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THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

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Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*

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Volume 21, Issue 10, May 21, 2025

Barnstormers Storm Dazzle Awards

by Christine Gordillo

Congratulations to our Barnstormers!! We are extremely proud

of all your efforts and talent!

From Board President
Nora Katzenberger:



Another amazing curtain call for the cast of Lakewood High School Barnstormers’ “Les Miserables.”

Lakewood High School’s production of “Les Misérables” won Best Musical (Tier 1) at tonight’s Dazzle Awards at Playhouse Square! Charlie Scott/Javert accepted the award on behalf of his fellow Barnstormers, and gave a wonderful speech.

The cast’s performance of “One Day More” at the end of the first half of the show brought the house down!! Congratulations to everyone involved in this fabulous show!!

Move Forward With Monica For Lakewood School Board

by Monica Bruaw

My name is Monica Bruaw, and I’m proud to announce my candidacy for the Lakewood Board of Education. I’m stepping into this race with a deep commitment to our schools, our families, and most importantly, our students. It’s time to “Move Forward with Monica.”

As a life-long Lakewood resident, LHS graduate, mother of three elementary-aged Lakewood students, with a professional background in education planning, I bring a boots-on-the-ground perspective of what Lakewood stands for and the professional experience to know how to navigate the changing landscape of education. I’m not running to build a political resume to seek a higher role, I’m running because I genuinely care about the future of our public schools and the well-being of every



Monica Bruaw

student who walks through the doors (which includes my own children who will be lifelong Rangers). The importance of local leadership has become increasingly apparent to me through my efforts as a founding member of Preserve Lakewood Schools and I am committed to protecting and leveraging our walkable, neighborhood-based model of education.

I’ve spent 25 years in the construction industry with 20 years as an education plan-

ner, working directly with school districts across Ohio to develop master plans, facilitate task forces and lead community engagement sessions. I have experience in navigating state requirements around building capacity regulations and relationships with school administration around the state, which gives me insight into the budgetary challenges we face. My relevant professional background has taught me how to navigate complex challenges, balance budgets with real needs, and always keep the focus where it belongs: on relevant data and on students.

I’ve led tough conversations that helped bring diverse voices together to solve difficult problems. I believe in listening closely, collaborating openly, acting transparently, and building trust. My goal is to support the district to build strong, inclusive schools where every child can thrive – both now and in the future.

We kick off this campaign with a casual “Meet Monica” on Tuesday June 3rd from 2-4 pm at the Lakewood Park playground. I want to meet you and hear your ideas, your concerns and your hopes for our schools. Lakewood needs a proactive approach to face the changing landscape of public education.

Together we can Move Forward With Monica.

www.Lakewood-moveswithMonica.com



photo by Jim O'Bryan

Lakewood’s Own Michael Gill Named 2025 Outstanding Literary Artist

by Jim O’Bryan

Congratulations to long-time Lakewoodite, Michael Gill for his recent honor: “Outstanding Literary Artist Of 2025,” awarded to him because of his endeavors as the founding executive director of Collective Arts Network, and editor/publisher of “CAN Journal.”

Those of us in Lakewood know him for a variety of things,

like the whimsical Water Moose sprinkler, which is always a hit with the kids at the Summer Meltdown, and other events around town. He was also a partner with the LO in the early great railroad track clean ups 1 & 2, and wrote the amazing piece for the Free Times about the Lakewood Observer’s successful effort to catch the

continued on page 2

Celebrate Community At The 11th Annual Birdtown Picnic

by Ava Olic

LakewoodAlive’s beloved Birdtown Picnic, sponsored by Shinn Law Firm, returns for its 11th year bringing neighbors together for an afternoon of fun, food, and connection. Join the celebration on Saturday, June 14, from 12:00 to 2:30 PM at Madison Park, right in the heart of the historic Birdtown neighborhood.

This free community gathering is a joyful kickoff to summer, featuring a first-come, first-served lunch, family-friendly activities, live entertainment, and resources from local organizations. Whether you’re new to the neighborhood or a longtime resident, the Birdtown Picnic is a great way to connect with

others and enjoy the welcoming spirit of Lakewood.

Vegan options will be available upon request, so there’s something for everyone. Don’t forget to bring your picnic blankets, lawn chairs, and your favorite people—family, friends, and neighbors are all welcome. Mark your calendars and make plans to join us for this festive summer tradition!

Thank you to our wonderful 2025 Birdtown Picnic Sponsors, including Title Sponsor, Shinn Law Firm, and Community Sponsors City of Lakewood and Sourced Taproom & Kitchen.

For more information, please visit LakewoodAlive.org/Event/BirdtownPicnic.



photo by Jim O'Bryan

Lakewood’s favorite sports reporter, Dr. Charles Greanoff, checking out the LHS Varsity Baseball players’ names at Cottage of Flowers. The Russell’s have been doing this for decades!

THE PRESIDENT’S PAGE

Connect With Council In The Community

Hi Neighbors,
One of my goals on Council has been to actively engage folks in their government and present multiple avenues of participation. Continuing a tradition started last year, and with the enthusiastic participation of my colleagues, I am excited to announce that

by **Sarah Kepple**
President of City Council/Council Person-At-Large

Council will once again be getting out into the community this summer for a series of community conversations. One of these town-hall style meetings is scheduled to be held in each of the

City’s four wards.
The purpose of our council community conversations is to meet residents in familiar neighborhood spaces and foster the type of open, organic dialogue that can be difficult to achieve within the formal setting of a Council meeting. While specific focus of each conversation will center around topics of particular interest to residents of that specific ward, all members of the community are welcome at any and all of the conversations.

