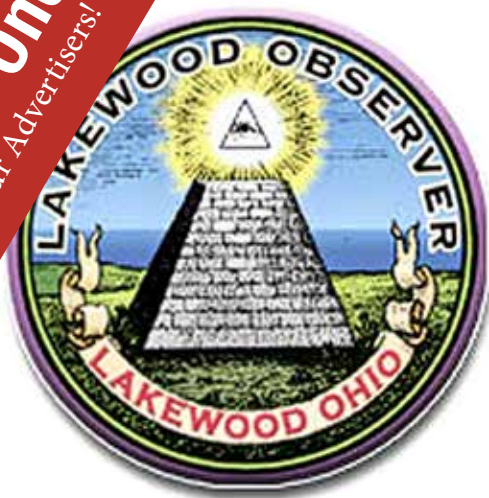


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“Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate” - Dr. Anthony Fauci

THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

Founder of Award Winning Observer Community-Written Newspapers & Websites

Volume 20, Issue 12, June 19, 2024

We Celebrate Waste And Recycling Workers Week



This week is Waste and Recycling Workers Week! To all of our amazing members of the Refuse and Recycling team, thank you for all that you do to keep the City of Lakewood clean and running smoothly.

A Big Thank You To Lakewood From Supplies4Success

by Karen Lee

Here we are celebrating the end of another school year – which of course includes celebrating the generosity of our Lakewood community.

For the past decade Supplies4Success has run a summertime city-wide school supply drive supporting our K-12 grad students. There are several collection methods: local businesses and churches act as collection sites where

people can drop off items throughout the summer, H2O campers recycle gently use items, and you can even donate funds directly for purchasing and leave the shopping to us!

Once items have been collected, a group of volunteers get together to sort, count, and box up the supplies for delivery in time for the start of school. Items are available at every building, and there are no financial requirements for stu-

dents to access these supplies.

The committee wanted to report some exciting numbers from last summer's collection. In 2023 we collected over 16,000 items to create supply closets in each of our schools. This number includes 5,000+ pencils, 2,500+ pens, 1,400+ folders, and so much more. If you want to know more about the impact of these stocked supply closets in each building, take it from our teachers: "Harrison Elementary School embraces diversity and inclusion and strives to create a warm and supportive environment for all our students including many new immigrants and refugees. Students can "shop" for backpacks, lunch bags, and other needed supplies. Equipping new Harrison students in need with school supplies fosters a sense of belonging, promotes academic engagement, and alleviates a financial burden on their families. We are so grateful for the donations. Recently we welcomed a new student to Harrison, and he was able to pick out a brand-new Spiderman backpack. His eyes widened in excitement like he couldn't believe it was real!"--Tiffany Hickey & Jeannette Sgambellone. We hear stories like this each year from all of our buildings. We hope to take the pressure off of families and teachers to make sure students



Left to right: Chief Kevin Fischer, new police officers Dennis Fischer and Anna Durczak, and Mayor George.

New Police Officers Sworn In

On June 5, Mayor George swore in new Officers Anna Durczak and Dennis Fischer to the Lakewood Police Department. Congratulations and welcome to each of you!

Grand Marshal Of July Parade Is... State Representative Michael J. Skindell

from Lakewood City Hall

Lakewood Mayor Meghan F. George announced on June 6th that State Representative Michael J. Skindell will serve as the grand marshal of the city's annual Fourth of July parade.

The parade is scheduled to step off on Lake Avenue at Kenneth Drive at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 4, 2024, and conclude at Lakewood Park.

Representative Skindell has been serving the Lakewood community for over 25 years. During his time as Lakewood Councilman-at-Large from 1998 to 2002, he was chairman of the Council's Rules and Ordinances Committee and he served on the Finance, Housing, and Public Works Committees.

He has been a member of the Ohio House of Repre-



Parade Marshal and State Rep. Michael J. Skindell enjoying a perfect afternoon on a typical Lakewood porch.

sentatives in District 13 from 2002 to 2010, and again from 2018 to present. He also represented Ohio Senate District 23 from 2010 to 2018. This will be Skindell's last year serving as a State Representative. In Janu-

continued on page 11

continued on page 8



Lakewood Fire and Paramedics Receive Grant For Knox Boxes

from Healthy Lakewood

The Healthy Lakewood Foundation has awarded the Lakewood Fire Department and Lakewood Neighborhood Paramedic a \$4,279 grant for the installation of Knox boxes, which are devices that provide

secure and quick access for EMS and fire responders.

It acts as a lock box/key. It allows first responders to quickly gain access to schools, office buildings, etc. without destruction to doors and windows.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT’S PAGE

The 411 On 420 In 44017

by Sarah Kepple
Lakewood’s
City Council President

Hi Neighbors! Cheeky headlines aside, I know many folks have been wondering about adult-use, or recreational cannabis sales in Lakewood, so I thought I’d...uh...clear the air.

The short answer is that the City of Lakewood is ready for business!

June 3rd – Lakewood City Council passed Ordinance 42-2023 which allows for the permitting of adult-use dispensaries.

June 6th – Lakewood’s citizen-led Planning Commission heard the first two applications for mixed-use distribution from the two current medical marijuana dispensaries.

June 7th – the State of Ohio’s Division of Cannabis Control (DCC) began accepting applications for mixed-use licenses.

September 7th – deadline for the DCC to issue provisional licenses. All Ohio adult-use dispensaries must have a license from the DCC to operate legally.

You may recall hearing about a temporary moratorium on adult-use dispensary licenses in Lakewood. You may also recall that immediately after Issue 2’s passage, Republicans at the Statehouse introduced two bills to repeal or drastically alter the law.



Unlike Issue 1 which placed language into the Charter, Issue 2 placed Chapter 3780 into the Ohio Revised Code, which state legislators can amend at any time through the legislative process. Additionally, Chapter 3780 created the State of Ohio Division of Cannabis Control (DCC) and gave them until August 7th to create the rules, regulations, and safeguards necessary to license adult-use marijuana dispensaries, processors, and cultivators. Lakewood passed our temporary moratorium to express our intention to wait to begin local permits until July or the finalization of DCC regulations, whichever came first.

