm for walking in the halls. Residents just need to sign in with the security guard—kids under 18 must be accompanied by a parent.

Live Well Lakewood's most exciting news is the January 24th kick-off event, a free health fair at Garfield Middle School, 13114 Detroit. From

9:00 am – 3:00 pm, browse the vendor area highlighting local merchants whose products and/or services contribute to living well. You'll be able to buy a pedometer, get a hand massage, learn more about chiropractic, watch an exercise class demo, and much more! Come and spend the day--Nature's Bin and Phoenix will be selling healthy food and drink.

From 9–11:00 am, Lakewood Hospital and Kaiser Permanente will be offering free health screenings on a first-come, first served basis.

The health fair features two exciting speakers, Dr. Michael Roizen at 11:00 am and Joy Bauer at 1:00 pm. You may have seen Dr. Roizen on a PBS special, on Oprah, or you may have read one of his best-selling "YOU" books. He's an engaging, dynamic and entertaining speaker who will describe "Your Beautiful Day."

continued on page 11

Calendar Of Events

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

Wednesday 01/14/09

6:00 AM – 7:00 AM
2:50 PM – 3:50 PM

Adult Swim - Daily High School Pool

Lakewood Recreation Department has Adult Swim available today! Cost is \$2.00 for a single admission or \$22.00 for a monthly pass.
Call Matt Demaline, Aquatics Manager at 529-4015 for more information.

Thursday 01/15/09

2:50 PM – 3:50 PM

Adult Swim - Daily High School Pool

Call Matt Demaline, Aquatics Manager at 529-4015 for more information.

7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Business Book Talk with Tim Zaun & Friends Main Library, Meeting Room

Tonight's book is: You Call the Shots Succeed Your Way-and Live the Life You Want-with 19 Essential Secrets of Entrepreneurship by Cameron Johnson Develop your entrepreneurial mindset, regardless of age, with this 23-year-old entrepreneur-extraordinaire.

Friday 01/16/09

6:00 AM – 7:00 AM
2:50 PM – 3:50 PM

Adult Swim - Daily High School Pool

Saturday 01/17/09

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Day Spa Mini Retreat Westside Yoga Studio 17100 Detroit Ave

A Delicious Afternoon Event Designed to Relieve Stress, Relax, Restore & Renew your Spirit. A few hours away from it all !!
Cost is just \$35.00

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

50 Dolla Holla 17020 Madison Ave.

Artwork Priced to sell!
The Pop Shop Gallery features works by over 40 of Cleveland's own artists. All art will be priced at \$50 each, on a first come first serve basis. Doors will open at 6pm on Saturday, January 17th for the opening reception and will close at 9pm. The early bird gets the worm at this show. An after party will also be hosted at Mul-

len's (located next to the gallery) with drink specials at 9pm, compliments of The Pop Shop Gallery.

6:30 PM - 10:00 AM

A Winter Gathering 3853 West 168th Street

Lakewood Ranger Marching Band and Lakewood Music Boosters Cordially Invite You to A Winter Gathering to benefit the new flag uniform vests and new percussion equipment. This event will be held at the Cretan Mutual Benefit Association of Cleveland. **Please park across the street in the city lot.**

Includes a Wine Tasting, Appetizers & Beverages, Dancing to the sounds of D.J. Ray, Silent Auction Sideboards, Wine by the glass and beer will also be available for purchase. Casual attire/21 and over only

Monday 01/19/09

6:00 AM – 7:00 AM
2:50 PM – 3:50 PM

Adult Swim - Daily High School Pool

Call Matt Demaline, Aquatics Manager at 529-4015 for more information.

Tuesday 01/20/09

6:00 AM – 7:00 AM
2:50 PM – 3:50 PM

Adult Swim - Daily High School Pool

Call Matt Demaline, Aquatics Manager at 529-4015 for more information.

7:00 PM – 8:45 PM

KNIT & LIT BOOK CLUB DOUBLE BIND BY CHRIS BOHJALIAN Main Library, Meeting Room 15425 Detroit Ave.

We'll keep our hands and minds busy on the third Tuesday of every month, sharing literary insights and personal projects. To register, please call (216) 226-8275 ext. 127.

Friday 01/23/09

6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

LECPTA Open House: Bounce Off The Walls Harrison Elementary School 2080 Quail Street

Lakewood Early Childhood PTA

will host a FREE Open House for all families of children 6 years and under. The evening will include great activities like a parachute, bouncy balls and a tunnel. All of the things a young child needs to let off some steam during these cold winter months. Please join us for this night of fun!

Saturday 01/24/09

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

GIRLS WITH WINGS: AVIATION INSPIRATION Garfield Middle School

This is an interactive and inspirational event for girls (ages 5-12). Join a professional pilot to hear about her training and career, and then learn "everything" you need to know about flying a plane with hands on instruction. We will end with a question and answer session. Classes are held January 24th, February 21st and March 21st from 10 am to 12 pm. Registration must be made through www.lakewoodrecreation.com

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

"Light Up Your Life" Happiness is Available, A Yoga Experience Master Teacher Rowan Silverberg 17100 Detroit Ave

Two Workshops, Sat., Jan. 24th Don't miss these afternoon workshops with Rowan Silverberg, a loved & renowned yoga instructor. Rowan has been practicing yoga for more than 40 years.

Enjoy a well rounded asana sequence including standing and balancing poses, backbends, forward bends, and twists.

Pre-registration \$30.00 per session, \$50.00 for both.

5:00 PM -

Homeless Awareness Sleepout Lakewood Congregational Church Pilgrim St. Paul Lutheran Church

Local Youth will spend the night out in an effort to raise awareness (and donations) to aid the Homeless of North East Ohio

Sunday 01/25/09

2:00 PM - 3:00 AM

Sunday with the Friends-Cello- bration Quartet

The mellow sounds of Cello-bration are just the thing to chase away the winter blues. Comprised of musicians from local community orchestras, this fun-loving quartet will play familiar songs in new arrangements. Are four cellos too many? No, there's always room for cello.

7:45 PM

LECPTA Presents: Jennifer Hanselman, author of "Return of the Party of Nine: Life with Sextuplets + One"

Jennifer Hanselman is the mother of Ohio's first set of sextuplets and

their energetic big brother.

Laugh along with mom Jennifer as she shares stories of six energetic preschoolers who keep their parents and big brother hopping with such adventures as:

- Potty training for the whole pack
- Diving into preschool
- Tackling the first family road trip
- Embracing an autism diagnosis
- Knocking out front teeth
- Wishing for a monkey

Jennifer will have her books on hand for purchase so bring your checkbooks! Her first book, Party of Nine, is \$14.95 plus tax. The new one, Return of the Party of Nine, is \$16.95 plus tax.

This presentation is free and open to the public.

Location:

Harding Middle School's cafeteria. The school is located at 16601 Madison (the corner of Wagar and Madison).



THE

LAKWOOD

OBSERVER

Your Independent Source for
Lakewood News & Opinion

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- Headache

lakewoodhospital.org/neuro

*Ranked by U.S.News & World Report, 2008.

 **Lakewood Hospital**
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Letters To The Editor

Lakewood - Is It Time To Privatize?

In response to the recent letter to the Editor in the December 7th edition of the Lakewood Observer, the Executive Board of AFSCME Public Works Local 1043 would like an opportunity to address the proposition of privatizing the Refuse Department.

When the Fitzgerald administration first took office in Lakewood, a Request for Proposals was initiated looking into the possibility of various divisions being privatized. Amongst these divisions was the Refuse/Recycling division. At that time, City Council researched the cost per household of both backyard, and curbside pickup utilizing members of our Local compared to those services provided by private companies.

After their research was done and submitted by City Council, the Council members realized that our current Refuse Department personnel and pick up was competitive with the private firms. Even if cuts were necessary, and the need to reduce the work force was required, the current members of the division with a change to curbside pickup would still be far cheaper than privatization.

Communities such as Parma and North Olmsted may have seen an initial cost savings within the first years due to the loss of workers/insurance payments. But after those first few years, the cities saw an increase in the cost of the services provided by private firms.

The cost savings for North Olmsted has not saved the city financially. Currently there are plans to lay off 5 Policemen, 5 Firemen, and 5 Public Works employees. Privatization of the refuse removal has done nothing for the city since its implementation prior to 2000.

In a comparison with Westlake, which utilizes BFI, Lakewood's cost per household was \$.39 less. Lakewood picks up 28,416 stops, compared to BFI in Westlake at 11,000. The cost per household in Westlake is \$14.99, and Lakewood \$14.60 with backyard service for more households.

These communities that have privatized could not bear the brunt of purchasing all new equipment for refuse removal, as they had sold their old equipment at auction. The statement that the cities "would never consider getting back into the business of collecting trash with city employees" is one of personal opinion, unless you are a representative of those cities. Once the equipment is no longer in the possession of the cities, the rates can climb as much as the private firm wants them.

We realize that as the former Regional Manager for municipal programs for BFI Waste Systems, Mr. Keith Davey would like to have the programs that he previously implemented for profit come to pass here in Lakewood. Privatization is not all that it is made

out to be in your letter to the Editor.

We understand that it may sound easy for us to say that the best case scenario is to keep all of our current workers in the Public Works Division during this time of economic strife. But we do feel that we provide a service that is not equal to, but greater than any that a private firm could offer.

Privatization would be a move of short-sightedness and a large mistake for this city and its residents.

The Executive Board of AFSCME Public Works Local 1043

Gerard Branco-President

Glen Bleich-Vice President

Ray Fisher- Chief Steward

Patrick Slife- Recording Secretary

North Coast Health Ministry Selects 2008 Partner Award Recipients

by Jeanine Gergel

North Coast Health Ministry (NCHM) has selected the Community West Foundation and The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation as the recipients of its 2008 Partner Awards.

The NCHM Partner Award is given to organizations that have demonstrated outstanding commitment to North Coast Health Ministry by financial or in-kind support and/or through encouragement and motivation of others to take leadership roles through philanthropy and community involvement.