- The council community conversations are scheduled as follows:**
Ward 4 – June 24, 7:00pm @ Cove Community Center
Ward 1 – July 2, 6:00pm @ Lakewood YMCA
Ward 2 - July 22, 6:00pm @ Lakewood Public Library Main Branch

Ward 3 – August 12, 6:00pm @ Lakewood Park Women’s Club Pavilion
Not sure of your ward? You can identify your Ward on the City Council website: <https://tinyurl.com/LkwdWards>
The Councilmembers for each Ward are, for Ward 1- Vice President Kyle Baker, Ward 2- Councilmember Bryan Evans, Ward 3- Councilmember Cindy Strebis, and for Ward 4- Councilmember Cindy Marx. Additionally, three of us on Council- myself, Councilmember Tom Bullock, and Councilmember Angelina Hamilton Steiner- serve the whole of the city as at-large members, and we’ll also be on hand to chat with you.
We are grateful to our gracious hosts for opening their doors to Council and the public. Please come and connect with your councilmembers, ask questions, meet your neighbors, and share your ideas and concerns.

Lakewood’s Own
Michael Gill Named 2025 Outstanding Literary Artist
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country’s most prolific pedophile, Phil Distasio, who was working Lakewood from his Rocky River home. (We have just received approval to rerun this story in an upcoming Lakewood Observer.)
Michael’s arts journalism career began in the early nineties, writing for regional publications: he was arts editor at the Cleveland Free Times and Cleveland Scene when they were both cutting edge journalism with sections covering visual art, theater, dance, and books every week. He was editor of the regional bike paper, “Great Lakes Courier.” He then launched the Collective Arts Journal, CAN. Under his leadership, CAN Journal was named Best Magazine in Ohio in 2019 by the Press Club of Cleveland, and he personally was named Best in Ohio in Reviews and Criticism in 2022 and 2023.
Mr. Gill has a BA in English (Hiram College) and an MFA in Creative Writing (Eastern Washington University). He has lived, worked, and studied in Washington DC, England, Wales, and Ecuador before returning to Cleveland. Mr. Gill’s poetry has been published



Michael enjoying his Water Moose at a recent Summer Meltdown.
in dozens of literary and other magazines, including Rolling Stone, and several chapbooks, which include “The Atheist at Prayer” and “The Solution to the Crisis is Revolution: Graffiti of Ecuador,” collected and translated. He has exhibited in solo shows at William Busta Gallery, BAYarts Sullivan Gallery, Tregoning & Co., and the Massillon Museum, and internationally at the Alte Feuerwasche Loschwitz Gallery during a residency at the Grafikwerkstatt in Dresden, Germany.
His books are held in Special Collections all over the world and in the Lakewood and Cleveland Public Libraries.
Congratulations Michael Gill, as always the kudos are well deserved.

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 **Lakewood Observer**

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Lakewood Is Ready For Summer

by Meghan George

Mayor/Safety Director, City of Lakewood



Jacob Chabowski's iconic image of summer in Lakewood down by the lake.

With Memorial Day coming this weekend, we are once again on the cusp of the summer season in Lakewood, a wonderful time to be active and enjoy everything our city has to offer. I encourage everyone to visit our parks, hop in our pools, participate in local outdoor events, stroll our walkable streets, and patronize our local businesses.

One of the first big events is always Meet the Trucks, which will be held this year on Saturday June 7th at 10am in Lakewood Park. The City of Lakewood appreciates the leadership of the Lakewood Early Childhood PTA, which is once again sponsoring this wonderful opportunity for Lakewood kids and their families to get close to and inside of Lakewood's police, fire, construction, and maintenance vehicles. Several vendors should also be on site offering a chance to purchase local food and refreshments.

Lakewood Park will also continue its summer tradition of films and music in 2025 as Friday Night Flicks and Concerts in the Park both kick off

in June. The Cleveland Shakespeare Festival will also be performing two shows in Lakewood Park (June 20th and August 1st). Please check out the calendar of events on the City of Lakewood's website for ongoing information about these and other events happening around our town: www.lakewoodoh.gov/calendar.

Summer's biggest day is always the Fourth of July, and Lakewood always does a great job celebrating our nation's birthday. As always, we will enjoy the Fourth of July parade and a concert in Lakewood Park and cap the day off with a fantastic fire-

works display. Last year, we completed work on the parking lot at Lakewood Park to increase capacity, but parking is still in demand, so consider walking or biking if you are looking for ways to stay active and visit the park for the big day.

Our community partners over at LakewoodAlive will once again have their own calendar of fun, family-friendly summer events. That includes the Lakewood Summer Meltdown event on Saturday July 19th held in Downtown Lakewood along Detroit Avenue and the 11th annual Birdtown Picnic in Madison Park on Saturday

June 14th at noon. LakewoodAlive also hosts their own outdoor concerts through the Front Porch Concert Series weekly in front of Lakewood Public Library beginning June 6th. The final concerts (July 18th and 25th) will take place at Madison Park Pavilion. Also consider checking out the 48th annual Lakewood Arts Festival, which will take place in our downtown on Saturday, August 2nd and offers a chance to support local artists.

As we enter June and the weather warms up, our two outdoor pools – Foster Pool at Lakewood Park and Becks Pool at Madison Park – offer some of the best ways to spend a summer day and beat the heat. Both pools are very popular options, so it's a good idea to explore a season pass for you or your family.

As you can see, Lakewood is full of opportunities to get out and make the most of your summer. I hope to see all of you in our parks, splashing in our pools, and strolling our streets to take it all in this summer season.



