

Lakewood's Award Winning Citizen Journalism Project for 20+ Years • In The Journalism Hall of Fame

Volume 21, Issue 12, June 18, 2025

Bullock Runs For Reelection

## To Keep Lakewood A Place Where All May Find Opportunity, Quality Of Life

by Eva Wolkowitz

"As prices rise and uncermounts nationally, Lakewood is more important than ever to working families we have a job to do," says Bullock

Noting that today's economy is putting the middle class under a lot of pressure, Councilman Tom Bullock said today he is running for reelection to keep Lakewood a community that gives working families an opportunity for a good quality of life at an affordable price.

"Lakewood has traditionally been a community where everyone can find a good quality of life-including working families and the middle class,"



Councilman Tom Bullock

said Bullock. "As prices rise and uncertainty mounts nationally, Lakewood is more important than ever to working fami-

## Please Help **Our Police Canines**

by Jim O'Bryan

A group of local businesses and residents, led by Wags And Whiskers, 14303 Madison Ave., are trying to raise funds to buy our two Police Canines bullet



Atyla and Pablo

and knife proof vests. If you would like to contribute go to: https://donate.spikesk9fund. org/team/661383. You can follow the QR code below.





## Celebration Saturday, June 21 6:00 PM - 10:30 PM

### Summer Solstice Celebration -June 21st At Lakewood Park

Come celebrate the longest day of the year at the 2025 Summer Solstice Celebration, which takes place from 6 to 10:30 PM at Lakewood Park. Enjoy local food trucks, engaging activities, music, and the best sunset in Northeast Ohio.

See you there!

lies— we have a job to do," says Bullock. Our City has a job to do in maintaining that promise, and I will work to see that it does."

Bullock said that everything he has done on City Council has been to make Lakewood succeed "so that average citizens-working families, middle class families—have just as much opportunity as wealthy people in the most affluent exurbs."

"Here you can find quality homes, excellent schools, lots of transportation options to get to a job, close-by shopping, wonderful parks, and warm and welcoming neighbors," Bullock added.

With more than 17 years of service in city government, Bullock brings to City Council the most experience and the deepest perspective on both the problems Lakewood has overcome and new challenges that are arising.

"I began my service to Lakewood in 2008 when we faced a city budget crisis and concerns that aging houses meant out-migration to exurbs

continued on page 10



## Meet The Trucks **Amazing Success**



Two weekends ago was Lakewood Early Childhood PTA's Meet The Trucks. What a great time for all. Thanks to these people, the Service side of Lakewood City Hall. Special thanks to Tree Service, that took the photo from high above. You can see all of our photos from the event at: lakewoodobserver.com or on our facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063715863115

### Community Safety Message From Mayor George And Superintendent Niedzwiecki:

## **Secure Gun Storage**

by Meghan George and Maggie Niedzwiecki

As summer approaches and children and teens may be more often at home alone or visiting friends' homes, Mayor Meghan George and Superintendent Maggie Niedzwiecki and Police Chief Kevin Fischer remind residents of the importance of safe gun storage, noting that secure firearm storage is an adult responsibility.

Gun violence is the leading cause of death for children and teens. Secure gun storage can save children's lives by preventing unintentional shootings gun suicides. Mayor George, Superintendent Niedzwiecki and Chief Fischer urge parents and caregivers to practice responsible gun storage by:

- Securing firearms in their homes. Responsible firearm storage means that guns are stored unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition.
- Free gun locks are available for Lakewood residents from the Lakewood Police Department.
- · Asking about the presence of guns in the homes of family and friends.

June is National Gun Violence Awareness Month. Mayor George and Superintendent Niedzwiecki remind residents of the following statistics:

Every year across the country, 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else, and nearly 77% of those incidents take place inside the home.

More than 700 children die by gun suicide each year. In the overwhelming majority of these incidents, the gun used was one that belonged to someone in their home.

Research shows secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to an 80 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens.

This summer throughout the year, our community leaders encourage all Lakewood adults to help protect Lakewood kids through secure gun storage.

## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

## Join Together For Juneteenth

### **Happy Juneteenth Neighbors!**

At Monday night's Council meeting Councilwoman Hamilton Steiner and I introduced Resolution 2025-29 to honor Juneteenth National Independence Day and spread awareness of its significance. Juneteenth, which can also be called Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Emancipation Day or the Second Independence Day, became a federal holiday in 2021. It marks the anniversary of June 19, 1865, the date on which federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas and informed the last of the enslaved people that they were free. This occurred two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth became a federal holiday in 2021, and now, at a time when some in our federal government are trying to erase parts of our shared American history, it is particularly meaningful for us to come together as a community in our observance of Juneteenth.

There are two great opportunities for us all to celebrate Juneteenth right here in Lakewood. The first, hosted by the Lakewood Black Caucus, is on Juneteenth itself, and will be held from 1-4pm at the Lakewood Presbyterian Church, 14502 Detroit Avenue. The second is this Saturday, June 21st from 4-6pm at Madison Park and is the first in a series of annual summer "block parties" presented by Madison Court Community Coalition and Lakewood Outdoor Basketball Committee. Both Juneteenth events are free to the public and will include food and family activities. Thank you to our neighbors in both groups who volunteer their time, talent and treasure to make these community driven events possible.

At Monday's council meeting we also recognized Madison Court Community Coalition (MC3), now kicking off their fifth year of community building, resource sharing, and advocacy. MC3 was formed in response to an incident of



President of City Council/Council Person-At-Large



At Monday's council meeting, Madison Court Community Coalition (MC3) volunteers were recognized for their work. MC3 will kick off their fifth season of block parties with a Juneteenth celebration Saturday, June 21st from 4-6pm at Madison Park.

gun violence at Madison Park in 2021. Since then, MC3 has sustained a positive, proactive presence at the park, improving the safety and usability of the park for neighbors and visitors city-wide. Our neighbors volunteering with MC3 will be collecting new and gently used school supplies at both the Juneteenth and July 26th block parties for distribution for the August 16th block party. To learn more about MC3 events or to volunteer, follow them on Facebook or Instagram, or come to the party Saturday!

If I don't see you at either Juneteenth event, I hope to see you at one of our upcoming Council Community Conversations. In my first year as Council President last year we started this tradition of holding town-hall type meetings to chat with 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.

Council Community Conversations:

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

**Ward 4** – June 24, 7:00pm @ Cove Community Center

### **Upcoming Council Meetings:** June 23

6:00pm Housing, Planning & **Development Committee** 

7:00pm Joint Meeting of the Animal Safety & Welfare Advisory Board and the Public Safety Committee

### June 30

6:30pm Joint Meeting of Planning Commission & Committee of the Whole

Sign up for our email list to receive agendas for upcoming meetings, livestream meetings or watch past meetings, and learn more about Council on our webpage: https://www.lakewoodoh. gov/lakewood-city-council/



### Your Independent Source for Lakewood News & Opinion

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**Lakewood Observer** 

### **Upcoming Submission Deadline**

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Council Passes Resolution 2025-31 Supporting Referendum of Senate Bill 1: SB 1 would radically alter how Ohio's public colleges and universities are allowed to oper- ate and what they are allowed to teach, ban most DEI programs, and limit collective bargaining rights of faculty. Signatures are needed for the SB1 Referendum petition by June 27th. Petitions are available to sign most days at the Root Cafe, or reach out to a council member to sign.



### The Lakewood Observer is produced by volunteers/residents of Lakewood.

If you'd like to help this history-making 19-year-old project continue to publish the words, stories and images of fellow Lakewoodites follow the QR Code to the Member Center and sign up at www.lakewoodobserver.com/members.

