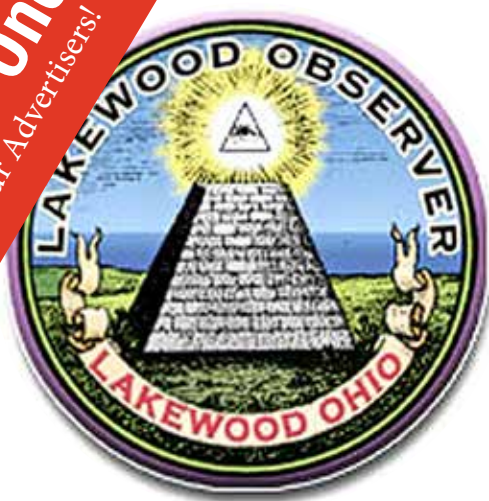


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CANDIDATES ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS Page 4

THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

Founder of Award Winning Observer Community-Written Newspapers & Websites

Volume 19, Issue 20, October 18, 2023

“Welcome To Lakewood” Is Back!

by Mary Kennedy

After a three year hiatus, our city's Welcome to Lakewood community event returns on Wednesday November 1!

This long standing community gathering provides

opportunities for Lakewood neighbors old and new to connect with their city, get resources and meet new people. If you are new to Lakewood or looking for additional opportunities to connect with your community,

Welcome To Lakewood is a fun event to learn more about local civic organizations, services, and ways to get involved in your hometown!

Come meet Lakewood city and school officials, as well as representatives of up to 50 local organizations, like the Beck Center, the Lakewood Family YMCA, and our Lakewood Public Library, along with activities for kids, and yummy treats from local bakeries. All attendees will leave with a packet of information all about Lakewood.

LCRAC is excited to bring this valuable forum for new and long-time Lakewood residents to learn about many of the great organizations, businesses, and opportunities available to Lakewood. This year Welcome to Lakewood will be held on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Garfield Middle School, 13114 Detroit Avenue.

If you have questions or are a local business or organization that would like to set up a table or provide in-kind donations please reach out to LCRAC via email at comrel@lakewoodoh.net.

Welcome to Lakewood is sponsored by the City of Lakewood and The Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission (LCRAC). LCRAC is a commission made up of volunteers appointed by the Mayor and Lakewood City Council Members. The Commission is charged with promoting equity, respect and diversity within the city. We strive to ensure that Lakewood is an intentionally inclusive and welcoming community.

Mary Kennedy has been a proud Birdtown resident since 2010. She is an active participant in several grass-roots community initiatives, a member of the Lakewood Tree Advisory and Education Board and the Lakewood Community Relations Advisory Commission, and an enthusiastic Lakewood parent. She has been a public high school science educator for the past 10 years and currently supports K-12 education in nearby Cuyahoga Valley National Park.



2023 Junior Fire Chief Jayden Fleming surrounded by family and fellow Firefighters!

Junior Fire Chief 2023, Jayden Fleming

by Jim O'Bryan

Congratulations to Jayden Fleming, a Horace Mann fifth grader who has been chosen as the 2023 Junior Fire Chief!

This would be the second year in a row, the honor has gone to a student from Horace Mann.

Each year fifth grade students are asked to submit an essay on fire safety. This year's theme was "Cooking safety starts with YOU." The best essay entitles the winner to a ride around Lakewood and then a

trip to his school in the truck.

The Lakewood Fire Department truck arrives at the school where students and staff are assembled to cheer him on. Jayden also read his winning essay at the Fire Department Recognition Ceremony on Oct. 8. Well done, Jayden!

You can read Jayden's essay with photos from the Firefighter Recognition Ceremony on pages 8 and 9.



Join Us For The Lakewood Photo Scavenger Hunt!

by Laura Hazen

Think you know Lakewood? Try the Lakewood Photo Scavenger Hunt and see! Contest runs Oct. 25 to Nov. 1. Sign up NOW. On Oct. 25 you'll receive an email with instructions and photos of features around Lakewood to identify! Answer correctly to be in a drawing for Amazing Prizes! Entry fee is \$10, payable as a donation on the Lakewood Foundation website (www.thelakewoodfoundation.org). Please select "Commission on Aging" when submitting your payment. Or pay with cash at Cove Community Center, 12525 Lake Ave - photos available on paper or email on Oct. 25. All proceeds go to the Lakewood Division of Aging! Contact lakewood-photocontest@gmail.com with questions.

Laura Hazen lives and works in Lakewood and she loves it. She works for both Hanson Services and Sweet Designs. She volunteers for a couple community groups, in particular, the Division on Aging.

LO's 2023 Halloween Decorating Contest



Mirl Avenue in 2021.

The Lakewood Observer is looking for houses and apartments with the best Halloween/Fall decorations to give some prizes to in appreciation of the residents of Lakewood for all of their hard work.



continued on page 7

Elect Anthony Mencini For City Council Ward 2

by Anthony Mencini

My name is Anthony Mencini and I've been campaigning hard to be your next city council representative in Ward 2. I would be honored to receive your vote on or before November 7th, and here's why:

I moved to Lakewood at an early age and graduated from St. Edward High School, only to move back after college because I knew Lakewood was special. I even found a wholesome community at St. Luke the Evangelist and bought my first house here.

I know fully in my heart, this is my home—a place filled with unparalleled vibrancy and potential.

I care deeply about Lakewood and I want to give my time and abilities to our community.

The following three focus points will define my career as your representative:

The "Hole" or "Pit" where the hospital used to be will be



Anthony Mencini

brought back into the conversation and see serious progress toward development.

Local Businesses will be held in higher regard. No more restrictions or hurtful over-scrutinization of conduct. Lakewood's attractiveness to new firms will rise as a result.

Property Tax Relief for homeowners across Lakewood

continued on page 10

THE MAYOR’S CORNER

Financial Accountability In Government

by Meghan George, Mayor, City of Lakewood

Financial accountability and wise stewardship of your tax dollars continue to be a fundamental pillar of my administration. As the City of Lakewood enters budget season again this fall, our department chiefs are working diligently with our finance team to align our expected revenues to continue supporting high-quality services and investing in the strategic needs of our community. We all look forward to partnering with Lakewood City Council to allocate a budget that recognizes the fiscal realities we face, yet also continues to position our city for the future and delivers the public services our taxpayers expect and deserve.

With these goals established, it’s also important to acknowledge that the City faces another tight general fund budget and tough choices to make in

addressing the capital needs of Lakewood’s aging infra-structure. In doing so, we continue to strategically leverage our federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars and aggressively seek additional grant funding and low interest loans to help mitigate the City’s significant capital burden. Those capital needs include things such as improvements to Winterhurst Ice Rink and the requirement to modernize our sewer and water infrastructure. As the pressures of inflation and ongoing increases to interest rates continue to affect everyone’s bottom line, we at City Hall are more vigilant than ever in carefully planning the budget for this coming year, and we must all be realistic about what is pragmatic to expect.

Around budget time each year, the Ohio Auditor of State’s Office

also announces annual awards, and I am thrilled to share that the City of Lakewood has once again achieved the prestigious Auditor of State Award with Distinction. To earn this award, a government entity must achieve a “clean” audit report. That means meeting a number of challenging criteria – everything from a strict adherence to accounting principles and avoiding material deficiencies or weaknesses in reporting to also having no ethics referrals, no financial concerns, and meeting obligations for public meetings and public records standards.

This is the fourth consecutive year that the City of Lakewood has achieved this award from the Ohio Auditor, and once again, most of the credit for this goes to our tremendous team in Lakewood’s finance department. Less than 5% of the of the 6,000 government

entities audited in the State of Ohio typically receive this designation, so it shows how hard our finance team is working and how successful they are in keeping your tax dollars accounted for every year. The State Auditor also once again awarded Lakewood its highest rating of four stars for our professionalism in responding to public records requests. We are all very proud of this distinction as well, because it highlights our commitment to transparency in the City’s work.

Congratulations are in order to everyone who plays a role in these successes at City Hall, including the Finance and Law Departments that take the lead on these efforts and also the entire Lakewood administrative team that works seamlessly and cooperatively to provide the financial resources and services that our residents deserve.