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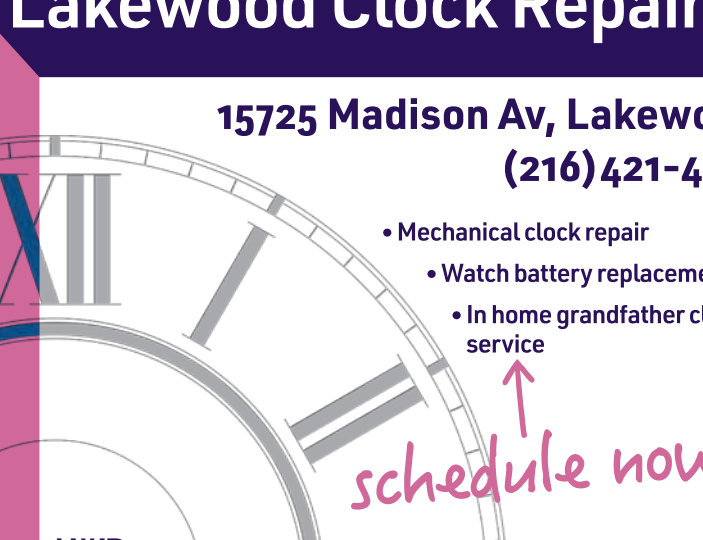
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LAKEWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY EVENTS

Upcoming Events And Movies

by Lisa Calfee

Barbara Steffek-Hill Film Matinee- “Our Man Flint” (1966)
Sunday, June 1, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. Main Library Auditorium

James Coburn stars as the dapper spy-extraordinaire, Derek Flint, a comic send-up of James Bond in “Our Man Flint.” Zonal Organization World Intelligence Espionage (Z.O.W.I.E.) calls upon ex-spy Flint to come out of retirement to save the human race from a group of deranged scientists with the customary plan to rule the world.

Book Club- “All We Can Save: Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis Facilitated” by Dr. Mike Skladany C.S.U
Mondays: June 2, June 9, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. Main Library Auditorium

Please join us and our notable guest speakers as we embark on an inclusive march forward in addressing the most pressing issue of the twenty-first century.

Children’s And Youth Services

by Jeffrey Siebert

Color Our World Summer Reading Club
Friday, May 9, 2025 through Monday, August 11, 2025

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 in online or in person. Come to the library and check in halfway through and receive a reward. All finishers select a new book to keep.

Join the Fun at Coding Club
Monday, June 2, 2025 from 6:00-7:40 pm. In the Main Library Computer Connections Room

Calling all fifth through ninth graders.Under the guidance of our awesome GirlsWhoCode facilitators, you’ll dive into the world of coding and create your own mobile apps, design cool websites, and even program robots.

Booktroverts: Teen Book Club
Tuesday, June 3, 2025 at 7:30 pm in the Main Library Multipurpose Room

This monthly book club for sixth through twelfth graders is where the love of reading meets the joy of friendship

Family Weekend Wonders
Main Library- Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.
Madison Branch- Fridays at 10:30 a.m.

Drop in to the Library’s special weekend story time. Family Weekend Wonders is offered every weekend throughout the year and features a different theme each week followed by a craft. No registration is required.



Inaugural Madison Park Chalk Fest Is Great Success

from news release

Thank you to everyone who participated in yesterday's inaugural Madison Park Chalk Fest! A special thanks to City of Lakewood, Ohio - Municipal Government for partnering on this community event and to Galadriel Olson and her wonderful team at Lakewood Art Supply for serving as the official sponsor of Chalk Fest.

We at Friends Of Madison Park are also grateful to Healthy Lakewood Foundation and The Lakewood Foundation because their support empowers our park group to pursue new initiatives.

Enjoy your experience yesterday? Please consider making a donation to support our efforts: friendsofmadisonpark.org. Miss Chalk Fest? Take a stroll through Madison Park before the rain comes later this week.

Thanks again to all who contributed to this event. We're going to chalk this one up to our amazing community.



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LAKEWOOD SCHOOLS



LHS Senior Art Show - This past Thursday was the Senior Art Show. As happens every year at this show, guests were in awe of the work our students created. It's a testament to the legacy of excellence in our LHS Art Dept. and to the ingenuity and imagination of our student artists! Artwork by Owen Ritchie.

Educator Spotlight: Alex Cammock

by Christine Gordillo

Lakewood High School social studies teacher Alex Cammock is a true embodiment of the Lakewood City Schools' vision of lifelong learning, perseverance, and continuous growth—for both himself and his students. Whether in the classroom or on the sidelines as head coach for our Ranger varsity basketball team, Alex daily displays our Vision of a Lakewood Educator competencies.

Says Alex's nominator, fellow social studies teacher Ron Lewis: "What sets Alex apart is the example he sets every day. He models goal-setting, reflection, and hard work—not just on the court, but in the classroom and throughout the school community. He holds himself and his students to high expectations, always pushing for excellence while maintaining a deep sense of empathy and understanding."

Alex leans on his empathetic nature and collaboration skills to build relationships with his students and players. "Collaboration goes a long way

to building rapport - which to me is #1 with my students," says Alex.

Alex's growth mindset is a natural outgrowth of his personal mantra of trying to "win" the day by just being a little better each day. He imparts that same philosophy to his students. About Alex's growth mindset, Ron says: "Whether he is adjusting a lesson to better meet student needs or recalibrating game plans mid-season, he is constantly reflecting and evolving."

Growing up a Ranger, Alex had the inkling he may have wanted to be a teacher when he helped out with the D.A.R.E. fifth-grade basketball teams. He realized that he enjoyed working with kids and helping them improve. He's been doing that ever since he joined the District as a full-time teacher back in 2008.

Ron sums up Alex's impact on our district: "Alex's steady presence, strong initiative, and passion for both teaching and coaching make him a role model for students and colleagues alike."

