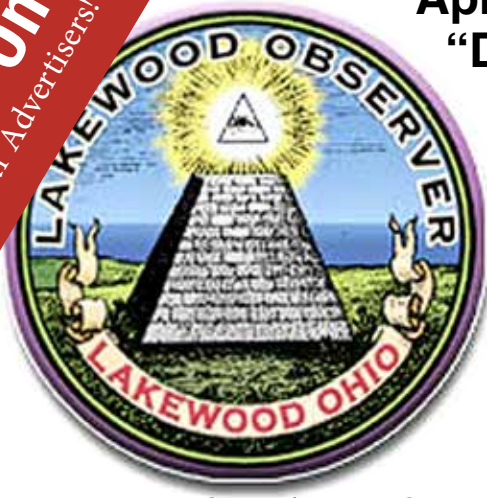


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THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

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Volume 20, Issue 7, April 3, 2024

EPA Officials Claim

Strong Odor Emanating From Rocky River

by Jim O'Bryan

This past week the City of Lakewood became aware of a sick, pungent odor that was most noticeable on the west side of the city. This odor had been emanating from a historic oil well along Hilliard Boulevard in Rocky River that was punctured during construction work. The

Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) was in the process of fixing the issue, but said that it would take several days to complete.

The "Newburg" oil has a strong odor and smells similar to the mercaptan additive that gives natural gas its smell. We have been informed that the odor, despite its unpleasantness,

does not cause any health issues.

Residents have been advised that the smell outside is not cause for alarm. If, however, you smell a gas odor inside your house (e.g., your basement) during this time, be sure to call 911 as you normally would, and the fire department will come check for a natural gas leak.

City Council Observed:

Real Estate Development Spanning 145 Years



1456 Warren



16024 Madison Ave

by Theodore Babcock

The Housing, Planning & Development Committee met on Monday, March 25 at 6:00 PM. Thomas Bullock - Committee Chair, Jason Shachner - Committee Member, Kyle Baker - Committee Member, Sarah Kepple - Council President, and Cindy Marx - Council Member Ward 4 attended the meeting along with Mayor Meghan George, Law Director Ernie Vargo, Director of Planning & Development Shawn Leininger and

members of the community.

The first business item was Ordinance 05-2024 which the committee and council had discussed one week prior. This ordinance would allow the city to enter into an agreement with a licensed broker for the sale of multiple properties. Four individuals from the audience addressed the committee. Two speakers asked the legislators to contemplate how 16016-16024 Madison Ave might benefit the community as a senior living facility; urging the elected

officials to consider all facets of future offers for the property and not simply accept the highest bid. Another commenter representing the Lakewood Child Care Center (the only current tenant of 1450 Belle Ave) expressed LCCC's desire to expand their presence in the building and pointed out that they had already made many upgrades to the building at their own expense. LCCC is interested in buying the parcel. Committee member and councilperson Kyle Baker stated that he would abstain from commenting or voting on this ordinance as his wife, Allison Baker, serves on the LCCC board.

The Committee then voted to remove 1450 Belle Ave, 16016-16024 Madison Ave and 16021 Madison Ave from the proposed legislation as these are commercial properties while the others listed were residential. With the Belle parcel removed, Baker reentered the discussion. He then proposed that two members of council closely

continued on page 2

continued on page 3

New Police Officers



On March 20, 2024 Police Chief Fischer (left) the Lakewood Police Department, and Mayor Meghan George, welcomed four new officers to the team: Christopher Schilla, Nicholas Krotine, Christina Bridges, and Christopher Rafter. Congratulations to each of you and we are glad to have you serving the City of Lakewood!

New Police Sergeant

Lakewood Officer Jeffrey Roda Promoted To Sergeant



On Wednesday, March 20, Mayor George administered the oath of office to newly-promoted Sergeant Jeffrey Roda. Congratulations, Sgt. Roda!

Healthy Lakewood Foundation's Community Grants Process Opens On April 8th

by Sharon Schuldt

Healthy Lakewood Foundation will accept applications for its Community Grants funding process from April 8 through May 10, 2024. Community Grants support organizational programming, projects and initiatives that seek to address critical needs, build community connections, address disparities, and improve the quality of our public and living spaces, with a priority on:

- Food insecurity and access to affordable high-quality food.
- Social and community support networks as safeguards against stress and discrimination.
- Access to early childhood education programs and

services.

• Affordable and safe housing, access to transportation, and safety in and access to public spaces within Lakewood.

Additionally, specific populations in Lakewood are prioritized in this funding, including children and youth, low-income older adults, single-parent heads of households, and immigrants and refugees.

Grant funding ranges between \$10,000 - \$40,000.

Non-profits and fiscally sponsored organizations are encouraged to review the application process and guidelines on HLF's website at <https://healthylakewoodfoundation.org/community-grants/>

West Shore Meals On Wheels Reduces Meal Pricing

by John Becker

The last several years have been full of news about skyrocketing food costs. Even through these inflationary times, West Shore Meals On Wheels managed for the last 12 years to hold meal pricing steady at \$8 per day (\$4 per cold lunch and \$4 per hot dinner).

Beginning January 1, 2024, the Executive Board voted to

REDUCE daily meal pricing to \$7 per day (\$3 for cold lunch and \$4 for hot dinner).

This benefit to our recipients would not be possible without the efforts of our Fairview Park and Rocky River Kitchen head cooks, who work tirelessly to control food costs. Our volunteers donate their time and expertise to pre-

THE MAYOR'S CORNER

A Holistic Approach To Safety

by Meghan George

Mayor/Safety Director, City of Lakewood

As the weather begins to warm up, so does our time outside, which allows us to spend more time enjoying our many parks and walking and biking through Lakewood. As Mayor and Safety Director, I think about safety year-round, and it is especially top of mind as things warm up and more people are out and about. I am excited to provide some updates on our holistic approach to safety here in Lakewood.

