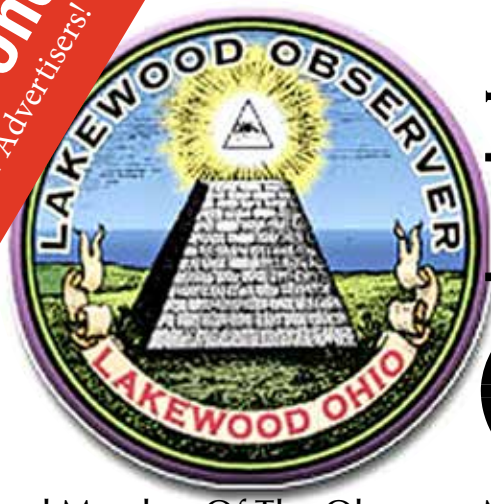


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Volume 17, Issue 24, December 15, 2021

LO's Holiday Lighting Contest - Which One Is The Best - VOTE NOW!

by Jim O'Bryan

This year we have over 120 entries to vote on. Thank you to all who sent in photos of their homes, their neighbor's, or that one house down the street that brings a smile to their face this holiday season. The different styles of decorations highlight the diverse artistic expressions of Lakewoodites, from the very simple to the way over the top. To everyone who took the time to put up lights and hang a wreath, Thank you. They are all appreciated and enjoyed. Now, let's find some winners.

Take out a piece of paper and a pen. Go to the photo gallery at www.lakewoodobserver.com, go through the different photos writing down the number of your 5 favorites. (You must choose 5). Then go to the Question of the Day right under the photo gallery on the front page and list your answer with a comma between each number. EXAMPLE: 005, 121, 257, 222, 001. It is that easy!

If you are nominated you can vote for yourself, but you have to vote for four other homes too. Any entry with less than five choices will be deleted, any entry with more than five will also be deleted. Three voters will be chosen at random for a gift certificate



or a GLOW IN THE DARK Lakewood Observer T-Shirt!

VOTING CAN BE DONE from Wednesday 12.15.2021 through 12/20/21 - MIDNIGHT.

You can only vote once a day! (You must vote for 5 different homes)

Votes will be tabulated and narrowed down to the top 20, prior to 12/20/21. The next day voting to decide the top 10 for prizes begins, stopping at Midnight 12/26/2021 On December 27, 2021 we will post the winners.

Winners will need to contact the Lakewood Observer to claim their prizes.

Prizes are graciously provided by Woodstock BBQ, India Garden, The West End Tavern, and The Root Cafe.



New Jewish Center Opens In Lakewood

by Rabbi Jacobs

A new Jewish Discovery Center is opening in Lakewood.

Chabad of the West Side, a local non-profit organization serving Cleveland's western suburbs for the past 5 years under the leadership of Rabbi Mendel and Devora Jacobs is excited to announce that their new center is finally ready to open for the community.

The ribbon cutting and mezuzah affixing ceremony were held at the center with Mayor Meghan George of Lakewood and dignitaries



appearing at 2:30 PM, at 15618 Madison Ave. in Lakewood.

Future programs include children's extracurricular activities and afterschool programs, adult education opportunities, and Jewish holiday celebrations.



In Canton on December 3, St Edward challenged Springfield for the State Championship, building a solid night with Quarterback Christian Ramos (146 yards 1 TD), the solid Defense that got four sacks, and the speed of Senior running back Danny Enovitch. By the end of the night St. Eds had brought the title back to Lakewood. Congratulations on a great year! We caught the “Yard Party” crew putting up this sign last night. They specialize in custom lawn greetings at: yardpartypeople.com.

Healthy Lakewood Foundation Accepting Applications For Board Member Position

by Kate Ingersoll

The Healthy Lakewood Foundation (HLF) is actively seeking a passionate, diverse, and committed member of the Lakewood community to serve on its Board of Directors. Interested members of the community are invited to apply to serve on the Foundation's Board of Directors for a 2-year term commencing in March 2022.

At this time, only Lakewood residents can be considered for this open position in order to maintain a board composition whereby at least 2/3 of members are Lakewood residents per the organization's by-laws.

The HLF Board values inclusiveness in its membership and seeks diversity to ensure that a range of skills, professional backgrounds, and lived experiences are represented and actively involved in the pursuit of its mission: To advance programs, policies, and practices that inspire a Lakewood community in which health and wellness are reflected in all aspects of life.

For a link to the online application and more information about the Healthy Lakewood Foundation and its Board of Directors, please visit HLF's website at: <https://healthylakewoodfoundation.org/>.

Applications will be accepted until January 15, 2022. Following an initial review of applications by HLF's Governance Committee, a

select number of potential candidates will be interviewed for consideration.

Please note that financial contribution is neither expected nor required for HLF board membership.

Please email admin@healthylakewoodfoundation.org.

org with any questions or for technical support in completing the application form.

To learn more about HLF, visit <https://healthylakewoodfoundation.org/>.

Kate Ingersoll is the Executive Director of the Healthy Lakewood Foundation.