"The Community West Foundation and the Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation have been critical to the success of North Coast Health Ministry over a period of many years," said NCHM Board Chair Brian M. King. "These two foundations are true partners of North Coast Health Ministry in providing health care to the medically underserved in our community. We are extremely grateful for their support and honored to present the awards to them."

NCHM Executive Director Lee Elmore said that recent contributions by each of the foundations have allowed NCHM to meet the growing local demand for health care by the low-income uninsured. "In recent years, Community West has provided funding for North Coast Health Ministry's full-time medical director and also for its prescription assistance program," said Elmore. "The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation gave us a substantial grant that allowed us to purchase and refurbish our current building in 2002, and they have provided continued operating support. Without these two partners, we would be much harder



North Coast Health Ministry Executive Director Lee Elmore and John Baco, who accepted the award on behalf of the Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation

pressed to serve the increasing numbers of our neighbors in need who come to North Coast Health Ministry seeking care."

The awards were presented at a North Coast Health Ministry holiday recognition celebration for the organization's volunteers and supporters on December 10, 2008.

Since 1986, North Coast Health Ministry has been providing health care to low-income individuals and families without medical insurance in western Cuyahoga and eastern Lorain counties. A faith-based free clinic located in Lakewood, NCHM is a bridge to better health for more than 2,100 patients who have no other route to care. With the support of over 100 volunteer physicians, nurses and other caregivers, NCHM is able to provide primary health care, specialty referrals, prescription assistance, and health education to the medically underserved.



Community West Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer David Dom-browiak, NCHM Board Chair Brian M. King and Community West Foundation Vice Chair of the Board David Hessler, Esq.



LUNCH & LEARN



**Kelly Boghosian, DO, Family Medicine
Lakewood Hospital**

presents

**"Depression: What to Do About the Blues"
Thursday, January 22, 2009 at 11:00 a.m.**

Assisted Living Building

1381 Bunts Road, Lakewood

(Campus is on NE Corner of Bunts & Detroit.)

RSVP by January 20th to 216-226-4010.

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Lakewood Senior Health Campus is a 150-bed Skilled Nursing Facility, 54-suite Assisted Living, and 60-suite Independent Living Continuum of Care Retirement Community.

Lakewood City Business News

City of Lakewood 2009 Budget Approved

The City of Lakewood has a budget for the 2009 fiscal year already. In previous years, it has been the custom to begin reviewing a budget during the first quarter of the new fiscal year. However, with the financial challenges facing the City, it's commendable that a balanced budget be adopted prior to the start of the New Year.

How does Lakewood's budget process work you ask? Good question.

The City's budget is a financial plan of projected expenditures within the constraints of anticipated revenues. The process begins with the Mayor and his administration. They work together to form a rough draft or first pass at a budget. The budget takes into account normal day-to-day operations of the City as well as the various priorities and initiatives desired to be undertaken in the coming year (think of this as needs and wants). The costs of the needs and wants are aggregated, matched with projected revenues and analyzed. It's not uncommon to go through several iterations of this process before a budget is formally proposed. Many times needs and wants are more than our income and difficult decisions need to be made.

Public budget hearings are then held where City Council members are able to ask questions related to the proposed budget directly to the Mayor and administration. Multiple budget hearings, each

lasting 3 to 4 hours, are conducted due to the detailed nature of discussions with each department. At the end of each hearing the public is invited to comment. After the completion of all hearings, Council members deliberate and ultimately vote on the proposed budget ordinance. By law, Lakewood's annual budget must be "balanced", meaning expenses cannot exceed revenues. Unlike the Federal budget, cities can't go year after year with deficit spending.

The City accounts for its various operations using fund accounting. Each fund has a separate and distinct purpose. If you think of Lakewood as a company, each fund is like a separate division with the company. There are many funds within Lakewood that are separately accounted for. A few of the larger funds include the General Fund, Police and Fire Pension, Water, Sewer, Bond Retirement and Capital Improvement. The General Fund is where the majority of everyday services normally associated with the City are tracked. Fire, Police, Refuse & Recycling, Parks & Public Property and Income Tax are

among the various services tracked in the General Fund.

There are many variables in play when forming the budget. Forecasting revenue is probably the most difficult part of the budgeting process, especially in the economic downturn that we're in now. Where does the City's revenue come from? In 2007, 49% of the revenues of the General Fund came from income taxes, 23% from property taxes and 28% from "other sources" (licenses, permits, inspections, intergovernmental transfers, etc). How many of you know what you will earn next year? Now multiply that by the number of taxpayers in Lakewood. Fortunately, when forecasting property tax revenue, the City gets help from County Auditor. Their office provides estimates of collections for the coming year.

Expenses are budgeted at a very detailed level. Some expenses are easy to figure out and some can only be educated guesses, usually based on prior actual amounts. Fixed or known payments such as rent or salaries can be figured fairly easily. The majority of City expenditures (over 80%) are salaries and benefits. When it comes to variable costs such as fuel, road salt or water main breaks, it becomes increasingly difficult to accurately project a year in advance. Multiply this by the number of variable expenses and it soon becomes a tall challenge! Imagine if every dollar you spend next year had to be accurately budgeted?

So, what's new in the 2009 budget? This is another good question. Facing continued financial pressures there are a number of revenue generating and cost saving initiatives that were considered throughout the budget process.

A tax amnesty program is anticipated to be rolled out in 2009. Tax amnesty programs are a one-time deal to encourage evaders or others who owe back taxes to pay up without incurring penalties or interest. The City estimates increased income tax revenue of \$113,000 over 2008 as a result. So, if you're a tax dodger, keep an eye out for this program. Lakewood needs you to come clean!

The housing crisis seems to be taking a toll on projected property tax revenues. Expected property tax collections are projected to decrease by \$340,000 from 2008. Not good news.

The elimination of back yard trash pickup proposed as part of the Mayor's Green Refuse Initiative is estimated to save between \$600,000 and \$800,000 per year for 2009 and beyond due to decreased number of personnel, lower equipment operating costs and reduced workers compensation claims. However, there is an initial capital outlay of \$2.5 million for 5 new automated collection trucks and receptacles for each residence. This initial outlay is partially offset by not purchasing a replacement

conventional collection truck and 4 new Cushman vehicles each year during 2008 and 2009. This net offset is about \$550,000. The existing fleet of Cushmans would be either sold or put to another use within the City.

Non-union employees will not see an increase in pay for 2009 and longevity compensation, suspended for 2008, could again be suspended for 2009. Established in 2002, longevity compensation is paid twice per year based on the length of service. Non-union employees with 5 or more years of continuous service are eligible for this compensation. This program could be replaced as the City moves forward with implementing a new performance appraisal program which will tie to a merit based compensation system.

Non-union employees will see health care coverage changes. The City is offering a 90% coverage plan as standard coverage. However, employees will have the option of paying the difference to upgrade to the 100% coverage plan. Previously, non-union employees were offered both plans as standard. The City negotiated with the paramedics union (LPA) during 2008 for this same coverage change and the AFSCME administrative union employees approved the change effective December of 2009.

Union employees will see a 2.5% increase in their pay for 2009 as well as other benefit increases under their current contracts. More than 80% of employees are under union agreements. All seven union contracts expire on December 31, 2009 and negotiations for the 2010-2012 years will begin in 2009. This should be an interesting negotiation process considering the economic downturn and how the non-union employees have sacrificed to help the City balance the budget.

There will be additional savings as the staff reductions in multiple City departments in 2008 will have a full year of savings realized in 2009. Also, the City will enjoy a full year of the recently implemented Law Enforcement Initiative with the addition of 4 full-time and 8 part-time police officers. This is expected to result in a \$500,000 increase over the 2008 budget.

Lastly, in 2008 the City began setting up reserve accounts which set aside money for specific purposes or unforeseen future events. Basically it's a savings account the City uses to plan for large known future expenses or can dip into if unexpected things happen. The goal is to build up the reserve accounts for purposes of separation payments, workers compensation liabilities, health care liabilities, economic development and budget stabilization. For 2009 the plan is to build the reserve accounts to \$250,000.

These are just few of the highlights from the 2009 budget. For additional details on how your money will be spent in 2009, visit the Finance Department section of the City's website (www.onelakewood.com).

by Charlie Page

Charlie Page is a member of the City of Lakewood Audit Committee. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Audit Committee or City of Lakewood.

HEALTH FAIR



***Free Health Screenings:**

Blood Sugar and Blood Oxygen (all day)
Bone Density (9:30-11:30 a.m.) & Blood Pressure (Noon-2:00)
compliments of Lakewood Hospital

***Speakers:**

10:00 a.m. Christine Nelson, Geriatric Clinical Nurse Specialist
SeniorCare Assessment Center, Lakewood Hospital
"Dementia: What You Need to Know"

2:00 p.m. "Holistic/Natural Pain Management"

***Exhibitors, Refreshments, Raffles & More!**
Wednesday, January 14, 2009 • 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Assisted Living Building •1381 Bunts Road, Lakewood
(Campus is on NE Corner of Bunts & Detroit.)

"SAVE ROOM FOR DESSERT" FUNDRAISER

First Annual to benefit Family Haven.
Local Girl Gallery • 16106 Detroit Avenueon
Valentine's Day-Saturday, February 14, at 7pm.
This event is open to the public.

The evening will be highlighted by an auction of hand painted dessert dishes designed by local artists and a dessert tasting of hand sculpted delicious works of art by local pastry chefs, restaurants and bakeries.

Working closely with Family Haven on this fundraiser is Lakewood is Art (LIA) a local organization dedicated to promoting artists, galleries and organizations interested in supporting a strong arts and culture environment in the City of Lakewood. LIA will be coordinating artist submissions for this event along with Gallery Owner, Linda Goik of Local Girl Gallery in Lakewood.

