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If you haven't got any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble. - Bob Hope

THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

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Volume 10, Issue 25, December 10, 2014

District PreSchool Programs Top-Rated By State

by Christine Gordillo

All the district's Early Childhood Programs have earned a 5-Star rating from the State of Ohio for meeting the

quality standards established by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services and the Ohio Department of Education.

Led by their talented staff,

the Emerson, Harrison, Hayes and Horace Mann programs have all earned the state's top rating. The 5-Star Step Up To Quality rating and improvement system was created to recognize and promote early learning and development programs that meet quality standards over and above the health and safety licensing requirements.

Participating programs can earn a one to five star rating.

In addition to meeting all standards of a four-star rating, programs with five stars may also:

Have lower staff/child ratios.

Use child assessment results to plan activities that best support learning and development goals for each child.

Share assessment results and create goals for children.

Develop plans to support children as they transition to a new classroom or educational setting.

Work with other organizations or businesses within the community to support children and their families.

Have an active and organized parent volunteer group.

Use input from families and community partners' inform the program's continuous improvement process.

Have accreditation by an approved organization.

Congratulations to the early childhood teams at these schools.



Light Up Lakewood coverage pages 12 and 13.

Last Minute Market Features Lakewood's Industrious Past And Present

by Kathy Patton

Now in its seventh year, the Last Minute Market & Screw Factory Open Studio will once again welcome the public to visit on Saturday, December 20th from 10am to 6pm. A building made to make cars 98 years ago, it is now a thriving example of adaptive reuse. Studios for art, crafts, fitness, and dance co-exist with industrial manufacturing, office space, and warehouses right on the edge of the Birdtown neighborhood.

The Last Minute Market & Screw Factory Open Studio is a curated, one-day marketplace of handmade, modern art and craft. One of Lakewood's largest holiday art events, this market



The Past: Templar Cars

features more than one hundred juried sellers and more than fifty studio tenants and their invited artist guests. Thousands of visitors each year get a peek into the art studios, as well as at the nearly-antique cars in the Templar Motors Factory Display, experiencing a unique piece of Lakewood's past and present in the Lake Erie Building at 13000 Athens Avenue.



The Present: A packed crowd at the Last Minute Market!

SEASON OF GIVING Cannnnnnnnnnntastic!



photo by Alex Russell

Some of the students collecting cans for Emerson's Cantastic.
photo by Alex Russell

by Molly Pilgrim, Teeghan McGann, and Farida Arslanova

In 2015 you are going to be amazed by Emerson Cantastic. This a fun way to be active and donate to people who need it most. The whole school is collecting cans to donate to the needy, but the 5th grade is doing it bigger, they're helping build the figures. That is your little hint of what you are going to see in 2015.

Diversity Potluck: Change Begins With You! Get involved!



Attendees listen intently to State Representative Nickie Antonio at the Diversity Potluck in 2014. The 2015 potluck will also be held at the Lakewood Women's Pavilion.
by Bernadette Elston

The City of Lakewood's Community Relations Advisory Commission is pleased to announce the annual Diversity Potluck. This year's theme is titled, 'Change Begins with You! Get Involved'. It's all happening on Thursday January 22, 2015 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Women's Pavilion in Lakewood Park. In addition to sampling delicious foods that represent the many diverse populations that live, work, and play in Lakewood,

community members have an opportunity to hear about some of the great ways to participate and get involved. The opportunities are endless; and, there are many commissions, churches, and other organizations that need you! What a great way to actively contribute to our great city and connect with like-minded people. As always, city officials will be present to share an evening, a meal, and conversation with the
continued on page 8

LEAF Holiday Market December 16

by Heather Ramsey

This holiday season we invite you to shop local with the Lakewood Earth & Food (LEAF) Community at our December holiday market at Garfield Middle School on Tuesday, December 16th from 5:30-8:00 p.m. This indoor farmer's market and craft fair combination can help you keep all of your holiday shopping local from food to art! Not only will you find a wide variety of local farmers and

artisanal food vendors offering local produce, baked goods, and much more for all your holiday gathering needs, but you can also find fantastic gifts for anyone on your list from local artists and merchants selling items ranging from baby gifts, to photographs, to soap. For those that have pre-ordered their City Fresh holiday CSA shares, these will also be available for pick-up.

While your there, don't forget to stop by our LEAF

table to say hi! We will have several items for sale as well, with all proceeds going to help support LEAF's programming. Warm up with soup made by our talented volunteer LEAF cooks or sip a hot beverage as you shop. Or pick up a copy of our "LEAF Cooks: Recipes from the Community" cookbook. Filled with recipes from local restaurants and residents featuring seasonal local ingredients, it's the perfect gift for
continued on page 2

LO Calendar

December 10, 2014

Holiday Open House:
Norris Family Chiropractic
9:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Enjoy coffee and snacks when you visit the great team at Norris Family Chiropractic!
Join Us For:
Chair Massage
Acupuncture (10am-1pm)
Massage Specials
20% off Supplements
Refreshments
We'll see you there!

Location: 14520 Detroit Ave
Lakewood, OH 44107

December 11, 2014
Lakewood Chamber of Commerce
Holiday Party
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Sample a wide selection of delicious food from area restaurants. Mingle with other Chamber members, their spouses and guests.
\$15/members, \$20/non-members
Proceeds from the evening's 50/50 raffle will benefit the LakewoodAlive Housing Outreach Program.
Location:
Around The Corner Warehouse Room
18616 Detroit Avenue, Lakewood

LEAF Holiday Market December 16

continued from page 1
that locavore or chef on your list!
Finally, the market will also be your first opportunity to apply for one of LEAF's 100+ community garden plots across Cove, Kauffman, Madison, and Webb parks and at the Westerly Senior Living apartments for the 2015 growing season. Plots sell out fast - as they say, "the early bird gets the worm" - so get your's before they're gone!
Vendors (subject to change) will include: Adapt Herbal Teas, Blaze Gourmet, Blue Cabin Candles, Bread-

December 12, 2014
Open House and GRAND OPENING of
Rhythm & Grace Ballroom Dance Studio
7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Come join us at Rhythm & Grace Ballroom Dance Studio for our Grand Opening Event. There will be finger foods, give aways, and of corse, DANCING! Rhythm and Grace will be having US and British Champion Kimberley Mitchell conducting two workshops, cutting the Grand Opening ribbon, and dancing with our very own Angel Criado!
Location:
15027 Madison Avenue
Lakewood, Ohio

December 13, 2014
Church of the Ascension Cookie Walk
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

The Church Women of the Church of the Ascension will host their annual Cookie Walk from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Sat., Dec. 13 in the undercroft of the church at 13216 Detroit Avenue.
This event features an array of homemade cookies including springerle, almond crescents, and kolachkes. Cookies will sell by the pound. Guests can also purchase Trail bologna and Swiss cheese from Amish country, burgundy wine jelly, and other holiday items. Proceeds benefit outreach programs supported by Ascension Church Women.

Location: Church of the Ascension
13216 Detroit Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio 44107

December 14, 2014
Santa Paws at Pet's General Store
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Portraits By Martha will be taking holiday pictures with your dog. No sitting fee, you select the photos you would like to order. A portion of the proceeds benefit Lakewood Dog Park. To schedule appointment, visit www.lakewooddogpark.com.
Location:
Pet's General Store
16821 Madison
Lakewood, OH 44107

December 17, 2014
Sounds of Season Concert
7:30 PM

Holiday concert with all of Lakewood High School's top performing ensembles.
Location:
Civic Auditorium, LHS

December 20, 2014
Last Minute Market & Screw Factory
Open Studio.

10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
The Last Minute Market & Screw Factory Open Studio is a curated, one-day marketplace of hand-made, modern art and craft. One of Lakewood's largest holiday art events, this market features more than one hundred juried sellers and more than fifty studio tenants and their invited artist guests. Thousands of visitors each year get a peek into the art studios, as well as the Templar Motors Factory Display, experiencing a unique piece of Lakewood's past and present in the Lake Erie Building.
Location: The Lake Erie Building
13000 Athens Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio



THE
LAKEWOOD
OBSERVER

FAQ: LO Calendar

Q: How can I help promote my event by getting it published in the LO Calendar, both online and in print?

A: Visit the LO homepage: www.lakewoodobserver.com and click the "Submit New Event" button on the right hand side of the page under "Upcoming Events." Once your event is approved for our online calendar listing, it will be considered for publication in the print version of the paper as well.

THE
LAKEWOOD
OBSERVER

Your Independent Source for Lakewood News & Opinion

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The mission of the Lakewood Observer is to attract, articulate, and amplify civic intelligence and community good will in the city of Lakewood and beyond.

Become an Observer!

As a product of citizen journalism, The Lakewood Observer is looking for people, ages 3-100, to get involved in the paper and the city. We are looking for volunteer writers, photographers, designers, and illustrators to help with the production of the paper. It does not matter if you are a professional or amateur, our editorial staff will be glad to help you through the process. Register to our website Member Center where you can submit stories, press releases, letters to the editor, photos. No need to register to post online calendar or classified ads.

Upcoming Submission Deadline
Sunday, December 28, 2014
Sunday, January 11, 2015

Publish Date
Tuesday, January 6, 2014
Tuesday, January 20, 2015

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Celebrating Over 10 Years of Community Discussion at: www.lakewoodobserver.com



LO Holiday Display Contest Is On

We were saddened to hear that LECPTA was not putting on their Christmas Lighting Contest again this year. As we have always enjoyed holiday lighting displays and the creativity of Lakewoodites, we thought we here at the LO should pick up the ball.

So here is the deal, NO ENTRY FEE, but let us know what displays you think are worth checking out, through the Deck, the Contest on the Front Page of our website, on our Facebook page, by phone, or write it down and drop it off at the office, or Jim Crawford's Office of the Lakewood Public Library. We will collect and photograph them and place them online for voting. December 22, we will announce the top three in each class and ask people to vote. In the first issue of the New Year, we will place the display with the most votes on the front page, and all of the winners will be featured in the paper.