Neighborhood Family Practice Continues Efforts

by Andrea Lyons

Since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, Neighborhood Family Practice (NFP) has targeted efforts to increase awareness, education and outreach and later, testing and vaccines, to at-risk and underserved community members. Those efforts continue today.

“Throughout the past year, we’ve worked independently, with state and local government, and other community partners to increase awareness and knowledge about COVID, along with access to testing and vaccines for the more vulnerable and underserved Black, Hispanic/Latino, low-income and refugee populations in our community – the very populations that have been disproportionately affected by the virus,” says Jean Poster, RN, MS, NFP's president and CEO.

Since January 2021, NFP has:

- provided 29,000 vaccinations to 15,000 individuals



16110 Detroit Ave, Lakewood, OH 44107

- 4,250 shots since August
- Conducted 100 community vaccination clinics with community partners

Along with participating in The Cleveland Community Health Centers COVID Services collaborative in partnership with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Cleveland Department of Public Health and local hospital systems, NFP partnered with LaSagrada Familia Church, the Hispanic Roundtable, Saint Paul AME Church and other local community organizations to prioritize the

continued on page 3

The Mayor's Corner

Many Accomplishments In A Difficult Year

by Meghan George
Mayor, City of Lakewood

Happy Holidays from all of us at City Hall! The past year has been filled with many achievements for our city, even as the pandemic continues to affect our lives. As we bring 2021 to a close, I'd to spend a few lines highlighting some things we can all be proud of accomplishing here in Lakewood over the past 12 months.

Rising to the Challenge of COVID-19: It's hard to remember, but when we began the year, vaccines were still not in general distribution and protocols were still very restrictive. Despite this, our city workers truly rose to the occasion and made sacrifices to keep services in place while also keeping us all safe. I am also grateful to all of you who have offered kind words and thanks to our staff – it means so much to all of us.

Caring for Those in Crisis: Our continued response to the impact of the pandemic included using some of our federal COVID dollars to provide rental assistance that kept people in their homes. The funds are dedicated exclusively to low-income recipients who are at risk of losing their housing due to the pandemic and have helped hundreds of our neighbors weather this storm.

Fiscal Excellence: Our commitment to fiscal excellence, transparency, and stewardship at City Hall was recognized externally this year when both the Ohio Auditor of State and the national Government Finance Officers Association both presented awards to our Finance Department.

Affordability: Using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, we were able to reduce the previously approved water and sewer rate increases by dedi-

cating \$25 million toward necessary water and sewer infrastructure needs. This puts real dollars in every ratepayer's hands by lessening the water and sewer rates now and in future years.

Census Results: We received news this year that our united efforts to get an accurate census count succeeded. Lakewood once again topped 50,000 residents – beating estimates to ensure we continue receiving key federal dollars and our people are fairly represented in government. It also means we are the third largest city in the county, and the 17th largest in the entire state.

Public Space Improvements: Several of Lakewood's parks saw major improvements this year, including Madison Park, Kauffman Park, and Clifton Prado, and our effort to make the Detroit Sloane intersection more pedestrian and bike friendly and welcoming is just wrapping up.

Investing in Safety: A top priority we all share is safety, and this year the

City continued to make sure our first responders are staffed and outfitted to keep residents safe. From modernizing and renovating Fire Station 2 to adding 40 new cameras across the city, we have invested in keeping Lakewood safe.

Listening to Lakewood's Priorities: Over the year, many of you have approached me and my administration voicing thoughts about issues as they have arisen, and we have done our best to be responsive. Whether it was safety concerns at Madison Park, a need to improve field conditions for those involved in recreation programming, or general ways to improve services, our goal was to listen first, and then find the best solution possible within the budget to make changes quickly for impact. I hope you have seen some results that have made a difference.

I'll close by saying it was a joy to see so many of you recently at Light Up Lakewood, where the weather was fantastic and thousands turned out to celebrate. What a great way to bring people together. I hope that you and yours all have a wonderful holiday season.

Happy holidays from our family to yours.



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Upcoming Submission Deadline

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Lakewood Observer



Detroit Sloane Project Nears Completion

from City Hall

The City of Lakewood expects the Detroit Sloane improvement project to be fully completed before the end of December.

The work done will significantly improve pedestrian and cyclist safety at this high-use intersection which serves as a key gateway to both our city and the Rocky River Reservation.

The project also incorporated water and sewer upgrades to address compromised, century-old infrastructure while the street was torn up, saving time and taxpayer dollars by completing the work simultaneously.

Construction Updates:

Lauderdale Avenue: Work continues on Lauderdale, with notices and electronic message boards being updated to keep residents up-to-date on the work being done.

Elbur Avenue: Crosswalks and ADA curb ramps are being worked on.

Leedale Avenue: Crosswalk at Leedale and Lake Avenue have been poured, and the ADA curb ramp will be replaced on the east side.

2021 Resurfacing Project: All of the planned work is complete as 2021 comes to a close.

Neighborhood Family Practice Continues Efforts

continued from page 1

information and care provided to communities of color.