To make sure that we would be

ready as soon as the state would allow, in December 2023, now Vice President Jason Shachner and I introduced a package of legislation with a majority of our colleagues to update our criminal code, zoning and potential

licensing. We have been diligently collaborating with the administration ever since to make sure that we could be ready for this moment and to respond to the 80% of Lakewood voters who supported Issue 2.

In May, after months of work, Lakewood City Council passed Ordinance 40-2023 “de-criminalizing” possession in alignment with Chapter 3780 while also clarifying our local expectations to keep consumption out of public settings such as parks, sidewalks and restaurant patios. In June, we passed the above-mentioned Ordinance 42-2023, repealing the moratorium and establishing permitting of adult-use.

So there you have it folks. Lakewood is once again leading the way and is positioned to be one of the first northeast Ohio suburbs ready to welcome adult-use sales. Our neighbors will be green with envy.



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lasclev.org

This is an informational presentation to help you understand the law and your rights. If you need legal help, information will be available for Legal Aid's intake and brief advice clinics, and the Bar Association's attorney referral service.



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OBSERVER

Your Independent Source for Lakewood News & Opinion

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 **Lakewood Observer**

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THE MAYOR’S CORNER

Taking Care Of Our Buildings

Lakewood’s status as both a charming, historic place and as Ohio’s most densely populated city helps make our community unique and full of activity. Over 50,000 people call Lakewood’s 6.7 square miles home, with more than 32,000 housing units (most of which were built before World War II). At City Hall, we are laser-focused on ensuring that buildings in Lakewood remain safe, especially with so many people living in and visiting our city, and considering the age of structures. With all this in mind, the work of our Division of Building and Housing is crucial to the quality of life in Lakewood.

Lakewood’s building and housing team, led by Commissioner Chris Parmelee, has a lot on their plate. A given year finds them overseeing a wide range of work on residential and commercial buildings and even food trucks. Our team of inspectors regularly reviews the condition of buildings across Lakewood and guides those looking to make repairs, alterations, or new builds.

Last year alone, our inspectors reviewed and issued over 2,700 building permits – these can include anything from the simple installation of a new water heater to the construction of an entirely new building. Building and Housing also oversees the annual licensing for owners of rental housing, which involves over 3,200 landlords. This work on rental units also includes a full interior inspection every time title changes hands on an individual unit.

For all single and two-family homes (whether rental or owner-occupied), the City performs an exterior inspection on a triennial basis. Our inspectors use a four-point scale, with a “1” finding no exterior code vio-

lations and a 4 finding “significant disrepair” with multiple major violations. Recently, we realized that we needed a similar level of regular review of Lakewood’s commercial buildings and worked to build new policies. To this end, we introduced three new tools. First, beginning in 2023, we now perform exterior surveys of Lakewood’s 1,500 commercial structures. Second, for buildings over four stories tall and more than 30 years old and for parking structures, the City now requires owners to secure a structural engineer to regularly issue an expert report on building

safety and overall condition. Finally, this year Lakewood will begin implementing its automotive business registration program to address the unique factors present in these commercial properties. (As noted, Building and Housing already oversees the City’s food truck registration process). As you can see, our Building and Housing team and our policies are highly proactive in working to prevent problems with Lakewood buildings. However, our inspector also will respond quickly when we receive a complaint from the public. If violations are

discovered, we always attempt to work with property owners to find solutions and connect people to tools and resources to address matters. The City also recently re-introduced the Heritage Home Program, which provides access to professional guidance and low-cost, below-market-rate financing. There is an immense volume of work ongoing to keep Lakewood’s buildings in safe condition. The City and our residents are fortunate to have an excellent team looking out for all of us in the Division of Building and Housing and helping ensure that we all keep Lakewood’s buildings in top condition.

CITY COUNCIL OBSERVED

Angela Byington, Lakewood’s New Director Of Planning And Development

by Theodore Babcock
City Council met on Monday, June 17th after meetings of the Finance Committee and the Committee of the Whole. Angela Byington was introduced to the Committee of the Whole where they were able to ask questions before recommending her to the full council to confirm her as Mayor George’s selection for new Director of Planning & Development. She was later confirmed and sworn in at the council meeting. Byington expressed excitement about working in a more “urban” community than Perkins, Ohio where she had been employed previously. She described Lakewood as “Vibrant, unique and progressive.” She addressed the fact

that Lakewood has combined the Planning and Development roles which is not how the majority of cities are organized. She has held a similar position elsewhere and has previous experience in Sandusky and Lorain as well. The Finance Committee meeting was 9 minutes long. The highlight of the evening was during the council meeting when Councilman Baker’s “Complete Streets” legislation was introduced. It is co-sponsored by multiple members of council and was vocally supported by six members of the community. The proposed ordinance would create a public forum for any and all changes made to roads, sidewalks, bike lanes and other infrastructure.

Mayor George spoke sharply and passionately about how the city employs many trained professionals in these areas and that they should be entrusted with these decisions. Councilpeople Schachner and Baker responded by stating that they do not believe the current wording of the ordinance hampers the administration’s ability to make recommendations and decisions. I thought the Committee of the Whole might address the vacant lot at the corner of Belle and Detroit but I guess that would fall to the Committee of the Hole. There were about 15 members of the community in attendance. Ted Babcock is a local photographer.

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Lakewood Public Library Programs

by Lisa Calfee

Literary Cleveland Presents:

Write Now – Poetry Writing Workshop with Instructor Corey Miller
Saturdays: July 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2024 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room
Participants will generate new writing in this free four-week practical workshop that explores a different element and form of poetry each Saturday. Registration is required and begins on June 1, 2024. Visit lakewoodpubliclibrary.org or call (216) 226-8275 ext. 110.