Here Are The Categories

- Best Traditional Display
- Tasteful Kitsch
- Best Daytime Display Not Featuring Lights
- Best Use of Traditional Plastic Figures
- Best Message For The Season
- Best Use Of One Strand Of Lights
- Best Use Of One Light
- Best Use Of One Color
- Best Use Of Lights And Other Media
- Most Original Inflatable
- Best Use Of Non-Christmas Theme
- Best Peace Sign
- Best Display That Includes A Monkey
- Best Business Window Non-Entertainment
- Best Business Window Entertainment
- Best Regional Display
 - Best In Birdtown
 - Best in Clifton Park
 - Best in Gold Coast
 - Best In Emerald Canyon Historic District
 - Best In Madison Village Area
 - Best in Downtown Lakewood

OR You make up the categories and send them in, let's have some real fun with this, and start a real fun contest.

<http://lakewoodobserver.com> QUESTION OF THE DAY or email to: production@lakewoodobser.com with the word Holiday Lighting Contest in the subject line.



18514 Detroit Avenue,
Lakewood, OH 44107
phone: 216-521-7684
fax: 216-521-9518

West End Tavern presents:

"Saturday Bloody Mary Bar"

Create Your Own - 11 a.m.

Serving Breakfast/Lunch featuring our famous Gourmet Meatloaf Stack and Savory Pot Roast Voted Best Hamburger On The Northcoast!

"Sunday Brunch"

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

A 20-Year Lakewood Tradition

Eggs Benedict • Eggs Sardoux • Stuffed French Toast • Pot Roast Hash Omelets • Fritatas • and more! featuring our famous "Mega Mimosas"

All proceeds to benefit the Cardiovascular Services at Fairview, Lakewood and Lutheran Hospitals.

Straight FROM THE Heart

Saturday,
February 14, 2015
Celebrating 11 years strong!

Early Bird Raffles:
Two \$1,000 Winners
The first raffle will be drawn from entries received by December 12, 2014.

The second raffle will be drawn from entries received by January 16, 2015.

All early bird winners will be eligible for prizes to be drawn at the event.

Raffle tickets can be purchased for \$100 each or 3 for \$200.

For more information or to register, visit www.straightfromtheheartevent.org or call 216.476.7061.

Fairview Hospital
Lakewood Hospital
Lutheran Hospital
Cleveland Clinic hospitals

Community West Foundation
Illuminating Hope

Win \$100,000 or one of 39 other great prizes.

- \$100,000 Cash
- Volvo S60 T5 Sport Sedan*, arranged by Westside Automotive Group
- Mazda CX-9*, arranged by Westside Automotive Group
- \$10,000 Cash
- Harley-Davidson Sportster Motorcycle 883 Iron*, arranged by Lake Erie Harley-Davidson
- 7-night European Mediterranean Cruise for two
- \$5,000 Cash
- 7-night all inclusive trip for two to Cancun, Mexico, donated by Drs. E. Dean and Nariman Nukta
- 7-day trip for two to Hawaii
- Diamond Bracelet, arranged by Rivchun Jewelers
- \$3,000 Cash
- Fur Jacket, arranged by Fur Allure
- 7-night Caribbean Cruise for two
- Diamond Double Halo Necklace, arranged by Rivchun Jewelers
- 5-day trip for two to California Wine Country
- \$2,000 Cash
- 5-day trip for four to Walt Disney World
- \$2,000 Cash
- 3-night trip for two to San Antonio River Walk
- Weekend Getaway for two to New York City
- 3-night trip for two to Las Vegas
- 7-night stay for two in Hilton Head, room accommodations only
- \$1,500 Cash
- Treadmill and Workout Essentials, arranged by Specialty Fitness Equipment
- His/Hers Movado Watches, arranged by Rivchun Jewelers
- Stock your Cellar with 100 assorted Wines, arranged by Rozi's Wine House
- \$1,000 Cash
- \$1,000 Travel Voucher
- Weekend Getaway for two to Chicago
- \$1,000 Cash
- \$1,000 Grocery Spree
- \$1,000 Cash
- 50" Television
- \$500 Gas Card
- 50 Bottles of Wine, arranged by Rozi's Wine House
- Day at the Spa for two, donated by Charles Scott Salon & Day Spas
- Hewlett Packard Notebook
- \$250 Gas Card
- Panasonic Wireless Sound System
- Samsung Galaxy Tablet

*Cash options available for 2, 3, and 5, at 75% of prize value
All trips arranged by Independence Travel
All electronics arranged by CompSource

Celebrating Over 10 Years of Community Discussion at: www.lakewoodobserver.com

City News

Council A Step Closer To Raising Council Members' Salaries



Council President and Ward IV Councilwoman Mary Louise Madigan called the December 1, 2014 meeting of Council to order at 7:31 P.M.

The first order of business was a report from the Committee of the Whole delivered by Councilwoman Madigan. The Committee has met four times since July to discuss the report from the Civil Service Commission recommending salary increases for Council (the report has been covered in great detail in previous articles). Council members have been making \$7,000 a year, without increase, for about 30 years. The Commission has been recommending for several years that Council raise their salary, but they have failed to do so. This year the Commission recommended that the salary for Council members be increased to \$13,000 and at the last Council meeting Councilwoman Madigan introduced an ordinance to do just that. The Committee of the Whole, the Committee made up of all members of Council, unanimously recommended adoption by Council once the ordinance has reached its full three readings. Council will read the Ordinance for the third time at the December 15, 2014 Council meeting.

Following the Committee of the Whole report, Council read the ordinance for the second time.

Next Councilman Tom Bullock (At-Large) asked Council to consider passing a 'placeholder budget resolution.' The resolution would later be amended with an ordinance that would outline Council's priorities for the 2015 budget year. These priorities would be things that do not make it into the budget as specific items. He thought

by Christopher Bindel

it was important for the resolution to memorialize a list of goals and policies important to Council and share them with the Administration. This way the Administration is aware of Council's priorities and Council can contribute to the establishment of policies. Councilman Bullock asked all Council members to participate in helping create the list of priorities to be a part of the ordinance.

Council referred the matter to the Committee of the Whole for discussion.

Next the Assistant Law Director, Jennifer Mladek read a communication from Law Director Kevin Butler regarding usage of traffic lanes. He submitted an ordinance to update the City's code on regulating the usage of lanes on roadways. This was brought forth by the creation of a bus lane on Clifton Boulevard. The law department wants to make sure that marked lanes and signage for lanes during specific hours are supported by law.

Council referred the ordinance to the Public Works Committee for consideration.

Assistant Director Mladek then introduced two more ordinances. In the past year Council has passed two ordinances that require further legislation. One relates to insurance and the other to second-hand stores. The additional legislation will set insurance limits and licensing fees respectively. In addition, in Director Butler's letter, he mentioned that in discussion over the two items in front of Council, and also from his office, there might be more areas of the City's code that are discovered requiring further such

legislation, or updating. For instance, in the case of a 70-year-old ordinance that says "a fee not exceeding 25 cents" should be charged for the weighing of private trucks on city-owned scales. Certainly, if such a service still exists,

the fee should be more.

Both items were referred to the Rules and Ordinances Committee.

Coming to the end of the agenda items and with no one from the public there to speak, Council President adjourned the meeting at 8:05 P.M.

C.S. Lewis Visits Lakewood Public Library

by Elaine Rosenberger

Best known for his "Chronicles of Narnia" children's book series, which includes "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," C.S. Lewis was a beloved author, Christian apologist, renowned academic and medievalist. Lewis' "The Screwtape Letters" were initially published as thirty-one installments in the UK's Guardian newspaper. Lewis was paid two pounds for each letter, and he donated the money to charity. His autobiographical work "Surprised by Joy," references his conversion to Christianity, and his "A Grief Observed" discusses his wife's death. Lewis' indomitable spirit, wry sense of humor, and heartfelt convictions are captured by Dr. Kevin Radaker when he brings A Visit with C.S. Lewis to Lakewood Public Library.

Radaker's portrayal of C.S. Lewis is set during the last year of Lewis' life, on a spring evening in 1963 when, after a prolonged period of illness, Lewis was finally beginning to enjoy improved health. With a deep, compelling voice and with dialect and physical appearance nearly identical to Lewis', Radaker uses anecdotes and selections from Lewis' writings to illustrate the British author's life and spiritual journey.

Dr. Kevin Radaker is a professor of English at Anderson University in Anderson, Indiana. His portrayal of



C.S. Lewis

Henry David Thoreau at the library last year drew a standing-room-only audience. He has portrayed C.S. Lewis over sixty times throughout the United States as well as in Beijing, China. Following his presentation, Professor Radaker will answer questions about C.S. Lewis, his life, and his writings; he will also discuss his preparations for portraying Lewis.

Radaker's presentation takes place on Sunday, January 4 at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium as part of the Library's Sunday with the Friend's Series. Admission is free and open to all. For more information, visit www.lakewood-publiclibrary.org/friends.

AROUND THE CORNER

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fundraisers and
special events
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Lakewood Public Library

LPL Calendar Of Events

compiled by Morgan Maseth

Saturday, December 13
Lakewood Public Cinema: “The Shipping News” (2001)
Directed by Lasse Hallstöm

An emotionally-beaten Kevin Spacey heads to his ancestral home of Newfoundland, with his young daughter in tow, in an attempt to start his life over after his unfaithful wife is killed in a car accident. His aunt, Judi Dench, is ready to take him under her wing, but only if he can learn to toughen up and move on with life. Settling into the cold and foreboding landscape, he finds a job as a newspaper reporter and begins to explore the unforgiving land where his grandfather died at only twelve years old. Shrouded in frozen mythological tones, his family’s dark history begins to unravel before him. Through the pain and turmoil, the beaten man finds a voice to reclaim his life. Then he meets the widow Julianne Moore...

6:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Sunday, December 14
Sunday with the Friends: “The Bachelor and the Bobby Soxer” (1947)

Here’s some old school Hollywood magic, featuring icons in roles you would never expect. Shirley Temple is a blossoming seventeen year old high schooler who’s decided that she’s in love with a playboy played by Cary Grant. (Okay, that’s not such an unexpected role for him.) The twist is that Shirley’s older sister, Myrna Loy, is a no-nonsense judge who’s not afraid to abuse her power. Grant has bigger fish to fry, but Loy sentences him to woo Temple until she gets over her silly crush. Throwing himself into the teenage scene, Grant gets down with the slang of the day and does the rest of the voodoo that they do, too as he conspires to find an age-appropriate love interest for his lovely nemesis. The resolution to this unlikely affair is as satisfying as it is predictable.

2:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Hands-On Help with eReaders
Do you own a shiny, new eReader, but don’t know how to download any of the thousands of free titles that are available through the Library? Make an appointment with a knowledgeable staff member who can show you around the bells and whistles of your device, whether it’s a Kindle, Nook, iPad, iPhone or something else entirely. Let’s talk.

Thursday Nights at the Madison Branch—Call (216) 228-7428
Sunday Nights at the Main Library—Call (216) 226-8275, ext. 127

Saturday, December 20
Lakewood Public Cinema: “The Tale of Zatoichi” (1962)
Directed by Takeshi Kitano

Here begins the tale of the blind swordsman. If you’re not a fan of fighting movies filled with repetitive non-stop violence, don’t worry about a thing. Sit back and enjoy the slowly building suspense. Action fans will be on the edge of their seats waiting and waiting for that first flash of swordplay—and when it finally comes, it will only last a fraction of a second. That’s because Zatoichi is a true master. One blow is all it takes. Frankly, he would rather make his living as a masseuse, relieving people of their aches and pains, but the world is a terrible place and Zatoichi must hire out his sword to make his way. In this unusually somber and wildly popular medieval drama, one gang hires a consumptive samurai to enlarge their turf and their rivals hire Zatoichi. With contempt for their employers, the two men go fishing together and become friends. But that doesn’t change the fact that, eventually, one of them must kill the other. So it goes for Zatoichi in the first and best of the more than twenty films made featuring the character. Japanese with English subtitles.

6:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Sunday and Thursday
Hands-On Help with eReaders

Do you own a shiny, new eReader, but don’t know how to download any of the thousands of free titles that are available through the Library? Make an appointment with a knowledgeable staff member who can show you around the bells and whistles of your device, whether it’s a Kindle, Nook, iPad, iPhone or something else entirely. Let’s talk.

Thursday Nights at the Madison Branch—Call (216) 228-7428
Sunday Nights at the Main Library—Call (216) 226-8275, ext. 127

Wednesday, December 24
Holiday: Christmas Eve – Closed All Day

Thursday, December 25
Holiday: Christmas Day – Closed All Day

Sunday and Thursday
Hands-On Help with eReaders

Do you own a shiny, new eReader, but don’t know how to download any of the thousands of free titles that are available through the Library? Make an appointment with a knowledgeable staff member who can show you around the bells and whistles of your device, whether it’s a Kindle, Nook, iPad, iPhone or something else entirely. Let’s talk.

Thursday Nights at the Madison Branch—Call (216) 228-7428
Sunday Nights at the Main Library—Call (216) 226-8275, ext. 127

Wednesday, December 31
Holiday: New Year’s Eve – Closed at 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 1
Holiday: New Year’s Day – Closed All Day

Saturday, January 3
Lakewood Public Cinema: “Rock Around the Clock” (1956)
Directed by Fred F. Sears

Whether or not this is a good movie is beside the point. Rock Around the Clock is an important artifact of the rock and roll revolution, howlingly inaccurate in its particulars but prophetic in its vision of the future. More importantly, everybody involved looks like they’re having the time of their lives. See Bill Haley and his Comets, clad in plaid, roughhousing their way through one rambunctious number after another. The corny nature of the plot

only serves to make their music seem that much more vibrant and alive. If that wasn’t enough, the Platters and Freddie Bell and the Bellboys round out the bill with their own hits—and bandleader Tony Martinez is there to show us what rock wasn’t. Also appearing, Alan Freed seals the deal for Cleveland rock lovers everywhere playing himself. This movie was quickly followed by Don’t Stop the Rock. We couldn’t agree more.

6:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Sunday, January 4
Sunday with the Friends: A Visit with C.S. Lewis

When Kevin Radaker played Henry David Thoreau last year, there wasn’t an empty seat in the house for his thoughtful combination of scholarship and performance. Now Radaker returns to the Library as C.S. Lewis, drawing every word he speaks from the author’s writings in order to share Lewis’ eloquent thoughts on pain and suffering, pride, free will, love, grief, anxiety and prayer. Best known for children’s books like The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, C.S. Lewis was a distinguished Oxford and Cambridge literary scholar who branched out into imaginative science fiction and fantasy literature for young people, infused with Christian allegory from his own spiritual journey. In 1963, the last year of his life, Lewis will tell the extraordinary story of his conversion to Christianity and recount his career as the most popular and highly acclaimed religious writer of the twentieth century. When the lights come up and the mask is dropped, Radaker, a professor of English at Anderson University, will answer questions from the audience.

2:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

The Blind Swordsman: Being A Good Person In A Bad Time

by Genevieve Jaskulski

To decide what is right and what is wrong in our current society can be difficult to say the least. Virtue, morality and kindness often take different forms depending upon the individual manifesting or cultivating them. The same could be said, if not more so, in medieval Japan, a culture steeped in honor and respect, but also soaked in the blood of those who traversed the time of feuding lords and multiple civil wars. On Saturday, December 20 at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium, we will be showing the critically acclaimed movie Zatoichi.

Back in 1962, the movie proved so popular to a reawakening postwar Japan that it spawned an unprecedented twenty-six sequels following the life and adventures of Ichi, the blind masseuse, whose heightened senses guide him through one of the ugliest periods in the island nation’s history.

In order to survive in a vicious world plagued by civil war and run by Yakuza gangsters, Ichi is forced to master the art of the sword—not only to protect himself, but to supply a marketable skill to the underground unto which he had become a fixture. But in truth, Ichi bears a far heavier load than his blindness. He is a man with an honorable soul and a deep sense of what is right and wrong. His profession as a hired sword to petty thugs is almost unbearable to him. He would much rather soothe pain as a masseuse than bring more injury to the world.

The film outlines, the redeeming quality of the human spirit faced with adversity and hardship, and does so with a breathtakingly artistic flair that leaves you anticipating the next film.

To learn more about this film and others screened at Lakewood Public Library, please visit our website at www.lakewoodpubliclibrary.org.

LPL Children/Youth Events

compiled by Eric Knapp

Saturday, December 13
Tail Waggin’ Tutors
For school-age children
Bone up on your reading skills by reading to a dog. Drop in for a one-to-one session with one of our dogs and owners that have been certified through Therapy Dogs International.
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room.

Tuesday, December 16
Art Connection
For students in kindergarten through fifth grade
Create your own unique piece of art to take home and show off to family and friends. To register, please stop in or call (216) 226-8275, ext. 140.
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the Main Library Activity Room.

Wednesday, December 16
Game Challenge
For students in kindergarten through fifth grade
Unique age-appropriate games will challenge and excite! To register, please stop in or call (216) 226-8275, ext. 140.
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room.

Family Weekend Wonders
Make the Library a part of your family weekend time with programs featuring stories, activities, music and crafts. These free programs are offered every weekend throughout the year at both the Main Library and Madison Branch. No registration is needed. Check out our website (www.lakewoodpubliclibrary.org/youth) for times and upcoming themes.

Main Library Activity Room and Madison Branch Auditorium

Lakewood Schools



Lakewood High’s planetarium went at auction for a little over \$2,000. LHS was the first high school in the country with its own planetarium!

Community Says Goodbye To Old Building At LHS

by Margaret Brinich

"Two things stand out from all the alumni tours I've given over the years. First, many have a strong emotional attachment to the traditions of LHS—the winter choral concert, the spring musical, etc., and above all the broad, rich curriculum. Second, the people—former teachers, coaches, peers- and physical place of LHS also holds a dear place for many people. No one ever asks to visit their old lap top.

Most seem comforted by the fact that the loss of the old building—which no one seems to welcome—is offset by the all the rich traditions that we have maintained."

- Chuck Greanoff, LHS Teacher and Tour-Guide Extraordinaire

"The Lakewood Rangers Education Foundation was proud to partner with the Lakewood City Schools to allow alumni, community members, and anyone else with an interest in the history of Lakewood High School to tour the historic building before it is torn down to make way for modern educational and extracurricular space for current and future students. I know, for me, as an alumni who spent 4 great years at Lakewood High School, it was a pleasure to give tours and interact with alumni and community members."

-Kyle Baker, President, Lakewood Rangers Education Foundation

As part of the day's festivities, the Lakewood Rangers Education Foundation sold pieces of the East Gym floor as well as Tryout Theater seats during the tours. Those that are interested in purchasing a piece of history can still do so, although supplies are limited. Pieces of the East Gym floor (12"x24") will be for sale for \$20 at the Ranger Shop until Christmas. All proceeds from the sale of the floor will go to benefit the programs & scholarships of the Lakewood Rangers Education Foundation. The Ranger Shop will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Saturday until Christmas.



Dr. Charles Greanoff addresses the next tour group before they head out into the old hallways of Lakewood High School.



Then after a little talk about what is going on and what they will be seeing, off they go! About 10 tours were given that day, with hundreds of people talking a final walk down memory lane.



The Grays head home with their piece of history.



Stan Austin, class of a hell of a long time ago, stands center court in the East Gym for a picture on the LHS Rangerman, still with guns!



Alumni remembering the L-Room and where the Viktor Schreckengost piece hung. The famous wooden relief is currently being specially stored away and will be rehung in the new building after construction is complete!