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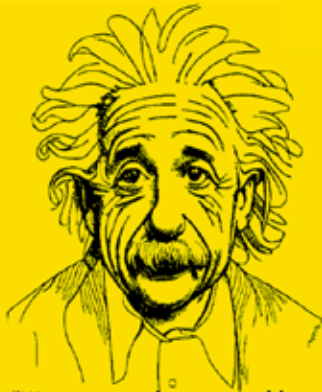
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Vote Trish Hendy

For Lakewood Board of Education



"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

Albert Einstein

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Worried about flu, RSV and COVID-19 this fall?



Antonia Nwankwo, MD

Cleveland Clinic
Lakewood Family Health Center

The fall and winter months are like a board game. What will the next roll of the dice bring – flu, RSV or COVID-19?

One way to stay ahead of the game is to get your flu shot between September and February.

According to Antonia Nwankwo, MD, a primary care provider at Cleveland Clinic Lakewood Family Health Center, the earlier the better. Getting vaccinated before flu season reduces your chances of getting the flu. It might also mean milder symptoms if you do get sick.

Hospitals are preparing for an influx of flu, COVID-19 and RSV as the fall respiratory virus season begins. With the potential for these three viruses circulating at the same time, it is important to receive vaccinations to reduce your risk of infection.

While cough, runny nose and fever are common to all respiratory viruses, some symptoms differ:

- Flu: Fevers of 103 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit, worsened nausea, vomiting.
- RSV: Wheezing or rattling when breathing.
- COVID-19: Loss of taste and smell, vomiting, diarrhea.

A laboratory test is necessary for an accurate diagnosis.

Cleveland Clinic offers many ways to seek care for respiratory viruses:

- Guidance and treatment for mild symptoms – Primary care providers (PCPs), Express Care or virtual visits.
- Treatment for serious symptoms, including shortness of breath, chest or abdominal pain, persistent vomiting or oxygen levels below 92% – Urgent Care or Emergency Department.

Dr. Nwankwo recommends getting the flu shot to help protect yourself and those around you. But, if you do get sick, our caregivers are here to help you.

To learn more about where to seek care, visit ClevelandClinic.org/WhereToGo.

To schedule your flu shot, call 216.444.2538 or visit ClevelandClinic.org/PrimaryCare.

Don't put off your mammogram.



For your convenience, Cleveland Clinic offers traditional and 3D mammogram appointments at multiple locations near you.

MyChart scheduling is available for patients with mammogram orders.

Visit ClevelandClinic.org/Mammogram for all locations and hours.

Ask the Experts: Caring for your Digestive Health

Wednesday, November 8 | 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Do you have chronic or occasional digestive issues? Specialists from Cleveland Clinic will share their expertise, answer your questions and provide details on:

- When digestive issues require medical intervention.
- Managing short-term and chronic digestive diseases like Irritable Bowel Disease (IBS), heartburn and liver disease.
- Colon cancer screening and colon health.
- Ways to create or maintain a healthy digestive system.

Register today: ClevelandClinic.org/AskTheExperts.

Free event.

Questions? Email wellnessevent@ccf.org.



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CANDIDATES FOR SCHOOL BOARD

READERS' QUESTIONS:

1. **LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY:** Lakewood has the shortest elementary school day of any district in Cuyahoga County. Would you be willing to consider lengthening the elementary school day by 30 to 45 minutes? Why or why not?
2. **ENROLLMENT:** Declining enrollment could pose a threat to the broad curriculum that is the hallmark of Lakewood City Schools. What ideas do you have for maintaining or increasing enrollment?
3. **CURRICULUM:** This year, the amount of time elementary students spend in music and physical education was cut by over 50%. What is your understanding of the role that early music and physical education play in the long term cognitive, social and physical development of a child? Do you favor restoring this time?
- 4.) **TRANSPARENCY:** While the Board of Education/Administration has sent out surveys and put together citizen committees in the past, when difficult decisions have needed to be made like the closing of an active school or curriculum changes, readers felt that those processes had predetermined conclusions and that

the opinions of the community were not actually represented or considered. They cited the Phase 3 committee and the recent reduction of music and physical education at the elementary level as examples. How would you bring a more transparent, inclusive process to the way decisions are made and shared with the public?

5.) **SAFETY:** Lakewood High School was in the news this past year for being chosen for the implementation of safety measures like installing ballistic film on cafeteria windows and upgrading locks on classroom doors. Would you consider adding metal detectors and safety officers at points of entry throughout the District?

ALL CANDIDATES ANSWERED ALL QUESTIONS. Because of space limitations, we published the School Board candidates' responses with the exception of Question 5 "SAFETY." Those answers along with all the candidates' answers, including those running unopposed appear online in their entirety. You can find the entire LO Readers Questions To Candidates at <http://lakewoodobserver.com>. Or follow QR Code at the end. Thank you to our Observer readers for your thoughtful questions.

School Board Member Linda Beebe

- EXPERIENCE: I have been a member of the Lakewood Board of Education for 40 years. During that time I've proven myself to be committed to the welfare of the district and the community. I'm running again, because I am passionate about public education and about Lakewood City Schools. I am a practicing attorney with J.D. from Cleveland Marshall College of Law. I taught 15 years in secondary and middle schools in the US and in Scotland. My husband taught in Lakewood High School, and my children graduated from Lakewood High School.
- 1.) **LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY:** It has been my thought for some time that we need more time in the elementary school day. It would solve many problems, including the one noted in question three below. I'm also a believer in year-round education, given my experience in the Scottish schools.
- 2.) **ENROLLMENT:** Declining enrollment is, in part, a consequence of smaller families and the changing demographics of northern Ohio. This state's funding policies also work against public schools in drawing money and children away into charter schools that are unproven and unsupervised. Although this is not a big issue in Lakewood, we all need to lobby our state legislature about public dollars for seriously underfunded, public schools being drawn from public education to vouchers and for-profit schools. Lastly, we need to make sure everyone in this community knows the quality and breadth of the Lakewood city school district by showcasing the gem that we have here.
- 3.) **CURRICULUM:** I favor restoring that time only if we have additional time in the school day. My children and other children benefited from their music education. However, given the time we have available, I believe that adding physical education to every quarter, increasing art, education, digital literacy, additional library time, and stem was the right decision. Curricular decisions in this district are made by the professionals that we hire to make such decisions. School board members need to walk very carefully about overriding that process.
- 4.) **TRANSPARENCY:** We have a citizen's facility study task force currently looking at the issues of declining enrollment, a new home for the Franklin School of Opportunity, and the best use of our new facilities in light of declining enrollment. The superintendent will be reporting out on the work that the committee has been doing at the November 4 school board meeting. Members of the community encouraged to attend that meeting or to watch the meeting on the school board website

Trish Hendy

- EXPERIENCE: After serving the district for thirty-three years—primarily as manager of our Civic Auditorium—I believe I bring a unique perspective to our board. As the assistant Barnstormer director and co-founder of The Lakewood Project, I helped students design, build, light, and run shows. Working extensively with students, faculty and administrators gave me a clear view as to what is actually happening in our schools. As manager of the Civic, I was responsible for a large budget, worked with vendors, and brought in high profile talent. My job was to safeguard the interests of the school, while satisfying a paying client. Sometimes I had to say no and most of the time I had to get creative with the resources to satisfy everyone's interests. I understand education, have made difficult high-profile decisions to promote safety, have experience with creative problem solving, and I ask questions and expect well thought out logical answers. I do my own research and I listen well.
- 1.) **LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY:** Yes. Expanding the elementary school day would allow us to have Music, Art, Physical Education, STEM/Digital Literacy for 100 minutes a week, all year, instead of the current schedule of 40 minutes. If we, as a community, believe these areas are important, we need to give our great teachers an adequate amount of time to teach these subjects. Increasing the school day to expand these offerings would also provide classroom teachers with more preparation time. Additionally, most of these courses cut down on screen time.
- 2.) **ENROLLMENT:** I propose that we create high-quality programming before and after school. Perhaps we need to rehire retired teachers familiar with our curriculum to run homework labs, guide small group play, lead arts and crafts, provide off-screen reading opportunities, and establish structure and routine so that kids are safe and engaged, giving parents peace of mind. Families can focus on family activities when parents and children reunite at the end of the day. I would also propose that we strengthen what we have that sets us apart from local private schools—our performing and visual arts programs. We could leverage our recreation department to offer more