Lakewood Public Library Events

All Programs Are Free And Open To The Public

Coroner’s Corner:

An Inside Look at the Cuyahoga County Coroner’s Office
Tuesday, January 13 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium
Blythe Pavone and Noreen Kyle from the Cuyahoga County Coroner’s Office will highlight the various investigation duties of the Coroner’s Office and explain the types of cases that fall under their jurisdiction. A slideshow will illustrate scientific techniques regularly employed by the staff to determine causes of death.

Business Book Club

with Tim Zaun and Friends
Thursday, January 15 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Meeting Room
You Call the Shots:Succeed Your Way-and Live the Life You Want-with 19 Essential Secrets of Entrepreneurship by Cameron Johnson
Develop your entrepreneurial mindset, regardless of age, with this 23-year-old entrepreneur-extraordinaire.

Five Star Films:

Enchanted April
Saturday, January 17 at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium
(1992-U.K.) Directed by Mike Newell Rated PG-13
Starring: Alfred Molina, Polly Walker, Joan Plowright, Miranda Richardson
A charming film about four Englishwomen, circa 1920’s, two of whom are stuck in empty marriages. On impulse, they rent a villa and jaunt off to sunny Italy. The women are instantly entranced by the place, and each basks in the tranquility offered by gorgeous surroundings. Without warning, things change.

Meet The Gardening Author:

The Dahlia Primer by Eleanor Welling
Thursday, January 22 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium
According to Eleanor Welling, every flower garden should contain at least one dahlia. After sharing a brief history of the flower, the author and expert will guide you in selecting the right dahlia for your garden. Tips on growing and showing dahlias will round out the evening, followed by a drawing for free copies of the book.

Sunday With The Friends:

Cello-bration Quartet
Sunday, January 25 at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium
The mellow sounds of Cello-bration are just the thing to chase away the winter blues. Comprised of musicians from local community orchestras, this fun-loving quartet will play familiar songs in new arrangements. Are four cellos too many? No, there’s always room for cello.

Supercollider Book Group:

Fantasy, Science Fiction and More
Wednesday, January 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Meeting Room
Tonight’s book discussion is about Ender’s Game by Orson Scott Card
When humanity is threatened by an alien race, Ender Wiggin leaves his family at the age of six to enter Battle School. Mind games and mock battles provide strict discipline, but it’s his instinct and compassion that make him an unequalled genius.

LEARNING LAB CLASSES AT THE MAIN LIBRARY

Reservations for computer instruction classes begin the first of each month. To register, please stop in or call (216) 226-8275, ext. 127. We ask that all students come to class with a working knowledge of the mouse. If you need help, visit the Technology Center and ask the staff to set you up on our Mouse Training Program. It’s fun, easy and essential to becoming computer literate. You must have a Lakewood Public Library card in good standing the day of the class. No exceptions.

Email Basics

Saturday, January 24 at 11:00 a.m. in the Main Library Learning Lab
It’s not too late to join the e-mail revolution. Keep in touch with friends and family.

Sharp Student Academy:

For Middle and High School Students
Build critical thinking skills and sharpen your study habits with real world computer challenges, smart instruction and the resources of the Lakewood Public Library. To learn more, call (216) 226-8275 ext. 127.

Test Skills:

Science
January 21 at 7 p.m. in the Main Library Learning Lab

CHILDRENS & YOUTH SERVICES

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Created Equal:

Wednesdays, January 7 – February 25, from 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and
Saturday, February 28 from 7:00 p.m – 8:00 p.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room.
For students in fourth through eighth grade
Be a part of history! Explore and recreate struggles for freedom and equality in America. Participants will script their own plays and perform them during a special “Family Music and More” program. This program is made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. To register, please stop in or call (216) 226-8275.

The Zone:

January 20-22
Inauguration Nation
January 26-29
Stamp Mania For students in kindergarten through fifth grade
Get in the Zone and sign up for a week of themed activities! Visit www.lakewoodpubliclibrary.com/youth for the list of fun and exciting programs just for kids. To register, please stop in; call Main Library at (216) 226-8275, ext. 140 or Madison Branch (216) 228-7428.

Homeworker:

Children’s and Youth Services Department at Main Library
For students in kindergarten through eighth grade
Tuesday, September 2, 2008 - Thursday, May 21, 2009
Need a little help with your homework or just want a cool place to work? Come to the new Homework Room in the Children’s and Youth Services Department at Main Library for help and resources.

Creation Station:

Children’s and Youth Services Department at Main Library and Madison Branch
Fridays, September 5 – May 22 at 4:00 p.m.
For students in kindergarten through fifth grade
Join us for crafts each and every Friday after school. There is no need to register; however, to schedule groups, please call Main Library (216) 226-8275, ext. 140 or Madison Branch (216) 228-7428.

CLUB LIFE:
Thursdays, September 11 – May 21 at 4:00 p.m.
For students sixth through eighth grade
Make a difference and join the club. Learn new skills or hone those you already have as you participate in projects designed to help your community. For more information, visit www.lakewoodpubliclibrary.com/youth. To register, please stop in or call (216) 226-8275, ext. 140.
Main Library Multipurpose Room

Family Weekend Wonders

Main Library: Friday: 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m., 4:00p.m.
Sunday: 2:00 p.m.
Madison Branch: Friday 10:30 a.m., Saturday 11:30 a.m., Sunday 3:00 p.m.
January 23, 24, 25: Hoot-ananny
January 30, 31: Abracadabra
February 1: Abracadabra
Make the Library a part of your family weekend time with programs featuring stories, activities, music and crafts. Our staff will provide materials and ideas for families wishing to continue reading and storytelling at home. The programs are free and there is no need to register in advance.

Family Music & More:

Jungle Safari
Main Library Multipurpose Room at 7:00 p.m. For the whole family
Saturday, January 24
Have a roaring good time as Katie Bee and Roger Dodger perform puppetry, storytelling, jungle balloon animals, music, magic and much more!

Spend a Saturday evening at the Library and enjoy programs featuring musicians and other talented performers. Performers are subject to change. Seating is limited. Doors open fifteen minutes prior to the performance.

Lakewood Sports

Rangers fall in Battle of Lakewood

by Todd Shapiro

The Lakewood Rangers boys' basketball team faced two of the top high school basketball programs in the Cleveland area mid December, losing a pair of games to Garfield Heights, 77-59 and St. Edward 54-45.

On December 13th, the Rangers traveled down Detroit Ave. to for their annual battle with the cross-town rivals.

St. Edward jumped out to an early 16-8 lead but Lakewood battled back to make the score 27-22. Devon Ross scored 10, of his game-high 19 points, in the first half.

Lakewood connected on just eight field goals in the first half.

"We played with a lot of reckless abandon and hustle out there, but we need to knock down our jumpers," Lakewood coach Phil Argento said.

The Rangers came out in the second half firing from long range. All four of Lakewood's third period field goals came from behind the three-point arc. Senior Brian Evans nailed a pair of 3-points, Dan Shannon and Ross also added 3-pointers as Lakewood trimmed the deficit to one point, 38-37 at the end of the third.

Lakewood, who fell to 2-3 with the loss, took their only lead of the game on



Lakewood senior guard Brian Evans goes up for a layup during the first quarter of play.

a Brian Evans drive to the basket early in the fourth period to make the score 39-38. Ross added a jump shot to make the score 41-38 with 6:50 remaining in the game.

The Eagles answered the Lakewood run with a 17-4 run to close the game.

"I guess its part of the process," Argento said. "It was a hard fought game. At times tonight we played well. But when guys get tired they make hurried decisions."

St. Edward struggled from the free throw line all night, making just 17-of-26 from the charity. But the Eagles were 6-of-6 from the line in the final two minutes, including 4-of-4 by Jor'gio Alexander Lacey, who led St. Edward with 14 points.

St. Edward improved its record to 3-2. The Eagles have a tough stretch of games over the next two weeks traveling to Strongsville and Benedictine, as well as playing in the Erie (Pa.) McDowell tournament before returning home to host Toledo St. John on January 3.

Devon Ross led the Rangers in a Friday loss to Garfield Heights with 16 points, junior Jay Toole also scored eight points, including a pair of 3-pointers.



Senior forward Dan Shannon goes up for a layup against a Brunswick High School defender. The Rangers fell to the Devils in double-overtime.



Senior guard Devin Ross pushes the ball up the court as Lakewood threatens to take back the lead during the third quarter.

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Lakewood Schools

West Shore Health Careers Technology Students Give to Seniors

by Rosemary Wagoner

Students in the Health Careers Technology class, a program of the West Shore Career and Technical District (Lakewood, Bay Village, Rocky River and Westlake) chose to participate in Lakewood Hospital's "Adopt A Senior" Giving Tree project. Students worked together in groups of four to select a tree ornament, purchase the requested items and make a card for the senior citizen they "adopted." The class adopted a total of nine seniors and purchased items such as pajamas, blankets, puzzles and gift cards.

They noticed the tree in the hospital lobby and requested to participate as a class because they wanted to "give back to the community" during this season of giving. We are all very proud of their initiative and touched by their generosity.



No School Operating Levy in the 2008-09 School Year

by Rosemary Wagoner

The Board of Education is unanimous – the Lakewood City School District will continue to operate within their current income for yet another year. Lakewood residents will not be asked to vote on a school levy in the 2008-09 school year.

"Our residents are feeling the impact of very difficult economic times. Families have had to tighten their belts. We truly appreciate the past support we've received from our community. It is making a positive impact on the education of our students. At the same time, we believe now is not the time to ask our residents for additional support. Instead, the schools must continue to look for ways to contain costs and save money," said W. Charles Geiger III, President of the School Board.

Vice President Edward Favre concurred, "Now is not the time for the District to ask the citizens to take on any additional tax burden. We must

continue to look for every efficiency and reduce costs where ever we can."

Board Member Linda Beebe stated, "We are looking to preserve and improve academic programming while at the same time save money. We are definitely committed to preserving academic programming."