“It is not only our mission, but also our obligation as a federally qualified community health center to create and provide systems of care that are equitable and accessible to all Clevelanders,” says Polster. “Our COVID-19 outreach efforts were, and continue to be, very deliberate. We want to help reduce virus-related illness and death among those who are most at-risk.”

In these times when our country is faced with battling the ongoing pandemic along with racial disparity, NFP continues to fight to address both by providing COVID-19 outreach, education and more. Testing and vaccines (including pediatric and booster vaccines) are available by appointment at NFPs seven community health center locations on Cleveland’s near west side.

About Neighborhood Family Practice

Founded in 1980 in response to a concern that residents of Cleveland’s near west side lacked access to primary health care, NFP focuses on providing high quality primary care in the patient’s neighborhood setting. Today, its seven public transit friendly locations offer same day appointments to a service area that spans twelve neighborhoods across Cleveland’s west side and is comprised of a highly diverse mix of residents. Accredited by The Joint Commission and designated as a Patient-Centered Medical Home, Neighborhood Family Practice provides primary care, women’s health and midwifery services, behavioral health, dental and case management appointments to more than 21,000 patients at its combined locations. www.nfpmc-center.org

Governor Dewine Appoints O’Sullivan To 8th District Court Of Appeals

from news release

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine today announced five appointments to fill judicial vacancies. He appointed Cornelius J. O’Sullivan to serve as a judge on the Eighth District Court of Appeals; Kenneth R. Callahan, Wanda C. Jones, and Mark R. Majer to each serve as judges on the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas; and Sergio I. DiGeronimo, to serve as a judge on the Garfield Heights Municipal Court.

O’Sullivan, of Lakewood, will assume office on Dec. 15, 2021 on the Eighth District Court of Appeals and will be filling the vacancy left by Judge Larry Jones who died. O’Sullivan must run for election in November 2022 to complete the unexpired term ending Feb. 9, 2027.

O’Sullivan most recently worked as a civil trial attorney, mediator, and arbitration chairman for Weston Hurd LLP, where he was a partner. In his prior position, he was a senior litigation attorney, where he handled major cases for CNA Insurance for 15 years.

O’Sullivan received his law degree



Marty O’Sullivan

from Cleveland State University’s Marshall College of Law, where he was an editor of the Cleveland State Law Review, and his undergraduate degree from the John Carroll University.

He currently is a certified mediator, Partner in Justice with the Legal Aid Society, director of Flock Community Meals, and a member of St. Edward High’s Alumni Board of Directors. In the past, he was president of the Cleveland Association of Civil Trial Attorneys and Legal Eagles, and chairman of Mayors Task Force on Winterhurst.

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Lakewood Schools

Dr. G's Rangers Round-Up: Basketball

by Dr. Charles Greanoff

December 10

Boys Basketball: Rangers Defeat Invaders

After opening the season with three tough road losses against elite opponents, the Lakewood Rangers led wire to wire and defeated Normandy 44-41 in our home opener.

Senior Hakeem Quaran (the First-Federal Lakewood Player of the Game) led all scorers with 21 points, using the 3 point shot and strong drives to great effect. Senior M.J. Grayer scored a modest 3 points, but was a force on the boards, somewhat neutralizing Normandy's significant size advantage.

Senior Andre Hallenburg tallied 7 and played his usual strong all-around game, as did senior Michael Hamdan who didn't score tonight, but played solid at point guard. Senior Khaled Kutkut hit a 3 pointer and provided valuable minutes off the bench.

Yet, within this senior dominated



Senior Hakeem Quaran, the First-Federal Lakewood Player of the Game, led all scorers with 21 points.

line-up, the key play of the game came from sophomore Drew Jablonowski (9 points). After storming out to an early 14 point lead keyed by intense team defense, the Rangers went cold, and Normandy closed to within 2 with 5:54 left in the game. All the momentum was with the visitors. But then, Jablonowski coolly knock down a corner



Senior Mollie Henrikson scored 18 points.

3-pointer—followed by a Quran 3—to repel the Invader surge, and the Rangers were on their way.

Hats off to Coach Alex Cammock and all the guys from 44107 for this team victory.

December 8

Girls Basketball: Rangers Defeat Heights Tigers

Led by a torrid 3-point shooting steak

by senior Mollie Henrikson (pictured/18 points) the Lakewood Rangers Girls Basketball Team (3-2) defeated Cleveland Heights 53-43 tonight at the Tigers gym.

Henrikson led all scorers, but many Rangers contributed to this team win. Starters junior Ava Carroll, senior Molly Pilgrim, junior Sam Hudak and sophomore Delaney Garcia scored, played strong defense, and rebounded well.

The Lakewood bench was superb—there was no drop off in play when substitutes entered. Junior Aya McAuliffe hit a couple of 3's and had a solid all around game. Junior Annette Doren didn't score, but played strong defense and handled the ball well. Junior Bridget McKenna played tenacious defense and scored on a driving layup.