- activities, classes, and camps at affordable prices with high-quality instructors.
- 3.) **CURRICULUM:** I strongly favor restoring the robust music and physical education opportunities our elementary children once enjoyed. Research establishes beyond a doubt that music and physical education positively impact children's cognitive development and mental health. Music strengthens the connection between the hemispheres of the brain, especially between the infancy to nine years. Music requires children to interact with the complex language of music—breaking down rhythms, reading notes, and making a number of physical decisions all without stopping, hence showcasing a complex interplay between auditory processing, emotion, and memory centers. Music helps children become emotionally balanced and productive adults (Varadi, 2022). Physical education develops motor skills and releases chemicals in the brain that boost self esteem and help students concentrate. Both facilitate the development of healthy, productive human beings. "Save the Arts" isn't just a campaign slogan; our innovative curriculum is part of what makes our school district so special.
- 4.) **TRANSPARENCY:** I believe that the board's primary obligation is to represent the community and to advise and monitor the decisions and actions of the superintendent and treasurer. I believe that board members should seek input from as many community members as possible. They should work with the superintendent and administrative team to create solutions that are responsible, well thought-out, and reflect community, teacher, staff and parent input. Once decisions are made, the board member should be able to defend those decisions—not cut and paste canned responses or choose to ignore concerned citizens. Committees formed by the board should not be full of like-minded people. Per the vision of the Lakewood Graduate, we should be embracing collaboration, communication, and growth mindset, remaining open to reversing course as we continue to learn and grow.

School Board Member Michael Callahan

- EXPERIENCE: I am an experienced member of the Lakewood Board of Education and current Board President. Through my current term on the Board, I have worked corroboratively with leaders and have helped the district navigate the Covid-19 pandemic, pass an operating levy in 2020, hire a new superintendent, and expand the district's Vision of a Ranger. I am an advocate for strong public education for all. My wife Kristyn (LHS class of '97) and I have three children currently enrolled in the Lakewood City Schools. I am endorsed by many community leaders and entities. I also work full time in the public sector as a parks and recreation director for another community and bring that perspective to a Board that is responsible for oversight of Lakewood's Community Recreation & Education Department.
- 1.) **LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY:** I would support any way possible to expand learning opportunities for students. Extending the school day is not a simple process but worthy of exploration. This topic may best be initially explored through the district's existing communication forum, a long-standing structure through which our administrative team and teachers meet on a regular basis.
- 2.) **ENROLLMENT:** It is very important that the district maintains a wide range of curriculum and programs, and that our policies ensure our schools are welcoming to all. Maintaining and expanding programs, from pre-school, to elementary specials, to AP and College Credit Plus options, to career tech, can attract and retain students. The district has a strong tradition of meeting children where they are and taking them forward through whichever path they require or prefer. This must continue. Also, we will continue to utilize our unique Community Recreation & Education Department to ensure that families with young children get engaged with the district and have a positive first experience. Those experiences can come in many different forms such as a parent-child program, swim lessons, youth sports, or a wide range of other opportunities. If that first experience with the district is positive, it can build relationships with families and help attract and retain students. Further, collaboration with city leaders to maximize the supply of affordable housing for families could help enrollment.
- 3.) **CURRICULUM:** Music and physical education have been and will continue to be very important to the district. They play an important role in childhood development. I like to focus on everything that has been added through the change in elementary specials and the process through which the changes were made. A

Michael Callahan continued on page 5

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Michael Callahan continued from page 4

dedicated co-facilitated team of some of the district’s best and brightest teachers and administrators worked collaboratively to add opportunities for children in K-5 to experience a range of curriculum year round including STEM, physical education (K-5 PE did not meet year round prior to this change), art, library and digital literacy, all while keeping music an important part of the curriculum. That said, the district will evaluate the class schedule, continue to listen to teachers and parents, and will make decisions in the best interests of all learners.

4.) TRANSPARENCY: One of the great things about this Board of Education and leadership team is that we embody the core competencies of the Vision of a Ranger, one of which being a growth mindset. We strive to improve communication with our parents and stakeholders wherever possible. I believe that I am a visible, approachable member of the Board who is responsive to community input. I will continue to do so. Our superintendent has engaged the community through the Listen and Learn series, and our district just engaged a large and diverse group of residents concerning facilities, specifically Franklin School of Opportunity, over the past several months. Their input was received and valued. Moving forward, the district will engage a wide group of residents as we continue dialogue about matters of significance.

Lisa Dopman

EXPERIENCE: As an educator, who has been active in the union, a current Executive Board Member of the Hayes Parent Teacher Organization, a room parent, a Hayes committee chair, a lifelong Lakewood resident, and three children currently enrolled at Hayes Elementary I have a unique perspective to offer the Lakewood Board of Education.

1.) LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY: I would absolutely consider adding time to the school day. Doing this should allow general education teachers extra planning time while also providing more time to the district’s arts programs. It is also important that students, especially in elementary school, have creative and physical outlets. Currently, they only have Physical Education once a week and recess for 20 minutes at a maximum. The arts programs are only offered two times per week, splitting between art and music. Research has shown, art and music programs to the developing mind are crucial. As the pressures of Ohio State Testing increases for all, it is imperative that we provide other outlets for our students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers.

2.) ENROLLMENT: It is important to provide adequate programs for all students including programs for athletics, arts, and academics. A lot of this will start through the Community Recreation and Education Department. If we improve offerings and communication through this entity, we will develop engagement and relationships early. Increasing diversity in the staff will also help maintain and increase diversity in our population. If diverse families see that we have a diverse teaching staff and a curriculum that provides a diverse range of subjects, they will be more likely to seriously consider Lakewood as a home.

3.) CURRICULUM: Research shows that music, art, and physical education programs have so many benefits for students, including academic benefits. There are instances where students feel inadequate academically but are allowed a place to shine in music or art. Music in particular naturally lends itself to collaborative learning. I am in favor of restoring time to these programs, however, I think that the old schedule was inadequate as well. Physical education should be year round rather than just three quarters. I personally haven’t spoken to anyone that cannot tell a difference in their child when they don’t have PE. Art was only offered for one quarter, which doesn’t allow for enough time for students to explore that form of creativity. By lessening time in any of these areas, it forces parents to find resources outside of schools. We should keep in mind that all families cannot afford these options.

4.) TRANSPARENCY: As a recipient of those surveys, I can say they feel biased. I am often left thinking “What did I just answer?” or “What did I agree to?” If the district is asking for input, the ways of obtaining that should be meaningful and thorough. There are a variety of ways to gain community input and they should all be utilized. These include meaningful surveys, community forums, committees, and inviting community members to school functions. No matter the ways the information is collected, it is important to actually review this input and find a way to make the information available. Administration should always be willing and able to adequately explain decisions to the community, while being prepared to answer questions.

Colleen Clark-Sutton

1) LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY: Yes, I am willing to have that conversation. I support a thorough review and community conversation about changing the elementary school day for our students. This could include examining resource and staffing allocations for equity across all student ability levels. This could be a multi-month study seeking input from all school district stakeholders. Which subject areas are essential to student development and success? How much time is appropriate for quality teaching and learning? What are the administration’s contractual obligations? What costs are involved? Are there any savings to be realized? Can the community afford any changes to the status quo? Is there a rationale for keeping the elementary schedule as it is? (This requires collection of data via appropriate survey instruments open to multiple stakeholders, focus groups with teachers and other district staff, and community meetings that are widely advertised and offered at different times and days of the week.)

2.) ENROLLMENT: There is a sweet spot in school district size where we are large enough to offer a broad curriculum and small enough to maintain a sense of connectedness that nurtures individual students. Fortunately, this sweet spot is not a single number, and thus far, the Lakewood City Schools have been able to pro-

vide a comprehensive and diverse curriculum. Our school district should develop an engaging and effective communications campaign that showcases the excellent educational opportunities and experiences of our students that encourages families to choose the Lakewood City Schools! Also, it is worth bearing in mind two census facts to consider when setting realistic enrollment goals. People are not having as many children per family. We raised two daughters in our home that once housed a family with seven children. Also, Northeast Ohio in particular, has been losing population for several decades and Lakewood has had a proportionate loss.