"As a district, we will continue to hold down spending whenever possible and will continue to participate in utility and health insurance co-ops. We are already realizing benefits from the building program by not spending dollars to maintain the aging buildings that were replaced or renovated. Through proactive staffing decisions, we continue to pursue operational efficiencies by not filling some vacancies. In addition, with the cooperation of our employee unions, the District has negotiated provisions to help control health care costs. We will continue to manage our budget in order to make maximum use of the resources the

community has made available to us during these difficult economic times," said Superintendent Dr. David Estrop.

Board Member Betsy Shaughnessy noted the importance of maintaining a consistent approach to fiscal management, "The Board does not want to ignore the difficult economic environment that exists and will continue to make incremental adjustments so that in the future it does not become necessary to make deep cuts."

"The Board of Education and administration understand these are difficult times. Working together with staff members, parents, and commu-

nity members, we are determined to stretch our dollars for another year, beyond the three years promised at the time of our last levy, for a total of eight years. This is more than twice as long as what was promised," said Treasurer Richard Berdine.

Board Member Matthew John Markling added, "The Board will continue to work closely with the Treasurer and the Superintendent to monitor spending and advocate for Lakewood at the state and federal levels. We do take our financial responsibilities and all of our responsibilities for the Lakewood Schools very seriously."

Phase 3 Begins:

Board Seeks Citizens for Steering Committee

On behalf of the Lakewood Board of Education, President Edward Favre announced on Monday, January 5, 2009, that the Board of Education will be appointing a Phase 3 Steering Committee to provide advice to the Board on a number of Phase 3 Master Facilities Plan issues. These issues range from the number of schools to be operated by the District to the funding of the balance of the facilities improvement program. Favre invited any resident of Lakewood or staff member of the Lakewood City School District to participate in this Committee. Interested parties are asked to provide their name, mailing address, phone number and email address to the Superintendent's office as soon as possible using any one of the methods below. If interested persons have children in the school district, it would be helpful to know the schools their children attend as the Board will be trying to achieve a representative balance in the Committee.

Email: david.estrop@lakewood.k12.oh.us

Office Phone: 216-529-4092

Mailing Address: Dr. David C. Estrop, Superintendent

Lakewood City School District
1470 Warren Road, Lakewood, Ohio 44107

It is anticipated that the Phase 3 Steering Committee will present its report to the Board in October of 2009. Favre said, "This is the last leg of the journey to complete the Facilities Master Plan that was begun in 2003 and has resulted in the construction or remodeling of six schools to date. This is very important work and I am hoping many in our community will again give their time and energy to assist us."

For more information, contact:

Superintendent David C. Estrop at 216-529-4092.

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MAMA's Madison Ave. Highlights

Carol Lynn's Salon Success

by Thealexa Becker

Nestled amidst the eclectic shops on Madison Avenue is a little salon whose comely appearance stands as a testament to the success story of its owner, Carol Lynn Congeni.

The tale of how Carol Lynn's Salon Plus became a profitable business worthy of admiration reads like the classic American Dream. Congeni, a lifetime hair stylist, after spending years on commission in other salons, took out a small business loan from the city of Lakewood, and with \$10,000, turned what was a dank, dark and empty store front into a blooming salon of her own.

"This is my first very own salon," said Congeni. "I rented chairs from other places for 12 years. I've been open a little over a year, and I've had over 130 brand new people, which is more new people than any location I've ever been."

Trusting in the loan offered to spruce up Lakewood store fronts so much, Congeni used her own money to buy the materials she needed to open the salon.

"I needed to buy everything, the only thing I had was scissors," she said amusedly. "I've never spent \$10,000 at one time, one outing even. Everything is mine now."

Yet Congeni also credits her location to the flourishing of her business. While previous salons that she worked in were "nowhere", at her current location there is already traffic. Nearby businesses support one another by trading literature and her clientele is loyal.

"Location, location, location," said Congeni. "It's warm and inviting, and there are a number of reasons that people would choose it. Madison is a cozy little spot."

Congenit has worked in the hair styling industry since taking the once offered cosmetology program 20 years ago at Lakewood High School. Growing up on the west side, her own hair was always left short and unattractive because stylists did not know how to manage ethnic and bi-racial hair.

"I met a lady on the bus who was a hair stylist," Congeni said about her first interest in the business. "She gave my parents her business cards. I saw this ability to look and feel good and it triggered me to do hair."

At Carol Lynn's Salon Plus, Congeni offers not only expert styling and coloring, but also manicures, pedicures, and spa treatments that include body waxing and facials. She enjoys coloring hair, asserting that she is quite good at doing highlights and corrective color as well as cutting hair (especially men's hair) and formal up-do's.

As a Lakewood Alumni with two boys in the schools, Congeni also enjoys giving back to



her community. The foremost example is her Honor Roll Program for students at Harding, Garfield, and LHS. Through this program, students who make Honor Roll are given a coupon for a free haircut once per quarter. Teachers are also given a continual \$10 off a haircut which amounts to \$120 worth of savings.

"It's my way of giving back to the community," Congeni said. "I received a great education from my teachers. I redeemed 40 from Harding. But some didn't use it because they thought it must be a bad place if they are gonna do it for free."

Being involved in Lakewood has also allowed Congeni to be involved in activities outside of her salon. For example, she was the stylist that shaved the heads of the LHS teachers during their extensive fundraising campaign two years ago. She is also a member of Rotary as well as LHS' RAD (Race and Diversity). She was a guest speaker at both RAD as well as the Career Connections class for LHS Freshman. Harrison Elementary students heard a presentation from Congeni on her success as a bi-racial business woman in the city of Lakewood.

"They loved me," she said adding how exciting it was to show them her website on the Smart Board.

Congenit hopes to expand by bringing in independent contractors to work at her empty stations. She already has one fellow stylist, Madeline, who at 75, has been cutting hair for over 50 years. But Congeni noted that it seemed to be proving difficult to bring in additional stylists despite her and other salon's best efforts at advertising.

"It seems to be hard to find contractors," she said. "To work here,

you need to be seasoned or have clientele, or you need to be a go-getter to market yourself."

As the owner, Congeni pays a lease, whereas independent contractors would pay her rent and pay for their own insurance. They are not guaranteed clients as they would be with a Best Cuts or Great Clips, but

Congenit insisted that a job at her salon was a better alternative.

"The advantage is that there is better experience," she said. "It's a nicer environment. To be your own boss is a good thing."

Having taught herself all of the business skills necessary to survive as a business owner, Congeni would be willing to help any independent contractor she hires to find clients and market themselves. Congeni attributes her own substantial client base to her personality.

"I'm a people person," she said. "I like to talk a lot. I've been doing this job for over 20 years and it is never boring. I'm as excited as day one and I make a good living. I'm a good listener as well as a conversationalist. A lot of people just need to vent."

Minding the current troubled economy, Congeni keeps her prices fair and has been keeping her salon "green", making sure that they do not damage anything. This also, she said, helps with the troubled economy, because customers, as well as she, need to save money anyway they can. Just another way of trying to give back.

"I'm celebrating a very successful year, and I thank Lakewood."

Carol Lynn's Salon Plus can be found at 15410 Madison Avenue.

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Live Well Lakewood

Meet Lakewood's Biggest Loser!

by Paula Reed

I met Lisa Griffis in 2001 when she enlisted my help in buying a house. We talked a couple of times on the phone before we met in person, so I had formed a mental picture of her from her voice. I was hoping my surprise didn't show when she walked in to the office. My first thought was, "She has such a pretty face." My second thought was, "Oh no—there are arms on the chairs in the conference room. How embarrassing will it be if she doesn't fit?!" Then I realized she had to deal with situations like that on a daily basis and somehow she must have managed to adapt.

During the time we worked together I gained admiration for Lisa's dry, self-deprecating wit, her sharp intelligence and her kind heart. The house she bought happened to be directly behind my house, making us back-door neighbors. However, between our busy schedules and the 6' wooden fence separating our yards we didn't see much of each other, though we talked on the phone periodically, mostly when Lisa had a house-related question.

In 2005 Lisa called to invite me to a craft show at her house and mentioned that she had lost 75 pounds. I went to the event, looking forward to seeing the change in Lisa with that huge weight loss. To my surprise, although she looked a little different, she was remained very overweight—she probably still carried about 265 lbs. on her 5'2" frame.

The next time I saw Lisa was more than a year later in my front yard as she walked by with her dog. She called a cheery hello and headed up the driveway, and I returned her greeting while thinking frantically, "She looks vaguely familiar—who the heck is she?" What a shock to realize it was Lisa—then strikingly different at about 175 lbs.

It wasn't until October 2008 when Lisa and I started working together on Live Well Lakewood, a new initiative that promotes healthy living in Lakewood, that I had the nerve to ask her how she got to 340 lbs., and what life is like when you're "morbidly obese." But I needn't have worried about offending her with my questions—Lisa happily shares her story in the hopes it will help someone else who is struggling to get control over their body:

Lisa was born at 9 lbs. 4 oz., so she was never small! She grew up in a family of hearty eaters whose gatherings centered on food and ignored exercise. Dinner table discussions seldom reflected the harsh criticism she endured for being the largest girl in her class. In high school she took up photography and journalism as a way to show that the fat girl had talent under the excess pounds. At Ohio University, where she majored in photojournalism, Lisa was able to shed a few pounds by walking to classes and swimming.

Lisa lived the next 20 years as a nomadic journalist, chasing better jobs across the country, and began binge eating to compensate for the pressure and loneliness that comes with moving

BEFORE



to a new job and city. By age forty the combination of getting older and carrying around twice a normal person's weight was beginning to slow Lisa's pace in life. She stopped traveling due to the embarrassment of having flight attendants chase her down the aisle brandishing a seatbelt extender. She tried and failed many times to lose weight, and had given up doing anything about her weight problem except for overeating to mask the pain of not being able to control her weight. She had let food become too important—a comfort for bad days and lonely nights, situations that were created partly because of her weight. Her weight was defining her lot in life.