But after Hendrickson, the Rangers most valuable player tonight was Jacquie Hudak (7 points), who hit a key 3 pointer to stem a Tiger rally, snagged several key rebounds, and was, as usual, an aggressive pest on defense. Every Ranger played with heart and an unselfish attitude tonight. Great effort by the squad from 44107

The State Football Champions St. Edward Football Team 2021



*St. Edward Eagles 2021 Championship Winning Football Team.
(courtesy of St. Edward Football)*

Kindergarten Parent Info Night Set

by Christine Gordillo

The Lakewood City Schools will return to an in-person format for its Kindergarten Parent Information

Night for the 2022-2023 school year. The event is set for Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 6:30 pm at Grant Elementary School. Students must be 5 years old on or before September 30, 2022 in order to be age eligible to enter kindergarten in Fall 2022.

The program will include a presentation by Director of Teaching & Learning Steven Ast, who will share details about the kindergarten curriculum and the registration process. Registration for the 2022-2023 school year begins on Monday, January 24. District Nurse Katy Corrigan will also be on hand to provide information on immunizations needed and other health care protocols. Following the presentation, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to ask questions and view the Grant kindergarten rooms. Some principals will also be on hand to answer questions.

If you plan to attend, please note that masks are required in all Lakewood City Schools buildings.

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Lakewood Public Library

December Virtual Events

by Andrea Fisher

Lakewood Public Library will premiere virtual Meet the Author events in December. You can watch these programs on [facebook.com/lakewoodpubliclibrary](https://www.facebook.com/lakewoodpubliclibrary) and [twitter.com/lakewoodlibrary](https://www.twitter.com/lakewoodlibrary) at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday evenings.

December 16

Local journalist and Duran Duran fan Annie Zaleski talks about her book *Duran Duran's Rio*. The book includes interviews with band members, and examines why the album took a while to catch on in the United States, and more.

December 30

Lakewood author Kathy McKinsey shares her love of writing and storytelling, and talks about her most recent book *Gifts of Grace*. This collection of novellas tell the stories of three women, and how their faith helps them through difficult times.

If you miss the premiere, the videos will also be available on the Library's website lakewoodpubliclibrary.org

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Lakewood Observer

District Extends Finance Committee Application

by Christine Gordillo

The Lakewood Board of Education is seeking applicants to fill two positions on its Financial Advisory Committee (FAC), which is dedicated to the District’s finances. Applicants must be Lakewood residents. The original deadline for applicants has been extended to January 3, 2022.

Duties of the committee include reviewing the annual state audit, conducting pre- and post-audit meetings, sharing business and financial “best practices” information, and reviewing the treasurer’s five-year forecast. The committee meets on a quarterly or as needed basis.

These positions are voluntary appointments beginning January 1, 2022 and are the result of a resignation and a term expiring on December 31, 2021, which will run until 2024 and 2025,

respectively. Applicants must be specific in the letter of interest whether they are applying for the term ending in 2024 or the term ending in 2025. Subsequent term renewals will be for three years.

Board members expect the committee members to work in a “cooperative, collaborative and consensus-driven manner.” Applicants for the positions are expected to have strong experience in areas of finance or audit experience, especially CPAs, CFOs, CEOs, or bankers.

Qualified and interested citizens are asked to submit a letter of interest and experience to:

Mrs. Betsy Shaughnessy, Board of Education President, 13701 Lake Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio 44107. Letters must be received no later than January 3, 2022.



A festive corner of Lakewood’s Refuse and Recycling Facility on Berea Road.

Trash Tips For The Holidays

by Denis DeVito

HOLIDAY REFUSE AND RECYCLING TIPS FOR LAKEWOOD RESIDENTS

- 1.) The Lakewood Refuse Department will be closed on Monday 12/27 and Monday 1/3.
- 2.) Residential pick-up will resume on Tuesday 12/28 and 1/4. Carts and bulk trash should be out on your regular scheduled pick-up day.
- 3.) When at all possible all cardboard should be broken-down and placed in the recycle cart. Excess cardboard must be tied or boxed for easy pick-up and to prevent littering the street.
- 4.) Non-glitter and non-foil wrapping paper and the cardboard rolls they come with ARE recyclable.
- 5.) ALL styrofoam is GARBAGE. If you place a TV box on the tree lawn and it contains styrofoam, it will be taken as garbage.
- 6.) Christmas trees must be free of lights and not enclosed in plastic bags so they can be recycled.
- 7.) Please place your trash and recycle carts away from trees and parked cars so the automated truck arms can reach them.
- 8.) On the side of the street where cars are parked, place your carts in the street on both sides of your driveway. (That way no car can obstruct the automated collection process.)
- 9.) If your cart is not full, please wait till the next week to bring to tree lawn. The Refuse department is quite taxed with the immense increase in holiday trash and recycling.
- 10.) This late in the season, all yard waste is trash.
- 11.) As a common courtesy to your fellow Lakewood residents, PLEASE do not place trash on the tree lawn before 6:30pm on the day before your scheduled pick-up day. Let’s keep our Lakewood streets beautiful.
- 12.) The hard working men and women of the Lakewood Refuse and Recycling Department most appreciate the good residents of Lakewood who follow the guidelines. Happy/Healthy Holidays.