3.) CURRICULUM: There are multiple studies that demonstrate that music, art and physical movement are absolutely essential for the intellectual, emotional, and physical development of children (and they are good for adults too (see Recreation Dept. for opportunities). We have a community responsibility to prioritize subject areas that will best serve all of our students. More art, more music, more physical movement, and/or introducing foreign language learning during the day could be excellent. Maintaining math, reading, science, social studies, and collaborative learning time is essential. As a multi-month project, we, as a community, could review our course offerings and school day schedule to be sure we are meeting the needs of all students and preparing them for the future - without having them in school for 12 hours per day. I include some details about this in my answer to the first question.

4.) TRANSPARENCY: I was part of the leadership team for Phase 3 of the 50-Year Committee: I remember the crowds of people attending our sessions and school board meetings. Phase 3 included significant updated information since the overhaul of our facilities took longer than expected due to the worst recession since the Great Depression. The Lakewood Observer wrote multiple articles, printed Letters to the Editor and printed writings from the School District. We were transparent and inclusive. The recent change in the elementary school curriculum was not handled as openly as our community is accustomed to. Hopefully lessons have been learned about using valid survey instruments and taking more time to gather information from multiple sources before making system-wide changes. I support reinstituting topic-specific community meetings to engage all community residents. School Board meetings are usually held on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month, free, and open to the public.

Martha Woerner

EXPERIENCE: I’m the parent of two young kids - future members of the Lakewood classes of 2039 and 2041. I bring the perspective of parents who are navigating preschool and enrolling our kids for the first time. And the decisions that the board makes now affect my kids’ education, even though we’re not yet attending school. With nearly 15 years of experience working with and within K-12 education systems supporting them to make school work for all students, I’ve built an understanding of the opportunities and challenges that districts face. I’ve worked in research, policy, strategic planning, human resources, finance, and community engagement. This experience will help the board develop and evaluate policy; make decisions informed by research, data, expertise, and community input; and support our district in hiring, developing, supporting, and retaining our talented educators and staff.

1.) LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY: Yes - whenever I think about a policy decision like this, I think about two key factors. First, what does research, data, and education best practice tell us? And then what does our community tell us about their aspirations and needs? In this case, the answers to both questions point us toward lengthening the school day. The relationship between time in school and student learning is clear and well established. And I’ve heard over and over from parents (and feel it myself) the desire for a longer school day, whether because it would add more time for the specials like art, music, or STEM or because it would solve a before-school childcare gap. A primary barrier to lengthening the day has been financial, so we would need to understand where funding might come from, what tradeoffs that would entail, and whether the community is willing to support those tradeoffs.

2.) ENROLLMENT: The district needs to deeply understand (1) how families make choices about where they send their kids when they enroll in kindergarten and (2) when families leave the district where they go and why. Once we have that understanding, we can build more active plans to attract and retain families. I think we overly rely on anecdotal stories and families defaulting into their neighborhood school, rather than making an active pitch (which is what competitor schools are doing). As the parent of kids who will be enrolling in kindergarten in the next few years, I have proximity to families who are in that first category. As someone who has worked in human resources for nearly ten years, I have experience in designing and implementing plans to attract and retain staff, which will translate into similar strategies for attracting and retaining students and families.

3.) CURRICULUM: All children deserve access to a robust, well-rounded curriculum that includes music and physical education, but also includes visual art, STEM, etc., and I have heard many community members articulate this shared value. Deciding the right balance among these subjects is a choice among many good things, and finding the balance of many good things in the face of constraints is challenging. In those circumstances, I think it is important to carefully weigh both the expertise and experience of professional educators and community perspective. I am interested in seeing the district revisit this decision because I have frequently heard from parents that they did not feel heard or that their preferences were not sought or considered during the decision-making process - which is particularly important when there is no clear “right” choice. This would also give us the opportunity to learn from this year of implementation and explore alternative options.

4.) TRANSPARENCY: Educating our kids is a partnership between profes-

Martha Woerner continued on page 12

LAKEWOOD HALLOWEEN

They're Baaaack!

by Adelaide Crnko

Last year skeletons ruled our Halloween landscape, and they're here again. But, with the arrival of other haunting characters, should we go so far as to say we now have a turf war, our own version of "West Side Story"? Not really. Skeletons are spending time with family and friends, hanging out in the yard or even playing ping pong. However, if ghosts attempt a takeover, who you gonna call?



LO's 2023 Halloween Decorating Contest continued from page 1

The Lakewood Observer is looking for houses and apartments with the best Halloween/Fall decorations to give some prizes to in appreciation of the residents of Lakewood for all of their hard work.

Go to: Daily Question on our homepage, <http://lakewoodobserver.com> (QR CODE on the right)

Nominate five different homes until midnight, October 31, 2023. Voting will be done by judges selected from the community and announced in the November 8th issue.

The top ten homes will be awarded prizes from Lakewood businesses.

A random nominator will be chosen for a spooktacular prize too!



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Uptown Lakewood Business Alliance

On Tuesday, October 24th from 5:30 - 7:00 PM,

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Look for the orange balloons outside of participating businesses on Madison Avenue between Warren and Hilliard, and stop in for a treat.



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Bay Village | Fairview Park | Lakewood | Middleburg Heights | North Olmsted | North Ridgeville

LAKEWOOD FIREFIGHTERS



Captain Martin Wellenhorst's family checks out his new badge that came with the promotion to Captain.



New Firefighter/Paramedic Anthony Favazzo gets sworn in.



New Firefighter/Paramedic Colin Lucas gets sworn in.



New Firefighter/Paramedic Matthew Tibjash after getting sworn in.



New Firefighter/Paramedic Nicholas Gehler gets sworn in.



New Firefighter/Paramedic Zachary Stryffeler after being sworn in.



New Firefighter/Paramedic Jeffery Mortensen gets sworn in.

by Jim O'Bryan

I always try to make the annual Firefighter Recognition Ceremony. A great chance to meet the new recruits, the ones on duty and retirees. Here are the high points of this year.

Swearing In Ceremony

- Captain Martin Wellenhorst
- Firefighter/Paramedics Nicolas Gehler
- Firefighter/Paramedic Anthony Favazzo
- Firefighter/Paramedic Zachary Stryffeler
- Firefighter/Paramedic Colin Lucas
- Firefighter/Paramedic Jeffery Mortensen
- Firefighter/Paramedic Matthew Tibjash

Recognition of Retirees

- Captain Gordon Polando
- Captain Joseph Schmook
- Firefighter Steven Colbert
- Firefighter Dean Jalovec
- Firefighter Matthew Kopack
- Paramedic Supervisor Charles Flynn

Meritorious Service Award

- John Paul-Terranova
- and Chris Makaryk

Life Saving Award

- Mike Tripodi
- Dan Santry
- Chris Makaryk
- Dalton Jalovec



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Celebrating Over 18 Years of Free Speech and Intellectual Diversity in Lakewood, Ohio: www.lakewoodobserver.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

See all endorsement “Letters To The Editor” online at <http://lakewoodobserver.com>

Alumni For Hendy

Dear Lakewood Community,

As a collective of Lakewood City School graduates, retired and current teachers, former parents, and staff both near and far, we have been disheartened to hear of the changes implemented in the elementary school day schedule resulting in drastic reductions to both music 60%) and physical education (50%) class times.

The addition of instruction in STEM and digital literacy is well-intentioned and we can appreciate that it seeks to meet the advancing needs of today’s world. Still, we know that it is possible for the integration of these subjects to be carried out in a way that does not impair student experience and engagement.

We believe that Trish Hendy is the best candidate for the Lakewood City Schools Board of Education. In our personal interactions with Trish, we have come to know her as hard-working, caring, and honest. Consistent with our Lakewood tradition, Trish Hendy values art and music education, and we support the changes she has proposed to restore music, art, and PE offerings in the district.