A trip to the doctor for any reason

triggered a lecture about her weight, and the label morbidly (Webster's definition: diseased; gruesome; horrible) obese. When the scales at the doctor's office hit 340 pounds she heard a chorus of medical professionals telling her that she needed to seriously consider gastric bypass surgery. She just continued to ignore their pleas to do something before it was too late.

What Lisa calls her "aha moment" came after a trip to Washington where she connected with old friends. After dinner one night they snapped a photo that forever changed her life. When the picture arrived at her home she was delighted to see her old friends hamming it up for the camera but was

AFTER



awestruck that she seemed to be the stranger in the picture. It was finally time to do something.

So, she grabbed the Suzanne Somers book, "Eat, Cheat and Melt the Fat Away" off the bookshelf containing the myriad of diet books she had accumulated over the years and actually read it. It was the first of many books she read and took to heart as she tried to break her lifelong habits of excessive eating and virtually no exercise. Lisa didn't tell her friends that she was embarking on a life-changing mission. She feared they wouldn't believe her—she had failed too many times before. As her own trainer and nutritionist, she became more aware of what she was putting in her mouth, portion sizes, and how much she would need to move to work off the extra pounds. Within a year she was down 70 pounds and for the first time in her life believed that she could make her dream of becoming a normal-sized person come true. To date, Lisa has lost 190 pounds and burned more than 660,000 calories to accomplish that feat, proving that healthy eating and exercise do work.

Her friends and colleagues began to cheer her on, like fans at a marathon race. She was encouraged by their support, even when a consistent "compliment" was that they didn't recognize her from behind, leading her to assume her former backside was quite memorable.

Lisa became totally committed to her new routine. With fewer pounds on her petite frame she was able to increase her workouts and began to enjoy walking the lovely streets of Lakewood. She bought exercise equipment for her basement; added strength training, biking, pilates, and swimming at Foster Pool. She started cooking for the entire week on weekends to make sure she ate balanced meals every day. She took her favorite recipes and began to retool them to include more vegetables, lean meat and less fat.

Within two-and-a-half years of starting her lofty goal of losing 200 pounds, Lisa has lost more than half of her former self. On October 8th, I was on the edge of my seat waiting to see Lisa appear on the Today Show. She looked fantastic in hot pink as she was inducted into the Joy Fit Club, led by Today Show nutritionist Joy Bauer, for people who have lost 100+ pounds. Because of Lisa, Joy Bauer will be a featured speaker at the Live Well Lakewood free health fair at Garfield School on January 24th. Lisa plans to achieve her ultimate 200 pound weight-loss goal by that date.

Lisa's triumph last week was buying a pair of size-8 jeans at Ann Taylor Loft. Shopping for clothes is now a treat, not a chore. She has begun traveling again and dating, and now knows that anything is possible. She is writing a book about her experiences; has a website (lisagriffis.com) and hopes to coach other people to help them achieve their weight-loss goals and live healthier lives.

If you ask Lisa how she did it, she'll tell you: "It's simple: Put down your fork and move your butt."

Lakewood Observer

Lakewood Hospital Creates Employee Food Pantry

by Anne Kuenzel

Lakewood Hospital has organized and stocked an Employee Food Pantry to assist its employees facing an immediate, unforeseen need. Any Lakewood Hospital employee or volunteer who has a need is able to take advantage of the non-perishable items in the food pantry. The Food Pantry, which opened on Monday, December 22, began from a suggestion of a few employees. Jack Gustin, president of Lakewood Hospital, gave his full support, as this was an easy way to help employees who need some assistance in providing food for their families during these difficult times. “Oftentimes an employee’s personal circumstances can change in an instant, says Gustin. “I thought this was a simple we could come together to provide a resource to help those employees in need.”

Carolyn Seelbach, member of Lakewood Hospital’s Children’s Board, presented Gustin with a \$1,000 check from the Board to help stock the shelves with food items. “We love what you are doing and when we do things like this, that help each other, there’s truly nothing more important,” said Seelbach during the presentation. Additional support to stock the pantry shelves has come from employees donating their Giant Eagle gift cards, which were a gift from the hospital administration, and also the coins collected from the hospital fountains.

“During these difficult economic times, it’s never been more important to continue to try different ways to reach out and help. I am very proud of the work our staff does every day and am very thankful for their continued devotion to helping our patients and each other”, concludes Gustin.



Jack Gustin, President of Lakewood Hospital, accepts the check for the Employee Food Pantry from Carolyn Seelbach, member of Lakewood Hospital Children’s Board.



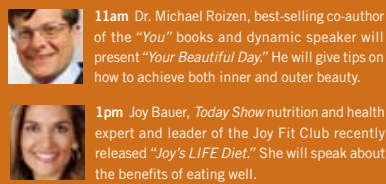
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Speakers and Book Signings



The schedule of events for the day:
9:00–3:00 Health Fair. Workout demonstrations all day.
9:00–11:00 Health Screenings—first come, first served
11:00–12:30 Dr. Roizen speaks
12:30–1:30 Dr. Roizen book signing
1:00–2:00 Joy Bauer speaks
2:00–3:00 Joy Bauer book signing
Nature’s Bin will be selling healthy foods and Phoenix will be on hand with coffee. Throughout the day, browse displays by local merchants who have products or services that contribute to living well. They will be offering information and merchandise for sale.

Live Well Lakewood

continued from page 1

Joy is the Today Show’s nutritionist, author of the newly-released Joy’s LIFE Diet and leader of the Joy Fit Club for people who have lost 100+ pounds. Introducing Joy will be Lakewood’s own Lisa Griffis, who was inducted into the Joy Fit Club in October, having lost 190 pounds through healthy eating and exercise. Following their respective talks, Dr. Roizen and Joy Bauer will be signing their books. Don’t have the books? Don’t worry—Border’s will be on hand to sell them and will donate 10% of the proceeds to Live Well Lakewood to help fund future healthy living events.

Live Well Lakewood will offer more than words of encouragement—it will offer support for those wishing to achieve a healthier lifestyle. On the drawing board is a website that will allow Lakewoodites to track their activities and nutrition; obtain walking

tours and map out their own walking routes; communicate with virtual or actual walking partners; serve as a reference for various walks/runs/biking events throughout the area, and determine which local restaurants offer healthy food choices.

Live Well Lakewood plans to provide quarterly events to foster healthy, active living, and hopes to build on Lakewood’s already strong sense of community by encouraging residents to take advantage of our walkable city—to patronize local shops, restaurants and services, to visit our award-winning library and to reconnect with neighbors and friends.

Mark your calendar for July 18th, when Live Well Lakewood will sponsor Walk & Roll. A great experience for all who attended in 2008, its inaugural year, this exciting event will be even more fun in 2009!



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Lakewood LECPTA

LECPTA Presents: author of “Return of the Party of Nine”
Jennifer Hanselman

by Bill Carson

Parenting is always a challenge, but imagine the challenges involved with raising sextuplets. Join Lakewood Early Childhood PTA for an evening with Jennifer Hanselman, mother of Ohio’s first sextuplets and author of Return of the Party of Nine: Life with Sextuplets + One.

The Hanselman sextuplets are back and wilder than ever in this second collection of stories about life with Ohio’s famous six-pack! Laugh along with mom Jennifer as she shares stories of six energetic preschoolers who keep their parents and big brother hopping with such adventures as:

- Potty training for the whole pack
- Diving into preschool
- Tackling the first family road trip
- Embracing an autism diagnosis
- Knocking out front teeth
- Wishing for a monkey

You’ll be amazed and inspired by what it takes to make it through each day in a house where life is never boring,

rarely quiet and frequently hilarious!

Jennifer Hanselman is the mother of Ohio’s first set of sextuplets and their energetic big brother. She is married to Keith, her college sweetheart, and lives in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. This is her second book about her unusual family, which was written in 15-minute intervals between potty accidents and playroom fights. She has been changing diapers for more than seven years and dreams of the day she can skip the diaper aisle for good.

Jennifer will have her books on hand for purchase for those of you who want to read more about this fascinating family. Her first book, Party of Nine, is \$14.95 plus tax. The new one, Return of the Party of Nine, is \$16.95 plus tax.

As with all LECPTA programs, this presentation is free and open to the public. This great program will take place on January 26th at 7:45 pm in Harding Middle School’s cafetorium, located at 16601 Madison (the corner of Wagar and Madison)

LECPTA Open House Offers
Winter Escape for Families

by Delaney Gilliland

The winter doldrums in Cleveland usually begin to set in around January. If your kids are anything like my usually happy and easily entertained 2-1/2 year old son, this is also the time they begin to bounce off the walls at home. The play dough has lost its luster and the toys from the Holidays are already beginning to seem old hat. Luckily, the Lakewood Early Childhood PTA has an event that will help exhaust some of that stored up winter energy.

Bounce Off The Walls at an Open House with LECPTA on January 23rd from 6:30 pm-8:00 pm! Families of children 6 years and under are invited to take part in this free evening of parachutes, tunnels and plenty of bouncy, rolling balls. The kids are sure to have a blast and parents might even work in some grown-up conversation with friends, old and new.

LECPTA will offer a special Open House membership rate for families interested in joining while attending the event. Plus, enter to win a gift certificate to one of Lakewood’s great local businesses. The Open House will be held at Harrison Elementary School, 2080 Quail Street, Lakewood, Ohio on January 23rd from 6:30pm-8:00pm. For more information about LECPTA or this event please visit www.lecpta.com.

LECPTA is a non-profit, volunteer organization that is part of the local, state of Ohio, and national Parent Teacher’s Associations (PTAs). We strive to promote the welfare of children and families in our community. Membership is open to anyone in Lakewood or the surrounding communities with an interest in programs for children from birth through six years of age.