Lakewood League of Women Voters 100th Anniversary

by Cindy Strebis

As we prepare to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Lakewood League of Women Voters, please consider a tax deductible year end donation and the gift of membership. One Hundred percent of the money donated to the Mary Warren Impact Scholarship goes to Lakewood High School Seniors that exemplify her qualities of community service, citizen participation, and humanitarian care.

To make a tax deductible donation to the Education Fund, please visit lwvgreatercleveland.org and add Mary Warren Impact Scholarship to the comment box. While you’re at the site, please consider joining. The Lakewood Chapter is at 86 Members and hoping to increase to 100 for our anniversary. We’d love to have your help defending democracy and empowering voters. Everyone is welcome to join. Peace.

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The Katzenberger Family

Holiday Greetings From Nora Katzenberger

Happy Holidays, Lakewood Friends!

Thank you, Lakewood voters, for electing me to the school board! I can't wait to be sworn into office in January, so I can get to work for Lakewood students, teachers, families, and community members. This holiday season, I hope you find joy in celebration with friends and family, as well as quiet moments to rest and restore. Best wishes to all for a happy, healthy, hopeful new year!

Nora Katzenberger
Lakewood Board of Education



Councilmember Jason Shachner and Family

Holiday Greetings From Jason Shachner And Family

Happy holidays, from our family to yours! This year brought us the wonderful addition of our daughter, Olivia, who brings us an endless amount of joy. We also experienced the loss of our pup, Tessie, who had been our faithful companion for the past 14+ years and whom we greatly miss. As I reflect upon the past year, I am inspired by the resilience of our City and its residents, and I am grateful for all the friends we have made in this community. We wish you and your families a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,
Councilmember Jason Shachner & Family

TOM BULLOCK'S HOLIDAY GREETING



To our Lakewood neighbors,

We wish you the peace of the holiday season, joy in your hearts, that your New Year shines with possibility!

The Bullock family
Tom, Molly, Tommy, William, and Bridget

Wishing Our Community A Wonderful Holiday Season



Tess and Bentley

HAPPY PAWLIDAYS! No matter where life takes you, I hope that your adventures bring you home for the holidays. Wishing you and your loved ones a joyous and fun holiday season.

Tess Neff

CHRISTMAS MORNING BAKED FRENCH TOAST CASSEROLE (Neff family tradition)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 loaf cinnamon swirl bread | 1 tablespoon vanilla extract |
| 8 large eggs | ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon |
| 2-1/2 cups half-and-half | ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg |
| 1 cup milk | Praline Topping (below) |
| 2 tablespoons sugar | |

Praline Topping: 2 sticks butter; 1 cup backed light brown sugar; 1 cup chopped pecans; ½ teaspoon each of cinnamon and nutmeg (combine all ingredients in a bowl and blend well and spread over bread)

Arrange slices of bread in two rows, overlapping in a 9 x 13-inch flat baking dish that is prepared with non-stick spray.

In large bowl, combine the eggs, half-and-half, milk, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and beat with mixer or whisk until blended but not bubbly. Pour the mixture over the bread slices, making sure all are covered evenly with the milk-egg mixture. Spoon some of the mixture between the bread slices. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

On Christmas morning, preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spread the Praline Topping (must be soft) evenly over the bread and bake for 45 minutes, until puffed and lightly golden. Serve with maple or raspberry syrup. Enjoy!

ry Christmas And Happy Holidays



Tristan Rader's Holiday Greetings

Have a very Merry Christmas. Joyful Kwanzaa. Happy New Year. And the best Festivus money can't buy.

From Caitlin & Tristan Rader

HOLIDAY REFLECTIONS

Dear neighbors,

Each holiday season, I find myself reflecting on the past year. This has been a year of firsts for our family; my first full year on City Council, Andy's first year as a campaign treasurer, Quill's first year of college, and our cats, well, not much changes year to year for house cats, but they had the house to themselves for the first time in quite a while as we all returned to our in-person lives. This is also my first holiday message, and I'm cognizant that while many of us are joyfully anticipating reclaimed traditions, we all find ourselves marked by this tumultuous time in different ways. For some little ones in our community, these will be the first gatherings that they'll remember with extended friends and family, and for some of us it will be the first holiday with folks missing from the table. As we work to show each other a little extra patience, tenderness, and grace, I am grateful for the impressive generosity and acts of kindness I see displayed throughout the year from one Lakewood neighbor to another, for the hard working public employees serving our city, the dedicated folks at Lakewood Alive and Lakewood Community Services Center helping us thrive, and the incredible healthcare professionals who continue to work to keep us safe. Lakewood is a special community. Thank you for being part of it.

Happy Holidays,

Councilperson Sarah Kepple



AND TO ALL A GOOD YEAR

Wishing all a happy and safe Holiday Season. Be thankful and keep the first responders, the people on the front line and those in need in your thoughts. We've been weathering difficult times and looking forward to coming out of the storm in 2022. It's been my honor to serve you for these many years.