Documentary - “Before Stonewall” (1984)

Presented by Tom Stebel from the LGBT Community Center of Cleveland
Saturday, June 22, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. (87 minutes)
in the Main Library Auditorium
The Stonewall Inn in New York City is considered by many to be the birthplace of the gay rights movement. Through personal interviews and archival footage, this documentary reveals the history of the LGBTQ community prior to the Stonewall riots.

Meet the Author - “The Beginning Was the End: Devo in Ohio”

Book by David Giffels
Wednesday, June 26, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium
“The Beginning Was the End” is the definitive account of Devo’s vibrant early history and the first-ever book about the band. Featuring more than eighty never-before-seen images of the band members, it tells the unlikely story of a collection of creative misfits from Northeast Ohio who formed a musical kinship that would define the aesthetic of the 1980s New Wave/MTV era. David Giffels is a critically acclaimed author of eight books. Books will be available for sale and signing at the event.

The Knit & Lit Book Club:”The Feather Thief” by Kirk Wallace

Tuesday, July 16, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Meeting Room.
The Booked for Murder Book Club:
“A Lady’s Guide to Mischief and Murder” by Dianne Freeman
Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room

Children’s And Youth Services

by Jeffrey Siebert

Adventure Begins at Your Library

Friday, May 10, 2024 through Monday, August 12, 2024 at the Main Library and Madison Branch
For all children and youth from birth up to those entering twelfth grade. Read for fun and rewards. Participants will be entered into weekly drawings for prizes and gift cards. Readers can check online or in person. Finishers receive a certificate of completion and a new book to keep. Registration is required.

Adventure Begins at Your Library Scavenger Hunt

Friday, May 10, 2024 through Monday, August 12, 2024 at the Main Library and Madison Branch
For all ages. Children are invited to participate in the Summer Reading Club scavenger hunt by looking for pictures of road and traffic symbols they might find on their next adventure. The pictures are found throughout the Children’s and Youth Services area of the library. The hunt lasts all summer. When you finish, turn in your scavenger hunt sheet to be entered in a drawing for a prize. No registration is required.

Just Baby ‘N Me

For You and Your Birth to 24-Month-Old Baby
June 10- July 18, 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.
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.

Pre-school Story Time

For You and Your 2 to 5-Year-Old Pre-schooler.
June 10 – July 18, 2024
Main Library: Tuesday - 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.
Children and their parents will enjoy stories, movement and songs for thirty fun filled minutes. The focus is on early literacy skills. No registration is required.

Pajama Party

For You and Your 2 to 6 Year-Old Child
June 10- July 18, 2024
Mondays: 6:00-6:30 p.m. and Tuesdays: 6:00-6:30 p.m.
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 with quiet books, movement, fingerplays and songs. No registration is required.

Jungle Terry and Friends Traveling Zoo

For the Whole Family
Friday, June 28, 2024 3:00pm - 4:00pm in the Main - Multipurpose Room
A favorite with all ages, especially little ones, Jungle Terry brings his animal friends to the Lakewood Public Library. Since 1990, Terry and his family have been raising animals and reptiles to educate and entertain families around Ohio. Join us to learn more about the animal kingdom and meet some of its residents in person. No registration required.

Family Weekend Wonders

Main Library- Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.
Madison Branch- Fridays at 10:30 a.m.
Looking for weekend entertainment for the whole family? Look no further! Drop in to the Library’s special weekend story time. Your whole family will enjoy these programs full of enthusiastic stories, engaging activities, entertaining music and clever crafts. Family Weekend Wonders Drop-In Story Time is offered every weekend throughout the year and features a different theme each week to keep things engaging. No registration is required.

To sign up for any program, register online at lakewoodpubliclibrary.org/youth or call (216) 226-8275, ext. 140.

BEAT THE HEAT

BOTH POOLS OPEN

Dive in to Lakewood’s public pools this summer. Both Foster and Madison Pools are managed by the Recreation Department and owned by the City of Lakewood. Both pools, and parks offer unique fun experiences for all members of the family! *This summer don’t miss out on all the cool fun!*

DAILY ADMISSION		
Age	Resident	Non-Resident
2 & under**	free with paid adult	free with paid adult
3 - 5	\$2	\$5
6 - 17	\$5	\$10
18 - 59	\$7	\$11
60 +	\$2	\$6

SEASON PASSES		
Age	Resident	Non-Resident
2 & under	free with paid adult	free with paid adult
3 - 5	\$10	\$90
60+	\$10	\$90
1 person	\$70	\$130
2 people	\$110	\$200
3 people	\$150	\$270
Family of 4+	\$190	\$340

INFO - Madison Park Beck's Pool

Lakewood Park Foster Pool - INFO

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LAKEWOOD SCHOOLS

Observations On The District:

The Good, The Better And The What The Heck: Part 4

by Trish Hendy

Good:

According to policy 0165.2 The Board can call a special meeting. “A special meeting of the Board may be called by the Board President, Treasurer, or by any two (2) Board members” It gives "at least twenty-four (24) hours advance notice to the news media that have requested notification, except in the event of an emergency requiring immediate official action.” “Special meetings of the Board shall be public. R.C. 121.22” Notification of a special meeting is posted on the LCSD website on the calendar and you can sign-up to get notifications by emailing kent.zemen@lakewoodcityschools.org or calling 216-529-4096. Notifications must be posted at least 24 hrs before the meeting time.

Best:

Summer break is here and now our community turns to the extraordinary Recreation Dept. headed by Leslie Krogman. Baseball, softball and the outdoor Lakewood pools. Youth and adult sports, and so many more choices like CSI for ages 7-11, chess lessons K-8, virtual handyman skills for adults and so much more. <https://tinyurl.com/mryh9hrw> Hundreds of participants and volunteers keep the Lakewood traditions alive and create incredible summers to remember. Don't forget the other summer traditions of the July 4th parade in the morning and The Lakewood Project concert at night leading into the best fireworks show in northern Ohio.