Lakewood Schools

“Ask Roxann”

Looking At The School Calendar

LO: A lot of parents have questions regarding the District’s idea about extending the school day which was described as, “a committee is studying the concept of a longer school day and/or a modified school calendar to provide opportunities to reach our goal of becoming one of the Top 20 school districts in Ohio.” This idea was recently explored in a survey sent to parents & stakeholders of the Lakewood City Schools. While taking the survey it becomes clear that much of a longer school day would be devoted to preparing students to take new tests that come with the Common Core requirements.

Many residents are asking what benefits come to the students from doing better on these tests and from attending a Top 20 school? Does this improve the quality of their lives and or their education?

RR: The Lakewood Teachers Association and Administration have a mutual interest in providing the highest quality educational experience to Lakewood students. Early in 2014 both groups collaborated to find innovative ways to reach our learners outside of a traditional calendar and school day. After several days of brainstorming we felt that we needed to gather a broader array of opinions



Roxann Ramsey
Asst. Superintendent Lakewood Schools

and sought to do that by involving more stakeholders in the discussion in order to make a well-informed decision; thus the survey.

In August 2014, a committee of teachers and administrators formed to study our school calendar, and our first task was to take the pulse of our Lakewood community. The survey opened in early November and the district sought comments throughout the month. We were very pleased with the volume of feedback we received as it continued to confirm the interest and support of our community. Most recently the data was organized

and presented to the committee for review, and these results will also be shared with all stakeholders prior to the winter break.

Feedback from multiple community stakeholders revealed that respondents had questions pertaining to the motive behind making changes to the traditional calendar. While there is not a succinct answer, we are able to answer many of the questions submitted to the Lakewood Observer. There were essentially three themes contained in the questions: Testing, Common Core and overall student achievement and well-being.

It would be hard to ignore the fact that the State Legislature has made significant changes to the testing schedule for the 2014-2105 school year and beyond. There are two testing windows. The first window opens in mid-February and the second opens in mid-April. All state required assessment concludes May 15, 2015. While this is a significant reason to look at providing more instructional time to students prior to the beginning of the testing window, there is more to consider when innovation, technol-

ogy and more rigorous standards have been infused into a more traditional schedule.

While the topic of Common Core has become a political lightning rod, the reality is that rigorous standards set forth for all learners can only improve learning opportunities for all students. There has been a considerable amount of educational research on what constitutes effective instruction. While most instruction improves student outcomes, some instructional strategies help students make larger gains. Researchers have coined the term “effect size” to describe how large or small the impact of the strategy is on student achievement.

For comparison purposes, an effect size of 0.0 has no impact (good or bad) on student outcomes whereas an effect size of 1.0 has a profound effect. An effect-size of 1.0 is typically associated with:

- Advancing learners’ achievement by one year, or improving the rate of learning by 50%
 - A correlation between some variable (e.g., amount of homework) and
- continued on page 14**

District Concerts A Great Holiday Treat

by Christine Gordillo

The Lakewood City Schools Music Department provides a wonderful way to enjoy some excellent holiday performances for an affordable cost for the whole family. The district’s acclaimed music program will be putting on performances throughout December as the district’s Winter Break approaches.

All the middle school and high school concerts take place at 7:30 p.m. at the Civic Auditorium. The first of the concerts kicked off earlier this month, but there are still some great ones left to take in:

December 10: LHS Winter Choral Concert

December 11: LHS Symphonic Band and Camerata Orchestra Winter Concert

December 17 & 18: LHS’ Sounds of the Season concert, featuring the high school’s top performing groups in

band, choir and orchestra. Ensembles performing include LHS’ Chamber Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Chamber Choir, Symphony Strings, Full Symphony and the Mixed Symphonic Choir. An Elementary Honors Choir will also perform. The program is the same each night.

And what would be a holiday season without our youngest performers’ irrepressible shows at the elementary schools where dramatists, instrumentalists, singers and even tap dancers will take the stage. For a full calendar of performances, please visit the Performing Arts page on the district web site: www.lakewoodcityschools.org. Tickets for the Civic Auditorium performances are \$3 for adults, \$2 for students and \$1 for seniors. The Sounds of the Season concert will be \$5 for adults, \$4 seniors and students. Can’t beat it!

Diversity Potluck

Continued from page 1

people they serve.

So ready your favorite recipe (enough to feed 8-10 people), and save the date! We sincerely hope you join us for what is sure to be a fun and family friendly evening.

The Community Relations Advisory Commission is, “Charged to advise, educate, and promote community relations. The mission of the Commission is to foster participation in the community; to encourage and promote respectful conversations

and collaborative efforts among and between residents and city officials; and to promote equity, respect, and diversity within the city.” Participation on the commission is voluntary and contingent upon appointment by the city mayor and the city council. There are currently seats available. The commission currently sponsors three annual events including the Diversity Potluck, Welcome to Lakewood Meet and Greet, and the Community Conversation.

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Lakewood Schools

Student Immigrants Share Their Stories

by Christine Gordillo

While many students at Lakewood High School began their lives in another country, not many of them share their stories with their fellow students. On Wednesday, students in some World History, Human Rights & Conflict and English Language Learner classes heard the very different immigrant stories of two young adults who were part of a documentary featured at film festivals across the country.

Brandon and Sandra were two of five teen-agers who were the subject of filmmaker Jean-Michele Dissard's "I Learn America: One High School, One Year, Five New Americans" documentary. The film followed five immigrants for a year at their high school in New York City as they struggle to adapt to a new home, learn a new language and manage the trials and tribulations of adolescence. They joined Dissard for a lively discussion of the film and their lives with the LHS students. The event was sponsored by the organization Facing History and Ourselves as part of its Community Conversations series.

Brandon and Sandra, both college students now, came to America



Brandon (left) and Sandra were featured in the documentary "I Learn America."

under very different circumstances but shared similar thoughts about expectations of what living in America would be like and having to start their lives all over again. Brandon, whose mother moved to the U.S. from Guatemala and left him behind at 1-year-old, crossed over to the U.S. by himself as an 11-year-old who had been living on his own.

Sandra's parents had been working in the U.S. while she and her brother were back in Poland and eventually her parents moved the entire family to the United States.

Dissard, an immigrant himself from France at the age of 16, wanted to share the stories of the teen immigrants with schools across the country that also have their own share of immigrant students to help everyone realize

that "we all come from somewhere else"...whether it's yourself or parents, or from another school, or city. "The stories in the film are your stories, too," he said.

With his first-hand experience as an immigrant, Dissard felt compelled to share with the students his perspective that "being an immigrant is actually an advantage...it gives you a window into another world." He also wanted the LHS students to realize that it is a "privilege to have students from another country in your classroom because you can learn so much from each other."

The students asked many questions of Brandon and Stephanie and also had a chance to share their life stories or their families' stories with each other in small groups.

On Thursday evening, December 4, students from the high school and Harding Middle School traveled to the Capital Theater in the Gordon Square District of Cleveland to view the film and then have a discussion with Brandon, Sandra and the filmmaker.

In a school system as diverse as Lakewood City Schools, "I Learn America" and its participants have a story to tell that surely hits home with most everyone.



Sandra chats with a rapt audience of LHS students.

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Lakewood Schools

Lakewood Catholic Academy Welcomes Its First President

by Paul Nickels

The typical elementary school is a pretty quiet place during the summer. That was certainly the case after the 630 students at Lakewood Catholic Academy spilled from the school's doors last June to begin their summer break.

All that changed, though, on the sunny morning of July 7th, when a whirlwind named Brian Sinchak touched down on the lakefront campus to begin his tenure as LCA's first president. In this role, Sinchak, 36, serves as the chief administrator and operational leader of LCA, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. The LCA campus, including the Holy Family Learning Center, cares for and educates children from as early as six weeks of age through the eighth grade.

The LCA Board of Trustees had committed earlier in the year to implementing a president-principal administrative model at the school – one that has proven very effective for the Catholic high schools in Greater Cleveland and across the country. A nationwide search was launched that produced more than 100 candidates and ultimately concluded with the selection of Sinchak. Prior to joining LCA, he had been serving as president of John F. Kennedy Catholic School, a two-campus school serving children from preschool through grade 12 in the Youngstown area.

Sinchak holds Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and a Masters of Educational Administration, both from John Carroll University, and brings more than a dozen years of experience in the field of education at multiple levels, including time as an administrator and teacher in the Diocese of Cleveland. His leadership in education has earned recognition by Today's Catholic Teacher magazine and the National Catholic Education Association. He is also a frequent presenter at state and national educational conferences on the topics of educational leadership and organizational change as well as Catholic social teaching and service learning.



LCA President, Brian Sinchak

"The caliber of talent Brian brings to Lakewood Catholic Academy is invaluable," said LCA Board Chair Kathy Laino. "His comprehensive background in the field of education combined with his passion for faith development in children and young adults, made him the ideal leader to take LCA into its second decade."

In deciding to accept the position at LCA, Sinchak reflected on a slogan he'd seen in an LCA publication he received during the interview process: "In the End, it's The Beginning that Counts."

"I was uncertain at first, largely because I had always felt that the high school years were the most critical period for formation," explains Sinchak, who also taught high school classes during his presidency at JFK. "My wife Mandy, who teaches kindergarten, has always held the view that it was important to get them early, and we enjoyed debating the point. My seven-year-old son was part of that dialogue too. When I visited campus during the interview process, I was instantly converted. Something very special was going on in the classrooms of LCA – something sacred. And it felt right."

A boundlessly energetic man who has traveled the world numerous times in service to the poor -- most recently on a trip to India last summer where he helped to build a school for girls in a rural area of the vast country -- Sinchak plunged in with both feet. He has already launched several key initiatives in the four and a half months since his arrival:

LCA, in a unique partnership with

St. Edward High School, will apply to become an International Baccalaureate (IB) School, offering the IB Middle Years Program, in April 2015. This innovative and research-based approach to curriculum and instruction will be a guiding force behind the academic strategic plan Sinchak is organizing for the school. LCA will be the first Catholic elementary school in Ohio to apply to offer the IB Middle Years curriculum.