Ed Favre, Board of Education

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant."
— Anne Bradstreet

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Lakewood Observer

Rep. Skindell's Statement As Legislature Approves More Than \$4.18 Billion To Invest In Jobs, People And Families

by Caitlin Robertson

Majority of funds are part of President Biden and Democrats' American Rescue Plan

Rep. Michael J. Skindell (D-Lakewood) voted in favor of Substitute House Bill (HB) 169 to appropriate \$4.18 billion to support education, expand access to childcare and improve public health, among other investments in Ohio's working people, families and communities amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill is funded through several federal COVID-19 relief packages, the majority of which comes from the American Rescue Plan Act backed by Democrats and signed into law by President Biden earlier this year.

Hundreds of millions of dollars



Representative Michael J. Skindell D-Lakewood)

allocated to Ohio under the American Rescue Plan were at risk of expiring had

the General Assembly not taken legislative action on the funds this month.

"It is essential to distribute these funds in order to advocate and provide for all Ohioans during these unprecedented times, and I was pleased to cast a vote in favor of the work put forth by the Biden Administration with the American Rescue Plan to help all the people of Ohio," said Rep. Skindell.

Sub. HB 169 includes:

- \$2.48 billion for K-12 schools;
- \$1.05 billion to help health care providers hire and retain employees;
- \$639 million in supplemental child care grants to enhance the hiring and retention of staff and improve access to child care;

\$250 million in grants for law enforcement agencies;

\$91.1 million for the Department of Health to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and address other public health priorities;

\$7.3 million to prevent youth homelessness.

The American Rescue Plan is landmark legislation for the Biden administration and advances many long-held Democratic priorities, including investments in working people, families and communities as Ohio and the nation continue to build back amid the COVID-19 pandemic after decades of failing to invest in families and communities.

The Plan will lower health insurance premiums, extend tax credits to families with children and invest in jobs. The American Rescue Plan is widely regarded as one of the most progressive pieces of legislation in history, with targeted aid to families making less than \$90,000 annually. No Republican members of Congress voted in favor of the American Rescue Plan.

Sub. HB 169 now heads to the governor's desk for his signature.

Caitlin Robertson is the Legislative Aide to State Representative Michael J. Skindell.

Beautiful Music, Magical Concept, Lakewood Schools' Annual Choral Concert - You Can Watch Online



All singers on the stage: the entire combined middle school and high school choirs along with alumni who left their seats to come up on stage and join the show.

by Betsy Voinovich

On December 13 Lakewood Schools hosted their annual High School and Middle School concert, featuring the 8th grade choir, Symphonic Treble Choir, Symphonic Mixed Choir, Chamber Choir, Vive L'Four, and Fourtes.

The concert began with all of

the lights down and choir members entering from each side with electric candles, singing Silent Night, and from there the night just got more magical.

One feature of the evening was that alumni were invited to the stage during the performances of the Fourtes, the girls' quartet, and the final songs of the evening. Members from the audience

of all ages left their seats and joined the full choir on stage for the finale.

Much thanks to Rayna Brooks, Grace Dahl, her student teacher, and Mrs. Blasko for putting on a professional, beautiful and inspiring show, and thanks to the choral students, past and present for their warmth, enthusiasm and talent. It was a wonderful way to kick off the season as students begin their vacation at the end of this week. You can watch the livestream from the comfort of your home here: <https://youtu.be/A8cwKx7bJsc> You'll be glad you did.

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4 Items	\$9.50	\$12.00	\$16.00	\$19.00
Deluxe	\$10.00	\$12.75	\$17.00	\$20.50
Extra Items	\$1.00	\$1.25	\$2.00	\$2.50
Chicken	\$2.00	\$2.50	\$3.50	\$4.50
Extra Cheese & Special Toppings	\$1.50	\$2.00	\$3.00	\$4.00

Available Items: Pepperoni, Sausage, Mushrooms, Onion, Green & Red Bell Peppers, Anchovies, Ham, Bacon, Fresh Garlic, Black Olives, Hot Peppers, Ground Beef, Pineapple, Jalapeño Peppers Special Toppings: Artichoke Hearts, Fresh Tomato, Broccoli, and *Chicken

Lakewood Is Art

December Art At Root Cafe



by Fernanda Quiroga

The Root cafe is happy to welcome and announce Wanda and Erika whose paintings and drawings will be showing at the Root Cafe through December.

We are proud to offer a space for introducing to the public these creative talents which have been nurtured in one family through generations. Wanda can always remember her parents actively painting and sketching. Yet somehow, she felt as if this talent did not belong to her until her daughter Erica encouraged her and inspired her to pick up a pencil and to get to work being herself. How does one be an artist? How does one create? She attempted it and then joy and talent began to color her heart, bringing up emotions which she hadn't even known before. Painting and art became Wanda's escape in the hard times and a surface on which to map out the heart's traffic in the good times.