What the heck:

On February 29, 2024 the board held a special meeting. The agenda was “Planning Session.” Going to minutes for a bit more detail: “The Superintendent and Cabinet members provided Board members with an update on matters pertaining to the 2023-2024 school year and discussed planning for the 2024-2025 school year and beyond.” There was no video or audio recording of this meeting. I would have

absolutely attended this meeting but at the time did not know the procedure of signing up to be informed that one was being held. But I do think this is a huge discussion that stakeholders should have been involved with and should have been in a general meeting and recorded. When the board does this type of thing, we can only assume that the transparency has left the building. The board is supposed to serve the stakeholders. All of the employees of LCSD are also supposed to serve the stakeholders and taxpayers of Lakewood. Somehow this has been turned upside down and sideways.

Role of "public servant": At its core, the term "public servant" denotes an individual whose primary motivation and role are to serve the interests, needs, and well-being of the public.

Definition of "volunteer": A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.

Policy 8120 introduces the topic of LCSD volunteering. “The Superintendent shall be responsible for recruiting community volunteers, reviewing their capabilities, and making appropriate placements.” I recently volunteered with the Lakewood Project concert, a group I co-founded and for which I am the director in charge of technology. These are some rules shared with my team as we prepared and worked with the students: “In the role as a volunteer... please bring your concerns to the staff member in charge of your event and allow them to determine what should go to who.” --Dr. Palumbo. This rule applies when a volunteer is actively at an event also. So, volunteers listen up, take time to find that staff member or you will not be able to send any communications to other staff members that may also be involved. Also, that designated staff member is the only person that can communicate with LCSD staff members during the event you volunteered for.

Furthermore, volunteers will not dictate times or need for meetings. So, if a volunteer needs to meet with

a staff member and the availability is while you are at work, just take the time off and wait until the staff member approves of the meetings' need and sets a time at the staff members' convenience.

According to Superintendent Niedzwiecki, "Volunteers do not direct employees." Somehow the staff member is to psychically determine the needs of the volunteers' event or just decide on their own what the volunteer needs. The superintendent continues: “As the Civic manager, you would never have allowed volunteers to direct you.” This could not be further from the truth. It was my job as an employee of LCSD and the Civic manager to take direction from volunteers from the PTA, Music Boosters and Athletic Boosters to name a few. It was my job to make all events successful and that meant taking direction from many people and helping their events to be what they wanted them to be.

I had emails from and in-person meetings with the superintendent and assistant superintendent as we prepared for our concert. After everything was done, I did ask for some sort of directions for being a good volunteer in order to not step on the landmines that apparently, I kept stepping on. There is no such document. Superintendent Niedzwiecki responded to my request for the guidelines with an email: “There are no specific guidelines for volunteers. Volunteers are just that: volunteers. They are here to assist employees, specifically the employee who has them as a volunteer.” I think of some of the other volunteer groups that must follow these guidelines: PTA, Athletic Boosters, Music Boosters, the many, many parent coaches for our Recreation Dept teams, who all need to make sure they don't break the 3 rules I know of, and all the other guidelines that aren't available, to have a good and successful experience when volunteering for LCSD.

It would only seem fair that someone thinking about volunteering be allowed to know the rules and guidelines and decide for themselves whether they still want to be part of our students' lives as a volunteer.

Reminder: Board meetings are the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month. To access the Board information go to lakewoodcityschools.org then choose the Board of Education tab for information regarding policies and contact info for all board members. Archival meeting information is available by YouTube search at “Brent Kallay.” There are many LCSD events on YouTube.

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LAKEWOOD SCHOOLS

Dr. G's Lakewood Ranger Round-Up:

Recap Of A Fabulous Year In Ranger Sports

by Dr. Charles Greanoff

At the risk of leaving out many fabulous moments, here are, in no particular order, some of my favorites from the 2023/24 Lakewood Ranger sports campaign. Now, the memories...

QB Avery Holt led the Rangers to a heart-stopping 1 point win over Clearview, throwing 3 long touchdown passes but actually caught the game winner as time expired on reverse WR pass from Alex Symons. (Avery then kicked the extra point). Donnie Mikuluk in later games and Chancellor Moses this night got the tough years, and Jaylen Chappell and Alex were the deep threats.

The resurgent Ranger Volleyball team had many big wins, perhaps none more satisfying than the Holy Name match. Olivia Baker, Sophia Zarbo, Emily Potoczak (pictured with fellow Scholar Athlete Award winner Hutch Reed) and Audrey McNulty led a great team effort.

The Boys Soccer team not only won the GLC-Wes--keyed by a huge defeat of Buckeye--but also went over to St. Edward on an early, chilly Saturday morning and left with a 2-0 victory and the Community Cup.

Girls soccer competed well despite many close losses, but had big wins over Normandy and Midview.

The Boys Basketball team stormed back from a 15 point deficit to win in overtime at Buckeye--keyed by Drew Jablonowski and Lucas Seguire. Junior Luke Vannucci set the 3-point record, and the squad won two tournament games, including a thriller over Hudson in the second round.

The Girls Basketball team was undefeated in the GLC East, and Delaney Garcia was the GLC-East Player of the Year. But the moment came in the second round of the playoffs, when the Rangers traveled to Walsh Jesuit and came away with a 4-point win. Delaney was the leading scorer, Layla Smith played a fabulous game, but Junior Elizabeth Doup took over the game late and secured the upset for the Rangers.



Emily Potoczak with fellow Scholar Athlete Award winner Hutch Reed.

Ava Watts was the GLC champion in the 100 freestyle and both teams performed well all year. The Boys 1-point win over Rocky River was a shocker. Junior diver Ryan Fetting qualified for the state meet.

The Softball team had some big wins over rivals Westlake, Bay and a thriller over Rocky River. Pitcher Mia Carroll-Greeves was again all Cuyahoga County, reached the 500 strikeout milestone, and went out in style with a grand slam and a complete game shutout in her last game.

The track teams had many highlights, including Charlie Payne's District win in the 1,600, Kaydence Doxley's dual victories (200 and Long Jump). Charlie went on to finish 7th in the state and Kaydence finished 2nd in the Long Jump in a tie-breaker. Sister Charion qualified for the State Meet in the 100 hurdles and in the 4 x 200 relay along with Kaydence, Charion and McKenna Hunt.