I am thrilled to share that our neighborhood ambassadors are returning to our parks this spring. Launched in 2023, the Parks Ambassador Program serves our five largest parks. The ambassadors provide a level of safety in addition to our uniformed officers, who will again be adding a parks detail during the warm weather months. We are excited to continue both of these important programs to ensure our parks remain safe and inviting for all users.

With the aim of enhancing inter-agency communication and bolstering emergency response capabilities, the City of Lakewood has secured new state-of-the-art radios for our police and fire departments, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These cutting-edge devices boast advanced features facilitating seamless communication not only within their respective departments but also with surrounding public safety agencies. This technological upgrade marks a significant improvement over previous generations, offering a suite



Lakewood firefighters answer a call off Warren Road on a cold rainy day. In a city of hundred-year-old wood homes, they are so very needed and loved.

of modern enhancements designed to optimize coordination and efficiency during critical situations, ensuring a more effective and coordinated response to emergencies. The radios are scheduled to be in the hands of Lakewood first responders this spring.

We also recently celebrated the graduation of our first Citizens' Police Academy class in years. This program was paused during COVID and has now returned under the leadership of Chief Kevin Fischer. The Citizens' Police Academy serves as a crucial bridge between law enforcement and the communities they serve, fostering understanding, trust, and cooperation. Through immersive experiences, participants gain insight into the challenges and complexities of mod-

ern policing, from crime prevention strategies to crisis response protocols. By demystifying law enforcement practices and encouraging collabo-

ration, the Citizens' Police Academy strengthens community-police relations and empowers citizens to become active partners in building safer, more resilient communities. Twenty-two residents dedicated nine weeks to this experience and recently graduated. Stay tuned for another chance to participate in this terrific program.

And finally, we have been preparing for the eclipse on Monday, April 8th. My administration has been in close touch with neighboring cities as we prepare for an influx of eclipse-seeking visitors. The Lakewood Police Department, Lakewood Fire Department, and the Department of Public Works are well prepared for this historic day. Municipal Buildings will be closed to the public beginning at 12:00 p.m. Please be safe, wear your eclipse glasses, and enjoy this special event in our beautiful city.

West Shore Meals On Wheels Reduces Meal Pricing

continued from page 1

pare and deliver delicious meals every day, and our corporate and individual donors continually provide food and funds to help our organization thrive for residents of Fairview Park, Lakewood and Rocky River.

For more information on becoming a West Shore Meals On Wheels recipient, or to inquire about volunteering or donating, please contact the West Shore Meals on Wheels website at www.WestShoreMOW.org or call each individual kitchen. The Rocky River-Lakewood kitchen can be reached at 440-333-6298. The Fairview Park kitchen phone number is 440-331-3842.

John Becker is retired from a career in fresh food manufacturing. He is now a volunteer for West Shore Meals On Wheels.

Lakewood Clock Repair



Your Independent Source for Lakewood News & Opinion

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CITY COUNCIL MEETING

City Council Observed:

Real Estate Development Spanning 145 Years

continued from page 1

monitor the sales process for these properties. Shachner suggested that President Kepple and the Ward 2 representative (himself) serve in these roles. This was approved by the committee.

The ordinance was ultimately recommended to Council. Bullock stated, "Those parcels are strategically important because we have control over them... the commercial properties on Madison." He continued, "Because Lakewood only has so many vacant parcels for redevelopment... we need to make our shots count and be thoughtful and choiceful in achieving our community good."

In reference to 1450 Belle, Bullock restated his position from 7 days prior that he would like to see a more in-depth analysis of the structure and explore what it would entail to keep the property. His closing remark was, "I'm still of the mind that this is a key asset for the city and that we should retain the ownership unless we have a clear and compelling reason to transfer the property to a private owner."

The next portion of the meeting dealt with Ordinances 03-2024 and 04-2024. These ordinances deal with

the old Board of Education buildings on Warren Road East Rockport Central School sits at 1456 Warren Road was built in 1879 and is 10,000 sq/ft. The old Grant School building is located at 1470 Warren Road, was built in 1899 and expanded in 1905 to 26,000 sq/ft. Both buildings are older than the City of Lakewood. Liberty Development acquired the properties in 2018 and they have sat vacant since that time. Liberty's plan is to rent out the smaller Rockport building as office space and the Grant building as a residential building with 28 mostly studio and 1-bedroom residences.

The ordinances propose a loan of \$500,000 and a tax-abatement plan for the developers. A presentation from Director Leininger cited the expense of historic restoration, rising labor costs, high interest rates and competition for tax credits from other local historical renovations as justification for the need of assistance for this development. Liberty does not expect to make a profit from this investment for at least 10 years. They plan to maintain ownership of the buildings for over 20 years.

\$200,000 of the proposed loan would go towards energy efficiency improvements in the Rockport build-

ing and the other \$300,000 is for the overall project and historical preservation. The proposed tax-abatement is a 15 year, 100% tax-abatement on the residential property and 75% tax-abatement for the commercial. Also proposed is a 30-year TIF (Tax Increment Financing). "A TIF is an economic development mechanism available to local governments in Ohio to finance public infrastructure improvements and, in certain circumstances, residential rehabilitation." -(ohio.gov) These properties did not produce any tax revenue for the city at all until 2018 when Liberty took ownership.

Discussion on this ordinance went on for almost an hour. After Director Leininger's presentation Dru Siley, who held Leininger's position as Director from 2008-2016 and is now VP of Development for Liberty Development Company, spoke on the developers behalf. Almost every member of council present asked questions of the two presenters.