Culinary Students Earn State Top 10 Honors

by Christine Gordillo

Congratulations to our three West Shore Career-Tech Culinary Arts students who earned spots in the top 10 of the statewide Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) competition! Way to go, Htoo Lweh Wah (6th), Finn Getts (7th), and Liz Carroll (8th)! Finn and Liz competed in the Baking & Pastry category and Htoo in the Culinary Arts category. These students practice for numerous hours after school throughout the school year perfecting their recipes and skills to prepare for the competition. Well done to all!

District Earns 9th Straight Best Community For Music Ed Award

by Christine Gordillo

We're thrilled to announce that Lakewood City Schools has been named a 2025 Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation for the ninth straight year! This prestigious recognition celebrates our commitment to providing exceptional music education to all students.

The Best Communities Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, the District answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs.

The Lakewood City Schools offer music education from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Instrumental instruction begins in 5th grade. Elementary choirs begin in third grade. Middle school offerings include classroom band, orchestra, and choir. Lakewood High offers multiple level of ensembles and extra-curriculars in band, orchestra, and choir.

A huge thank you to our talented music teachers, supportive families, Lakewood Music Boosters, and our entire community for creating an environment where students can discover and develop their musical talents!

Madison Park's Becks Pool Opens June 3rd Lakewood Park's Foster Pool Opens June 10th



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

Pool passes go on sale May 6th

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
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4 Items	\$12.25	\$14.75	\$19.25	\$22.50
Deluxe	\$13.00	\$15.75	\$20.50	\$24.00
Extra Items	\$0.75	\$1.00	\$1.25	\$1.75
Chicken	\$2.25	\$2.75	\$3.75	\$4.75
Extra Cheese & Special Toppings	\$2.00	2.50	3.50	4.50

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

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LAKEWOOD OBSERVER FORUM

The Bunts Road Shared Use Path: The Right Path Forward For Lakewood

by Cassandra Organ

Lakewood’s Bunts Road Rehabilitation Project is a once-in-a-century chance to build a safer, more connected city. Don’t let misinformation stop progress. Sign the petition organized by Bike Lakewood to support the shared use path and show up for safe streets! <https://bikecleveland.quorum.us/campaign/BuntsRoad/>

Lakewood’s Bunts Road Rehabilitation Project aims to address aging infrastructure and replace 100+ year old water mains throughout the corridor. The project presents an important opportunity to invest in a safer, healthier, and more connected city. Recently, there has been a lot of misinformation shared to generate opposition to the planned Shared Use Path, and some of our city council members are starting to cave to the pressure. We’re here to help shed some light on the facts.

The approved plan includes a 10-foot-wide shared use path along the west side of Bunts Rd from Lakewood Heights Blvd to Clifton Blvd. This path will create a much-needed north-south connection for people walking, biking, using mobility devices, and pushing strollers — while still maintaining safe access for people driving.

Here’s why Bike Lakewood supports this project

Save the Trees: Per the city’s original presentation, there are 224 trees on Bunts Road. Of these, the city estimates only 111 trees will be impacted by the project in the Shared Use Path format, and 125 new trees are to be planted. The city has stated that the sewer and road work being performed will remove trees regardless of whether the path is added or not, but each tree will be evaluated during design to save as much of our current canopy and increase it where possible.

Equity in Transportation: Not everyone drives, but everyone deserves to get to their destination safely and efficiently. This project makes the route more accessible for older adults, people with disabilities, kids walk-

ing to school, and residents who rely on biking or walking as their primary means of transportation. The city plans to maintain the path including paying for repairs and snow removal, something we cannot rely on with our current sidewalks. Bunts is also one of the only north-south corridors in Lakewood that connects all the way through to Cleveland, making it a viable commuter route for those entering or exiting the city to the south. Those who walk or bike should not be required to meander around the city on side streets to safely arrive at their destinations.

Safety First: Bunts Road has a history of crashes and unsafe conditions for people walking and biking. Studies show that pedestrians, bicyclists, and other mobility device users are at the most risk from automobiles. In its current configuration, the only legal place

for a bicyclist to ride on Bunts in excess of walking speed is on the road. Bicyclist injuries and deaths due to vehicle collision far outnumber pedestrian injuries and deaths due to collision with bicycles. The new shared use path will separate vulnerable users from fast-moving traffic and create a safer, calmer environment for all. The sidewalk on the east side of the road will remain for anyone uncomfortable with using the path.

Property Values: Some are concerned that the value of their property will decrease as a result of the Shared Use Path. Numerous studies have been performed to assess the impact of bicycle paths and home values, and the consensus is that the value of homes within 50m of a path generally increase between 3-5%, and as much as 15%.

Increased Volume and Unsafe Conditions: Another common con-



Scan to sign the Petition in Support of the Bunts Road Rehabilitation, to include the shared use path!

cern is that the addition of the path will result in an exponential increase in the volume of bicyclists, and that the conditions are unsafe with so many driveways. While the volume of bicyclists may increase, it is important to remember that this is not a leisure des-

You can read the rest of this article online at: lakewoodobserver.com

Safer Alternative To The Proposed Bunts Multipurpose Trail

by Harry Johnson

I have lived in Lakewood for 34 years and have ridden my bicycle all over Lakewood long before there were any bike lanes. What attracted us to Lakewood in 1991 was the safe walkability of this town and the tree lined streets, amongst other amenities. I don't disagree with the need for bike lanes in our fine little town and with that being said, I do think the bike lane or "all purpose lane" on Bunts is not the best idea for Lakewood.

Bunts residents aren't asking for their property to be shortened by 5 feet and have their trees removed just for a bike lane to be installed instead. Let's be honest, it is a bike lane that is requested for this project.

I think a lane, on this busy street, would put the cyclist at risk as that street is one of the busiest streets in Lakewood that crosses several rather

dangerous intersections and Lakewood High School.