The 19-5 Baseball Team won the GLC-East, with the key win a 3-2 thriller at Buckeye behind the arm of GLC-East Pitcher of the Year junior Logan Ellis. The Rangers played a chal-

lenging schedule, with many big wins over tough opponents, including Elyria Catholic, Lake Catholic, Westlake, Canton Glen Oak, North Ridgeville and Eastlake North.

Unfortunately, I only got to one Tennis, Hockey and Lacrosse match/game each, and didn't catch any Wrestling, Golf, Bowling, Gymnastics or Cross Country, but I know each had their moments and that our athletes competed with pride and integrity.

Things are looking up for

Lakewood Rangers, with many young players returning to Varsity action next year. The graduating seniors can take great pride not only in what they have accomplished individually and with their teams, but also in setting a high standard of effort and commitment for all our future Rangers. Although they play different sports, the Lakewood Rangers are one team, from one town, that never gives up,

Long Live Lakewood

Grant Green Team Spurs Change



by Christine Gordillo

The Lakewood City Schools continued to ramp up its efforts this school year to be a more eco-friendly organization. Grant Elementary is a shining example of making our staff and students aware of their environmental impacts and learning what they can do to help make a difference.

Led by student wellness Julie May, the Grant Green Team (grades 3-5) has implemented several initiatives this school year to lead the school on a path to greater sustainability practices.

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student wellness Julie May, the Grant Green Team (grades 3-5) has implemented several initiatives this school year to lead the school on a path to greater sustainability practices.

These efforts include recycling paper throughout the building and in the cafeteria, recycling GoGo Squeeze-like pouches, creating a share table for unopened and uneaten food from the school, composting (via Rust Belt Riders), and using compostable silverware and trays. All these efforts were made possible by a \$2,600 grant the District received from the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District as well as support from Nutrition Services.

Students play a crucial role in the green efforts. Each classroom has two student recycling steward who monitor the recycling bin daily and give

continued on page 8



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FORUM

The Abandoned Car Wash

by Dan Bracken

For years, I walked past an abandoned car wash every morning on my way to work. A few years back, it did great business for a while, then was deserted. Re-opened a few times, but never stayed in business for more than an afternoon.

I distinctly remember its Grand Opening, on a December morning. Giant bow across the front. Every vehicle in the region made its way to the car wash that day. The proprietor would be on his knees the entire time, making sure each vehicle was thoroughly cleaned. Having run his new business for hours, the proprietor fell asleep on site. But after that first glorious day, it would open only sporadically. The proprietor had his hands full with many ventures in the area.

The sounds were awesome: Vroom-Squeak-Scrub-(indecipherable muttering). Such sweet music.

As soon as my presence was noticed, the sounds would mute, but resumed when his sister came by with that jeep of hers:

“NO GIRLS! Them’s too tall.”

“That’s discrimination! We’re getting a lawyer!”

In hindsight, I wish I’d been disciplined enough to heed that voice in the back of my mind: This is a limited time offer. How I wish I’d forced myself to stop and watch my Children’s beautiful imaginations soaring. No matter what household task I thought I needed to get to. My life isn’t any better today because I completed those tasks, and the car wash will never reopen.

It’s hard to remember exactly what the proprietor looked like. Overalls, random hats (I guess a cowboy, firefighter, or pirate could operate a car wash?), always something in his mouth.

I still see the proprietor every day. He is doing fantastic, looks great... and is about to graduate High School. (Gulp)

The car wash’s colorful walls have faded. The few cars left are not clean. Once we realized it would never have a new owner, we retired it to a donation box by our front door. Never took that final ride to the donation center, though. Only clothes, books, and toys with lesser emotional attachment. We have walked past that particular donation box for years. Good days (Little

League championship...), bad days (appendicitis...). Dressed up and leaving to say goodbye to Grandparents, then returning with a piece of our hearts missing.

The long-dreaded day arrived last week: High School is finished. (Gulp) Absolutely heartbroken amidst all his bliss, I decided today was the day. Waited for the garbage truck. Closed my eyes. Tossed it in. Meanwhile, he bounded into the house and excitedly purged his backpacks, gathering all the materials he would no longer need. Ran past me as I was trudging back into the house, caught the garbage truck, and gleefully threw it all in. Thereby burying the abandoned car wash.

I am looking at a photo of the Proprietor and his Car Wash in all their glory. I brace myself as I flip it over... 15 years ago?! Such a long- yet fast- imperceptible disappearing act: car washes, train tracks, party favors, building sets, mispronunciations, 20-pound-last-day-of-the-quarter-backpacks, gratuitous band-aids, hand-made presents, inevitably monochromatic Play-Doh sets, all things Nerf, a lowered backboard... rain boots with a 50% chance of being on the correct feet!

I have searched high and low, and now sadly conclude that there is not one single crayon in this house.

I can’t see "Bracken Park" --the Whiffle Ball Stadium in our backyard-- anymore.

Never again will I see the words SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED printed across the bottom of a just-unwrapped present. (Not too upset about this one.)

Lastly: that little hand will never again hold on tight to mine as we head off on our adventures. (No future adventures will involve hand-holding.)

All of these have been abandoned. No wonder this hole-in-my-heart is so massive! You could drive a Hess Limited Edition Dump Truck through it.

And there would be nowhere to wash it afterwards.

Dan Bracken moved to Lakewood in 2011. He’s been married 25 years and has two children (22, 17). He is a Life Skills Instructor at Monarch Center for Autism and creator of “danipulatives”: learning materials made from creatively re-used everyday objects.

S.O.S. - Save Our Seniors: Support Property Tax Reform

by Keith Davey

In the May 8th issue Tristan Rader wrote an article describing some of the duties and responsibilities of our state legislators. He listed quite a few responsibilities including climate change, worker’s rights, marijuana legislation etc. However, he failed to mention that our state representatives have direct control over our real estate property taxes in Ohio.