Some members of council were a bit chummy with former Director Siley for my taste but asked legitimate questions and received satisfactory answers. Council President Kepple asked what recourse the city would have if Liberty failed to uphold their side of the agree-

ment to do this work on the buildings and maintain their historical charm. Siley pointed out that Lakewood would be both lien holder and manager of the tax-abatement. He stated that any failure by the developer to satisfy the agreement would put their tax benefits and loan at risk. Councilman Baker said that there should be a high bar for access to public incentives but that he feels this project and its agent are worthy.

Liberty Development Company has been based in Cleveland since it was founded in 1996. Co-Founder, CEO and President Tom Kuluris is a Lakewood resident. LDC was one of at least 5 bids for this land and was the only bid that did not plan to demolish the two buildings. It was made clear that readying these facilities for tenants and turning them into a profitable business venture would not be possible without the proposed incentives. Siley described the interiors as "rustic" but noted that the structures are sound. He stated that the current plan is to charge less than \$2 per sq/ft for the residences.

The meeting began at 6:05 and was adjourned at 7:34.

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EDUCATION OBSERVED

Observations On The District:

The Good, The Better, And The What The Heck

by Trish Hendy

The Good: This new column will be focusing on The Lakewood Board of Education and the entire district. Let's start with the basics: there are 5 members on the school board who are elected by our community, and they serve a 4-year term. In general, all school boards have three responsibilities: developing the annual budget to run the school system; setting school policies; and hiring and evaluating the superintendent and treasurer. The only positions that the Board itself hire are the superintendent and the treasurer. The board therefore acts as their bosses. Policy 1210 states "it is the primary duty of the Board to establish policies and that of the Superintendent to administer such policies" and policy 1310 states "The Board vests the primary responsibility for the financial affairs of the District in the Treasurer."

When someone stands and speaks at a school board meeting they may feel frustrated or wonder why the board members do not answer their question or respond at all. Policy 1222 explains: "The Board only speaks through its minutes." Pretty frustrating. This column's goal is to help all of us understand more about this organization that has a tremendous impact on our entire community.

Take a moment and go to lakewoodcityschools.org; find the Board of Education tab. There you will find information about board members, purpose, calendars, and a Board Policies link. Reading through policies may not sound like a great way to spend an evening, but there is an amazing amount of information about the district that can be found in these policies. General public meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 7pm and are also livestreamed on YouTube. Search "Brent Kallay" or go to the link on the Board tab. This is also the location to find archived board meetings, special events and concerts.

The Better: Eclipse glasses are being supplied to every student through the Teaching and Learning Department. LHS hosted the OMEA Junior High solo and ensemble where 150 stu-



Speaking of "eclipse glasses" made some of us remember everyone's favorite room at Lakewood High School. The Lakewood High Planetarium! Lakewood High was one of the first public schools in America to have a full sized working planetarium. It went back before Sputnik and space flights. The room was closed for a decade then dismantled when the new school was built. The Eames benches and mechanism sold at auction for a couple thousand dollars.

dents participated, 50 from Lakewood all earning superior and excellent ratings. In 1999, one Lakewood elementary school started a jump-a-thon to raise money for "Jump Rope for The Heart." More elementary schools have joined and to date they have raised over \$100,000. Recently LHS welcomed 28 students and teachers from Germany. They stayed with Lakewood families, communicating in German and English while exploring Cleveland.

What the Heck: Policy 7510 mandates in detail the usage and priorities of all district properties, it states: "In order to assure a close relationship between the Board of Education and the Lakewood community, it shall be the policy of the Board to grant and encourage maximum use of schools facilities as provided by law...Such use shall not interfere with the regular education programs. Category 1: Lakewood Student Groups, Category 2: Lakewood School Support Entities, Category 3: Lakewood Public Nonprofit Groups Category 4: Lakewood Private Nonprofit Groups and Category 5: Commercial Users/Non-Resident Groups."

I was around when this policy was written. It was in response to the practice of school facilities being rented out as much as possible for the rental monies. The result was that Lakewood school groups were pushed aside in favor of making money on rentals. School groups were given dates and then had those dates taken away or changed to accommodate a rental.

Just like all the facilities owned by our community and managed by the

district, the Lakewood Civic Auditorium at Lakewood High School serves as a place for concerts, commencements, dance recitals, and awards ceremonies just to name a few. When it fits into the district schedule, it is rented out to mostly different community groups.

This year the Civic has been rented so much that it severely limited usage by the LHS Performing Arts Department's yearly musical. Due to an overly zealous rental schedule, instead of the normal 10 plus weeks of closely monitored time for rehearsals and production, they only have 1 full week of uninterrupted time. Volunteer parents are spending many hours to catch up, and Sunday rehearsals had to be scheduled for pit and cast. Now there are reports that the district is offering overtime to maintenance staff to help get the set done, up and struck. But none of this gives back the needed rehearsal time on stage.

It is clear that obtaining the best results for students should be the priority. Did the amount of money the rentals brought into the district justify paying for all that overtime and the unforeseen expenses generated by taking the time away from the musical?

Superintendent Niedzwiecki assured me that neither this Board nor she has set any priority above the Lakewood Student Groups use; even rental agreements. Though extra cash flow is a bonus, there is not a current practice that would disregard policy 7510. She said that mistakes were made this year due to new people involved

in scheduling that did not completely understand the district needs.

We know that the community will rally around these students. Thankfully the superintendent has already guaranteed a review and a commitment to doing better in the future.

The dates for this year's school musical, "Sweeney Todd" are 4/11, 4/12 and 4/13 at 7pm in the Civic Auditorium. Ticket info can be found on the Lakewood Music Boosters website: <https://lakewoodmusicboosters.com/>

If you would like to submit questions regarding the Board or District go to <https://lakewoodobserver.com/suggestion-box>, title your question, "Attention:Trish Hendy" and enter it in the submission box.