We know that, if elected, Trish will be a tireless advocate for the students of Lakewood Schools, just as she was during our time at LHS. Trish Hendy supported and believed in all of us when we were Lakewood students; we hope that she is given the opportunity to share her passion for Lakewood and Lakewood’s students as a member of the Board of Education. Vote Trish Hendy for Lakewood Board of Education

Respectfully,

Greg Culley LHS Class of 2010

D. Sweeney (former board of education member), Dr. C. Greanoff ‘77, M. Hildebrandt ‘68 (retired 27 years in LKWD), Dr. B. Hankins (34 years), G. & J. Wondrak (retired 26 years and 15 years respectively), M. Wightman (retired), J. Tabaj (33 years, retired), T. (Coyne) Andreani ‘82, P.& H. Hilty ‘72, M. Lisi (‘91-’97, retired), T. & T. Selby (retired 23 years and 30 years respectively), L. (Welty) Mueller’ 81, M. Mueller ‘07, B. Mueller-Calvitti ‘09, J. & D. O’Bryan ‘72 ‘80, L. (Mast) Girman ‘73, Dr. C. Iacullo Nygaard ‘01, K.Smith ‘99, C. Lavelle ‘98, C. Woodard ‘98, K Tee ‘93, C. Scealf ‘99, M Vondrak ‘97, K. Bindel ‘00, Z. Schroll ‘06, M. Tabor ‘00, C. Studer ‘98, K. Bindel ‘98, B. Connor ‘99, T. Peckens ‘97, J. Robinson ‘98, G. Culley, ‘10, M. Trnavsky-Carnovale ‘98, N. Palmieri ‘98, J. Christensen ‘97, E. Brett ‘98, J. Fleming Wroblewski ‘94, K. Smith ‘06, J. Browning 98, N. Pearce ‘91, C. Holmes ‘91, R. Lowe ‘97, C. Crawford ‘91, M. Fox ‘94, A. Wasielewski ‘05, N. Cleary ‘97, B. Craven ‘08, K. Maclean ‘93, D. Tardivo 06, J. Wilks ‘95, K. Hurst ‘06, B Novotny ‘97, B Novotny ‘98, G. Browning ‘76, S. Petrone ‘19, R.Kosmowski ‘98, M. Spooner ‘98, M. Kiley ‘98, M. Mays ‘98, K. Van Stratton Banda ‘97, J Youngs ‘98, A. De Sorgo ‘88, K. Eubanks ‘97, G. Ott ‘97, N. Bocchicchio ‘98, M. Wurstner ‘96, S. Wroten ‘03, A Bartos ‘22, A. Perez ‘09, G. Blackburn , A. Stevenson ‘04, E. Jackson ‘10, K.Tuleta ‘07, T. Hollander ‘07, B. Wroten ‘04, M. Horn ‘13, V. Hamm ‘07, A. Neidert ‘10, S. Stewart ‘07, J. Kless Sharma ‘08, A. Hinshaw ‘06, G. Gilbert ‘06, M. Davis ‘20, P. Eberl ‘74, D.& L (Holchin) Lutsock ‘91 and ‘90, S. Holchin ‘96

Elect Anthony Mencini For City Council Ward 2

continued from page 1

would also be at the top of my list as your next city councilman. I will advocate and spearhead the charge toward tax reform and consult with our representatives in Columbus.

Being a city councilman is not solely about the big ticket issues, however. It’s about the very real problems you experience, which the current city council hasn’t paid much attention to.

I know full well that local government policy affects your daily life more than any other level, so it is my duty to listen and abide by the goals you put before me.

As your councilman, I will have regular meetings—at least quarterly—and provide comprehensive monthly updates regarding Lakewood’s municipal agenda.

I want my neighbors to consider me a vehicle for their needs and wants, not someone who sits above them and wields their given authority without inhibition or behind closed doors.

Contrary to the status quo, it doesn’t take a lawyer to do this job, just someone who is empathetic to the needs of the people they are serving.

You will get the most out of me in Ward 2. I will work day and night—as I did in writing this letter—to make sure you are informed, your questions answered, and your voice is heard.



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3 Items	\$10.50	\$12.75	\$17.00	\$19.50
4 Items	\$11.25	\$13.75	\$18.25	\$21.25
Deluxe	\$12.00	\$14.75	\$19.50	\$25.00
Extra Items	\$.75	\$1.00	\$1.25	\$1.75
Chicken	\$2.25	\$2.75	\$3.75	\$4.75
Extra Cheese & Special Toppings	\$1.75	\$2.25	\$3.25	\$4.25

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SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

Miss Frippery's
Costume Jewelry Emporium OMG - It's Jewel-ry!

by Camelia Carter

My name is Camelia Carter and I am the author of "The Incredible Miss Vicky" and the original founder of No More Heroin.

It has taken me a little over 7 years to fully rejoin the land of the living since losing my son, RJ, to overdose in 2016.

After spending years working from home doing customer service, I now buy, sell and trade antique and vintage costume jewelry with other collectors.

It is with great expectations of brighter days ahead for myself and the community I intend to serve that I

present to you... Miss Frippery's Costume Jewelry Emporium on Madison Avenue in Lakewood, OH!

In my shop, you can expect to find incredible vintage and contemporary jewelry, along with beautiful handbags, shoes, clothing, accessories, collectibles and more. We even have a smidgeon of "guy clothes"!

My place is pretty much wall-to-wall, curated fabulousity, with fun, funky and unique treasures everywhere you look!

Miss Frippery's is also designed to be a somewhat communal space, welcoming individuals and small groups

to use my broken jewelry pieces to create and consign or keep new pieces of jewelry or art.

I like to think of my place as a complete, not-to-miss experience.

Come see for yourself! There's no place quite like it anywhere!

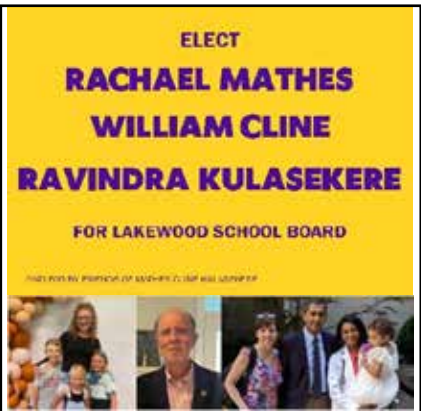
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Inside the emporium.



Excellence in Academics: Support a fact-based, age-appropriate curriculum, across the school system, which would encompass the pure and applied sciences, technology, the arts and physical education. Such a curriculum would be made available online or by other means for all community members to review and understand at all times.

Parental Rights: Recognize that parents are often the best advocates for their children's education and wellbeing. We would support a parent's rights to understand all aspects of their children's school experience, and ensure that every child is provided a safe learning space within the school system.

Communication: Foster an honest, transparent and collaborative environment that involves dialogue between the school board and students, teachers, parents, administrators and other support personnel.

Fiscal Responsibility: Improve upon the ongoing excellence of the Lakewood City School District while maintaining fiscal responsibility. All financial decisions will be held to the highest standards of transparency, ethics and integrity.

Learning Environment: Uphold the rich traditions that define the Lakewood School System while cultivating an equitable learning environment which embraces diversity, respect, tolerance, and safety for all.

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Please vote on or before Tuesday, Nov. 7th

Contact me at 216-402-7999 or Colleen.clarksutton@gmail.com

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CANDIDATES FOR SCHOOL BOARD

Martha Woerner continued from page 5

sional educators and students, parents, and community members. Each brings important experience, perspective, and expertise to the partnership, which requires active stewardship especially when facing difficult decisions. When I’ve facilitated decisions across large, diverse groups, I always follow several steps. First, I involve the community in the process early and more than once, and I make sure everyone is clear about what the decision is, who will make it, and what criteria are used. I gather community perspectives in a variety of ways, make sure that all groups are involved, and share themes of what I’ve heard with the community. Once a decision has been made, I also make sure to share why that option was chosen over others, including how community input influenced the decision. While we may not all agree with the decision, I’ve found these steps build trust and transparency.

Ravi Kulasekere

EXPERIENCE: My education includes a PhD in physics from the University of Missouri. I’m also an ANWPB board-certified holistic health practitioner at Do No Pharm Naturopathy LLC, in Lakewood, Ohio. Prior to becoming a naturopath, I was an ABR board-certified medical physicist, and worked in the field of cancer care, at various hospital systems in Michigan and Ohio for 13 years. My decades long academic career included teaching and tutoring high school and college students and medical residents, covering subjects such as mathematics, physics and radiation oncology physics. I have published several peer-reviewed articles completed during two decades of corporate and hospital-based research programs. I have served as a board member for several non-profit organizations over the years. If elected, I would utilize my extensive skill set to bring academic excellence, fiscal responsibility, and a safe and equitable learning environment through effective communication and parental involvement to the Lakewood City Schools.