I believe I have a safer alternative that would still provide a North/South lane for Lakewood cyclists and pedestrians that would keep Bunts as it is. I propose to make Wyandotte and Giel a one-way street with the added bike/all-purpose lane for North and South bike traffic. These streets are lesser travelled than busy Bunts. It would have zero impact on property size, cost the city much less as no additional construction would be needed, (only painted lanes) and a simple redirection of traffic to One-Way.

In fact, I would propose several North and South residential streets be changed to One-Way and add those lanes to those streets as well. I honestly believe this would have a positive impact for runners, cyclist, dog walkers, and all pedestrians that would like

a more quiet/safer alternative to sidewalks and busy streets like Bunts.

With Lakewood's roads being basically a North South/East West grid, it would be easy, economical, and safe to create these One-Way streets and create a more safe thoroughfare for cyclists, runners, and pedestrians just trying to get their steps in.

I can't imagine the city not wanting to spend less, not wanting to keep the tree canopy, and not wanting to keep its residents safer all the while making Lakewood more attractive to anyone who visits or wants to move here.

Harry Johnson has been a Lakewood resident since 1991. He's married to Patty. Both of their children are LHS grads. He's interested in outdoor activities, cycling, camping, gardening, kayaking, fishing, hunting, writing and all family events.



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LAKEWOOD OBSERVER FORUM

Safety Concerns:

School District Decides Against Studying Safety Amidst Potential Elementary Closures

by Jennifer Schlosser

Lakewood parents and residents are voicing strong concerns about student safety due to the potential closure and repurposing of one or even two of our neighborhood elementary schools.

Closing and repurposing even just one elementary school would force Lakewood’s youngest children (ages 5 to 11 years old) to walk or bike longer distances to school, with many more students crossing busy streets and railroad tracks.

Studies show the greater the distance a student has to travel to school, the more they are at risk for absenteeism, with a sharp decrease in attendance after 8 tenths of a mile. Right now the walk length for many of Lakewood’s elementary students is less than that; if schools were closed, that distance would dramatically increase — putting many more students at risk of absenteeism and other negative impacts. The first goal of the district should be that the students actually reach the school buildings safely.

Since the district does not offer bussing for general education students (and saves an estimated up to \$2 million annually by not doing so), district leadership has a responsibility to ensure that Lakewood students have safe, reasonable walking routes to school.

No Plans to Complete a Traffic or Safety Study Despite Community Concerns

District leadership has said that they don’t plan to study how closing schools would impact traffic and safety in Lakewood, because they partnered on creating Lakewood’s Active Transportation Plan (<https://www.lakewoodoh.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/041524-Lakewood-ATP-Adopted-reduced-size.pdf>), which was finalized in April 2024.

The problem with this is that it was developed **BASED ON HAVING SEVEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**. The plan also does not account for the incoming

hundreds of multifamily housing units under construction at Brockley and Detroit, which will increase traffic stress levels, nor has it looked at the traffic or safety impact of the District’s idea to create a centralized pre-k.

The district was offered funding for a more in-depth traffic and safety study to address the loss of up to two schools and declined - Why?

Our best estimate? An in-depth study would show that closing an elementary school is unsafe for kids’ commutes to school and is a bad idea. It would also cause longer car lines and safety issues for students commuting to the remaining schools.

Could the funds the district spent on TWO consulting firms—one to assemble data and another to manage the Task Force-- have been better spent on gathering data to ensure the safety of our children? Pedestrian And Bicycle Crashes In Lakewoods: 97% Within 1/2 Mile Of Schools

Even without an adjustment for the current proposal which would increase danger for children walking and biking longer distances, and

increase congestion and car traffic around the proposed remaining schools, the Transportation Plan reveals sobering data on the number of crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians in Lakewood from 2017 to 2021 (See Lakewood Active Transportation Plan, page 43 for more detail).

According to the Plan, from 2017 to 2021, there were 141 crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians in Lakewood, 21 of which resulted in serious injuries, and 1 of which resulted in a fatality.

- 66% of pedestrian crashes were within 1/4 mile of schools, and 97% were within 1/2 mile of schools.
- 67% of pedestrian crashes that were fatal or caused serious injury were within 1/4 mile of schools, and 84% were within 1/2 mile of schools.

Survey data from the Lakewood Active Transportation Plan show safety is a top priority: 83% of residents ranked minimizing walking distance as important, and 78% prioritized avoiding major thoroughfares. Still, the district has declined targeted community requests for and offers of outside funding to conduct a traffic study.

What It Looks Like

Here’s a way to visualize this. Per the Lakewood Active Transportation Plan, Clifton, Hilliard, Detroit and Franklin, and are cited as high-risk corridors. If, for example, Lincoln Elementary were to close, children on the west of Lincoln would presumably be redistricted to Horace Mann, an estimated 0.9 mile walk along Clifton Blvd, a corridor that is rated 4 - which is the highest, for Pedestrian Crossing Level of Traffic Stress.

The school district’s unwillingness to gather and analyze additional safety data puts students at risk, especially in Ohio’s most walkable and densely populated city.

With elementary enrollment stabilizing and increasing over the recent years, our question remains: Why are we still discussing closing an elementary school in Ohio’s most walkable school district?

Preserve Lakewood Schools is a coalition of parents, residents, and leaders in Lakewood, Ohio, committed to preventing the closure/repurposing of elementary schools by Lakewood City Schools, and supporting the long-term vitality of Lakewood’s public schools.

A Peek Into An Elementary Facilities Task Force Member's Experience

by Martha Woerner

Many community members have been curious about the Elementary Facilities Task Force’s work, and while there are many ways to learn about the specific content, I wanted to share what it’s felt like to me to be a Task Force member. I’m a parent of two little kids (4 and 1.5 years old), a person who found her forever home and community in Lakewood, and a K-12 education professional with 15 years of experience in a wide variety of settings. After more than eight months on this Task Force, I walked home from our last meeting with a mix of emotions:

gratitude, relief, and pride.