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LAKEWOOD SPORTS

Dr. G's Lakewood Ranger Round-Up: Baseball/Softball

by Dr. Charles Greanoff
**March 28: Rangers vs
Lake Catholic**

To win 1-0 over a strong team like Lake Catholic requires outstanding pitching and solid defense. With Logan Ellis (complete game shutout) in command on the mound and stingy defense, the Lakewood Rangers got just that today, and the result was pleasing to Ranger loyalists. Logan scattered 5 hits and struck out 7, issued 0 walks and induced many ground balls.

That's where the defense comes in with infielders Riley Verderber, Cooper Russell (who scored the lone run on a Leo Soneson sacrifice fly), Brady Long and Nick Hart making several critical plays each. Peter Checkett was rock solid behind the plate. But it was right fielder Andrew Krankowski who made the play of the game. After a 7th inning leadoff double by the excellent LC pitcher, the next batter hit a short fly ball into no man's land--or so it seemed--in shallow right center. Andrew raced in and made a sliding one handed grab, stifling what could have been a back breaking rally. Logan retired the last two batters on strikes, and the Rangers walked off the field with a 3-0 record in this young season.

This was a very satisfying win for Lakewood, who has had spirited battles for the last two seasons (each team winning a one-run game), the Cougars winning last year. The Lakewood Rangers are young, always play hard and are all from 44107.

Long Live Lakewood.

**March 27: Rangers vs
Canton Glen Oak**

Freshman Riley Verderber threw



3 and 2/3 scoreless innings in relief, leading the Lakewood Rangers (2-0) to a 5-3 win over Canton Glen Oak. Sophomore Nick Hart got his second consecutive save, Lakewood had some solid at bats when it counted most, as the defense was solid and the Rangers once again overcame an early 2-0 deficit. Senior Andrew Krankowski broke a 2-2 tie with a sharp single up the middle in the 5th inning, followed by 6th inning RBI walks from Cooper Russell--who played a strong game at short--and Leo Soneson. Ronan Johnson sparked the Ranger 2 run 6th with a leadoff single, had two hits, scored a run. Drew Jablonowski had a hit and scored a run.

It was cold, but the Rangers warmed up the fans with a very solid team effort. We have a fabulous new

field for a true community based, home town team. Back at it tomorrow vs Lake Catholic. Long Live Lakewood.

**March 25: Softball,
Rangers vs Bay**

The Lakewood Softball and Baseball teams started well today, beat Bay 12-2 and Strongsville respectively. Senior Mia Carroll-Greeves started and got the win--and 4 hits and 4 RBI-- on the North Lot Field. Madison Comer, Emily Gillick and Marissa Showers and Gaby Carroll-Greeves contributed offensively for the Rangers, with Gaby making several fine defensive plays. Ella Bower pitched three strong shutout innings to close it out Lakewood.

**March 25: Baseball,
Rangers vs Strongsville**

Over on the baseball field, pitcher Drew Jablonowski, Michael (W) Klasa and Nick Hart (S) were rock solid on the mound. Cooper Russell had two RBI, while Logan Ellis, Brady Long and Klasa had one each. Andrew Krankowski was 1 for 2 with two walks. Leo Soneson had 2 hits, and Freshman Riley Verderber his first career hit as a Ranger.

Congratulations to both squads--great team effort by both. Great to see all the hard work paying off for all these players that live in our 44107.

Long Live Lakewood

AROUND THE CORNER

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Lakewood Public Library

Upcoming Events

by Lisa Calfee

Lakewood Public Cinema Documentary- Eclipse Over America

Presented by Rita Chahda

Sunday, April 7, 2024

2:00 p.m. (60 minutes)

Main Library Auditorium

Join us for a special visit by Lakewood High School science teacher, Rita Chahda, as she gives us an informative overview of the April 8th eclipse, the first total solar eclipse visible over Lakewood since 1806, followed with a screening of Nova's Eclipse Over America. The film documents the events surrounding the August 21, 2017, path of totality for both scientists and the public, while explaining the significance of this once in a lifetime phenomenon. Free eclipse glasses will be available after the documentary while supplies last.

Film- Casablanca (1942)

Presented by Terry Meehan

Saturday April 13, 2024

6:00 p.m. (102 minutes)

Main Library Auditorium

Filmed and set during World War II, Casablanca focuses on an American expatriate (Humphrey Bogart) who must choose between his love for a woman (Ingrid Bergman) and helping her resistance-leader husband (Paul Henreid) to escape from Vichy-controlled Casablanca. Particularly memorable is the "duel of the anthems" between the German officers and the patrons of Rick's Café.

Presentation- Cleveland Metroparks History: The Early Years

Presented by Judy MacKeigan

Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Main Library Auditorium

Learn how our beloved Emerald Necklace evolved from an idea to reality with Judy MacKeigan, writer and historian at the Cleveland Metroparks. Follow the park's history as it blossomed in the 1920s, survived the Great Depression, fought through World War II and met new challenges in the 1950s.

Children's And Youth Services Programs

by Jeffrey Siebert

Just Baby 'N Me

For You and Your Birth to 24-Month-Old Baby

Just Baby 'N Me is a lap-sit story time ideal for babies from birth through early walkers. The focus is on rhymes, songs, finger plays and exploring short books together. Registration is required. Register for each session separately.

April 1- April 25, 2024

Main Library - Mondays- 10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Wednesdays - 10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Thursdays-10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Madison Branch - Thursdays - 11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Pre-school Story Time

For You and Your 2 to 5-Year-Old Pre-schooler.

This pre-school story time is ideal for walkers, new talkers, and learning early literacy skills. You and your toddler and preschoolers will enjoy short books, songs and rhymes. The focus is on skills with your participation as a model. No registration is required.