Even though we pay our property taxes to Cuyahoga County, the methods and formulas for those taxes are controlled by our elected officials in Columbus. Very few politicians want to discuss lowering our property taxes for one main reason. In most counties, 65-75% of our property tax goes to fund public schools. Most politicians are deathly afraid to upset the school teachers unions who are huge supporters and contributors to their campaigns.

The sad reality is that every three years our home evaluations increase and the public schools receive an automatic increase in funding that has not been voted on by the taxpayers. Because of this taxing formula, seniors are being driven out of their homes. Property values are going through the roof and while it may be a windfall for those individuals selling their homes, it is an incredible burden to the rest of us.

Many of us seniors want to stay in the homes where we raised our families and have resided for many years. The increase of value in our homes will not be realized until we sell. In the meantime, the pressure from rising costs in food, fuel and medical care combined with high property taxes is devastating.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT! - Citizens for Property Tax Reform is attempting to rally seniors in Cuyahoga County to put pressure on our politicians to make changes in the property tax structure.

In Phase 1, we are asking for immediate relief for seniors by putting a freeze on current property taxes for everyone 65 years or older and increasing the eligibility for the Homestead Exemption. Phase 2 will be a total restructure of the property tax system for all Ohio homeowners. Seniors, together we can be a highly persuasive.

Please check out our web site @ reformpropertytax.com

Feel free to contact me by email at kd44107@yahoo.com for more info.

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AROUND LAKEWOOD

Three Arches Foundation Welcomes New Board Members; Gavlak Elected Chair Of The Foundation's Board Of Directors

by Kristin Broadbent

Three Arches Foundation, a community-focused grant making foundation, welcomed three new members to its board of directors and elected Gina Gavlak as its new chair. Domonic Hopson, Selina Pagán, and Lee Peña joined the 19-member volunteer board. The Foundation also recognized the leadership contributions of outgoing chair Mary Anne Crampton and departing directors Mike Carlin, Jay Carson, and Jeff Milbourn.

Gavlak will lead the Foundation as it carries out its work of investing in the advancement of solutions that impact equitable access to care, specifically those that remove barriers and improve behavioral and physical health. With over 30 years of experience in leadership, program and fund development, advocacy, and direct



Gina Gavlak

patient care as a registered nurse, she has focused her career on increasing access to high-quality, affordable, and equitable health care for everyone. Gavlak is vice president of development for Neighborhood Family Practice (NFP) where she leads fund

development, community engagement, and advocacy initiatives. She also serves as president of the North Coast Health Foundation, a supporting organization which works to advance the mission of NFP by raising awareness of services and fostering philanthropic support.

Hopson is president and CEO of Neighborhood Family Practice, a Federally Qualified Health Center delivering high quality, affordable primary and preventative health care in a medical home setting with seven locations across Cleveland's west side neighborhoods and Lakewood. Throughout his career, Hopson has led efforts to enhance community health outcomes and address health disparities.

Pagán is the executive director at The Young Latino Network, a nonprofit organization working to cultivate community care and positive action through community-building, civic engagement, and advocacy. She is deeply committed and recognized for her continued leadership and contributions in addressing the pressing needs and advancing the interests of the Latine community.

Peña is the fiscal officer at Hispanic UMADAOP, a nonprofit focused on empowering the Hispanic/Latinx and larger community to reduce the negative impact of alcohol, drug abuse, and violence through culturally sensitive, holistic prevention, education, intervention, treatment, and re-entry programs.

He is a certified treasurer professional with extensive experience in both the nonprofit and corporate sectors.

"We are excited to have this group of individuals join the board and bring their unique perspectives and expertise to our work," comments Kristin Broadbent, president and CEO of the Foundation. "Each is an outstanding leader with firsthand knowledge and broad understanding about people in the communities served and the health issues they face."

The board recognized outgoing directors Carlin, Carson, and Milbourn for their invaluable insight and active engagement. Crampton was also honored for her leadership since the Foundation's inception in late 2017 and becomes its second immediate past chair. *She will continue to serve the Foundation as a board member.*

About Three Arches Foundation (TAF) – Three Arches Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity that invests in advancing the health and well-being of the people of Lakewood and surrounding communities through grant making. By connecting people, ideas and resources, the Three Arches Foundation fosters a collaborative approach towards investing in organizations whose work directly addresses the continuum of physical and behavioral health issues. For more information, visit threearchesfoundation.org

Kristin Broadbent is president and CEO of the Three Arches Foundation.

How To Safely And Legally Navigate Bike Lanes

by Kenneth Knabe

About those bike lines you're increasingly seeing around Lakewood and the Greater Cleveland area...many communities have added bike lanes to their roadways for the specific, exclusive use of cyclists. Some are "protected" with bollards (as on the stretch of road between Clifton and Lake Roads connecting Lakewood and Rocky River), some are simply painted stripes and a bike image with a directional arrow on the pavement.

Cyclists have the right of way when riding in a bike lane, and motor vehicles cannot travel in them. However, if the lane is clear of cyclists, a motorist may cross a bike lane to make a turn, access parking, or enter or exit a roadway.

No vehicle, except for a bicycle, can stand or be parked in a bike lane or



Kenneth Knabe

in any way impede bike traffic.

When there is a bike lane present, a cyclist may still choose to ride on the road, "taking the lane." Adult cyclists have a legal right to ride on the road in Ohio (except on divided, controlled access freeways).

Enjoy your summer by riding safely and legally!

Ken Knabe is Greater Cleveland's Bike Attorney promoting cycling safety and representing cyclists injured by careless drivers. 14222 Madison Avenue Lakewood, OH 44107 (216) 228-7200.

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continued from page 1

have the needed supplies to succeed academically.

We will be starting our summer 2024 collected after the 4th of July. If anyone is interested in working with us, here are some ways to participate: manage a collection site, pass out flyers, or volunteer on our sorting day. We will report service hours if requested. Please

email us at lwkdschoolsupplies@gmail.com to be connected with a member of the committee.

We look forward to another successful summer of collecting! Supplies4Success is a 501(c)3 under The Lakewood Foundation.

Karen Lee is the Supplies4Success Chair. She has been a Lakewood resident since 1999.