1.) LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY: Yes. This type of change will involve negotiations with the LTA, parents and staff and it will also require additional funding to implement. However, the benefits to a slightly longer school day can be easily justified as the amount of information that is added on to our curriculum increase continuously. A longer school day will not only help the teachers teach and students learn but also can be helpful in managing parent work schedules by requiring less before and after school care.

2.) ENROLLMENT: Declining enrollment does not happen overnight. It’s usually the end result of systemic issues faced by parents over a period of time. When parents recognize that they are not being heard and see no solutions being offered, they make the decision to remove their kids from the public school system. Therefore, the first and foremost action should be to know what caused them to make that decision. Honest, open conversation and active listening to parents, teachers and students is essential. Perhaps even inviting parents who decide to take their kids out to an exit interview to find out the reasons might be helpful to identify trends and offer solutions. Also using available local outlets to promote the school brand to both new and old residents can make the difference in enrollment.

3.) CURRICULUM: Absolutely. In fact, I am in favor of increasing the length of the school day to possibly use it to reintroduce the reduced time from the arts and PE programs. Every study done has shown the elementary age participation in art, music and drama improves the cognitive ability, focus and retention capability of a young child. In addition, the arts motivate children, improve on their social skills and emotional intelligence, provide avenues for improving on critical thinking skills, allow for stress reduction pathways and overall enrich the lives of young children. It was an absolutely short-sighted move on the part of the current school board to reduce the time children spent on the arts. The value of PE needs no additional emphasis at a time when most kids are seriously lacking the needed time outdoors being active. If we want healthy and well-rounded kids these programs need to be reintroduced.

4.) TRANSPARENCY: The process currently being used is fine but in the above examples the execution of the process is what was flawed. The solution is simple: be honest in all communications with parents, staff and students. Difficult decisions have to be made sometimes and people understand that. Everyone appreciates it as long as the communications have been honest and genuine efforts have been made to explain the process with clarity. The Board of Education is elected and cannot operate in a silo, ignore the input of the community or have preconceived notions of how things should be, and then expect to deliver quality outcomes that work for everyone.

Rachael Mathes

EXPERIENCE: With 3 children in the Lakewood School District, I have a personal interest in ensuring they receive the best education. With 15 years’ experience in Finance, I bring a unique perspective towards fiscal responsibility while focusing on equity and inclusion. My approach is founded on transparency, open communication, and collaboration. I will engage with parents, teachers, and the community to understand concerns and aspirations, fostering a sense of shared purpose. I have served a Member of the Lakewood Economic Development Committee, Bird-town Beautification Project, Senior Pen Pal Program, Taste of Lakewood Committee, and past Treasurer of the Roosevelt PTA. I am passionate about leading by example and showing my children the importance of community involvement and civic responsibility. If elected, I will continue to support Excellence in Academics, Parental Rights, Communication and Transparency, Fiscal Responsibility, and an equitable Learning Environment which embraces diversity, respect, tolerance, and acceptance for us all.

1.) LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY: Yes. Increasing the school day will provide students and teachers additional learning opportunities that will enhance their

personal development and improved academic performance. This will also help parents who utilize before and after school care and may decrease homework allowing for more school and personal life balance for all. This implementation will require negotiations with the LTA, parents and staff and also additional funding, but the benefits of doing so enhances our student’s quality of education.

2.) ENROLLMENT: Declining enrollment is usually the result of parents choosing homeschooling or other school systems to send their children. When parents see they have not been heard and that solutions are limited, they make the decision to remove their kids from the public school system. We need to understand what led to this decision by assessing the needs of our local population and adjust accordingly. Honest, open conversation and active listening to parents, teachers and students is essential to build trust, retain current students while attracting new ones and having some return. Also, enhancing our marketing efforts to showcase the unique strengths of our schools by engaging local outlets, businesses, and alumni to promote our schools will also aid in increasing enrollment.

3.) CURRICULUM: This has been a very controversial decision, on the part of the current school board to reduce the time children spent on the arts without proper engagement of the community and those affected most. By increasing the length of the school day, we can also reintroduce the reduced time taken from the arts and PE programs. Studies support that music and arts improves our children’s cognitive ability, focus and retention. These subjects nurture creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence and self-expression. PE is vital as it promotes physical fitness and helps students develop a healthy and active lifestyle. It promotes teamwork, cooperation and sportsmanship. These subjects provide a release for students and a break from academic pressures, an outlet to reduce stress and overall enriches the lives of our young children.

4.) TRANSPARENCY: Transparency is key within the decision-making process. We can seek community input through surveys, public forums, town halls and school board meetings. Encouraging and actively engaging with our community members, parents, teachers, and students on their input and how the school boards decisions affect them. If after a decision is made and the overwhelming response is negative, we can review past decisions that lacked community involvement and explore opportunities for course correction. The Board of Education are elected officials, and cannot act unilaterally, this only inhibits the commitment to deliver quality outcomes that work for everyone.

Ahmie Yeung

EXPERIENCE: The unique blend of my lived experiences as a disabled Sociologist mother makes me exceptionally qualified to serve as a Lakewood Board of Education member. I have been having to figure out creative workarounds for barriers life presents due to my disabilities since my childhood, and this has resulted in my being very adept at resource management/reallocation. My training as a Sociologist would benefit the district as we collaborate to make the best decisions for the entire community with transparency and engagement. My experiences as a mother with four children currently enrolled in grades 2, 5, 8, and 11, a 2022 LHS graduate, and three children who have taken advantage of College Credit Plus provide me with additional insights that serve the community. All of these aspects of me are not represented by anyone else currently on the board or ballot.

1.) LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY: Before the school board considers lengthening the school day, it is vital to get the pulse of all directly impacted community members and ensure that any lengthening of the school day happens in ways that do not negatively impact our families. Some families may welcome starting the elementary school day earlier to more closely align with the middle and high school start times, while extending it later may work better for other families who need to give teens time to reach the elementary school. Teachers also need to be consulted on how an extended day would flow with the excellent work they’ve already been doing and their own human work/life balance needs. I am definitely in favor if it brings more music and PE back into the elementary day routine.

2.) ENROLLMENT: I believe we have a major opportunity to increase district enrollment of homeschooling and charter schooling families by enriching and expanding the virtual and alternative education options available through Franklin School of Opportunity, where my own children have been thriving as asynchronous virtual middle school students since before the pandemic. Offering the flexibility of the virtual curriculum in more ways, even to children who are enrolled in our physical schools, would also help students who are out of sync with their peers find their own pace for progressing through the curriculum with the compassionate support of our teachers and other school staff there to guide them. As more of our high school students are in the news having earned degrees with College Credit Plus, more ambitious families will want their highly capable students in our schools to tap into the support that makes that possible.

3.) CURRICULUM: Based upon my deep dives into the subjects of human development, socialization processes, and social neuroscience, early life exposure to music instruction and supervised, coordinated physical movement are foundationally crucial to healthy human development and setting up our children to thrive as they grow. If there is a responsible financial way to increase the amount of time those subjects are offered in our elementary schools, then I support not only restoring the time but expanding it. The research I have reviewed shows that those two subjects lay foundations that improve comprehension in all other academic subject matters, as well as various forms of neurological/physiological function that have benefits beyond academics. Both of these subjects develop goal-setting and “practice makes

Ahmie Yeung continued on page 13

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Ahmie Yeung continued from page 12

progress” growth mindsets that set children up to do well in other life contexts.

4.) **TRANSPARENCY:** As a Sociologist, I am dissatisfied with the surveys from the district. They were poorly constructed, asked leading questions with ill-fitting multiple choice answers, and I know from experience that the resulting data is not analyzable in professional ways. Future surveys should be designed and analyzed by actual social scientists, preferably embedded in our community - perhaps with our Sociology students at LHS and their teacher involved as a learning opportunity. For transparency, data sets should be available for public review. As for the committees, I have questions about how people are being recruited to them currently. From what I have seen, we need to increase engagement with our school families and neighbors via community events, while advertising the need for participants in these committees at those events. This would diversify the perspectives included in these critical teams by broadening the participation pipeline and helping people find the onramps to involvement.