March 4- April 25, 2024

Main Library: Tuesdays: 10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Wednesdays: 11:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

Madison Branch:

Thursdays: 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Pajama Party

For You and Your 2 to 6 Year-Old Child

Make the Library a part of your bedtime routine with an evening story time. Children are encouraged to wear their favorite pajamas and bring their stuffed animal friends to snuggle. Join us as we wind down for the night. You and your children will enjoy short books, songs and rhymes. The focus is on skills with your participation as a model. No registration is required.

March 4- April 23, 2024

Mondays: 6:00-6:30 p.m.

Tuesdays: 6:00-6:30 p.m.

Galaxy Slime

For Students in First through Fifth Grade.

Galaxies look like sparkly streaks and swirls in the night sky when viewed from here on Earth. They are made of millions or even billions of stars! Make your own colorful, sparkly galaxy slime using glue, cornstarch, food colors and glitter. Come join the slimy fun! Free eclipse glasses will be available at the program while supplies last. Registration is required.

Friday, April 5, 2024 from 4:00pm-5:00 pm in the Main Library Activity Room

Rover Races

Learn how we use rovers to explore other worlds. Participants work in teams to model the process for communicating with a rover on Mars, to build programming skills and understand the effects of time-delay. Free eclipse glasses will be available at the program while supplies last. Registration is required.

Wednesday, April 3, 2024 from 4:00pm - 5:00pm in the Main Library Multipurpose Room

Space is the Place: Celebrate the Eclipse! Family Weekend Wonders Drop-In Story Time

Come to this Special Family Weekend Wonder that celebrates our full solar eclipse. Enjoy eclipse and space themed stories, a craft and pick up a pair of solar eclipse glasses for joining us. No registration required.

Friday, April 5, 2024 at 10:30am and 7:00pm

Saturday, April 6, 2024 at 10:30 am and 2:00 pm

Sunday, April 7, 2024 at 2:00pm



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ECLIPSE

Eclipse Information

by Jim O'Bryan

On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will take place where the moon completely blocks the sun for nearly four minutes. Lakewood and a large portion of Northeast Ohio sit in the path of totality for this event, which means that we have front-row seats to one of nature's most amazing phenomena.

Some quick reminders: Make sure that you have eclipse viewing glasses certified to ISO 12312-2 standards. Improperly viewing an eclipse can cause permanent damage to your eyes.

The timing of the eclipse for the Cleveland area is as follows:

- Eclipse starts: 1:59 p.m. EDT**
 - Totality begins: 3:13 p.m. EDT**
 - Maximum totality: 3:15 p.m. EDT**
 - Totality ends: 3:17 p.m. EDT**
 - Eclipse ends: 4:28 p.m. EDT**
- Lakewood City Hall and the Lakewood Municipal Court will be closed to the public beginning at 12:00 PM on Monday, April 8th.

The Lakewood Police Department will not be enforcing the rush hour parking restrictions (Monday-Friday 7:00 am-9:30 am & 4:00 pm-6:30 pm) on April 8th. Enforcement will resume on Tuesday, April 9th.

In anticipation of the influx of people and traffic, we want to make sure that safety remains at the fore-



Clockwise from top: Partial Eclipse in 2017.

The sun photographed this week. Another partial eclipse in Lakewood back in 2017.

front for our residents and visitor alike. As such, the following rules will be in place on Monday, April 8, 2024.

Park Rules for Total Solar Eclipse
The following rules will be in effect at all Lakewood parks on Monday, April 8, 2024.

Park Hours
Lakewood Park: Sunrise-11:00 PM
All other parks: Sunrise- one hour after sunset.

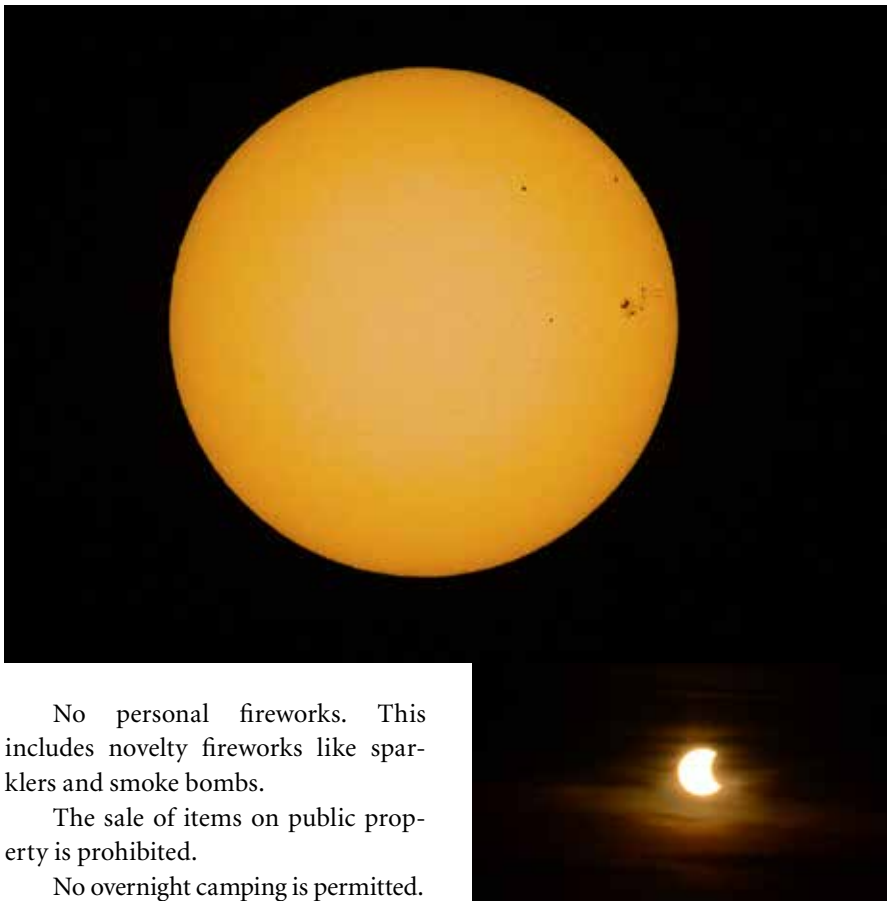
April 8, 2024. Any vehicles parked in these lots are subject to towing.