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## THE MAYOR'S CORNER

## **Public Works Really Works**

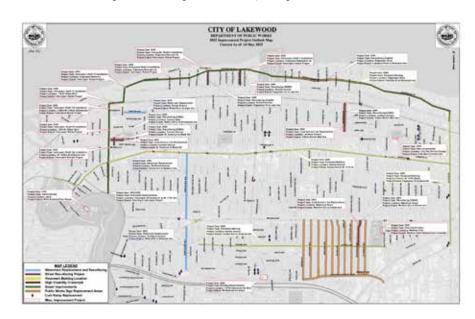
With a city as dense, busy, and historic as Lakewood, keeping our public assets - streets, parks, infrastructure, and buildings – in good condition takes immense effort. Always leading the way is the Lakewood Department of Public Works, who oversee our 217 streets, 180 miles of sidewalks, and 74 acres of parks, as well as our multiple city buildings (everything from City Hall and Cove Community Center to Winterhurst Ice Rink and our wastewater treatment plant, just to name some). I want to thank the entire Public Works team for their efforts, including Director Chris Gordon and City Engineer Mark Papke for their leadership.

Public Works is busy year-round, but they are especially visible in the warm weather months when many of our streets and parks projects are in full swing. For our streets, sidewalks, intersections, and underground infrastructure, every year Public Works develops a map of maintenance and improvements. I have included this year's map of that work plan, and as you can see it is extensive.

The plan touches areas across Lakewood and the projects span a wide range – repaving roads, improving crosswalks, adding or replacing signs, watermain replacements, and sewer improvements. This year's plan also includes finishing up the multiyear complete renovation of the City's main sewer interceptor, which runs the length of Lakewood up to 90 feet below grade along Edgewater and West Clifton. Guiding all this work is in addition to ongoing responses to unpredicted emergencies that demand street repairs.

On top of all the work on streets and sewers, Public Works is again working on special projects in our parks. This year, that included upgrades to neighborhood parks like Merl Bunts Park and Niagara Park, while improving our two large parks by creating a new

**by Meghan George**Mayor/Safety Director, City of Lakewood



connection between Madison Park to the Birdtown neighborhood via a cityowned lot on Halstead and overseeing the completion of the Lakewood Skate Park at Lakewood Park. The City is also using the slow season at Winterhurst to continue upgrades there, with Public Works helping guide work to upgrade and expand the locker rooms, modernize the spectator stands, and continue a major overhaul of the facility.

Beyond parks and streets, Public Works takes on special projects beyond their regular scope of work. In 2025, that includes overseeing the completion of the new Lakewood Animal Shelter, which will open on Berea Road later this year, as well as a new pole barn to store and protect city equipment, and the initial stages of a design build project for treatment tanks at Lakewood's wastewater treatment facility in the valley.

While some of these projects across Lakewood can cause inconvenience as we go about our daily business on city streets, we can all feel gratitude for the efforts of our hardworking Public Works Department team to maintain and improve our city. We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we work to keep Lakewood roads, sewers, parks, and buildings safe and in high quality condition to server our residents and taxpayers.





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## **LAKEWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY EVENTS**

### by Lisa Calfee

### Meet The Author- "The Towpath" by Jonathan Walter

Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Author Jonathan Walter pays homage to the legend and history of Northeast Ohio and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in "The Towpath," a time-travel suspense thriller. Books will be available for sale and signing at the event.

#### **Musical Presentation -**

### The Mother Road: Celebrating the History of Route 66

Presented by The Victor Samalot Duo on Sunday, June 22, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Get your kicks through essential road music, including Bobby Troup's Route 66, along with the visuals and backstories of America's most iconic highway. The Victor Samalot Duo features Victor Samalot on guitar with Bobbi Holt on bass and vocals.

### Lakewood Public Cinema Film -

### "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert" (1994)

Presented by Tom Stebel on Saturday, June 28, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

Join Tom Stebel from the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland as he screens and discusses this award-winning and critically acclaimed film that follows the comic adventures- and misadventures- of three friends who take a road trip across the Australian Outback in a tour bus named Priscilla.

#### Knit & Lit Book Club -

"Cold Sassy Tree: A Novel" by Olive Ann Burns

Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium

### **Booked for Murder Book Club -**

"The Marlow Murder Club" by Robert Thorogood

Thursday, June 26, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room

### Children's/Youth Services Programs

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.

### Just Baby 'N Me

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

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. No registration is required.



### **Pre-school Story Time**

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

Children and their parents will enjoy stories, movement and songs for thirty fun filled minutes. No registration is required.