William Cline

EXPERIENCE: Following my honorable discharge from the U.S. Airforce I moved to Lakewood with my wife and have lived here for over 50 years. Our children were educated in the Lakewood City Schools and they had an excellent experience within the rich traditions of the district. My post-service work career of over 30 years, included positions in financial, manufacturing and non-profit sectors. As a professional manufacturing manager, I acquired excellent decision making, organizational resource allocation, efficiency improvement, and cost-reduction skills. Transitioning from the manufacturing sector to the non-profit sector, I was a professional career coach where I was able to offer career guidance and skills development training to a diverse population. I believe that my broad skill set will be helpful to provide the school district with insight on how to effectively collaborate with everyone involved and provide a results-driven educational system which consistently achieves positive end results.

1.) **LENGTH OF SCHOOL DAY:** I would be in favor of extending the elemen-

tary school day by 30 to 45 minutes. Topics presented in elementary school provide the foundation for future learning and equip students with the critical skills necessary for mastering the increasingly difficult topics they will encounter as their educational journey continues. Evidenced by recent declining test scores, and studies that indicate students have fallen behind in mastering basic critical skills, support the necessity of extending the current school day. This increase would be beneficial in allowing additional time to be allocated to regaining lost ground that was sustained during Covid and would align our school district with the remaining districts in Cuyahoga County.

2.) **ENROLLMENT:** Parental trust and confidence in our educational system is vital in maintaining and increasing student enrollment. Declining enrollment numbers indicate that this trust and confidence is lacking. Establishing and maintaining a non-confrontational collaborative alliance between board members and parents focused on involving parents in all aspects of their children’s education, especially in the area of curriculum development, is vital in maintaining and increasing student enrollment.

3.) **CURRICULUM:** I strongly favor restoring and even increasing time spent in these areas of instruction. Studies indicate the positive impact that exposure to music, the arts, and physical education have in the cognitive, social and physical development of our children. Additionally, the negative response from a large number of parents, regarding this action, indicate their dissatisfaction with the decision of the board to reduce class time in these areas.

4.) **TRANSPARENCY:** Any lack of transparency by the Board or Administration, whether actual or perceived, leads to reduced trust and confidence regarding the decision-making process. The public, especially parents, need to be assured that they are afforded the opportunity of being active participants, not merely an afterthought, in this process, and that their voices and opinions are always heard. As a Board Member I would be an advocate for full transparency based on open dialog, consideration of differing opinions and views, and parental involvement throughout the decision-making process.

WARD 2 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Council Race, Ward 2: Councilperson Jason Shachner, Anthony Mencini

1.) **RESIDENTS CONCERNS:** Name two things you have learned while speaking with residents: what are their biggest concerns about their ward, and what are their biggest concerns about Lakewood in general? How will you address these concerns as their councilperson?/How are you addressing these concerns as their councilperson?

2.) **HOSPITAL PROPERTY:** The "holespital" -- the site of the former Lakewood Hospital -- was brought up by many readers, one who pointed out that Lakewood teenagers make jokes about it on TikTok and Instagram. We've had suggestions that it be turned into an ice rink and a nature preserve. What can you do to bring something to that area that Lakewood residents can be proud of?

Councilperson Jason Shachner - Ward 2

EXPERIENCE: My background and experience make me the best candidate to address residents’ everyday concerns and to turn their ideas into legislation and policy. After graduating from college, I served as an AmeriCorps VISTA Fellow for the non-profit organization Turning the Page in Washington DC. I then pursued my law degree at Case Western Reserve University School of Law. After graduating I dedicated seven years as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in the Felony Division of the Lake County Prosecutor’s Office, handling cases from drug possession to aggravated murder.

In my current role as Assistant Director of Law for the City of Cleveland, I provide legal advice and counsel to members of the City Council, the Administration, and various city departments. My responsibilities include representing and advising the Department of Public Safety, the Mayor’s Office of Capital Projects, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Civil Service Commission. I also draft legislation, policies, and legal opinions.

1.) **RESIDENTS’ CONCERNS:** The two main concerns I hear from residents are speeding and the condition of rental properties owned by out-of-state landlords or LLCs. Regarding speeding, I am working on revising the Traffic Calming Program’s criteria to increase the number of eligible streets. One proposed change includes redefining survey responses, where non-responses would be considered abstentions rather than “no” votes, giving residents that choose to participate more say. Additionally, in the Public Safety Committee, we are exploring the feasibility of installing speed cameras in school zones and determining the legal ramifications of installing them elsewhere.

Out-of-state landlords and LLC-owned properties present challenges in enforcing building codes. I am exploring measures included in Cleveland’s Residents First legislation, such as mandating that these entities appoint a person in Cuyahoga County who is legally responsible for the physical and financial condition of the property, to improve Lakewood’s ability to hold negligent landlords accountable.

2.) **HOSPITAL SITE:** I share residents’ frustration with the slow progress of developing the former Lakewood Hospital site. On September 18th, we had a Committee of the Whole meeting with the developer, CASTO, to learn what progress they have

made since Roundstone withdrew from the project. The developer was able to revise their plan, but financing has become more difficult because lenders are currently not providing loans for projects over \$50 million. CASTO proposed completing the project in phases to allow it to continue to move forward. The hope is that once the first phase begins, market conditions will adjust, and the developer will be able to complete all phases of the project. I, along with my colleagues, will continue working to ensure that the development meets the needs of Lakewood and that the developer incorporates the items we listed in Council’s Term Sheet Priority Communication, which you can read here: <https://www.lakewoodoh.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Council-Term-Sheet-Priorities-Communication-PostCOW-Final.pdf>.

Anthony Mencini

EXPERIENCE: I have nearly four years of experience as the operations manager for a non-profit in Rocky River, quickly learning the necessary skills on the job. I understand the daily operational needs and struggles of a small business, including leading a cohesive team and contributing to big picture plans for growth. I also organize and lead Grapevine, a community of young adults at St. Luke the Evangelist. While a critical role, our City Council doesn’t need another lawyer, but rather someone with boots-on-the-ground practical experience in the private sector. I believe I am the best person to represent you on Lakewood City Council given my youthful energy and fresh takes, the love of my hometown, and my keen ability to learn on the job like no one else. I will do everything in my power to best steward the position and responsibilities with the goals you provide and a well-formed conscience.

1.) **RESIDENTS’ CONCERNS:** Ward 2’s concerns are: Speeding, Crime, Sewers. Lakewood’s concerns are: The “Hole” or “Pit,” Sewers. My #1 issue is to expedite development of the vacant hospital lot and replace it with a sizable firm that can fill its shoes economically.

I had the pleasure of speaking to one of Lakewood’s finest at the Community Festival. He said speed trackers around our community can track speed data. This allows our limited number of officers to focus on the streets needing them most. The perceived rise in crime is related to the speeding issue. I was told there wasn’t a shortage of officers, but when addressing these issues, maybe we’ll find that there is. Information is the basis for all future action and we need more to act accordingly. I will find out and make it widely known for you. This applies to all other issues as well.

2.) **HOSPITAL SITE:** This is my #1 issue. It would be best for our community to have a larger firm fill the hospital’s shoes comparable in employee number and income. If this is prohibitive due to a “competitive real estate market,” I would love to see a park, either a nature reserve or something that can alleviate traffic from Lakewood Park. It’s apparent a community is thriving when you have so many participating in outdoor recreational activities, so enticing more by making it abundantly available is a great idea for Lakewood. It would draw more people downtown to spend money, propping up the economy and could change the landscape of downtown for the better. There is a charm in mixing development with nature. The Metroparks are a good example of this balance. Lakewood could be a microcosm of Cleveland’s relationship to the Metroparks, or feel like New York’s Central Park.

QUESTIONS FOR Mayoral Candidates

Readers' Questions For Mayoral Candidates

1. What are the two most important issues facing Lakewood right now? What is your administration doing to address them?
2. What way can you suggest that citizens of Lakewood could become more involved in taking good care of their city?

Mayor Meghan George

EXPERIENCE: Lakewood has been my home for more than 40 years. I'm a third-generation resident, I grew up on Rosalie Avenue, and attended St. Luke Elementary School and Lakewood High School. After graduating from LHS, I earned my bachelors degree from The Ohio State University. I also hold a life and health insurance license and a post-bachelors degree from Cleveland State University. Prior to becoming Mayor of Lakewood, I was elected to Lakewood City Council-at-Large and worked as a consultant to large organizations throughout Ohio, advising them on employee benefits and human resources. I helped employers meet their work-force's needs while reducing costs, remaining compliant with labor regulations, and planning for the future. I live in the heart of Lakewood with my toddler Maggie and my partner Matt. I enjoy frequenting Lakewood's beautiful parks and recreation.