The school has instituted a new dining program emphasizing freshly prepared foods and managed by Cleveland restaurateurs Fabio and Nicole Salerno (Lago, etc.), who also happen to be the parents of three LCA students. The program has been a tremendous success, drawing rave reviews from parents and students. "The dining program provides food that nourishes both the body and the mind and fuels productive learning," notes Sinchak.

While service activities have always played a key role in an LCA education, Sinchak is taking service to a new level -- expanding the opportunities to serve to include national and even international venues. This summer, LCA upper school students will travel to Central America along with Sinchak and several of their teachers. LCA students have long volunteered throughout Lakewood and the Greater Cleveland area in a variety

of ways and will do so in an expanded way with a new service learning initiative that is being developed.

Eventually, Sinchak's role at LCA will be focused primarily on external relations and resource development, but this year, he's plunging into the full scope of school activities, including curriculum, classroom and teacher observation, facilities planning and management, and even the aforementioned lunch program.

"I want to get to know every aspect of the school in order to develop plans for the future," he explains. "After all, at LCA I am standing on the shoulders of giants – the founding administrators, our excellent faculty, and our highly committed parent community – all of whom worked so hard to create a culture of excellence at the school since the day it opened. I have enormous respect for what they have created, and I only seek to build on that."

Since its creation in 2005 when three of Lakewood's Catholic elementary schools – St. James, St. Clement, and St. Luke – decided to become one school (later joined by Sts. Cyril and Methodius, now Transfiguration Parish), Lakewood Catholic Academy has not only continued to offer residents of Lakewood a parochial alternative, but has drawn students from as far east as Bratenahl and west to the Lorain border.

"I am very passionate about Catholic education, and I will work tirelessly to sustain and improve Lakewood Catholic Academy," says Sinchak. "I believe what we offer our students is vitally important!"

Lakewood Catholic Academy Accepting Applications For Fall 2015

by Paul Nickels

Lakewood Catholic Academy has begun accepting applications for the 2015-16 school year for its preschool and kindergarten programs, as well as for grades one through eight. LCA currently serves almost 600 students from 19 different zip codes across the Greater Cleveland and Northeast Ohio area on its lakefront campus. The school's innovative and rigorous curriculum, grounded in the Catholic faith, supports students in reaching their full potential.

LCA offers a part-time preschool program for students 3 to 5 years old, as well as a full-day kindergarten program. Space is limited. For details on our programs or application process, contact LCA Admissions Director Terri Richards at 216-521-0559

ext. 3028 or by email at trichards@lakewoodcatholicacademy.com. Lakewood Catholic Academy will also be hosting an Open House event on Sunday, January 25, 2015. Visit www.lakewoodcatholicacademy.com for more details.



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Monetary donations also accepted. Please make check payable to:
Lakewood SDA Church. Please note donation is for Little One's Ministry
Please mail to 1382 Arthur Avenue, Lakewood, OH 44107, Attention Treasurer



Current schedule

Tuesdays 10:30am to 12:30pm

Oct 14 and Oct 28

Nov 11 and Nov 25

Dec 9 and Dec 23

Donations Appreciated

At the church, during the listed dates and times



Natural Wellness For Women:

Lakewood Prenatal And Fertility Massage

by Deleen Long

Women in all stages of life have a new resource this year for their alternative health needs. As a Licensed Massage Therapist (LMT) I recently joined the team at Norris Family Chiropractic, providing therapeutic massage for natural fertility support and for the childbearing years and beyond.

For women who are trying to conceive, fertility massage supports hormonal balance and helps improve circulation to the abdominal organs. It may be used in conjunction with Assisted Reproductive Technology or as a standalone treatment. This treatment can also assist women who are not trying to conceive, but are experiencing pain or discomfort with their cycle, including symptoms of menopause.

Prenatal massage is adapted for the mother's comfort and safety in all three trimesters, and can alleviate common complaints such as back or hip pain and carpal tunnel syndrome. Massage during pregnancy has also been associated with a reduced risk of prematurity and postpartum depression. Mothers who have recently given birth can support their recovery, including healing cesarean scars, with postpartum massage.

I have been a practicing massage therapist in the Cleveland area since 2010. In addition to my work with women's health, I have treated a diverse range of clients from children to athletes to elders, and truly enjoy providing individualized care to each person who entrusts their wellness to my hands.

Learn more at: www.lifelongbodywork.com.

To learn more about all our practitioners and services, join us at our Holiday Open House for refreshments, freebies, special discounts, and good company!

Join us on Wednesday, December 10 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. for our Holiday Open House.

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Happy Holidays!





Join us this Season

as we anticipate together the Hope and Promise that comes with Christmas when God shows up.

Sunday Mornings

8:30am Awakenings – Chapel Communion Service
9:45am Traditional Worship with Chancel Choir
11:05am Impact Modern Worship with Impact Band

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24

6:00pm Family Candlelight Worship
10:45pm Traditional Candlelight Worship

All People Matter to God and to Us
at Lakewood United Methodist Church
15700 DETROIT AVE. (at Summit) • LAKEWOOD, OH
216-226-8644 • WWW.LKWDUMC.ORG





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Celebrate Jesus and pray in the New Year.

Christmas Eve at LPC – December 24

Family Candle Lighting Service – 7 p.m.

Stories and carols appropriate for excited children (and adults!) ending with the Lighting of the Christ Candle and “Silent Night” sung by candlelight.

Service of Lessons and Carols – 10 p.m.

Based on the beloved service from King’s College with familiar congregational carols, choral and instrumental music, and “Silent Night” sung by candlelight.

Advent Organ Recital Series – 12:15 p.m.

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Light Up Lakewood 2014

Shop Hixson's To Recapture Christmas, December 20 In Ohio, "Mr Christmas" Works In Lakewood



Bill Hixson, owner of Hixson's in Lakewood leads the 2014 Light Up Lakewood Holiday Parade. There was no better choice than Bill who has annually decorated and designed Christmas trees for the White House going back to the Reagan Administration.

by Jim O'Bryan

This December 20th, please take the time to immerse yourself in a real Christmas Cleveland Tradition, stopping by Hixson's Flower Barn, at 14125 Detroit Avenue, and walk through the store, see the historic displays that go back even further than the store which has been located in this location for over 60 years. Bill Hixson has been a friend of my family, both sides, for longer than the store has been open. Actually it was a relative that helped him get the building, when the truck, horse carriage car wash was closing. Shortly after opening he was joined by his longtime friend and partner Eunice who has kept the store running strong and pure to itself for a half of a century. I swear some of the things from opening day are still on the shelves, though so many great memories for everyone that has shopped there flow over the counters at a rapid pace. It is just a perfect place to soak up the holidays, and to bring the wee ones for memories only a grandparent can lay down. "X-Box, huh, Bobby when I was your age, all we had to play with was one of these..." Bobby is not moved at the moment, but when he is dragging Bobby junior to the second power around the space mall, saying the same thing, he will remember that day and smile.

Christmas in the end is about the memories. Moments are fleeting, but memories, good, bad stay with us for a long long time. Walking through Hixson's is just good for the soul, especially around Christmas. I mean he has a massive Easter Egg Collection at Easter that is worth seeing, he has great art shows throughout the year, especially when he brings out his gorgeous collection of Japanese Art prints. One of the best private collections I have seen. But Christmas, Christmas is his gig. He has the largest selection of quality ornaments I have seen outside of Frankenmuth, Michigan. Different each year, with a few stragglers from the years before, which is reason enough to stop during the holidays, thousands of ornaments. But the best way to explain it is how it happened.

I was shopping for some last minute stocking stuffers decades ago. As Bill Hixson was friends with my grandparents, he was not on my short list of, "Oh hey let's go see Bill Hixson..." even when I was in my 30s. I mean let's be honest rock candy and knick knacks, or scotch and clubs, it just seems to all fall by the wayside.

So I stop into Hixson's to get a special ornament for our tree. We have a nice collection of ornaments going back to the turn of the century. I picked out a blue gorilla that was just adorable, a Christmas ornament, with a little head and arms on it. I hand it to Bill, and he signs it! To be honest I felt violated at the time. I am, last minute trying to end the day, I find the perfect ornament, and "Banksy Hixson" tags it! I mumble and walk out of the store, into the car and head home. I hid the package away, but I just couldn't stop thinking of the then 70-year-old tagging my stuff. I mean, really?

So the next day I go back to the shop before they sell the last untagged blue gorilla. I walk in and the place is packed! I try to wind my way back to the ornament room and it is tough. The place is so packed and everyone is happy, and laughing, and all I want is my ornament. The route of least resistance heads to the right, and I head back into the depths of Hixson's, and after the main room it takes on the feel I have now come to love. New items with items from the 30s, 40s, 50s, a living working museum, where you can buy the displays, and purchase history. The kind of history that matters, hand-made items, not produced in large quantities, and each one a form or art or craft that reeks of being made by someone that cares.

By the time I work my way through the various rooms of displays, and Christmas past, I am becoming more relaxed and more in tune with the spirit of the times and the people in the store. By the time I make it to the ornament room it is shoulder shoulder and ornaments are flying off the shelves as children pick out heirlooms that will become part of their history, their lives and their memories. I find the area the blue monkey was in, and I locate the last one, and move to the end



Holiday Parade kicks off! 150 plus more photos online at <http://lakewoodobserver.com>.



Our favorite High School Band, Lakewood High gets things going!



How many Girl Scouts can you fit in a trailer on a cold night?



Lakewood's second favorite marching band! Oh yeah! Now we are having fun!