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Lakewood Cares - Religion



Local Youth Spend 5th Year Out in Cold

by Dan Slife

Starting Saturday afternoon, January 24th, dozens of high school kids from the Lakewood area will once again take to the cold hard streets in order to bring awareness to plight of the homeless in North East Ohio. The youth of Lakewood Congregational Church along with Pilgrim Saint Paul Lutheran Church will be spending the night

outside in nothing more than the box homes they create. Now in it's fifth year, the Homeless Awareness Sleepout aims at collecting donations in the form of cash, change, clothing, blankets, shoes, coats, toiletries and non-perishable food items. If you wish to help, donations will be collected curbside at either location (Detroit Road at West Clifton or Detroit Road at Manor Park).

Lakewood Lutheran School Hosts Open House and Offers \$2000 Scholarship

by Luanne Bole-Becker

Lakewood Lutheran School (LLS) is proud to be part of the network of Lutheran schools sponsoring a joint open house and scholarship opportunity this month.

On Sunday, January 25, LLS will join 14 other Lutheran schools within the tri-county area as they all open their doors to prospective families from 1:00 – 4:00 pm. They'll also offer a chance to receive a \$2,000 scholarship, usable in grades K-12 at any of the participating schools for the 2009-2010 school year. In all, scholarships will be awarded to two new students (those not currently attending a Lutheran school within the area), chosen from the valid applications received. Official scholarship rules and application forms are available on the website (www.jesus4students.com), and at all schools during the open house.

All of the Lutheran schools are dedicated to help shape students into

Christ-centered, well-educated, and productive citizens and disciples. It's a partnership with families and churches that, together, serve a vast range of communities, from Avon to Euclid, Brunswick to Cuyahoga Falls, and many areas between and beyond. Lakewood Lutheran School serves families with children in grades preK through 8 from Lakewood, Cleveland, and neighboring cities. Students of all faiths attend.

"A Christian education offers everything our child needs to succeed," notes Jamie, a Cleveland parent. Susan, from South Euclid, agrees: "My child is getting a solid spiritual foundation AND an academic boost!"

For more information, visit the schools' website at www.Jesus4Students.com, or call

1-888-7-EQUIP-U. With the open house on January 25 and this scholarship opportunity, there's no better time to learn more about a Lutheran school near you!

Ministerial Musings:

"In the beginning..."



by John
Tamilio III

Once I accepted the call to be the new Senior Pastor of the historic Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ in Tremont (a Just Peace and an Open and Affirming congregation), my wife and I began looking for communities in which we would raise our three children. It did not take us long to select Lakewood.

Many issues weighed heavily into our decision. Most importantly: the quality of the public schools and the sense of community in which we were raised. Susan and I were reared in Beverly, Massachusetts - a city twenty minutes north of Boston. Having spent the last five years in Overland Park, Kansas (a suburb of Kansas City, Missouri), we were longing for a town populated with mom-and-pop stores, yet rich with diversity - as opposed to the white-bred, cookie-cut, franchised suburbia from which we emigrated.

Once we settled into our west-side home, one of my parishioners, friend, and Lakewood pillar Bill Grulich intro-

duced me to Jim O'Bryan and I was given this opportunity: to be the new religion columnist for The Observer.

So here is what you can expect from me every other week: a column of spiritual depth, but not rooted in the sort of exclusivism that popular culture has come to associate with Christianity due, mainly, to a growing fundamentalism that seeks to eradicate the line between church and state by legislating its beliefs; a bi-weekly article informed by the best theological scholarship, though not so erudite that it is inaccessible to the average lay person; a forum that merges the practical and the theoretical and remains connected to issues that concern residents of Lakewood; a piece that ultimately seeks to engage the mind and touch the heart.

If there are any topics that you would like to see me address in this column — issues that are important to you and your spiritual formation — then please send me an e-mail: johnt@pilgrimalive.org. Each submission will be prayerfully considered, whether or not it is tackled. One rule, though — no communiqués bashing my other religion, The Boston Red Sox...that includes you, Charlie Bango. Otherwise, we should become old friends pretty quickly.



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Lakewood Observer



Lakeland Lights Up

by Jian Tropf

Lakeland Avenue Block Club held its first Lakeland Lights celebration this year. Neighbors illuminated and decorated their homes to celebrate the Winter Solstice, Christmas, Chanukah, New Year, Kwanza, or just to chase away the winter darkness. Prizes were awarded in the categories of Winter Wonderland, Best Traditional Decoration, and Most Humorous. All decorators were also entered into a drawing for a Participation Prize.

Prizes and in-kind donations were generously provided by Aladdin's, Melt Bar & Grilled, Dewey's Pizza and Inventus. Thanks also to The Merry Arts and Roman Fountain Pizza for our Block Club Holiday Party where the prizes were awarded. The Lakeland Avenue Block Club is co-chaired by Mara Manke and Carol Mason. Lakeland Lights was co-ordinated by Joan Tropf and Kim Langley.

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Holiday Lights Observed

Holiday Snap

Lakewood residents love decorating their homes and businesses for the holidays. Along with bight glittery holiday lights, this year we are seeing a tremendous increase of inflatable inhabitants. This home on Carabel Avenue is just one of the many Lakewood homes who have taken on the task of the care and 'feeding' of these seasonal residents. Feeding entails just a bit of electricity to maintain an air supply.

Kim Yanoshik is a Lakewood resident who often wanders around town with a camera slung around her neck snapping photographs of whatever strikes her fancy. In June 2008, Kim joined a loose group of photographers around the world who post a photo a day of the town where they live as part of City Daily Photo (citydailyphoto.com). Each day Kim posts a photo taken in Lakewood on lakewooddailysnap.blogspot.com of the people, places, and things of Lakewood which capture her eye. Recently, the Lakewood Observer approached Kim and asked her if she would share her quirky eye with the readers of our paper. You can catch Kim's Lakewood Daily Snaps @ <http://lakewooddailysnap.blogspot.com/>





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Lakewood Perspective

Pokemon Battles the Big Three

When I was growing up, I loved to play games. When the weather was nice, we played stickball, football and basketball, and when it wasn't we played every board game available. The game didn't matter, it was more about the spirit of friendly competition that flowed through myself and my friends.

While I'm a little embarrassed to admit that the new era of video games has kind of left me in the dust, I'm not ashamed to admit that the nature of my love of games has not faded one bit. Currently, my favorite is a game I learned to play only to spend more time with my son. Yes, I play Pokemon. And no, I don't just know the rules, I've actually taken the time to learn the different cards and recognize the different strategies.

At first I was simply trying to help my son at a game he enjoyed, but, truth be told, the game really grew on me. The game itself is a simple routine of attack and defend, but, in my opinion, the real reason for its popularity is due to the creative balance inherent in its design. While some cards are definitely stronger than others, a player's success is not completely dependent on what cards he has, but also how he plays them. Players become more successful the faster they learn to limit their own weaknesses while exploiting their strengths. And here's the best part. After every game you play, it becomes very obvious as to what those strengths and weaknesses are.

I've played a lot of different games in my time. And I've never before come across a game where learning the reason for your failure is so readily understandable and correcting it so easily undertaken. Every time my son loses a match, I ask him: "Do you know why you lost?" And almost without fail, he can answer "yes". And with that knowledge, it's easy for him to correct his strategy or alter his deck accordingly. With very little effort, every loss only makes him a stronger player.

But the loss is very much a critical part of the learning experience. Without losing, it's harder to know where you are truly vulnerable. When he struggles, but still manages to scrape out a victory, he's much less likely to evaluate his performance, and even less likely to make any real changes to his strategy or deck structure. And especially in a game where new cards are coming out all the time, sometimes the fastest way to get beat is to make no changes at all.

But, if you keep your ego in check and are willing to humble yourself every once and a while you can become a very strong player who wins often and rebounds from loss quickly. Even the best players cannot win all the time, but only the best players learn every time. In Pokemon, winning isn't everything, and losing isn't a bad thing. But in all my years of playing games, I've usually found this to be the case.

So why is losing so feared in

other aspects of life? Over the past few months, America has been living under the constant threat of one failing industry after another. The housing, banking, and auto industries all seem to be seconds away from catastrophic collapse. A loss, any of which we're told, could send our economy into a tailspin.

While I'm not dismissing the subsequent hardship that would blanket any community that experiences the close of factories or loss of jobs, I'm confused as to exactly when our social and economic system became so brittle that it couldn't tolerate the inevitability of market change. And I'm even more uncertain as to how we expect to combat that change by throwing more money into doing things the same way.

I don't recall anyone lamenting the loss of the typewriter industry. And I don't remember reading about our government extending subsidies to keep the pony express from going under after the incorporation of the telegraph and telephone. If a restaurant goes out of business, there is usually a

by Bret Callentine

reason; the food might be over priced, the service might be bad or the location might cost too much to rent. Needless to say, if the owner doesn't change his strategy and correct the shortcoming, it would be foolish to think the business would turn around.

Well, if Detroit can't make money selling cars using its existing business model, then something needs to change. But by spending billions of tax dollars on government assistance, I'm afraid it will be just like watching my son squeak out a victory at Pokemon. I don't want Ford or Chrysler to fail, but I think as a society we need one of them to fail, to instill in the others a sense of the true magnitude of their responsibility.

For too long, those who controlled these massive industrial engines have seemed almost complacent in only scraping out a small profit. The company struggles, yet they still manage to win themselves a paycheck, so they see only the net win and are generally satisfied. But since when is the goal of a business simply to stay in business?

You can't make it to the NHL if you measure success only by not falling down on the ice.

When I watched the testimony of the Big Three Auto makers in Washington, I saw concern, but not passion. I saw the faces of men that looked more than smart enough to run a company, but nowhere near strong enough to build a company. And that is essentially the task before them. Where was the competitive spirit that would have admitted that their company will do better if their competition closes its doors? What I needed to see was the football coach that could inspire his team to fight for prosperity.