TWO MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING LAKEWOOD: Lakewood's aging infrastructure and sewers and the use of city dollars are two imminent issues facing our city. To address the immediate need to upgrade our sewers, my administration included sewer upgrades in Lakewood's 2023 budget, and we started the sewage replacement project in March and are still working on completing it.

Additionally, my administration has saved the city taxpayer dollars so that residents and businesses can better focus on what is important to them by utilizing federal economic recovery ARPA funding to pay for capital projects like sewer upgrades and recreation amenity renovations instead of using city dollars. The City of Lakewood has also won the Ohio Auditor of the Year award for city fiscal responsibility each year of my term as Mayor of Lakewood, an award only five percent of Ohio municipalities receive.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT: To better take care of our city, citizens can tune into what's going on in the city government by attending city council and school board meetings and weighing in on local issues. Citizens can frequent our small businesses and utilize our public amenities. They can also be mindful of the roads by mitigating public safety issues that we can control like driving the speed limit

and making the streets safer for everybody on the road. And ,they can play their part in a greener and cleaner Lakewood. We can all work together toward making Lakewood the best place for families, residents, and businesses of every kind.

William Yeung

EXPERIENCE: I have been training and educating myself on public governance since I was 12. I have volunteered on many campaigns since 2016 and have asked candidates many questions, including their goals and plans to achieve them. I started college coursework in 7th grade, receiving a Bachelor's in Organizational Leadership from Cleveland State University. I have served on city advisory boards and

To Read All the Answers to all of the questions answered by all the candidates In this year's election follow the QR Code, or go to Lakewood Observer's front page at <http://lakewoodobserver.com> You never have to register to read or access our massive libraries of photos and stories. You must register to post.



attended many public civic engagement meetings of various types.. Some may hold my age and lack of real-life experience against me, but I see it as freeing from being stuck on a particular way of things. My fresh perspective allows collaborations to find better solutions to problems, and I aim always to keep an open mindset to any feedback while seeking out quality mentors and advisors.

TWO MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING LAKEWOOD: From discussions I have had with Lakewood residents, the top two issues Lakewood faces now are health care and housing. We have not had a proper hospital since 2016, when the Lakewood Hospital was decommissioned and torn down. While the Family Health Center does offer some treatment options, they do not provide inpatient care. My administration would work to solve this issue by partnering with organizations to create a satellite hospital, staffed in innovative ways that build on educational opportunities in the region.. To solve housing issues, I see the first step to be discouraging property neglect by landlords, and present a program that would connect homeowners to reputable contractors, in collaboration with students at LHS.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT: Lakewood is a city of neighbors. Our city is influenced by each of us. We are all influenced daily by various pressures on each of us, which then affects how we interact with one another. I see city leadership's role as fostering opportunities to build community relationships, similar to ways I saw while I was working with the Madison Court Community Coalition. Instead of constantly nagging people on what they should do, it is more effective to give people the opportunity to take actions that match their values. The more opportunities we can provide to our community to engage with each other in meaningful ways, the more people will naturally become involved in caring for our city. There is also the constant struggle of breaking through the information overload that everyone has to get invitations to community connections onto people's calendars, so we must keep trying.

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LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

Understanding Your Medicare Options

by Debra O'Bryan

For those who will be participating in the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period, which this year runs from Sunday, October 15, until Thursday, December 7, your Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) may have provided some information regarding the costs associated with your current Medicare plan and any changes for 2024.

Because Medicare plans can change, there may be a possibility, says Carl Lishing, a licensed insurance agent with HealthMarkets Insurance Agency, that your plan could offer different coverage for 2024. "Since plans and costs can change each year, I believe it's important to review and understand your current plan to ensure it meets your needs for 2024," Carl says.

Carl says that part of his personal service model is to meet with his clients one-on-one to help them understand what their current plan offers them, whether it's still going to meet their needs moving forward, and whether there are any cost increases associated with having that plan. "With each of our clients, we dive into the details of Medicare," he shares. "The first is prescriptions. We'll help you ensure your medications are covered and that the cost of your prescriptions meets your budget. Then we'll talk about your provider network. We'll help you choose a plan that includes your doctors and hospital. Finally, we'll discuss what your plan covers, and any costs associated with the plan."



Lakewood's own Carl Lishing of HealthMarkets Insurance Agency on Detroit is here to help you.

"As a licensed insurance agent, I want to help guide you through the Medicare Advantage enrollment process and help you Find a plan that fits your needs," Carl says. Aside from helping you with your Medicare options, there is a component to the process that only Carl can offer— his friendship.

"My focus is on the people I help," he emphasizes. "This isn't a trans-

actional relationship. This is about helping people. I can work with you. I'm a resource. I'm available to you throughout the year, not just during the enrollment period."

Carl says some clients struggle during the year to understand their plan details. He says he's happy to help clarify things. "Medicare can be complicated or difficult to understand," Carl says. "You might feel like pulling your hair out. I'm here to make things easier—and to provide guidance."

Meet the Team:

With decades of experience in the industry, Carl Lishing is a licensed insurance agent who has been recognized for several accomplishments in the Greater Cleveland area. He's joined

by fellow licensed insurance agents Gabriella Andrada, who handles client reviews, and Sabrina Perritt, who directs her focus to the under-65 customer segment.

"With this team as well as the additional support in our office during the Medicare Annual Enrollment Period, there is a tremendous degree of appointment flexibility," Carl says. "And, as always, our guidance is available at no cost to you."

You can reach licensed insurance agent Carl Lishing at 216-228-0765.

HealthMarkets Insurance Agency is located at 16506 Detroit Avenue, in Lakewood. Office hours currently by appointment. Find out more at ClevelandInsurance.info.

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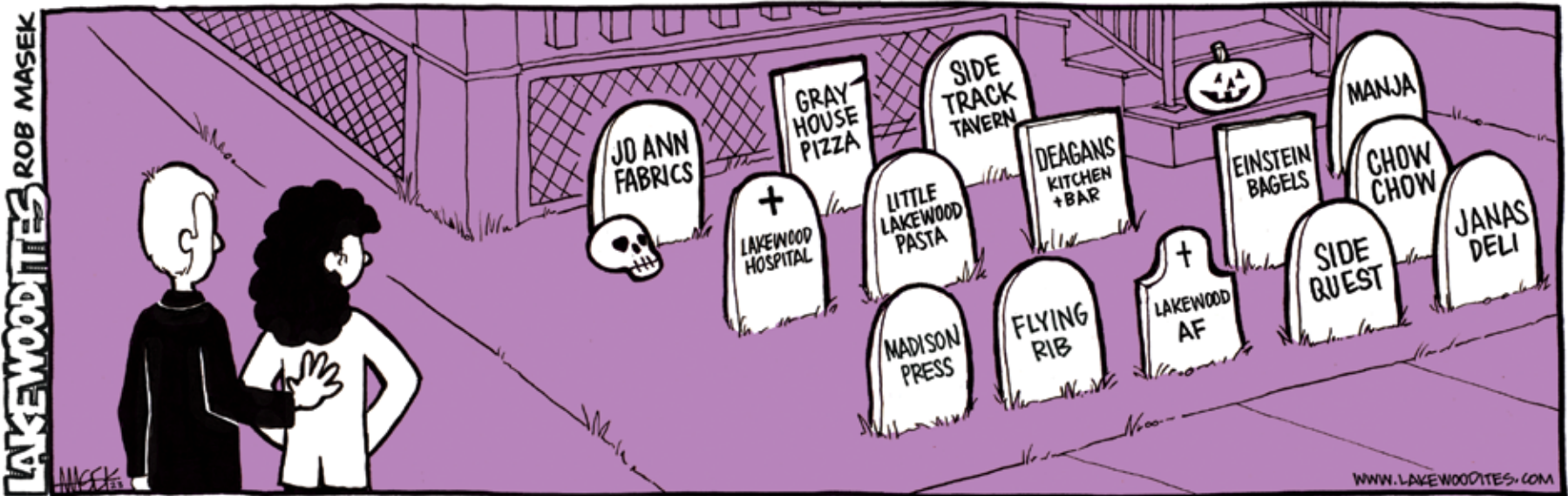
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