Grant Green Team Spurs Change

continued from page 6

weekly reports on progress. Older students have given presentations at lunch to younger students, educating them on proper recycling and composting and their impact on the Earth. This not only fosters a sense of community but also ensures the sustainability efforts are ingrained in the school culture for years to come. It also is a great opportunity for the older students to build their leadership and communication skills.

Stephanie Oliveri, the Grant cafeteria lead, has been an important member of the Green Team as she initiated composting within the cafeteria kitchen. That combined with the students' efforts at lunch and breakfast times has resulted in Grant composting more than 3,000 pounds of food waste since March! Grant's composting ini-

tiative aligns with broader District efforts, including composting in the high school cafeteria and Ranger Cafe.

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LAKEWOOD CARES

Rotary Awards Scholarships To Five High School Seniors

by Lynn Donaldson

Five area graduating seniors were awarded scholarships by the Rotary Club of Lakewood and Rocky River at its weekly lunch meeting on June 3. Recipients include Mimi Nee, Leah Campbell, and Zen Bowers of Lakewood High School, Stephen Tirpak of St. Ignatius High School, and Hannah Schmidt of Saint Joseph Academy.

Each will receive \$3,000 Donald W. Strang, Jr. Scholarship awards from the Lakewood-Rocky River Rotary Foundation. This \$15,000 scholarship program is part of nearly \$78,000 that the local Rotary Club donates to community programs each year.

In addition to demonstrating academic achievement and potential, these five Rotary scholarship winners were chosen for their character, as well as extracurricular and community involvement.

Having immigrated to the U.S. just 10 years ago, Mimi Nee's discovery that she could excel in advanced placement language classes inspired her to seek to become the first in her family to attend college. She accumulated over 100 hours of community service as her way of giving back to a community that supported her family in their adjustment to this country.

Mimi served four years on Lakewood's Student Council and was active in LHS's Help 2 Others program. She was recognized for her sportsmanship in volleyball and lacrosse. She will attend The Ohio State University to study health sciences, aiming to become a physician's assistant.

Leah Campbell is an accomplished woodwind player for Lakewood High School and the Cleveland Youth Wind Symphony. She ran cross-country and track, volunteered with the Help 2 Others program, and was co-president of the History Club, expanding its reach beyond the school to the Lakewood Public Library.

The scholarship interview team was impressed by her work in a program called "Trout in the Classroom" that raised baby Rainbow trout at school, then released 118 of them into the Rocky River. She received the Gold Award from the Girl Scouts because of the recycling program she initiated at



At the Rotary Club scholarship presentation on June 3 were (from left) Leslie Favre-Krogman, club president; students Hannah Schmidt, Leah Campbell, Zen Bowers, Stephen Tirpak, and Jon Francher, scholarship chair. (Not pictured: Mimi Nee.)

her school. Leah will attend The Ohio State University to study environmental engineering.

Zen Bowers was captain of the Lakewood High School swim team and volunteered for the Help 2 Others service program. To help break down cultural barriers, Zen established a "Tea Club" at their school where participants learned about various tea cultures around the world while drinking tea from that region.

As early as fourth grade, she felt a commitment to protecting the natural environment, inspired by popular conservationist Steve Irwin. To help curb the effects of climate change, Zen is planning on pursuing the study of forestry, fisheries and wildlife at The Ohio State University.

Saint Joseph Academy graduate Hannah Schmidt has worked to develop an international perspective. She spent time last summer at the U.S./Mexico border on a school-sponsored service/learning trip where she connected with migrants and community advocates to learn about immigration justice.

The summer before that she was part of the U.S. State Department's Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange Program, traveling the U.S. with 35 Iraqi students. Hannah volunteered as a tutor and childcare provider at the Hope Center for Refugees and Immigrants, as well as through her school's Benedict Joseph Labre Ministry. To continue developing the ability to connect with strangers through compassion and service, Hannah will study social work at Loyola University Chicago.

St. Ignatius High School graduate Stephen Tirpak has a head for science and a heart for compassion. In addition to playing lacrosse and football and serving in student government, Stephen immersed himself in two of his school's outreach ministries. He took part in their Pallbearer Ministry, providing company, comfort, and dignity in instances where there are few if any family or friends to grieve someone's death.

Through the St. Benedict Joseph Labre Ministry, every week he delivered supplies and developed friendships with

people living on the streets. For two years he's been part of a work-study program at NASA Glenn, and will continue that work studying aerospace engineering at the University of Notre Dame.

The local Rotary club is part of Rotary International, a worldwide organization of more than 1.2 million business, professional, and community leaders. Members of Rotary clubs (known as Rotarians) provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations, and help build goodwill and peace in the world.

There are 33,000 Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas. Clubs are nonpolitical, nonreligious, and open to all cultures, races, and creeds. As signified by the motto "Service Above Self," Rotary's main objective is service – in the community, in the workplace, and throughout the world. To learn more, visit www.rotary.org.



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LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

H2O Clothing Drive Fans: **The Wait Is Over!**

by Emmie Hutchinson

The blue bins are in place at all three fire stations and at Cove Community Center, waiting to be filled with clothing donations.

If you are not familiar with this project, H2O collects clothing donations for several weeks, then our young volunteers prepare them for a

one-day Super Sale. Items are sold at EXTREMELY low cost as a service to the community. In addition to learning about the value of affordable clothes for people, H2O campers learn about the impacts of textiles on the environment.

This is a staple of Summer Service Camp, and we hope you will donate!



COVE COMMUNITY CENTER

Meet Me At Cove

by Nancy Feighan
Chitra Walker
Community Resource Specialist
Lakewood Area Collaborative,
Division of Youth

Chitra is a dedicated and deeply involved community member. She moved to the United States from India in 1972. With the help of friends, she pursued higher education and eventually settled in Northeast Ohio in 1982, where she raised her family, and built a career in healthcare administration from which she retired in 2012.