All generators, propane and gas fueled grills are prohibited.

All tents, shelters, and beach umbrellas are prohibited.

Police may conduct searches of bags and containers for reasons of public safety.

No alcoholic beverages are permitted at any time throughout the year.



photos by Jim O'Bryan

No personal fireworks. This includes novelty fireworks like sparklers and smoke bombs.

The sale of items on public property is prohibited.

No overnight camping is permitted.

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A Message from County Executive Chris Ronayne

April is Poetry Month! Cuyahoga County's Poet Laureate, Honey Bell-Bey, uses poetry to inspire and motivate people.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts recently honored her with the National

Citizen Artist Award for her significant contributions and influence. Even before becoming the Poet Laureate of Cuyahoga County in 2020, poetry has been a part of Bell-Bey's life. She wrote her first poem at age eight, and today, she encourages young people to write poetry as well. She is also the founder of The Distinguished Gentlemen of Spoken Word, which is a performance group for men. The award-winning troupe performs across the United States and around the world.

Bell-Bey's work goes beyond poetry. She is a youth and community advocate and an experienced trainer in Substance Abuse, Youth Work, Culture, and the Integration of Science and Innovative Practices.

To read Honey Bell-Bey's poetry, visit poets.org/poet/honey-bell-bey.



Honey Bell-Bey: Poet, writer, educator, and community advocate.

Cuyahoga Reads Literacy Tips

Celebrating National Poetry Month with your children in April is an excellent way to ignite their love for reading. The vibrant, fun and playful nature of poetry, which often involves exploring simple concepts and emotions, makes it a perfect choice for young readers. Not only does reading poems inspire their imagination, it also introduces them to language structures, word choices, and rhyming patterns in a joyful way. Encouraging children to not just read, but also write their own poem, further enhances their linguistic skills and lets their creativity blossom.

Log your reading for the **Cuyahoga Reads Reading Challenge!** Scan the QR Code to get started with the Beanstack app today!

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LAKEWOOD SOCCER

Lakewood G.O.A.L.S. Kicks Off Its 2024 Fundraising On April 11 With Dine To Donate At Aladdin's Eatery

by Mirsad Curri

It only takes reading a few of Dr. G's Lakewood High School athletic recaps to see how high school sports bring us together as a community and fill us with Ranger pride.

According to Kristian Hila, LHS '10 "The greatest strength of the LHS Boys Soccer program is our beautiful mix of cultures and life experiences that come together and create lifelong friendships and a shared love for our game and the Lakewood soccer family."

Current and future athletes pour their hearts into the soccer program. You might see them on their way to conditioning at 6:00 am year-round or playing at the Madison Park Futsal courts late into the night. Behind the scenes there are hours spent studying – sometimes learning English for the first time or helping teammates master chemistry and algebra. Some players work part-time to help their family pay for rent and food. Others spend hours volunteering in the community.

While differences in finances are not an insurmountable hurdle within Lakewood, they play a big part in shutting down opportunities for some of our talented athletes to play high-level club soccer. This type of training exposes players to intense competition, puts



Flags representing the country of origin for LHS Boys Soccer players, a tradition started by Dr. Amy Daso, is the highlight of the home opener every year.

them in front of college recruiters offering scholarship opportunities, and helps them realize their fullest potential.

Over the years, many in the community have been quietly helping make higher-level soccer training more accessible by paying for soccer cleats/uniforms, purchasing meals, or springing for extra hotel rooms. Now, with the encouragement of former LHS alumni and parent groups, the G.O.A.L.S. program has been launched. Granting Opportunity and Access for Lakewood Soccer (G.O.A.L.S.) is raising funds to provide high-level soccer training and equipment for boys from refugee and low-income families. Key to the program is creating a sense of belonging and support by removing income level as a barrier.

For me this is a personal story. Like many LHS soccer players, I came to Lakewood as an immigrant. I was 7 years old, from a single parent home

and did not speak a word of English. The Lakewood soccer community was welcoming and generous. Families in our community found ways for boys like me to play for LSA and later Lakewood United. We had rides, and uniforms, and a safe, fun place to make friends and feel at home.

Waking up at 5:30 every day for training as an LHS soccer player was intense, exhausting and an amazing environment for building great habits, learning to make good decisions, and building the best friendships.

When I am not studying for my accelerated BSN degree you can see me on the sidelines as a Lakewood United and Lakewood City Futsal coach, and in the stands for LHS games with fellow alumni and lifelong friends cheering on each new generation of Rangers. I am grateful to be able to give back to the community that did so much for me.

I hope you will consider making a contribution either directly to G.O.A.L.S. or by enjoying a delicious, healthy meal for dine-in or take-out on April 11, 2024 at the Lakewood Aladdin's Eatery, 14536 Detroit Ave, Lakewood, OH 44107. On that day, 10% of all proceeds will go directly to support G.O.A.L.S.

Interested in making a monetary



donation? G.O.A.L.S. donations can be made online at: <https://www.thelakewoodfoundation.org/donate> (find us at the bottom right corner of the page) or by mailing a check to:

The Lakewood Foundation
12525 Lake Avenue
Lakewood, Ohio 44107 (please write G.O.A.L.S. in the memo line)

We are grateful to The Lakewood Foundation, a 501(c)3, for serving as the fiscal sponsor for G.O.A.L.S. and for all of the in-kind and financial support we have received in support of our mission. To learn more about G.O.A.L.S., check out our GOALS Lakewood Facebook page or email us at Goalslakewood@gmail.com.