Gratitude. I cannot be more grateful for the opportunity to serve my community in this capacity and to my incredible fellow Task Force members. I’m also deeply grateful to the Board of Education and our district leadership for inviting community perspective into this process in multiple ways (community meetings, surveys, the task force, individual meetings with community members) - most districts don’t have such an extended, open process. Within the scope of this decision and some constraints (such as maintaining the special education classrooms at Emerson and Horace Mann), I found district leadership to be open to hearing alternative proposals, providing additional data and information, meeting 1:1 with us, and updating analyses.

Relief. This process has been long - we began meeting in August 2024 - and about a topic with no easy answers. In my 15 years in education, I have never seen a school redesign, repurposing, or closure that has been easy, nor have I ever met any educator who views one of these options as anything but a tool of last resort. Emotions run high. The amount of information that goes into a decision like this - educational, operational, financial, community perspectives - is enormous and complex. This is just one decision in a broad eco-

system, and priorities conflict. While I’ve enjoyed this experience immensely, I also know that it’s one that won’t be tied up neatly in a bow.

Pride. I am proud of the work of the Task Force and how we have operated. We didn’t find some magical solution or arrive at a single recommendation that would solve all the challenges identified and satisfy everyone - something we always knew would be impossible. But we, as a group and as individuals, engaged in constructive dialogue with real curiosity, honest disagreement, a willingness to reconsider and evolve our opinions, and a commitment to trying to do what is best for our kids and our community in the long term. That’s the hard, essential work of strong communities and exemplifies the Lakewood that I know, value, and respect so deeply.

As our recommendations move to the Superintendent and Board, I remain confident that no matter what decision is made, our kids - my kids - will still get a top-notch education in a tight-knit school community even if it doesn’t look exactly what I thought it would.

Martha Woerner is a passionate believer in the power of public education to transform lives. She's proud to call Lakewood home for her family of four.



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LAKEWOOD CARES

Come Celebrate The Renovated Community Spaces Of Lakewood Congregational Church

by Joanna D'Agostino

Lakewood Congregational Church has made a major update to a beloved space: our social hall and kitchen, home to fellowship, potlucks, performances and pageants for more than a century. It's time for the public to see this transformation.

LCC is inviting community leaders, business owners, faith partners and neighbors to an open house on Tuesday, May 27, at the church, 1375 W. Clifton Blvd. in Lakewood, to see the new social hall and kitchen.

The event runs from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. There will be brief remarks at 5:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be available. All in the community are welcome.

The open house program will include recognition of the designers, architects and construction companies on the renovation project, in addition to thanking the capital campaign team, building team and congregation for all

their support in this successful project.

"This whole project grew out of our church's strong history of creating safe spaces for meaningful community connection," says LCC's Senior Pastor, Rev. Joanna D'Agostino. "When our cornerstone was laid in 1915, these rooms were the first to be completed. We had a bowling alley and a basketball court, and we hosted dances, dinners, and performances. People gathered here to meet their neighbors and be together in community. That spirit of connection, which the world needs now more than ever, is a part of our DNA and it's essential to our mission."

LCC's social hall and kitchen were built in 1915 and, prior to the new project, were last renovated in 1954. Time had taken its toll on the spaces, which were well used by the congregation and the community. More than two years ago, church leadership began the process of looking to modernize, refresh



Above: A recent talent show being held in the newly renovated auditorium. Right: A photo of the auditorium in 1954, the last time it was renovated. Photos provided by Lakewood Congregational Church's recently digitized archives.



Historical Lecture At Church Of The Ascension The Life And Artwork Of Lakewood Native And Naturalist Henry Wood Elliott

by Corky Thacker

Lakewood High School Historical Club President Eva Wischhusen will present "Henry Wood Elliott: Lakewoodite and America's First International Conservationist" on Sun., May 25 at noon, following the 10:30 service at Church of the Ascension, an Episcopal Church located at 13216 Detroit Avenue. The talk and refreshments will be in the church's second-floor Ascension Hall. Some of Henry's family members will be present to help answer questions, and examples of his artwork will be on display.

Henry was born in Lakewood in 1846; the family farm was where Cohasset Avenue is today. He was a watercolor artist, naturalist, and environmentalist. After working in Washington, D. C. for the Smithsonian, he traveled to Alaska, where he became passionate about saving the seals and educating the country about the nature of their new state through his art and writing. In 1905, he co-authored a doc-



Henry Wood Elliott

ument with U.S. Secretary of State John Hay that became the North Pacific Fur Seal Convention of 1911, the first international treaty dedicated to the conservation of wildlife.

His family was one of the first at the Church of the Ascension, which was founded in 1875. Henry, his wife, and their 10 children were all involved in church life. One of their daughters was married at Ascension in 1900, and her wedding dress will be part of a "Sacred Moments Exhibit" at the church this summer.

Part of a series of historical lectures celebrating Church of the Ascension's 150th Anniversary, the event and food preceding it are free, and the public is invited. Reservations are not required; however, a call by Thurs., May 22 to the church office, (216) 521-8727, would be appreciated to plan numbers for the luncheon. For more information about Church of the Ascension and other upcoming activities, please visit www.ascension-lakewood.org.

and brighten the kitchen and social hall, as well as the West Clifton entrance.

The result is a space where LCC, a congregation of the United Church of Christ, can continue to build up our community by providing space for people to gather for events, meetings, performances and more.

LCC is excited to continue to share

these spaces with our neighbors. The open house will include information about space rental and community use. To learn more about the renovation of the social hall, kitchen and West Clifton entryway, visit LCC-Church.org/social-hall.