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

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

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

### Pajama Party

For You and Your 2 to 6 Year-Old Child.

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

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

Put on your pajamas, bring along your favorite stuffy and join us as we wind down for the night with books, movement and songs. No registration is required.

### **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.

### The Wonderful World of Bubbles

Main Library Multipurpose Room - Friday, June 20, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

For the whole family. This show takes bubbles and science to a new level of fun. See square bubbles, bubbles that change shape, bubbles that walk a tight rope and even a person inside of a bubble. This is a laugh out loud comedy show for all ages.

### Jungle Bob's Animal Show.

Main Library Multipurpose Roo - Friday, June 27, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.

For the whole family. Join us for Jungle Bob's educational Animal Show. See and learn about a variety of animals including reptiles, mammals and insects. No registration required.

### **Booktroverts: Teen Book Club**

Main Library Multipurpose Room - Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 7:30 pm..

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



## **CITY OF LAKEWOOD**

### Parent Magazine Chooses Lakewood

## As Best Place To Raise A Family And More

### reprinted from North East Ohio Parent Magazine Back-to-back champs!

Lakewood has been named as the Best Town to Raise a Family by Northeast Ohio Parent Magazine for the second consecutive year. In addition, Lakewood Park was named as the best playground.

## Best Town to Raise a Family Winner Lakewood

For the second year in a row, Lakewood has won this honor from readers. The city's innovation of its community programs, resources and activities provides residents and visitors alike a sense of a welcoming environment. The walkable city has plenty of restaurants, parks and scenic views for everyone. For families, the city has choices of education and entertainment — including schools, arts centers, early childhood programs, libraries and events. The city is also actively working to support residents with special needs with programs such as Blue Envelope Program and Autism Safety Roster. —lakewoodoh.gov

### Best Sensory-Friendly Outing (special needs) Winner: Beck Center for the Arts

For all ages and abilities, Beck Center for the Arts in Lakewood offers people with special needs an opportunity to dive into the arts through all the senses. In its Creative Arts Therapies department, from early childhood to adult, participants can take adapted music, art, dance and theater in a group session or individual lessons. The supportive certified therapists are there to create a welcoming environment and enrich the lives of individuals with special needs through the arts programming. — beckcenter.org

### Best Dance Studio: Winner: Beck Center for the Arts

Beck Center's dance education program is one of the most comprehensive and well-respected in Northeast Ohio. Programming is available for early childhood students, youth, teens and adults. Beck Center offers age-appropriate early childhood classes in preschool dance, pre-ballet and kids 'n dance, which foster a love of movement and build confidence, coordination and creativity.

— beckcenter.org

### continued on page 10





### **Lunch Is On Us!**

Each year the City of Lakewood shows their appreciation of the entire City staff from all departments in all locations by treating them to lunch on them, which is really lunch on us, as we pay the taxes. It is money well spent as each and every one of our departments has been doing an amazing job to keep the city running smoothly even with the threats of less money, tighter budgets, and a greater need to do more with less than ever before. Most of us don't take enough time to thank those that work for us. From Parking Enforcement, through Service, Water and Waste Management, to Police, Fire and those in the courts, tax and water departments, enjoy your lunch from Barrio's! You deserve it.

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## **BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT**

**Reviving Trinity Block:** 

## A Story Of Preservation And Vision

by Frank Scalish

The transformation of Lakewood's Trinity Block reflects both vision and dedication. For years, I saw the potential in the historic Trinity Lutheran Church property. When the City of Lakewood acquired the site and issued a request for proposals, I quickly moved to assemble a trusted team: preservation consultant Heather

Rudge of HP Group, and architects Scott and Analia Dimit of Dimit Architects. Dubbed "the dream team" by Maria Scalish, CEO of Scalish Construction, the group brought together their expertise to secure Federal and Historic Tax Credits — critical fo preserving the site's architectural integrity while making the project financially viable.