Active in her community, Chitra has volunteered for various organizations including the City of Lakewood's Community Relations Advisory Commission, the League of Women Voters, Lakewood Chapter and as a founding board member of the Healthy Lakewood Foundation. She is also a volunteer peer coach, supporting families affected by substance use disorders. Her dedication to community involvement and her advocacy for understanding and kindness reflect her belief in the power of collective action and conversation. For almost two years, Chitra has worked part-time as a community resource specialist in the City of Lakewood's Lakewood Area Collaborative, Division of Youth and will be retiring at the end of this month.

Chitra was instrumental in bring-



ing the ME/WE Family Education Program and Support Group to the City of Lakewood. The group meets, both in-person and virtually on Saturday mornings from 10am-12pm at The Cove Community Center. This unique program provides education and support for families concerned about a loved one's substance use, offering a 12-week cycle covering 10 different topics and peer support. Funded by the Opioid Settlement, it helps families understand addiction, set healthy boundaries, and prioritize self-care.

Please join us in thanking Chitra for her valuable contributions to the community and wishing her all the best in her retirement.

Nancy Feighan is Project Specialist II, Department of Human Services, City of Lakewood.

Legal Aid Is Hosting A Know Your Rights Presentation In Lakewood

by Tonya Sams
The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland and the Cuyahoga County Human Rights Commission will be hosting a special Know Your Rights Presentation on June 26 at 9:30 am at the Cove Community Center, 12525 Lake Avenue, Lakewood, OH 44107. This FREE presentation will help provide Lakewood residents with the information that they need to protect their rights in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodations.

This presentation is made possible through partnerships with the City of Lakewood, Cove Community Cen-

ter, Cuyahoga County Human Rights Commission, and Lakewood Community Services Center.

For more information go to: las-clev.org/06262024/.

If Lakewood residents need further assistance beyond this informational presentation, help is available at Legal Aid Brief Advice Clinics. A full listing of Brief Advice Clinic dates and locations are available at las-clev.org/category/all-events/clinics/. Residents can also apply online at las-clev.org/apply-for-free-legal-aid/ or call 888-817-3777 during most business hours.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program HAS GONE DIGITAL!

by Nancy Feighan
A big change this year for the program. Seniors are now able to sign up online. Requirements are the same in that you must be 60 years of age or older and meet a certain income criteria but the process is more streamlined in that you can use your smart devices to sign up and to use your vouchers.
Go to www.aging.ohio.gov for the details and a link to the application. If you need assistance please feel free to contact us at 216-529-5005 and we will help you with the process.
Susan Hijjawi is the Manager of the Senior Services Division of Aging.

Grand Marshal Of July Parade Is... State Representative Michael J. Skindell

continued from page 1

ary of this year, Representative Skindell announced he would not be seeking reelection.

In addition to his public service, Representative Skindell serves on the Lakewood Chamber of Commerce, the Lakewood Democratic Club, and the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party. He is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Barton Senior Center and Westerly Senior Apartments in Lakewood and the Lakewood Jaycees, where he served as president in 1999.

"Representative Skindell has served the Lakewood community for over 25 years," said Mayor Meghan F. George. "We are honored to have him serve as

the grand marshal of the parade. As Representative Skindell leaves office at the end of the year, we thank him for all the contributions he has made to the Lakewood community and wish him all the best in his next chapter."

Joining in the parade will be musical favorites: the Lakewood High School Ranger Marching Band, St. Edward Marching Eagles, and The Red Hackle Pipe Band.

At 7:00 p.m., the Lakewood Project, Lakewood High School's Youth Rock Orchestra, will perform at the Bandstand at Lakewood Park.

The Fourth of July festivities will conclude following Lakewood's annual fireworks extravaganza, set to begin at approximately 9:45 p.m.

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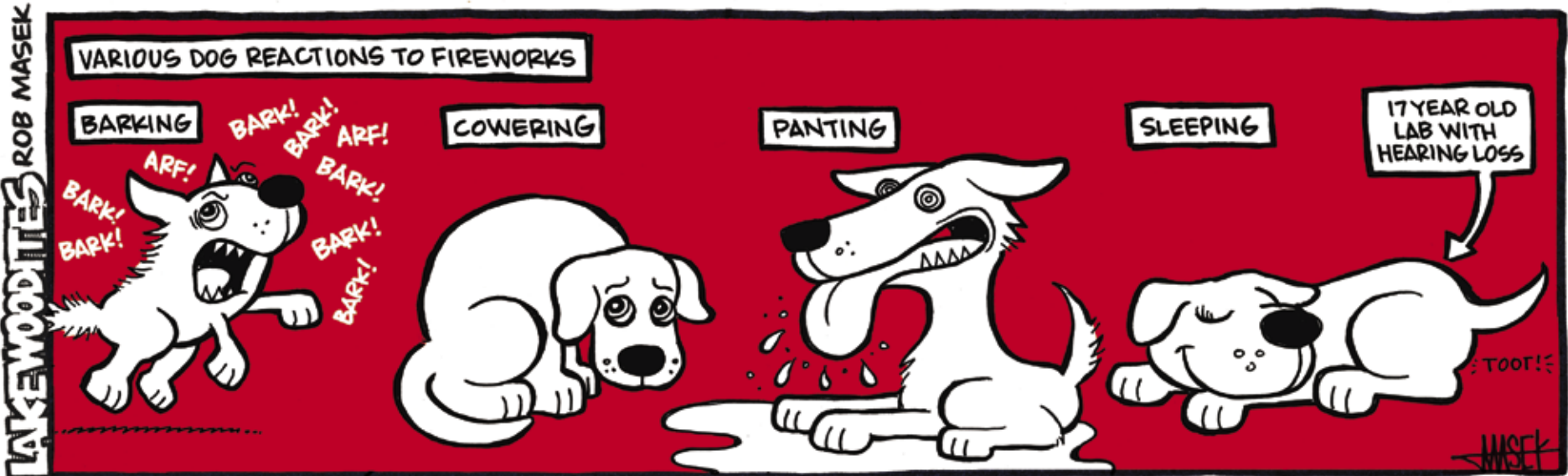
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