Ghostbusters for the holidays, I think this event is really finding itself.

of the line, the very long line, that forms nearly every December, but it is in a place where there are over a million things to see while waiting. The line is moving slowly as each ornament is purchased then signed by BILL HIXSON! OMG what is this? So I start talking with people around me, from Wooster, from Cleveland, from Toledo and find out they are here just to see new ornaments, and get them signed! I ask the couple from Frankenmuth, Michigan, the home of Christmas in America, why here and not there, and they say, "They don't have Bill Hixson!"

Over the past 12 years I have had the pleasure of reacquainting my self with Bill Hixson and his side kick Eunice, and it has been just that a pleasure. The man, the artist that has decorated White House

Christmas trees going back to Reagan's first term.. The man who invented the modeling clay all flowers are held in, the man who travels to Japan each year to help with many of the charities over there he has helped to form and nurture. Bill Hixson might be the best PR piece ever put into play in Lakewood. He is known all over the world, and simply should never be ignored. December 20th take some time, grab the kids, the grand parents and stop in Hixson's for a walk through. I bet you find that last minute item you are desperately looking for, and like myself many years ago, discover the real meaning of this holiday season.

14125 Detroit Avenue
Hours: Daily 10am - 9pm
Sat. 10am - 6pm, Sun. 12pm - 5pm

Light Up Lakewood 2014



Great fun for the entire family... “Hold still, let me get this photo...



... Hold on...” “Dad stop moving!”



Ok, maybe great memories and fun for some of the family.

photos by Jim O'Bryan



There are idiosyncrasies of the event that used to bother me, but now I have grown to love them. One is trying to find a place to see the fireworks. The first year they started right after lighting and no one saw them. This year they gave us a 30 minute chance to run to our favorite spot! I don't care what you think, I love that.



Lakewood families smiling and having fun everywhere! This is what it is about!



A University of Akron student



Once you get past the trunks, some of the other features are just beautiful.



You wait for hours to see Buddy the Elf, and then, there he is! This year he brought a family of Who's and a cheerful Grinch! Now we're talking.



Emerson Unicyclists!



All the Lakewood businesses were hopping, but especially if you served hot liquids. It was standing room only at the Root Café!



Councilwoman-At-Large Cindy Marx and LakewoodAlive's Director Ian Andrews.

photos by Jim O'Bryan



But everyone goes nuts when they light the trunks! It's so CLE! Happy Holidays To All!

Lakewood Cares

Cox Communications Provides Low-Cost Internet For Families

by Allison Urbanek

LakewoodAlive is thrilled to spotlight a wonderful program offered by Cox Communications through a partnership with Connect2Compete, a nonprofit program. Connect2Compete brings affordable and fast Internet to area families.

“Ask Roxann” Looking At The School Calendar

continued from page 8

achievement of approximately .50

- A two grade leap in GCSE, e.g. from a C to an A grade
- An effect size above 0.4 is above average for educational research

If an effect size of 0 shows no effect and an effect size of 1.0 is clearly enormous, as a parent consumer of educational quality when should you start to think that the payout is worth the cost? The general rule of thumb is that if an educational effect is .40 or greater it is worth an investment.

Developing high expectations for each student has an effect size of 1.44. High expectations refers to students expectations for and beliefs in themselves. Teachers need to provide opportunities for students to be involved in predicting their performance. Making the learning intentions and success criteria transparent, having high, but appropriate,

and fast Internet to area families. According to the US Census Bureau, one in four homes are without access to the Internet. Often times, lower income families are unable to take advantage of the Internet to keep in touch with family,

expectations, and providing feedback at the appropriate levels is critical to building confidence in taking on challenging tasks. The Common Core embodies higher expectations for all students, while allowing local school districts the freedom to set forth the pathways to reach those significant learning goals, and allowing the teachers’ professional autonomy.

While more information will be forthcoming regarding the results of the calendar survey, I would welcome additional dialogue and questions so that we can partner to find creative and innovate ways to use instructional time to give all Lakewood students a well-rounded, individualized, rigorous, and socially and emotionally appropriate education.

References: <http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk> <<http://www.teacherstoolbox.co.uk/>.

research important topics or learn skills that give them a competitive edge in the work place. The Connect2Compete program is working to help make the Internet affordable and accessible especially for families with children.

Cox has partnered with Connect2Compete to provide fast, low cost Internet locally. In addition to the affordable price of \$9.95 plus tax per month, there is no contract, no deposit, no modem or installation fees and the price is guaranteed

for two years. There are several criteria that a household must meet: 1) must have at least one child who is eligible for the National School Lunch Program, 2) has not subscribed to Internet services within the last 90 days, and 3) cannot have any outstanding bills or unreturned equipment with Cox.

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— Clark

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11 p.m.
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Lakewood Is Art

I Wrote These While I Was Supposed To Be Balancing Equations:

Reviews Of New Releases By Local Bands

by Buzzy Kompier

Record reviews are a tricky business. It's one thing to enjoy music, but to, like, pick out what you like about it? That being said, if I review your thing and I didn't like something, don't feel too bad. My opinion doesn't matter all that much.

Mirrors - Something That Would Never Do - Mustard Records - 16 songs - Download

One of several Cleveland bands listed as the forefathers of punk, Mirrors gained somewhat more notoriety once they split, with some members going on to join The Styrenes. Previously released on vinyl by Violet Times in 2009, this new, download-only issue adds one song, "All My Life." The songs themselves have singer Jamie Klimek's distinctive, visceral voice,

guitars that switch from sweet, light leads into snarling, distorted power chords, primitive drumming, strange layers of keyboards, and more. Mirrors, like other "proto-punk" bands, are obviously influenced by The Velvet Underground, but Mirrors go further, mixing the three-chord power and lyricisms of Lou Reed with melodies somewhat reminiscent of "Forever Changes"-era Love. "How Could I" somewhat emulates "I'll Be Your Mirror" (only with harpsichord and without the German accent) in its guitar leads. "Hands In My Pockets" is influenced by the three-chord songs found on "White Light/White Heat," as well as outtake "Guess I'm Falling In Love," clearly, but with Klimek's unique spin on things. Other highlights include the hilarious "Penthouse

Legend," with its goofy, album-titling refrain and manic energy, and the loony choruses of "Everything Near Me." 4/5

electric eels - Die Electric Eels - Superior Viaduct - songs - Vinyl, download

Lakewood hometown heroes electric eels are often cited as the first punk band ever, and this record lends itself to that theory. It contains the famed single "Agitated/Cyclotron" as well as material found on the eels' other, hard-to-find reissues of the past, such as "The Eyeball of Hell" and "Those Were Different Times." The songs are trebly assaults, with Dave E McManus's whining vocals and the twin-guitar, no-bass madness provided by John Morton and Brian McMahon. I believe the only song with bass is the two-chord, experimental piece, "Natural Situation." Also includes Cleveland punk anthem "Jaguar Ride," the random, grooving "Refrigerator," and the great "Anxiety," described by Julian Cope as "the most clamorous de-glamourising of a song, ever." 4/5

Cleveland Steamers - Who's Next? - Smog Veil Records - 10 songs - Vinyl, CD

The Cleveland Steamers' second album rocks just as much, if not more, than their first. "Standing In Line"

(and its reprise, "Still Standing") are odes to waiting for the checkout, listening to idiotic customer's complaints and jibber jabber. The band recruits Adults' saxophonist Marianne Friend for the second track "Dance Baby!" which recalls not only some songs by that band, but some songs of Cleveland legends the Easter Monkeys as well. The dual vocals of Meredith Rutledge and Cheese Borger work perfectly, both switching back and forth between lead and backing. And the band, composed of guitarist Nick Summa (from Floydband) and Death Of Samantha drummer Steve-O, ain't bad either. Plus, the 2 Bobs (Richey and Sablack) make guest appearances on "Papa Oom Maw Maw" and "Being With You," as well as Tom "Freddy Pants" Fallon on the drums for "Papa Oom Maw Maw." What this all adds up to is a record perfect for any fan of the Defnics, the Pink Holes, and any other band mentioned previously in this review. 4/5

Are you a local band? Do you have a record out that you'd like me to review? Email me a link at vaguelythreatening@gmail.com or just let me know you're sending it, and mail whatever non-digital format to John Kompier, c/o Lakewood Observer, 14900 Detroit Ave, Suite 205, Lakewood OH, 44107.

Mirrors Play Old Home Night At Beachland Ballroom Dec 21st

by Betsy Voinovich

If you missed the much talked about appearance of Lakewood's own proto-punks, Mirrors, performing their superb tribute to Lou Reed a couple months after his death, you will have one last chance to see them later this month at The Beachland's Old Home Night, on Sunday December 21st.

The current Mirrors line-up consists of founder Jamie Klimek on guitar and vocals, newcomer-to-the band Brent Ferguson on bass, Studio-A-Rama veterans Dave Franduto on vocals and guitar, Tom Madej, drums, and Tom Fallon, of many memorable Cleveland bands, past and present, including Satan's Satellite's, The New Salem Witch Hunters and The Amazing Pink Holes on vocals and yet a third guitar. If you haven't experienced Mirrors wall of guitars— dense, in your face, and melodic all at once—you'd be doing yourself a favor to drive over the bridge from Lakewood to Collinwood, even if it is snowing.

Klimek wants everyone to know that this, Mirrors Fifth Fare-



From left, Tom Fallon, Brent Ferguson, Tom Madej, Jamie Klimek and Dave Franduto with Beachland co-owner Mark Leddy looking on from the rail.

well appearance, is a benefit show for Klimek himself while he is still alive and can spend the money, and says that there is a good chance that he will do the show lying down on the stage, or possibly from the audience, in a chair with a drink, as he recently realized that "the rest of the band members play rings around me."

Don't miss it.
Mirrors/Home and Garden/Nick Riley AllStars 8PM, December 21st, 2014, at the Beachland Ballroom, 15711 Waterloo Rd, Cleveland, OH 44110.

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Wellness Watch

6 Tips To Help Grieving Kids Survive The Holidays

by Laurie Henrichsen

Children are “Forgotten Grievers”

Grieving children experience conflicting emotions during the holiday season. Excitement about presents and parties are coupled with the sadness of knowing they cannot share these special traditions with their deceased loved one.