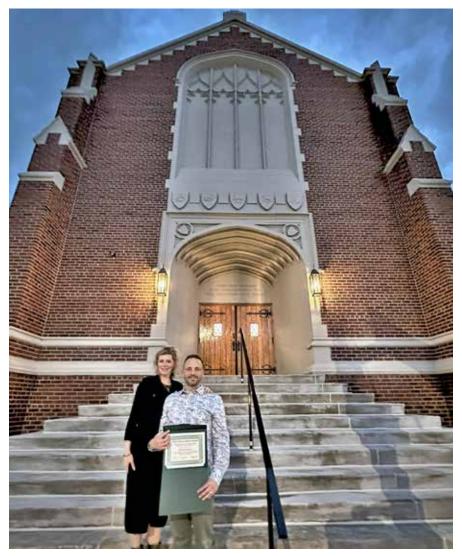
With tax credits in place, the team carefully balanced preservation with adaptive reuse. In just under a year, the former church, storefronts, and schoolhouse were converted into vibrant, mixed-use spaces, now home to offices, a yoga studio, and a fitness facility. Central to the preservation effort was retaining the Sanctuary's original volume. One of the most significant achievements was the full

restoration of the Sanctuary's stainedglass windows, returning them to their original brilliance.

Some of the notable exterior improvements included removing a deteriorating 1967 porch addition to restore the church's original south façade steps. The 1953 classroom wing saw vinyl windows replaced with multi-pane casements true to the building's design era which showcase the beautiful natural lighting. To ensure accessibility, a new ADA-compliant entrance and Lula elevator were added. Site improvements also featured a repaved parking lot with EV Charge-Point stations.

Historic storefronts were restored to their original configurations using archival photographs. Landscaping was completed in partnership with Wild Ones Greater Cleveland, incorporating native Ohio plantings and a new rain garden adjacent to a bocce court—a nod to both my and Maria's roots. Community bocce leagues ar set to launch in Fall 2025, creating a new gathering space for the neighborhood.

Guided by our mission to build a greater Cleveland, Scalish Construction delivers design and construction



Frank and Maria Scalish in front of their jewel, The Trinity Block, holding their Preservation Award given to them by the City of Lakewood.

services that elevate communities, restore historic structures, and improve buildings for both people and the environment. Every project is approached with artistry, craftsmanship, and a

deep respect for both history and future sustainability, we feel we accomplished that with the Trinity Block development.

## **Trinity Block Market**

by Maria M. Scalish

When we first took on the restoration of the former Trinity Lutheran Church, my husband Frank and I each saw the potential in different parts of the property. While Frank focused on bringing new life to the historic building itself, I couldn't help but see the opportunity in the sprawling parking lot. With my background in retail and close connections with many of the talented local artists and boutique small business owners here in Lakewood, I knew this space could evolve into something special for the community.

That vision became the Trinity Block Market — Lakewood's first curated public makers market, designed

July 12, 10am-12pm

July 26, 10am-12pm

(614) 466-5921 rep13@ohiohouse.gov

ohiohouse.gov



to bridge Downtown Lakewood to the West End and bring people together to celebrate small businesses, makers, and local creativity.

The Trinity Block Market is a natural extension of the mission behind The Trinity Block development itself: to create a destination where Lakewood residents and visitors from nearby suburbs can gather, shop, and immerse themselves in the community. Our hope is that this market grows into a new tradition for Lakewood and helps further support local artists and small businesses.

The inaugural market will take place on Sunday, June 29th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. We've brought together a carefully curated group of vendors, including Cle Clothing Co, Blair Ritchey, Mishi Lifestyle, Lakewood Plant Co, Leona's Custom Hats, Han-

nah Dunphy, Narrow Dog Pottery, Sixth City Vintage, as well as regional favorites like Nomad, Shore Society, Wandering Wardrobe, and many more. Visitors will also be able to enjoy Trinity Block's newly opened tenants, including Jersey Mike's, Lakewood Bottle Shop, and Cle Bagel Cafe, learn more about Body Fit Training, Cultivate Yoga and Megan Cox Bridal/ Makeup by Meridith. Some of Lakewood's other small business favorites like LBM, Immigrant Son Brewery, and Trikeable Treats will also be present.

We're excited to kick off this new chapter and welcome everyone to join us as we build something meaningful together for Lakewood.