Mirsad Curri LHS '13 is a G.O.A.L.S. Board member.

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SATURDAY
APRIL 6
11:30AM

MARRIAGE

SATURDAY
APRIL 6
2PM

TRAUMA AND RELATIONSHIPS

SUNDAY
APRIL 7
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LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

April Showers And Regional Stormwater Management

by Kirsten Bull

Spring precipitation data is critical to track the impacts of rainfall on Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's two major wet-weather programs: Project Clean Lake (our work to reduce Lake Erie combined sewer overflow pollution by 4 billion gallons a year) and the Regional Stormwater Management Program (which addresses intercommunity stream challenges like erosion, flooding, water quality and debris maintenance). For more information on either of these programs, please visit our website, neorsd.org.

Large-scale rain events across Northeast Ohio and NEORS D's member communities are increasing. The spring season will likely bring increased rainfall and an increase in the sewer district's efforts to address problems related to stormwater runoff from hard surfaces. The Regional Stormwater Management Program is funded by a fee on your NEORS D bill. The fees

are calculated based on the amount of impervious surface area on your property, such as rooftops, driveways and patios.

Property owners have options to make changes or improvements to their properties to reduce the amount of runoff affecting local streams and storm sewers. Actions like disconnecting downspouts, installing rain barrels, or planting rain gardens are some of the ways property owners can better control runoff on their property. On-site stormwater management helps protect water quality and reduce flooding and erosion. For more information, please visit neorsd.org/fee-credit, where you can fill out any applicable applications.

Questions? Contact us (216) 881-8247 or tweet us @neorsd.

Kirsten Bull is the Communications Coordinator, Communications and Community Relations Department for the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District.

Poetry For You Dead Battery Plaque

by Ralph Hutchison

Hang this by dead batteries.
Dispose of these
dead batteries,
our enemies now,
and memories
of some foul disease
in the RIGHT PLACE
at the RIGHT TIME
or POW!!
suffer the penalties
of our crime.

The poet is a computer programmer, living in the city.

Neighborhood Watch

by Mark Herron

As those who overwinter here,
I fill the feeders in my yard
For hungry birds who wander far
And those companioning near

That they and those together flock
In browns and grays and muted tones
With colorful and foreign stocks
Behind this row of modest homes.

All day I watch for one or two,
Quick of wing and bright of hue
Who flash of yellow, orange, blue
Red, or green in passing through

And as they land or as they fly
In local or exotic guise,
I watch for something bold and new
As my neighbors watch there too.

Mark Herron is a part-time writer, information professional, and proud parent of two children! He has been a resident of Cleveland's greater west-side community for over 20 years.

Magician Mark Paskell To Headline Centering Space Gala

by Syndie Eardly

Las Vegas magic is coming to Lakewood on June 8, when Mark Paskell takes the stage at Lakewood Catholic Academy for the Centering Space Magical Journey Gala fundraiser.

Paskell turned professional at the age of 15, and by age 20, was working in Las Vegas. Later he expanded his repertoire to include entertaining both private and corporate clients, such as Steven Spielberg, John Travolta and many Fortune 500 clients, at a variety of private events.

"Mark is an amazing magician and entertainer," said Betsy Nero, director at Centering Space. "We are so thrilled that he offered to perform at this benefit for us. He has been an inspiration and has provided a lot of encouragement and support in the planning process."

The fundraiser, which takes place on June 8 from 5:00 – 7:00 PM, will include heavy hors d'oeuvres, drinks, live music, silent and live auctions, a 50/50 raffle and a performance by Paskell on the LCA stage. All the proceeds will go directly to ensuring the continued ministry of Centering Space to the people of Northeast Ohio.

Located on the shores of Lake Erie next to Lakewood Park, Centering Space is a peaceful and inclusive space where people are invited to attend regular prayer hours each week or select from a wide variety of programs

throughout the year.

Although prayer, meditation and contemplation are often components of Centering Space's offerings, the focus of the programs covers a wide range of subjects and experiences, including photography, nature, biblical studies, spiritual dance, music, poetry, drumming, grief, Taizé and the exploration of a variety of religious traditions, writers and philosophies.

Founded in 2003 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Centering Space was created to provide a space where people could gather in community to deepen their spirituality and discern a course of action in times of transition, triggered by losing a loved one, changing careers or experiencing a major life passage.

Tickets to the Centering Space's Magical Journey Gala 2024 can be purchased online at ourmagicaljourney.org or by calling (216) 228-7451.

To learn more about Mark Paskell, check out this website: <https://www.markpaskell.com/>

Syndie Eardly is a career journalist and marketing professional, with more than 30 years experience writing for weekly and legal newspapers, as well as B-to-B professional publications for the real estate and mortgage industries. She is a freelance writer located in Lakewood, Ohio, and a volunteer at the Centering Space Retreat Center in Lakewood.

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OBSERVER FORUM



APRIL

ARIES:

It's all about the Ram. The Sun has landed in your house of personality. The Solar Eclipse brings changes into your life; it will be the catalyst that paves the way for a new you.

TAURUS:

The Bull's got something hidden up its sleeve; the Solar Eclipse will shine the light on that, & then you'll have to come out of hiding. No more staying in the Bull Pen for you.

GEMINI:

This month, the Twins have double the pleasure or double the trouble; it's up to you to see how you roll with it. The eclipse is shaking up your world of friendships & organizations.

CANCER:

The Crab is making some bold moves in the career sector. The eclipse makes you examine what stays and what has to go. You've got too many irons in the pot; scale back.

LEO:

The Solar Eclipse has the Lion/Lioness looking into foreign affairs; maybe you're thinking it's time to get out of the Jungle & spend time somewhere on a sandy beach sipping a pina colada.