But what about young Erica? She has inspiration from parents and grandparents both. And Larry also. Some of her earliest memories were studying color with Grandapa, learn-

ing that there are words for colors like feelings, words like warm/cool or primary/ secondary. She remembers Grandma painting landscapes together with Uncle Larry. Always fearless, Erica found a natural wellspring of emotion when she hit charcoal. Finally Erica's perfect clarity of raw emotion, lovingly developed in her family since childhood, has a natural home. It's a shade of black or a strong line on a variously white or tinted canvas. Come see black and white compositions in the hands of an expert colorist. Color gives you names for feelings. A black and white drawing can provoke different emotions in different viewers or various emotions in sequence as it is encountered by an individual viewer.

The Root Cafe continues its mission to support local artists. Our city's creative work is our whole future. Please don't miss the chance to warm up with a scone and coffee as you experience Wanda's and Erica's fine paintings at the Root Cafe during December only and hopefully another month in the future.

The Picture

by Gregory Norris

I have often heard it said a picture is worth a thousand words or beauty is in the eye of the beholder when it comes to art. I never thought too much about it until the other day when having a phone conversation with a friend who is into art.

She said what I really want for Christmas is for my daughter to paint me a picture. I have saved a space on the wall above my buffet for it, but she says she is too busy with her career to paint, but I think she would have the time if she watched less TV. We talked some more about the art in our homes and how mine is mis-matched and I was thinking about doing something different. and concluded our conversation.

I had a tough time sleeping that night as I frequently do since my wife passed away just over a year ago. I walked around the house looking at the different pictures none of which

are a Rembrandt or Picasso and realized each one had a story of how it came to be in my home. Then I looked at the picture that hangs in my bedroom. I always thought it represented the ocean at sunset, over the last year I have found much peace and relaxation looking at it. I wondered what the artist was really trying to convey, so I texted her the next morning and her reply was as follows.

It is designed to mean whatever you want it to mean. The beach at sunset, the dessert at sunset, or the pink land with sun, Elmo. Why do you ask Dad?

So, I think I can say to my friend's daughter. Find the time to paint a picture for your Mom it may give her more joy and peace than you realize.

Greg Norris is a 28 Year Corporate Security Professional and 16 Year Golf and Life Skills Coach with First Tee who enjoys writing.



Happy Birthday!
LO's biggest fan turns 89. Native Lakewoodite, Janet Voinovich turns 89! Congratulations on all the great years, and for preparing our editor for working with us.

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Lakewood Cares



We Need A Little Christmas

by Lee Kemp

In the 1960s Broadway musical and movie *Mame*, an eccentric woman named Auntie Mame is the central character of the story. Toward the end of the first act, the 1929 stock market crash leaves her family destitute and the mood becomes as gloomy as the weather. To liven things up and ease the depression, Mame sings a rousing musical number that has become the most popular song from that play and movie, “We Need a Little Christmas,” as she lavishly decorates the family home for the holidays.

The song is a lively, bright optimistic number that sticks with the listener, and it is no wonder that the song has become so popular through the years. Perhaps that song might best express the feeling of joy at this time of year, especially during tough times like the ones in the play and movie.

After almost two years of COVID induced lockdowns, closings and sickness, with more people getting vaccinated and the rate of new infections falling again, perhaps we can have hope of returning to some sense of normalcy. After last year it seemed that somehow the Grinch had actually stolen

Christmas from us with no Christmas parties, shows, concerts, plays or family gatherings to enjoy. After being all hunkered down and afraid of being exposed to COVID last year, we really need a little Christmas this year. Last year my family gatherings at Thanksgiving and Christmas were on zoom.

After an almost two year period of civil unrest and protests, including an assault on our nation’s Capital, as well as our ongoing political divisiveness, perhaps one thing that everyone might agree on is that we need a time to celebrate just the joy of the season. Regardless of how anyone celebrates this holiday, we need a little Christmas right now. We need the shopping, the shows, the music and most important, the gathering with friends and family to celebrate the holiday.

When you think about it, December is a very gloomy month of the year. It is dark in the northern hemisphere as the winter solstice comes a few days before Christmas when the sun is at its lowest point in the sky and the daylight is the shortest of the year. In this part of the country, December is often the cloudiest month of the year with a sunny day being a special treat.

December also brings cold rain as well as sometimes a lot of snow. But the snow soon turns to slop and then freezes into ice making it difficult to get around outside.

Without the lights and decorations of the Christmas holiday, this would really be a very gloomy depressing time of the year. But for a few weeks, we can enjoy all the lights and special things of the holiday season.

In fact, the reason we celebrate Christmas on December 25 is that the biggest holiday in the ancient Roman year was the Saturnalia celebration following the winter solstice. That marked the time when the sun began its annual climb in the sky which signified that warmer and brighter days were ahead. It was a time of great celebration and of parties. The early Christians who were persecuted by the Romans celebrated their holidays at the same time as the Romans so as not to be seen as different. The Jewish celebration of Hannukah, the festival of lights, is also celebrated when it is darkest in the northern hemisphere.

Many of our Christmas traditions have their roots in the pagan celebrations of the winter solstice. One is

the lights on the Christmas tree. This Christmas tradition began in Germany when evergreen trees, which keep their color throughout the long winter, were brought inside the house. The lights on the indoor tree represent the stars in the heavens. In what is now Great Britain, the Druids celebrated the winter solstice with bonfires that provided heat and light, but also were thought to help bring back the sun. It worked since after the winter solstice the sun began rising higher in the sky.