Panera Lakewood

Floressa Café



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Ohio House of Representatives

Columbus, Ohio 43215

77 South High Street - Floor 10

## **LAKEWOOD EDUCATION**



### **Ranger Clubs Raise Funds For Homeless** Children And Lakewood Animal Shelter

by Christine Gordillo

Shout out to our student clubs that do so many good things for our community! • LHS Key Club recently held a car wash and raised \$500 for Sleep In Heavenly Peace, an organization that builds beds for children displaced by homelessness.

• Harding's Kiwanis Builders Club ended their year with a popcorn fundraiser for the Lakewood Animal Shelter that raised \$600.

### **Employment Opportunities: Fall School Sporting Events And Activities**

by Mitchell Robida

Like Sports? The Community Recreation and Education Department has employment opportunities for the Event Staff position for Fall School Sporting Events & Activities. Event Staff are the direct representatives of the Lakewood Board of Education and the Lakewood City Schools Community Recreation & Education Department during Fall School Sporting Events & Activities. The primary duties and responsibilities are, but not limited to, the monitoring and managing of all facility events, ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants.

The ideal candidate for the position of Event Staff will have the ability to establish priorities and work independently, without direct supervision. This position is part time, approximately 15-20 hours a week, nights and weekends required.

Interested candidates should submit an Employment Application, which is available at www.recreation.lakewoodcityschools.org under Find It Fast-Part Time Jobs, to: The Lakewood City Schools Community Recreation and Education Department, c/o Mitchell Robida, 14100 Franklin Blvd., Lakewood, OH 44107.



## **Rotary Awards Scholarships To** Six Area High School Seniors



(From left) Rotary Club president George Hwang, scholarship winners Piper McElfresh, Gregory Friel, Flint Slankard, Charieon Doxley, Elizabeth Weir, Zoey Serna, and Rotary scholarship chair Jon Fancher.

### by Lynn Donaldson

The Lakewood-Rocky River Rotary Club awarded college scholarships to six area graduating seniors at its weekly lunch meeting on Monday, June 2. Recipients include Flint Slankard of Rocky River High School, Gregory Friel of St. Ignatius High School, Elizabeth Weir of Avon High School, and Charieon Doxley, Piper McElfresh, and Zoey Serna of Lakewood High School.

Each student will receive a \$3,000 scholarship award from the Lakewood-Rocky River Rotary Foundation. This \$18,000 scholarship program is part of nearly \$78,000 that the Rotary Club donates to community programs each year.

The six Rotary scholarship win-

ners were chosen for their character, academic achievement, extracurricular involvement and community service.

Charieon Doxley is no stranger to the Rotary Club, having been recognized earlier this year as the Outstanding Student in the Early Childhood Education program of the West Shore Career Technical District. She was a four-year track and field athlete, setting several school records in sprints, hurdles, and relays. She coached elementary students in the Running Ranger Program as well as the Youth Volleyball Summer Camps for

Read the entire article online at: lakewoodobserver.com

## Lakewood Pools Are Open!



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### **FORUM**

## Lakewood Residents Deserve Clarity And Honesty On School Funding From Lakewood City Schools

### by Jennifer Schlosser

Real battles are underway in the state of Ohio over the funding of public schools. From the perspective of those who support public education, there's little debate that state lawmakers are dismantling Ohio's public school systems while heavily investing taxpayer dollars into charter and private schools. This year's state budget is likely to continue this trend, causing additional harm to many school districts.

The state budget bill won't be finalized until Governor DeWine signs it on or by June 30. But the current version of the state budget bill – passed by the Senate on June 11 - includes an increase in state funding for Lakewood City Schools. Currently, our school district would receive \$17,270,639 each year in 2026 and 2027 - \$426,431 more than Lakewood received each year in 2024 and 2025.

Recently, Lakewood City Schools released messaging in a Cleveland. com article regarding the impacts of the house version of the budget bill on Lakewood's schools. We appreciate school officials raising public awareness to how state policy will impact Lakewood. Unfortunately, this piece is significantly misleading.