VIRGO:

Virgo, the Solar Eclipse is shining on transformation. It's time to examine the deeper issues. The Sun may shine on the outside, but you'll need to delve much further down.

LIBRA:

The eclipse is shining on Libra's house of personal/business partner-

ships. You may be wondering if you're ready for a change. Don't worry; you don't have to choose; the eclipse will do it for you.

SCORPIO:

The Scorpion must put away that Stinger if you want your health to have the regenerative powers you're known for. The eclipse is causing you to take a hard look at that.

SAGITTARIUS:

The Centaur needs to come out of the forest & see the trees. Use a little bit of creativity & you'll find a way out of the darkness into the light; the eclipse is shining the way.

CAPRICORN:

The Goat is taking a rest off the mountain, and the eclipse is shining on your area of home and family. If changes need to be made, the eclipse no doubt will let you know!

AQUARIUS:

My dear Aquarian, the eclipse is hitting your house of siblings' communication & local travel. If you've thought of doing some short-term teaching or learning, now is the time to hit the books.

PISCES:

The Solar Eclipse has landed in Fish's Lake. Changes need to be made in your financial house. You can't swim away from this one; keep what supports your core values & beliefs.

Eva Starr, the local astrologer, has been studying the moon & stars since she could read. You can reach Starr at evastarr@evastarr.com & her website evastarr.com

Enough Already: The World Is Watching As Gaza Is Being Starved

by Laura Beans Sika

How much longer will the world allow Israel to act with absolute impunity? On countless occasions since the escalating attacks on innocent Palestinian civilians, the Biden Administration has been reported to "warn" Israel, and "pressure" Netanyahu and "push" the IDF to act in accordance with international humanitarian law. It has been six months. Six months of watching massive airstrikes, absolute destruction, depraved military operations and death - so much death in Palestine. Now, we are watching as those that survived the relentless bombings, die of forced starvation because Israel will not allow sufficient aid into Gaza.

It is long past time for the United States to halt the financial, military and political cover we've given Israel's genocidal campaign. Even after the ICJ's ruling, objections from international humanitarian organizations, and warnings from the Biden Administration, Israel has rejected any calls for restraint and doubled down on their intent to massacre Palestinian civilians. Currently, the IDF is poised to launch an invasion of Rafah, the southernmost point of the Gaza strip where 1.5M forcibly displaced refugees are sheltering.

To be in lockstep with Netanyahu's authoritarian regime is unconscionable; to hold Gaza and the world hostage by refusing international ceasefire res-

olutions is absolutely evil. Not only does the U.S. look incredibly foolish on the world stage, but also utterly hypocritical and breath-takingly callous.

As a nation, we will face consequences for aiding and abetting a genocide. Whether it's Trump in November, or a geopolitical conflict in the near future or judgment day when we meet our proverbial maker, America needs to take accountability and course correct or else this will be the beginning of the end of our role as a leader of the free world. No short-term foreign policy goals are worth that.

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COVE COMMUNITY CENTER

Happening At The Lakewood Family Room In April

by Jessica Parker
Birth & Beyond

This in-person class is designed to help you prepare for the journey of pregnancy, birth and beyond. Whether you're a first-time parent or adding to your family, our knowledgeable Birth and Postpartum Doula and Lactation Counselor, Kristen Bindel will provide valuable information and support to guide you through this exciting time. This is a FREE birth class funded by a grant from the Healthy Lakewood Foundation. The 3 part class will be offered throughout the year with the first session taking place on April 10, April 24, and May 8 from 5-7:30 PM at the Lakewood Family Room in Cove Community Center. Registration is required. Call 216-529-5018 or email Jessica.parker@lakewoodoh.net for more information.

Newborn & Infant Support

Once your baby has arrived you are bound to have questions. We feel that all mothers should be supported with grace and understanding during this first vulnerable year. Come as you are and find expert support and guidance as well as friendships that can last a lifetime. This drop in group is just that. Come when you can, no need to register. Kristen Bindel, Doula and Lactation Counselor, facilitates this group for all new parents and their babies every Wednesday morning from 10 am to Noon.

Morning Drop In Play

The Lakewood Family Room is the perfect place to let your child play in a

cozy, friendly, safe environment while you meet your neighbors! Grab a cup of coffee while your little one plays with blocks, trucks, dolls, puzzles, and more. No registration is required. Tuesday mornings are reserved for those 3 and under while Thursdays are for babies to big kids (0-5)! Doors open 9 to 11 AM.

Afternoon Drop In Play

The Lakewood Family Room opens three afternoons a week for all ages. Best suited for children under the

age of 8, the room is set up for the same sort of exploratory play that we have in the mornings. Whether you have a baby or a toddler or need somewhere to spend the hours between school and dinner, join us to unwind. Mondays 3 – 6 PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays 3 – 5 PM. Please note there will not be programming on April 8.

Learn Thru Play

Each Friday, the Lakewood Family Room is filled with learning activities in disguise! These play based oppor-

tunities are centered around monthly themes and invite you and your child to explore together while strengthening basic literary, math, science, and art skills. No worksheets here! Just easy activities that you can recreate at home. Excellent for preschool aged, but open to babies and toddlers as well. No registration required. 9:30 to 11 AM.

Jessica Parker is the Program Manager at Lakewood Family Room.

Breakfast With The Bunny Was A Hit



Even though it felt like winter outside, spring was in the air inside the Cove Community Center on March 24 at the 2024 Breakfast With The Bunny event. Thank you to all of the H2O - Help To Others volunteers, City of Lakewood, Ohio - Department of Human Services staff, sponsors, and guests for your support!




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1382 Arthur Avenue, Lakewood, OH 44107 (enter through school glass doors)

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