“Family traditions may have changed since the death. It may seem like nothing is the same as it used to be or everything is the same, except that their special person is missing,” said Diane Snyder Cowan, Director of Hospice of the Western Reserve’s Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center.

Snyder Cowan said children are sometimes called “the forgotten grievers.” While adults may be consumed by their own feelings of sorrow and loss following the death of a loved one, they should also be aware of the special needs of children, who may withdraw or try to mask their feelings. “They lack the experience of adults in

coping with the powerful - and sometimes unpredictable – mood swings and emotions that are a normal part of the grieving and healing process. They need extra support and guidance,” she said.

She offered the following tips to help children manage grief during the holidays:

- 1) Gently reassure them that it’s okay to talk about and express feelings to someone they trust.
- 2) Encourage them to ask for comfort and hugs.
- 3) Provide a journal or notebook and encourage them to write down or draw feelings, thoughts and memories. This can be in a journal or letter to the person who died.
- 4) Light a candle and encourage your child to surround it with photos in memory of their loved one.
- 5) If your teen enjoys cooking, suggest preparing their loved one’s favorite dish for the holiday dinner table as a way to remember and honor their memory.
- 6) Suggest volunteering or making a charitable donation to an organization that was meaningful to the loved one such as a local nature center or food pantry.

“The holidays are very difficult for those who are grieving,” Snyder Cowan said. “Working together as a family to plan ahead and meet each person’s needs and wants is always helpful. It’s okay to set limits and to say ‘no’ to some things. It’s good - and normal - to laugh and love as well as cry and remember.”

The Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center offers an extensive range of grief support services and tools available to anyone, including many in Lakewood and the surrounding suburbs. Services include one-on-one

counseling, free grief support groups, videos, a parents’ tool kit, online grief discussion groups and more.

About Hospice of the Western Reserve

Founded in 1978, Hospice of the Western Reserve has grown in response to community needs. The nonprofit agency offers one of the largest community hospice programs in the country. Its calling extends far

beyond “typical hospice care” to serving the most vulnerable, including a pediatric program for children with life-threatening illnesses, grief support and crisis response for schools, and specialized end-of-life care for the most complex cases. For more information, call 800-707-8922 or visit hospicewr.org. The Lakewood Office is located at 14601 Detroit Avenue, Suite 100.

Stress Management For The Holidays

by Cynthia Kessler

No, it wasn’t your imagination. Christmas candy treats and decorations were already crammed on store shelves the day after Halloween! The big box retailers pushed up Black Friday to 6:30 a.m. Thanksgiving Day. The television commercials bombard us with images of luxury cars wrapped in giant red ribbons and children playing with the latest electronic gadgets. Don’t forget the news coverage of anxious, stressed out people standing in line for those retail ‘doorbusters’ on Thanksgiving Day.

Needless to say, the holidays can be stressful and sometimes difficult to navigate. On the other hand, the holidays can be joyous and rich in traditions. Some people look forward to them with great anticipation, others might have mixed emotions and joke about just surviving them, while even others

might outright dread them. What might your holiday look like if you weren’t just trying to get through it?

As a psychotherapist I have often found that the two to three weeks prior to a major holiday and after are high stress for lots of people. They can be fraught with expectations of oneself and others. Some families may be spread across the country and only see each other once a year. A college student may be visiting her parent(s), a soldier may be coming home, a child of divorced parents may have to visit two different households. Let’s not forget that other people may be alone. For others, there may be a painful, unresolved childhood memory of a parent always drinking too much and totally spoiling the holiday for them. Holidays can also be an especially bittersweet time when there has been a loss of a loved one.

continued on page 20

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Business News

Lakewood Chamber Announces “Why I Love Lakewood” Essay Contest Winner

by Valerie Mechenbier

Clement Bouvier, a fourth grader at Lincoln Elementary School, is the winner of the 2014 “Why I Love Lakewood” Fourth Grade Essay Contest. Clem’s essay was chosen from 123 heartfelt essays submitted by Lakewood 4th graders. In addition to winning a \$100 cash prize, Clem rode in the Light Up Lakewood parade in a car provided by Steve Barry Buick and helped “flip the switch” with Santa and Mayor Summers to turn on the lights in Downtown Lakewood as part of the Light Up Lakewood festivities on December 6th. Congratulations, Clem!

Why I Love Lakewood
by Clement Bouvier

My dad and I talk a lot about what I want to be when I grow up. Right now I want to be a computer engineer, a piano player or a teacher and I can learn about all of these things in Lakewood.

My favorite place is the Lakewood Library because I can read as many books as I want to. I can find out about anything there. I also love my school, Lincoln Elementary, where I have music class and sing in the Lincoln Singers. I take piano lessons at Educators Music—a fun place with nice people. But I think I do a lot of learning because there are things that happen in Lakewood that don’t happen anywhere else.

This summer I went to Meet the Trucks at Lakewood Park and I got to walk inside a fire truck, a police wagon, a front loader and a snow plow. In summer I read twenty-one books for the Library’s summer reading program. I learn a lot just by walking down Detroit Avenue and seeing different kinds of churches and eating in restaurants with food from all over the world. I learn a lot in Lakewood because it’s unique and has great people and what I know now is that I want to live the rest of my life here.



Lakewood Chamber of Commerce President, Patty Ryan with this year’s “Why I Love Lakewood” essay contest winner, Clement Bouvier.

Lakewood Plant Company And Peace By Piece Cleveland

by Daniel Gifford

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Opinion

One For All, Assault At The ‘Frog Park’

by Sara Kass

On Tuesday, November 12, 2014 at about 7 p.m., a child looked into the window of Cyrano’s Place, a fencing club at 15639 Madison Ave. I was the coach at the time and seeing the child, I did what I normally do, and invited the child to watch me finish the lesson with another student. The child, 11 years old, explained that he had gone to the park on Madison, the ‘Frog Park,’ after school, where he had been assaulted by a bunch of teenagers.

He ran away from the teenagers as fast as he could only to find himself at a shop. The personnel at the shop helped clean off the blood from his fat lip and bleeding nose. Then, they sent him on his way.

On hearing this child’s sad tale, I told him that I would be calling the police on his behalf, not because he was in trouble, but because he had been wronged. Then the child started to shake and tremble. Reality started to set in. The child’s mom would meet the police at Cyrano’s Place before taking the scared child home to safety.

When I was 17, someone came up behind me and tried to rape me. I went into competitive fencing mode, which saved me big time. I looked like a battered wife after the fact. There is a healing process that happens after physical/emotional trauma like this.

One of the biggest hurts is not having your own pain recognized for what it is. Or, being told, it’s your own fault that you were assaulted. How is it your own fault? I don’t know. I guess you intended to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

What I can’t understand is why any adult would let a hurt child go back on the street after he had been attacked.

Were they thinking, ‘These things happen, now go on with your own business and leave me alone?’ How can you not get involved? At least get the child back to their parent or the police when something like this happens.

I’m appalled that this happened. I’m appalled that four hours after the incident this child is walking aimlessly around town too freaked out to truly

make a sound decision to help himself.

We need to be vigilant for the entire community, always, for ALL our neighbors. These teens who hurt this child will have no reason to stop, unless we as a community give them a reason. Call this bullying if you want, but the truth is, this child was assaulted at one of Lakewood’s parks! And it needs to STOP!

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Sponsored by the Community West Foundation, the raffle to select the 40 prize winners

takes place on Saturday, February 14, 2015, at the Straight from the Heart red-tie gala at LaCentre Conference and Banquet Facility in Westlake. In addition, early raffle ticket purchasers are entered into two early bird drawings on December 12th and January 16th. Each winner receives a \$1,000 cash prize.

With such a great cause and so many incredible prizes, why not purchase a Straight from the Heart raffle ticket for your chance to win

the \$100,000 grand prize and 39 other amazing prizes? Raffle tickets are \$100 each or three tickets for \$200.

To see a full list of available prizes, or to purchase raffle tickets online, visit www.straightfromtheheartevent.org or contact the Community West Foundation at 216.476.7061.

All proceeds from this raffle will benefit cardiovascular services at Fairview, Lakewood and Lutheran Hospitals.



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Stress Management Holidays

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Stress does not need to be regarded as a feeling to avoid. In fact, it’s impossible to avoid. It’s quite natural to sometimes experience what psychologists call anticipatory anxiety or stress, where body and mind are preparing for even a positive event, similar to a runner preparing for a marathon. The antidote is to get to know what your stress is about. Determine if it’s internal (“I must create the perfect holiday family reunion”) or external (“My mother expects me to create the perfect holiday family reunion”). Once you become aware of and identify your particular stressor, you gain back some control. Now you can decide what you need to do in order to help manage and reduce your stress. For example, lower too high expectations about the perfect family gathering; or maybe take a ten minute ‘time out’ for some restful breathing and quiet away from all the holiday hosting. Make the holiday about how you want it to be with the people you care about.

Cynthia Kessler, Ph.D. has been a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist for the past 25 years. Medicare, Medicaid, and other insurance accepted. She has a private psychotherapy practice in the INA Building at 14701 Detroit Ave., Lakewood, OH. She can be contacted at (216)543-1695.

Lakewood Living

My Best Friend's Bowl:

Local Group Helps Families Stay Together

by Mike Deneen

It's December, which means Lakewood is enjoying the holiday season...the time of year to gather with family and friends. For thousands of Lakewoodites, "family" means not only humans, but household pets.

One local group works year-round to keep families together through difficult financial times. My Best Friend's Bowl (MBFB) is a local volunteer group that collects and distributes pet food to local families in need. This prevents beloved pets from being surrendered to local shelters.

The group was started by Judy Towner, a volunteer at Lakewood Community Services Center. Towner was working the counter at LCSC in January 2011 when a woman asked if they might have dog food. Luckily that day there happened to a bag of dog food in the warehouse. "When I gave it to her she got teary eyed and told me she had been giving her dog rice," Towner recalls.