This country is not devoid of the kind of hard working leadership necessary to pull entire industries out of turmoil, I see it frequently in the faces of the kids at the Pokemon tournaments, and I see it in the enthusiasm of the prolific small business owners throughout our city. It lives in the heart of everyone that remembers the games of their youth, where you cannot achieve victory without the potential for defeat, and a loss is only a failure if you never play the game again.

Are You Ready to "Walk+Roll" in 2009?

by Lois Moss

Start making plans to attend or have your organization provide a program for Walk+Roll Lakewood scheduled for Saturday, July 18. In its fourth year of programming and for its second year in Lakewood, Walk+Roll™ will be opening streets to people by temporarily closing streets to cars. We are currently sending grant proposals and sponsorship packages and early indications are good that the program will continue. Walk+Roll, the City of Lakewood, LakewoodAlive, Live Well Lakewood, Lakewood Hospital, the Lakewood Recreation Department, the YMCA of Greater Cleveland and the Beck Center for the Arts are just some of organizations currently collaborating on this free community-wide event in Lakewood. All organizations and businesses - big and small - are encouraged to participate with programming highlighting health, nutrition, physical fitness and green living.

Walk+Roll Lakewood will be the first event kicking off over two weeks of programming aimed at improving our air quality. Getting out of cars for short trips makes northern Ohio cleaner, saves money, helps you live healthier, makes neighborhoods safer and builds community.

July 18-31 is also the "Commuter Challenge" hosted by the Northern Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA) which works to make our air

cleaner by reducing ozone levels, vehicle emissions and carbon waste. During the Commuter Challenge, look for contests and promotions to encourage carpooling and public transportation as well as bicycling and walking.

Look for additional Walk+Roll information at the "Live Well Lakewood FREE Health Fair" on January 24, 2009, from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Garfield

Middle School.

Future articles will detail how your organization can participate in Walk+Roll Lakewood or you can register for e-mail updates at www.walkroll.com. A 3-minute video of 2008's Walk+Roll Lakewood will show you how fun Walk+Roll was and remind you of summer days soon to come www.walkroll.com/mediacoverage/

Walk+Roll Calendar 2009

Other proposed Walk+Roll communities and dates that are in the works include:

July 19 - a community to be announced

July 25 - Detroit Shoreway

July 26 - Slavic Village

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Notes From Iraq

Coming and Going: Replacements Arrive

by Eric Smith

The Soldiers standing at the edge of the helicopter landing were in a single file beside the earthen barriers, shifting their feet back and forth, talking in low, muted tones, lit only by the faint glow of red landing lights and burning cigarettes. Their bags were piled around them, not more than an arm-length away, looking in the midnight darkness like a random jumble of sacks, strewn in the same formation as their owners. Other Soldiers, distinguishable by the lit chemlights hanging from their shoulders, moved back and forth, counting and recounting, checking names against the manifest.

"Ten minutes out," The radios crackled.

"Ten minutes out!" The manifest-checkers yelled.

Conversations cut short, the queued Soldiers straightened up, dropped cigarettes onto the ground, and began to shoulder their rucksacks. Ears strained against the autumn chill in the air, listening for the sound of the approaching aircraft. Eyes scanned the cloudless sky, looking for shadows against the stars.

We heard the aircraft before we saw them; a mighty, rhythmic thumping like a high-octane base drummer with perfect tempo. Two of them flew toward the landing zone in full black-out, with no lights visible, leaving only their silhouette against the sprinkled stars as visual proof of their approach. The first helicopter flared, the pilot pulling the nose up as it descended, and the rotorwash from the twin blades stirred up a stinging sandstorm. We all ducked behind the blast walls, turning away, the Soldiers in line falling down on their bags as if the rucksacks needed protection from the flying gravel.

When the wind subsided and we were able to look up again, the aircraft had already dropped their rear ramps and the crew chiefs were outside conducting their checks. We could see into the dimly lit interior where other Soldiers sat packed along the fuselage walls, a mountain of their own baggage piled to the ceiling between them. They struggled out, disoriented by the darkness, noise, and wind from the still spinning blades. One of the guides ran forward and started yelling "New arrivals, grab a bag, any bag! Follow the lights! Move out! Follow the lights," as he gestured toward a trail of chemlights on the ground, leading into the center of the FOB. He turned back to the waiting Soldiers. "Chalk one outbound, get ready to load!"



Soldiers waiting on a plane.

Our replacements had arrived.

Our stay in Iraq is nearing its end. And like the massive sandstorms that signaled the end of summer and beginning of autumn, our redeployment is a swirling mix of controlled energy, directed with foresight that seems to vary from months to hours in its scope. Every single piece of equipment must be inventoried, cleaned, labeled, sorted, and packed. Personnel have to be manifested on flights out and flights in, each manifest crafted with an attention to detail that ensures those with the right skills and rank are leaving the

FOB in perfect concert with those arriving. Mechanical failures, the weather, human error, and imperfect communications all compound to foil the best of plans. And the enemy gets a vote.

Our little fortress in the desert has double the normal population, as the new unit arrives and we have yet to fully move out. The line at the mess hall stretches out the door and around the corner. The latrines run out of toilet paper soon after they are cleaned. There are so many people in the offices and headquarters it's difficult to walk through a room. And every building

and tent has been turned into temporary sleeping areas, including our gym. Remarkably, there is very little conflict. Our Soldiers, happy to see their relief here at last, know that they will soon be home. And the new unit, relieved themselves to have finally arrived after a long period of training and preparation, is waiting patiently for us to leave so they can go about their business unfettered.

Throughout the convoys, helicopter flights, staff meetings, and inspections, our operations continue. This week I have sat in on four contract signings for development projects, been interviewed by auditors from the Department of the Army, prepared for a visit from the Corps Commander (a three-star general), supported the construction of a new Iraqi base, all while conducting operations every night to bring in more bad guys. The additional task of redeploying the battalion doesn't mean relief from any of the others. It just means I sleep less.

I'll be among the last to leave in the battalion, as I ensure all of our equipment is accounted for and shipped properly. In the meantime I'll be out at the landing zone, a chemlite hanging from my shoulder, trying to make myself heard over the rotor wash. And each aircraft that lifts itself into the night sky will bring me one step closer to coming home.

"Cello-Bratton" Quartet Plays Lakewood Public Library

by Joan Rubenking

Feeling the effects of the Cleveland area winter blues? Join us then on Sunday, January 25th, as the Friends of Lakewood Public Library present The Cello-Bratton Quartet, led by Carole Banyas. Their mellow music may be just the thing to chase away those winter doldrums. This fun-loving group promises to play familiar and new songs in unique arrangements sure to make you smile.

Carole Banyas is a graduate of the Capital University Conservatory of Music and has a Bachelor's Degree in Music in Education. Accordingly, she has taught music in area Catholic schools for over twenty years, including five years of general music at Lakewood's St. Luke School. Carole currently has about 150 string students in three area schools: St. Albert the Great, St. Columbkille, and Incarnate Word Academy. She is a long time

member of the Ohio Music Education Association and her students regularly participate in OMEA contests and other events.

As a cellist, Carole performs weekly with the church choir at St. Luke's in Lakewood, and has been a member of the Parma Symphony Orchestra for over thirty years. Parma Symphony is a community orchestra of over sixty musicians that performs in concert at least four times a year. Carole also performs occasionally with a string quartet, and has been part of a cello duet for about ten years, along with the cello quartet.

Cello-Bratton is comprised of Carole Banyas and three other past and present members of the Parma Symphony Orchestra. Jo Student is a retired teacher who now plays regularly with the Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestra, another area community orchestra, as well as with Cello-Bratton. Cheryl and Bob Anderson make up the final two parts of Cello-Bratton. Cheryl is also a retired teacher and Bob is currently a scientist at NASA. Both of the Andersons are talented amateur singers and have been members of the Westshore Chorale for many years.

Cello-Bratton has been together for four years, and the quartet has been invited to display their conjoined talents for various groups. They have

performed on several occasions at the clubhouse of Jo Student's retirement community in Strongsville and at a fundraiser for the Westshore Chorale. Carole and the other players are eager to give back to the Lakewood community in performance, and Carole, as a Lakewood resident, feels particularly happy "to have the opportunity to perform at our library."

The January 25th performance will be an hour or so of small ensemble music selections from Bach to jazz. All pieces will be short ones, and the group will include some "familiar" classical pieces for cello ensemble. Carole plans to offer commentary and explanation of the various pieces in the program for the audience's benefit. Cello-Bratton may also be joined by two Lakewood musician friends of Carole's, a flautist and an oboist, to contribute to the full and rich sound. Carole promises "to play an assortment of music in interesting arrangements for cello. It will be something different and enjoyable for any audience." Indeed, the performance seems like a warm and cheery way to spend a Sunday afternoon. Circle the date and come lift your spirits with the gifted musicians of Cello-Bratton! This event is generously funded by Cuyahoga residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture and the Friends of the Lakewood Public Library.



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Pulse Of The City

The Little Church On The Hill

OK, in the interest of honesty, St. Barbara Catholic Church on Dennison is technically not on a hill. The fact is, it LOOKS that way, as you drive by it on the Jennings Freeway that comprises part of State Route 176; as that highway slices through and over the Flats' western banks, and past the Old Brooklyn neighborhood of Cleveland.

This was the route that I drove to and from the school where I taught, in those last years before my retirement. It was just about the best way to get from Lakewood, out to Seven Hills, without having to wind out through the w117th/Memphis Ave. corridor.

Those last teaching years were especially challenging for me, in a variety of ways. New educational demands were being placed on the special needs population, along with an exponential increase in paperwork documentation. In addition, my special classes that had formerly been dedicated to one type of student need were being replaced with the "cross-categorical" model, where students having a number of exceptionalities were all grouped together. Class sizes were growing too, to the point that individual assistance for students was becoming more and more difficult to address.