Joanna D'Agostino is the Senior Pastor of Lakewood Congregational Church.

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LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

LakewoodAlive Announces

The 2025 Front Porch Series Lineup

by Ava Olic

Ushering in the summer season with the 15th Annual Front Porch Concert Series, sponsored by Johnson Bentley Wealth Partners of Raymond James, LakewoodAlive is pleased to officially announce our talented 2025 lineup!

Comprised of seven gifted and unique musical groups and performers, everyone is sure to find something that speaks to their musical taste. Spanning multiple genres, each week's concert remains family-friendly while delving into a variety of different sounds.

These free, outdoor concerts will be every Friday evening in June and July* at 7 PM. The first five shows will take place June 6 – July 11* on the front steps of Lakewood Public Library (15425 Detroit Avenue), followed by two concerts at Madison Park Pavilion (13201 Madison Avenue) on July 18 and 25.

Kicking off the series on Friday, June 6, is The Stix Quintet an emerging force blending neo-soul, funk, and R&B into a groove-laden sound that's impossible to resist. Led by drummer and bandleader Nehemiah "Stix" Baker their tight rhythms and infectious energy are guaranteed to get audiences on their feet and moving.

Hailing from Toledo, Chole &

Outside the Lakewood Public Library

- 6/6 - The Stix Quintet
- 6/13 - Chole & the Steel Strings
- 6/20 - The Chardon Polka Band
- 6/27 - Moises Borges Brazilian Jazz Quartet
- 7/11 - Apostle Jones

Madison Park Pavilion

- 7/18 - The Baker's Basement
- 7/25 - Grumpy Plum

the Steel Strings is a six-piece Cosmic Americana band crafting a fresh take on psychedelic folk-rock, playing Friday, June 13. Fronted by the husband-and-wife duo Chloe and Connor Ward, the group weaves dreamy melodies and heartfelt lyrics into music that speaks to dreamers and kindred spirits alike.

What started as an oom-pah polka band formed in high school in 2003 has grown into The Chardon Polka Band — an eccentric, high-energy ensemble beloved by fans of all ages. With a mix of quirky charm and genuine musicianship, their lively performances bring a fresh twist to a classic sound. They will grace the Front Porch stage on Friday, June 20.

Next on Friday, June 27, Moises Borges Brazilian Jazz Quartet, led by Brazilian-born guitarist and vocal-

ist Moises Borges, will perform. This Cleveland-based quartet brings the rich rhythms of Samba and Bossa Nova to life. Borges' smooth vocals and magnetic stage presence create a captivating experience for fans of Brazilian jazz and global music alike.

Playing on Friday, July 11, Apostle Jones is a powerhouse soul band from Cleveland known for their genre-blending sound and electric live shows. Fusing Rock, R&B, Blues, Gospel, and Funk, the group delivers a raw, original musical experience packed with spirit, energy, and joy that radiates from the stage to the crowd.

The Baker's Basement is a Cleveland indie folk duo made up of drummer/vocalist Kate Dedinsky and guitarist/vocalist Adam Grindler, performing on Friday, July 18. Known for

their whimsical sound and heartfelt lyrics, their music blends quirky folk with indie rock sensibilities to create a style that's uniquely their own.

And closing out the series on Friday, July 25, the dreamy and delightfully upbeat Grumpy Plum is a Cleveland-based slop pop band led by singer-songwriter Tallulah Swasey. Since launching in 2019, the band has carved out a loyal following with their candid lyrics and catchy melodies that hit all the right emotional chords.

For more information regarding the 2024 Front Porch Concert Series, please visit: LakewoodAlive.org/Front-PorchConcerts.

*There will NOT be a show on Friday, July 4.

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Meet The Bikes At Meet The Trucks!

by Cassandra Organ

Meet The Trucks is a beloved annual, family-friendly event in Lakewood. This year, Bike Lakewood is excited to participate in the festivities by introducing the very first Meet the Bikes! Meet the Bikes will allow residents to check out a variety of interesting bikes and bike set-ups (think historical bikes, cargo bikes, and more!). Come check out the different bikes, ask any questions you might be curious about, and feel free to bring a bike of your own to show off! Bike Lakewood will also be offering a free Bike Valet

at the event, so you will also have a designated place to park your bike while enjoying the day's events. Stop on by and see us at

Meet the Trucks on Saturday, June 7 from 10-2 at Lakewood Park!



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LAKEWOOD IS ART.®

Lake Erie Monster

by Kevin Kelly

The creature was last seen by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, who confirmed a report of the sighting, suggesting that everyone stay out of the water. Many of the reported sightings of the monster seems to be when the lake is at its calmest. The latest reported sighting of the creature was in 2021. It occurred when a gentleman from Johnson City, Tennessee, was lounging on the patio of the Collision Brewing Company, near the mouth of the Cuyahoga River. He reported seeing a long, cylinder shadow, the width of a kayak, moving just below the surface of the water. The



Tennessean man claimed that the incident felt very unsettling to him. Over the years, publicity of the

Lake Monster has reached newspapers in other countries as far reaching as the island country of Japan and UK's

Exhibit At Root Cafe In Lakewood Artist Welcomes “Homecoming”

by Luanne Bole-Becker

Lakewood will always feel like home to me. In June, I will have the pleasure of presenting a collection of photographs and assemblages entitled “Far and Near” at the Root Café, 15118 Detroit Ave. The exhibition runs from June 1–30 with an opening reception on Sunday, June 1, from 6–8pm. The reception is free and open to the public, and all artwork is available for purchase.

I lived with my late husband Bob Becker (a well-known local radio and TV personality) and worked in Lakewood for 30 years. We were Emmy-winning video producers who specialized in creating documentaries and “Applause” segments for WVIZ/PBS ideastream. Together, we raised our family in Lakewood and



were active in the community.