Judy realized that there were likely to be others in need, so she sprang into action. She started seeking pet food donations, and portioned them out into smaller bags to distribute. Word began to spread about her efforts, and soon the community was helping out. Local pet stores began sending her



Local kids team up with Westerly residents to bag and distribute pet food to families in need.

opened bags of food, and area rescue groups spread the word to collect more donations. She was eventually able to give out 10 pound bags of dog food, and 3.5 pound bags of cat food. The group has grown to more than 12 active volunteers, and they now serve over 120 dogs and over 50 cats per month.

Many local organizations have made My Best Friends Bowl possible. Supporting businesses include Pet's General Store and Pet Supplies Plus in Lakewood; Style Mutt in Cleveland;

and Pet People in Avon. Friends of the Lakewood Dog Park (FLDP) and Citizens Committee for the Lakewood Animal Shelter (CCLAS) have also been avid supporters. Animal rescue groups such as "The Rescue Inn" have also provided tremendous help. Lake Erie Screw Factory donates space to store food. The Lakewood Foundation acts as the group's fiscal agent.

Local kids have been especially helpful. Girl Scout troops, grade school classes from the Lakewood School District, and kids from Lakewood Catholic

Academy have held collection drives. H2O, the volunteer group at Lakewood High School, has helped with distribution. "Without their help, we wouldn't be what or who we are today," Towner says of these numerous supporters.

MBFB plays a crucial role in the local pet community. By helping people in need to keep their pets, they reduce the number of animals that are abandoned or surrendered to local shelters and rescue groups. "I have heard so many people say how our distribution helps them feed their pets," says Towner. "They have enough difficulty feeding their families let alone their pets. Some have expressed that if they had not received our help, they would have to have given them away or surrendered them to a shelter."

How You Can Help

Sadly, demand for MBFB's help has increased in recent months as the difficult economy continues to affect pet owners. However, there are many ways that you can help:

- * Cash donations can be made by check, made out to The Lakewood Foundation (MBFB's fiscal agent), and sent to 16024 Madison Avenue Lakewood 44107. Please put "My Best Friend's Bowl" in the memo line.

Monetary donations can also be

continued on next page



My Best Friend's Bowl relies on the help of volunteers of all ages to help provide pet food to needy families.

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This time of year, we often take time to celebrate life and make memories with loved ones. It's also a time to honor and remember those who have died. Grief is a natural and necessary process, but it can be one of the most difficult experiences we face in life. Hospice of the Western Reserve can help. Our Elisabeth Severance Prentiss Bereavement Center is here for anyone who has experienced a loss through death—even if you haven't directly received our hospice services. Attend a group, explore online grief discussions, download resources, reach out to us and choose the hospice of choice.

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Lakewood Living

Twins Are A Couple Of “Jammy Buggars”

by Ingrid Dickson & Irene Joyce

One late Thursday night, we Taster Twins, with our patient husbands in tow, visited the soon to be a Lakewood landmark, Jammy Buggars. The name brings a smile to your face, particularly when you discover that it means “lucky individual” in British slang. Patrons who eat here are indeed fortunate because the food is inspired and consistently delectable.

The New England Lobster rolls are a perpetual favorite with the Taster Twins. The chilled shrimp and lobster adorned with a zesty mayonnaise nestled in a warm folded over bread is

absolutely delicious. Paired with hand-cut French fries, this dish is not to be missed.

Each month, Jammy Buggars offers special burgers with artistic ingredients, but you cannot go wrong creating your own burger with a luscious dollop of fresh mozzarella atop. They cook the patties to order, so their special blend of beef is always perfectly flavorful and immensely satisfying.

The ultra-creamy macaroni and cheese is the ideal way to throw dietary caution to the wind and just enjoy yourself.

Our husbands were duly impressed

with the massive selection of beers and were not shy about sampling something new.

The service was leisurely, giving us plenty of time to savor our appetizers, the highlight of which was the sauce-laden chicken wings. They were meaty and messy—two of our favorite qualities in a wing! The wait staff was quick to rescue us with extra napkins, which were very much needed and appreciated.

When the entrees arrived, we were ready to eat and we weren’t disappointed.

Never ones to deny ourselves dessert, we had to order the peanut

butter pie. Although we were pretty full and somewhat sauce-covered, the charms of the sweet, velvety, peanut-buttery concoction proved irresistible. We were glad we didn’t deny ourselves the pleasure of a decadent dessert to top off a delightful dining experience.

Jammy Buggars has a stated goal of “to make Jammy Buggars a favorite meeting place by combining a welcoming, community-focused atmosphere, moderate prices and warm service. We want people to be comfortable... just like being at your Mother’s house (but, with better beer).” We think they’ve succeeded!

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My Best Friend’s Bowl:

Local Group Helps Families Stay Together

continued from previous page

made via paypal at their website www.mybestfriendsbowlakewood.com on the “how can I help” page.

*Food donations can be made at the following locations:

Lakewood Community Services Center 14230 Madison Avenue Monday-Friday 10am-2pm and Wednesday 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Pet’s General Store 16821 Madison

Avenue 216-226-0886.

Pet Supplies Plus 14839 Detroit Avenue 216-6827 In the Marc’s Plaza. Look for the blue donation bin by the exit.

*The group has numerous volunteer opportunities available. These include bagging and tagging of food; help with events; and other tasks. If interested, visit their website www.mybestfriendsbowlakewood.com and click the “how can I help” page.



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Lakewood Living

Homes For The Holidays

by Chris Bergin

Once upon a time, real estate was thought to slow down as the new year approached, giving way to hot cocoa and flurries of snow. These days, we know better, and when winter comes around, it's also time to buy or sell your house. So grab your mug, sit down by a fire and find out why now is the season of homes for the holidays!

- Twinkling with holiday lights,

your house will shine bright to eager buyers looking for their perfect home.

- Temperature isn't the only thing dropping this winter; mortgage rates are near historic lows.
- Homes are new beginnings for buyers & sellers. When the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, sellers will want to start fresh and buyers will want to be all settled into their

new home.

- Serious buyers are out. Your home won't be subject to casual window shoppers, (they're too busy at the mall).
- Buyers have extra time off from work, which means more hours in their day to search for a home.
- January is typically the month when employees are transferred to new positions. To capture these buyers,

your home must be on the market now because they often cannot wait until the spring to move.

Keep in mind that you are in control of your home. If you are going to have family or friends visiting simply create blackout dates when your home is not available to be shown. Don't want to move during the holiday? No problem, advertise upfront that you'd prefer a specific transfer date to the new owner. Remember, everything is negotiable in real estate!

There are plenty of reasons why winter is a great time for buyers too! Remember the old adage, "the early bird gets the worm?"

Youth Challenge Honors Top Teen Volunteers

by Kathy Rigdon

The Youth Challenge Dance and Drama program will kick off the season with a Holiday Show on December 14 at Magnificat High School's Performing Arts Center. The event will also include a Volunteer Recognition to honor the year's top teen volunteers.

Youth Challenge offers free, year-round programs to over 160 participants throughout the Greater Cleveland area. The participants are children with such disabilities as muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and hearing or vision impairments. Transportation to and from programs is also provided at no charge.

Dance and Drama is one of 350 programs that Youth Challenge offers each year thanks to the help of over 400 teen volunteers who gave over 10,500 hours of service. The teen volunteers are trained to work with children with physical disabilities and are paired one-on-one with participants at each program.

Special recognition will be given to volunteers who have reached the levels of 25, 50, and 100 hours in 2014. Teens who reached the milestones of 100, 250, and 500 hours of cumulative service to Youth Challenge will be honored as well.

The top 10 Youth Challenge teen volunteers of 2014 are:

- Kendra Cundiff, Junior, St. Joseph Academy, 256 Hours
- Zac Alberty, Junior, North Olmsted HS, 234 Hours
- Olivia Rivard, Junior, St. Joseph Academy, 195.5 Hours
- Maya Cundiff, Sophomore, St. Joseph Academy, 187 Hours
- Summer Ohman, Freshman, Fairview High School, 158 Hours
- Halle Mackert, Senior, Westlake High School, 128 Hours
- Teresa DePace, Senior, Valley Forge High School, 123 Hours
- Bill Bis, Freshman, Miami University (Westlake HS Grad), 116 Hours
- Nick Morris, Senior, St. Edward High School, 115 Hours
- Marisa Francis, Freshman, Gallaudet University (Lakewood HS Grad), 107 Hours

"Our teen volunteers are half of our mission and are truly what make Youth Challenge possible," said Sarah Perez-Stable, Director of Volunteer Services. "The energy, joy, fun and friendship they bring to their partners makes an incredible difference in the lives of our participants and we can't thank them enough."

The Holiday Show and Volunteer Recognition is Sunday, December 14, 2-5 p.m. at the Magnificat Performing Arts Center, 20770 Hilliard Blvd. in Rocky River. For more information visit www.youthchallengesports.com or call 440-892-1001.

The Youth Challenge Holiday Show is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.

There are fewer buyers in the market in the winter, so there is less competition. This can make the difference in our market where the inventory is extremely low and buyers may be finding themselves in a bidding war.

- Only serious sellers are on the market in the winter, making it more likely that they will strive to negotiate for a win-win scenario.
- Fewer buyers also mean fewer loans are being processed. Interest rates drop every winter on a cyclical basis. This also means faster closings.
- Finally, enjoy your summer! You can avoid spending your summer vacation with the masses searching for your new home. Instead you'll already be settled in, enjoying your new home, sprucing up your landscaping and grilling on your new patio!

You can start your homework today at www.ClevelandRealEstateSource.com. Info as well as at www.HomeValuesInLakewood.Info. Both sites will get you on your path to achieving your real estate goals for the new year.

Chris Bergin is a licensed real estate agent with Berkshire Hathaway Lucien Realty in Lakewood and can be reached at Chris@ChrisBergin.com.



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