The most difficult aspects of those years for me, were with some medical issues, both for me, and for my family. It became more and more difficult to teach, and at the same time, to handle those concerns.

Still, I was glad to be a full-time teacher. All the way up to my last "official" day in the classroom, I will always regard my participation in that profession as an honor, and a joy. I've seen so many of my former special needs students turn out successfully, and that has been an extremely satisfying reflection for me.

One of the nicer aspects of my particular job situation was the fairly long drive to and from my school. I'm not sure, with today's mercurial gasoline issues, whether I would still feel that way these days- but back then, that drive allowed me time either to mentally prepare for the day, or to mentally unwind- before arriving back at home.

Contrary to what you may think, teachers do not have all of the answers, and there were many days that I found myself on the highway, wondering how to handle some concern. It was at that point that I noticed the little church sitting on the hill, at about the mid-point on the way to my job. St. Barbara's sits right there, where Denison and the Jennings Freeway meet. That little church served as a nice reminder to me that I needed to be thankful for the challenges that were coming my way that day, and also, to say a little prayer; that things would hopefully go well and turn out right- both for my students, and with that day's issues.

And so it went. Before long, I had a little daily ritual of a quiet, heartfelt prayer of hope, as I whizzed by that church on the way to work. Soon, a

by Gary Rice



heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving was raised in my heart, as I whizzed by in the evening; going in the other direction. In the days and weeks prior to my mother's death, during the last year of my teaching career, that church assumed a greater and greater place in my heart; as my prayers intensified, and my spirit began to tremble.

For a long time, I did not even know the name or denomination of that church. It was just "The Little Church On The Hill" to me. One day, I did discover from a friend, that it was named St. Barbara's, and here's where the story starts to get real funny. I've written before that I did not come from a Catholic faith tradition. Therefore, to my family, there was very little religious knowledge of "saints". Well, a number of years ago, I came across, and purchased, a beautiful medal of a saint, whose name I did not know. I'd even asked several Catholic friends who it was, and they did not know either. Several people thought that it might have been either the Blessed Virgin Mary, or her mother, St. Anne, but indeed, it was neither. I only knew that it was a beautiful medal.

It turned out that this particular medal that I'd purchased years ago, was that of St. Barbara, whose church, from afar, had spiritually nourished and sustained me during those last difficult years that I spent in public education. Discovering that so-called "coincidence", was an overwhelming emotional revelation for me, due to the confluence of both medal and church coming into my life.


It is no secret that in the last few years, the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland has been facing decisions regarding the possible closings of neighborhood parishes. It is my understanding, that one of those under consideration for closing, is St. Barbara's.

In our own community of Lakewood, several churches have also been under consideration for closing. The Bishop's final decision regarding the closing or consolidation of some of Cleveland's parishes is expected to

transpire in the spring of 2009. I suppose the purpose of this particular column, is to show those who might want to close St. Barbara's, and all those other churches, what a sublime and positive impact those places have in their communities; even among those who might not historically share in their faith tradition. Sometimes it takes some outsider to speak up and let those within know the beauty of what they really have. So here's to that valiant little church on the hill, and to its dedicated parishioners! I truly believe that God allowed that church to make a huge difference in my life, and by extension, in the lives of so many others.

Sometimes, change can bring opportunities, like with the formation of Lakewood's Catholic Academy out of several former Lakewood parochial schools. Let's hope that the changes to come will include other constructive options for other area churches and schools. Thanks St. Barbara for your medal, and for your little church on the hill. Happy New Year to you and to your parishioners! You will never be forgotten, no matter what happens to the bricks and mortar building. I do hope and pray, however, that your little church on that "hill" will be around for a long, long time to come.

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Conservation Corner

New Year's Resolutions

Though you may think it is a little late to make New Year's Resolutions, it is always a good time to commit to making a positive change. So, if you've got some room on your resolution list, or haven't made any at all, consider one (or more) of these easy, and often money-saving, green options (in no particular order):

1. Start using a reusable bag for all of your shopping, rather than paper or plastic disposable bags. Or, if you've already bought a bag, but keep forgetting it, as I often do, commit to keeping it where you'll actually use it. Many reusable bags fit easily in a purse, and some even have clips so that they'll attach to your key ring.

Why? We use hundreds of billions of plastic bags each year, each of which requires petroleum to produce and many of which end up either in landfills or as litter. Hundreds of thousands of animals are killed each year from eating plastic bags that appear to be food.

How? Check out the wide selection available at reusablebags.com or stop by Green Smart Gifts. Many stores also sell their own versions near the checkout.

2. Use a water filter and a refillable bottle rather than buying bottled water; use a reusable mug or thermos for coffee rather than styrofoam cups.

Why? It takes some oil and more water than the bottle will contain to produce a plastic bottle, and more than 3/4 of them end up in landfills. And, though you may think the water you buy is better, the standards are less strict than for tap water, and it costs a whole heck of a lot more. Meanwhile, Americans consume hundreds of millions of cups of coffee each day, much of it in single-use containers, sending millions of cups to landfills where, if they're made of styrofoam, they'll linger for hundreds of years.

How? Though each has its pros and cons, the main water bottle alternatives are aluminum (SIGG bottles), steel (Kleen Kanteen), and durable plastic (Nalgene). For coffee, most coffee shops sell mugs with their own labels (and often, discounts for using them), and any number of thermoses are available wherever you shop.

3. Replace your incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents (CFLs).

Why? A typical lightbulb is amazingly inefficient - 80% or more of its energy creates heat rather than light. CFLs, on the other hand, produce light with much less electricity and last longer. Though they contain a

tiny amount of mercury, and thus must be disposed of carefully, this mercury content is less than the mercury emitted by power plants producing the extra electricity to power an incandescent bulb. Though they cost more initially, they will make up for it in energy savings and longevity.

How? Next time a light burns out in your home, replace it with a CFL. They are widely available (at Home Depot, Target, etc.) in a variety of wattage levels and colors, and are even available specifically for dimmer switches and ceiling fans.

4. Reduce your paper waste.

Why? Though around half of our paper does get recycled, this does not negate the immense amount of paper that we could avoid using in the first place. Each American gets an average of 41 pounds of junk mail each year, so 20 pounds of it, if not more, ends up in the landfill, along with printer paper, newspapers, and everything else.

How? To reduce your junk mail, check out Catalog Choice, 41pounds.org, and Green Dimes, or, if you prefer the DIY approach, call catalog senders directly, call 888-5-OPTOUT to be removed from credit card offer lists, and register with the Direct Marketing Association to stop most national mailings. To thin out that stack of old bills and statements, switch to online banking and billing. It'll save paper, and some companies will even give you a credit or some sort of incentive to switch. Receipts are another paper product that many of us don't need: Next time you use the ATM, use your credit card at the gas pump, or are just asked if you want a receipt, say no unless you really need it. And, for the paper that you already have, recycle it, and don't forget to buy recycled!

5. Green your diet: commit to organic, local, and/or vegetarian meals. Whether once a month, once a week, once a day, or completely.

Why? Industrial food produc-

tion and transport takes a huge toll on the environment, as land is degraded by pesticides, the air is polluted with fuel exhaust, and the conditions of animals on feedlots lead to illness and more pollution.

How? Though winter is a difficult time to start a local food challenge, any step in this direction will help. Organic foods are available at most supermarkets year round, as are, of course, non-meat options. Once spring and summer roll around again, consider shopping at local farmer's markets, using community-supported agriculture programs, or even growing your own produce.

6. Change the thermostat.

Why? Heating and cooling make up a large percentage of home energy use each year, so any improvement in efficiency can mean big savings, in energy and dollars.

How? Get a programmable thermostat if you don't already have one. It will easily pay for itself before too long. Turn down the temperature at night and when no one will be home, and try turning the heat down one degree for a week or so and see how it feels. Keep going as much as you can - each degree will save you money on your heating bill. Check your windows and doors for drafts and seal them - this will not only keep the heat in during winter, but out during the summer.

7. Walk or bike instead of driving. Once a week, once a day, whenever.

Why? The gasoline we put into our cars is another big part of many people's energy-related expenditures, as well as an important contributor to pollution.

How? Commit to walking or biking, or even carpooling or taking the bus, on short trips. Combining errands into one trip will also help. And when you do drive, drive greener - don't idle for longer than a few seconds, keep your tires inflated and your filters clean, and drive calmly (slow accelerations and decelerations and no speeding).

Resident Letter

A Return To Victory Gardens In Support Of Urban Farms

With the cost of food and the transportation costs of foodstuffs constantly rising and the likelihood of a deepening, world wide recession, it is time for the City of Lakewood to reconsider its prohibition on the keeping small livestock, such as rabbits and chickens. I have lived in Lakewood for 26 years, and I do not make this suggestion lightly. We are entering a time of great economic crisis, not unlike the World Wars and the Great Depression, when citizens turned their yards into gardens, and those living on functioning family farms and the wealthy were the only ones who could depend on a constant supply of fresh food.

I stopped vegetable gardening a few years ago because of declining mobility, but I have decided to put in raised vegetable beds this year to offset some of the increasing food costs. What I would like to be able to include in my efforts to become more self sufficient, is a source of animal protein to help replace the meat and eggs that are rising in cost every day. Keeping a few chickens would have a limited impact on the environment, and the care of

small livestock is a good responsibility building tool for families with children.


Any change in the code could be temporary, with a requirement for renewal every few years, or when the economy turns around. The flocks could be licensed, which would add a little coin to the city coffers to offset any enforcement costs and the licenses would be time-sensitive, with the provision that any animals must be removed should the city choose not to renew the license, or upon the lapse of the code change. The city could include a weight limit and a limit on flock size to prevent abuses and the keeping of larger livestock.

I am not suggesting that we begin grazing sheep on the front lawn of City Hall, as they did at the White House during WWI, but in order to help alleviate hunger, which is a growing problem in Lakewood, this step is worth consideration.

Diane R. Jones
Lakewood Homeowner

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