When, in the days after the winter solstice the sun began its slow climb in the sky, it was a cause to celebrate the return to sunnier and warmer days ahead. That celebration was the beginning of the Christmas feasts of the season which led to the famous “boar’s head” celebration and the yule log, a large log brought in for the fire since the night was long and cold. Somehow the ancient pagan celebrations that began long before the birth of Jesus endure as ways to celebrate the Christmas holiday.

Despite our differences and beliefs, it’s time to enjoy the joys of this glorious holiday season. After the past two years, we sure need a little Christmas now.

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Lakewood Travel

The Work Begins, In Chimoio, Africa

by *Fernanda Quiroga*

Hello People! My name is Fernanda. You may have seen me around town or read my story in a previous issue of The Lakewood Observer. In that story, I arrived in Mozambique, Africa, to start a wonderful experience that for sure made me appreciate and see the world from a better perspective learned from amazing and strong people.

After spending a few days in Maputo, I embarked on a journey in normal time, I mean, roads in good condition etc. It would last approximately 5-6 hours, it took us 18 hours, no kidding hahaha!... to Chimoio, the place I would live for 6 months working with the communities.

The trip was very happy and new but very uncomfortable. We stopped in uninhabited places, like where there was nothing at all, to go to the bathroom where there was no bathroom. Women have no problem with that because they use capulanas, which is a large fabric that they tie to their body as a skirt, the capulana has a thousand uses, carry babies, cover the hair, carry things either fruit or bread, load support on the head, etc.

I, who had no experience and no capulana, had to wait until I saw a place with a bathroom, which was about 5 hours later.

In some places of the trip there were small vending stands of fruits, bread, boiled eggs, soft drinks, and well water in recycled bottles.

Most of the people who sold were children and women, they ran to the buses to sell even if the bus was already moving, what talent!

Upon arrival in Chimoio, we were greeted by Veronica, administrator of



a teacher training school (technical school) that was located in the middle of the very authentic community.

Within the project there was also a primary school, and a health research center, all very modest and full of African culture, which is beautiful.

They accommodated us in a house with a roof made with dried grass, very typical. I felt I was fulfilling a great dream, living it 100% real.

Next day we started work! I was very excited to work in the community so the first project was to start recycling and reusing.

We put different names on containers so they could reuse the plastic bottles for water, start making compost and paper to use for the students as a pedagogic material.

This first experience helped me a lot to lose the fear of speaking Portuguese, even if at the beginning it

was weird or bad pronunciation, they always helped me to explain myself.

This project was made very fast. I had money from fundraising and personal funds so I just got the materials, explained to the people and started to work. Also we had volunteers who would take the compost, plastic, paper and glass to different locations to reuse like paper for schools, glass for art, compost for gardening and food collectives and plastic for any creative person who could use it.

Designing the compost system was a physically satisfying experience as well as an intellectual challenge. It appealed to my background and training. There is something in me that is always wanting to offer what you might call an engineer's perspective. We dug a trench next to the school's vegetable garden and lined it with grass. Then we involved all the life of the soil, the bugs and the worms. We gave them our compost and enlisted their help. That's when I was inspired to design an herb garden to compliment the school's vegetable garden along with their new composting system.

Among the many inspiring people who taught me on this part of my journey and helped me to think from an engineering perspective but in a more natural way were "The Sisters." One of these sisters, Larissa, was an herbalist and a deeply spiritual woman. She started a medical center in Chimoio which is free of cost and which has some very inspir-

ing and elaborate systems for providing very thorough care over a long time using only natural means. She taught me many things. I learned the names and properties of many different plants and studied to memorize and understand their properties and complex interactions. But there was something else. She had the patience to teach me some ways of thinking like learning to do things in a more natural way, avoiding chemicals and things like that. I hadn't thought about those things back then. Even more than that, she taught me to really love herbs and see their sensual side. To smell and touch and experience them in all ways. There is no substitute for nature.

Even with all this help and support, my gardening project involved some frustration and some failure at first. It was three months of rethinking and false starts before we got any harvest of medicinal plants, but then we had it! It was so amazing to touch and handle them, ten different kinds, dried and sold in small bags at the central market for more funds to sustain and improve our process, get new materials and make it better next time. The students made books with beautiful creative artwork which listed all of the benefits of each plant.

These two projects expanded my beliefs about what can be done with a life. Motivated and inspired by some documentaries about world culture which I had watched when I was very young, I had left a familiar world in Chile, studied another culture around the world and learned many different ways of living. At the same time, I found that a lot of what we all care about is shared. It doesn't need translating. By the time the seasons changed again I was working up the motivation and the schemes to do many more things on earth with my one precious life.

This is part three of a series of articles. When we meet again on these pages, the days will be getting longer! Please read more about my world traveling adventures in future issues of the Lakewood Observer.

References:

School: <https://oneworldcenter.org>

African Organization: <https://www.adpp-mozambique.org>




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