When my husband died in 2021 after a 9-year bout with Alzheimer’s, I moved away from Lakewood and focused my creative energies on building a solo career in the visual arts. My artwork is a lot like me: quirky, whimsical, a bit disjointed, and full of vintage pieces and parts!

My favorite art form is assemblage making, which I consider a natural extension of the documentary work about the art and history of Cleveland that I did with my husband. These objects already hint at the stories of their craftsmanship and original usage. Not only are they beautiful in their own right, but I assemble them in new ways and add to their stories.

“Far and Near” also features a series of photographs from

my travels outside the state and around greater Cleveland. I’m thrilled to share my work at the Root Cafe. I often gathered there with friends when I lived there, so it’s fitting that my first exhibit in Lakewood would be there. Plus I’m excited to see friends again at the opening! The exhibit can be seen seven days a week, 8am–8pm through June 30th.

NOTE: An article about the Beckers’ home and life in Lakewood appeared in the Lakewood Observer in 2006, written by Bob Becker. Read it here: <https://lakewoodobserver.com/read/2006/03/08/living-in-luellas-house-br-discovering>

A native Clevelander, Luanne Bole-Becker has merged a variety of careers, including 20 years creating video documentaries, primarily for PBS. She is an Emmy-winning producer whose work focused on Northeast Ohio history, art, and culture. She especially enjoys discovering quirky details, behind-the-scenes stories, and unexpected perspectives. She is both writer and visual storyteller. In 2019, Luanne set down the video camera to create collections of still images, often exhibiting them upon discarded or recycled materials. Her award-winning 3-D assemblages combine vintage objects and illustrations, short poems, paintings, and photographs.





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Northern Ireland. Restaurants, comic books, numerous television shows, and beverages have been named after the “Lake Erie Monster.”

Scientists have weighed in over the years on what the creature could possibly be. Some of the suggestions range from a giant crazed carp to an oversized gar-pike.

If you are interested in hearing more on this mysterious aquatic creature, you can catch the documentary, “The Legend of the Lake Erie Monster,” which is showing on Cox Cable, Channel 45, Sundays at 8:30 PM. It is listed under “Shocker Enterprises” on the TV guide listing. Also, you can view the documentary on Cleveland Spectrum, Channel 1025, Sundays at 9pm. For more info you can email: Kevin@shockerenterprises.com or call: 216-230-1840.

Kevin Kelly has spent a lot of his time with family and friends who live in Lakewood. He is a local video producer in Cuyahoga County who produces documentaries for independent and government stations around the United States.



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COVE COMMUNITY CENTER



Cove Garden Club Visits Rockefeller Park Greenhouse’s Vibrant Gardens

Seventeen members of the Cove Garden Club recently took their first field trip to the Rockefeller Park Greenhouse, a hidden gem in Cleveland. They explored tropical plants, fruit trees, and colorful displays, strolled through the Mall—a formal garden with trimmed hedges—and visited specialty gardens like the All-American Selections, Betty Ott Talking Garden, Latin American Garden, Japanese Garden, and the vibrant Willott Iris Garden. A bright, beautiful morning full of nature’s colors!

Generations Connect Through Poetry, Song, And Smiles At Cove



We had a heartwarming visit at Cove on May 8th as kindergartners from Padre Pio Academy, led by the always-joyful Ms. Cathleen Coyne, brought laughter and smiles to our older adults and guests. They started with a sweet recital of Robert Frost’s “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” then used American Sign Language to perform “A is for Adorable”—and they truly were! The kids charmed us with “The Unicorn” by Shel Silverstein and had everyone smiling and laughing as they used duck whistles to sing “Six Little Ducks.” It was a wonderful reminder of the joy that comes from connecting generations. Thank you, Padre Pio Academy and Ms. Coyne, for brightening our day!

Meet Me At Cove: Diane Nix, Community Connector, Film Fanatic, And Lifelong Explorer

by Nancy Feighan

Diane Nix was born in Northfield, Ohio, and raised in Cleveland. The oldest of five—“and best looking,” she jokes—Diane’s story is one of independence, laughter, and staying ahead of the curve. She built a successful career in credit management, first at State Chemical Manufacturing and then for 20 years at Sherwin-Williams, working alongside her sister, who retired after 40 years there. Diane remains close with many former coworkers, gathering annually to reminisce and laugh.

Always a trailblazer, Diane moved downtown before it was popular—when city living meant no nearby grocery store. She loved the energy and five-minute commute. Two decades ago, she moved to Lakewood and never looked back.

Her pride and joy is her son Jim, a newly retired lieutenant from the Solon Fire Department and now Chief of Troy Township’s. Diane enjoys traveling with him and his fiancée, always open to new experiences.

A devoted film buff, Diane and her sisters have attended the Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF) since 1991. They book hotel rooms and dive into movie marathons together. When CIFF moved to Playhouse Square in 2021, their tradition didn’t miss a beat.

Diane also loves NYC—her favorite city—and enjoys day trips to Amish Country and scenic spots with her close-knit group of friends from Cove:



Doris, Martha, Pat, Barb, and Donna, sharing adventures, good food, and great company.

She first got involved with Lakewood’s Division of Aging at the old Madison location and was thrilled when services transitioned to Cove—just steps from her home. With a knack for connection, Diane volunteers at the front desk, greeting both newcomers and regulars, making them feel welcome, and sharing the exciting activities and programs available at Cove. Diane values diversity and feels strongly about being part of a vibrant, inclusive community where people from all walks of life feel connected.

Whether she’s greeting guests at Cove, catching the latest indie film, or hopping a train to NYC, Diane lives with joy and purpose—and inspires those around her to do the same.



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