The manner in which Treasurer Zeman and Superintendent Niedzwiecki chose to present this topic, we believe, does a disservice to Lakewood.

The reader is spun up with mis-

leading and dramatic numbers, then lulled into a non-sequitur rationalization of the Elementary Planning Task Force "repurposing" an elementary school into a centralized preschool building. The superintendent caps off the misleading presentation of state policy to imply that \$14 million in biennial budget cuts could mean "more than repurposing" an elementary school is necessary.

We take particular issue with this misleading statement by Superintendent Niedzwiecki in light of how little the administration and School Board have done to address the fiscal issues implied by this statement. Three items for readers' consideration:

First, the way Ms. Niedzwiecki is using the \$14 million figure is a mischaracterization of the actual policy. Second, Mr. Zeman is projecting that Lakewood will be running annual losses to the tune of \$8,714,531 per year by 2027 growing to \$16,393,785 by 2029 prior to any of these state budget changes.

So the 30% cap would increase these annual losses to over \$23,000,000 by 2029. Yet, the only potential cost reductions considered by the administration and School Board over the past two years is to "repurpose" a newly built elementary school.

If the administration's data is taken at face value, the estimated ~\$750,000 ing an elementary school would amount to about 3% of the operating deficit Mr. Zeman is projecting for 2029. In other words, closing a school is a drop in the bucket compared to the deficit Lakewood would need to address, and would make little difference in the size of levy needed in 2026.

As far as we are aware, the administration and school board have spent zero time assessing ways to grow enrollment or otherwise boost funds to the school district outside of taxpayer levies. (For example, offering the opportunity for students living outside of Lakewood to attend Lakewood City Schools by paying tuition could provide a new source of revenue and bring additional students to the school district. Or, transitioning the management of Lakewood's recreation department to the City of Lakewood, opening up additional funds for Pre-K to 12 education.)

Third, the administration and task

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force have presented zero information showing the business plan or costs for building and operating the centralized preschool that would replace the elementary school. It is an affront to the term "fiscal responsibility" for the administration and school board to use this phrase to describe any aspect of the Elementary Planning Task Force process.

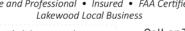
We urge Lakewood's school board members and district leadership to prioritize proactive transparency and honesty with our community, and make a plan to restore trust with Lakewood's community moving forward. Lakewood's future – and our children's futures – depend on it.

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



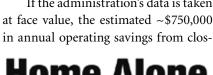
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## **LAKEWOOD OBSERVER**



## A Sudsy Start To Summer On Lincoln Avenue

by Nathan Noll

Lincoln Avenue's annual block party brought together more neighbors than ever before, with visits from Lakewood's police and fire department. This year also featured and a kid's foam pit that stole the show (check out the drone shot to see the aftermath). This cherished tradition is just one of the many reasons we love calling Lakewood home.

Nathan Noll is a proud Lincoln Avenue Block Party Planning Committee member.





Calling All Gardeners:

## Join The 4th Annual GardenWalk Lakewood!

by Melissa Kress

Calling all green thumbs and garden enthusiasts! On Saturday, July 19, from 10 AM to 4 PM, Lakewood will burst into vibrant color as residents and visitors embark on the 4th Annual GardenWalk Lakewood, a free, self-guided tour of the city's most beautiful and imaginative gardens. Whether you have a small urban oasis or a sprawling floral paradise, this is your chance to showcase your hard work and creativity to the entire community. The sign-up deadline is Sunday, June 22, so don't delay!

To register your garden or to learn more about the event, visit GardenWalkLakewood.org.

There are so many ways to be part of this city-wide celebration and help our blooming community grow even more vibrant!

• Know a garden that deserves the spotlight? Encourage your favorite green-thumbed Lakewoodite to sign up!

• Want to explore Lakewood's lush landscapes? Invite your friends and make a day of it!

• Feeling helpful? We're looking for cheerful volunteers to deliver yard signs, staff information stations, and sell GardenWalk Lakewood t-shirts on



the day of the event. Email us at GardenWalkLakewood@gmail.com and let us know how you'd like to lend a hand!

Thank you for helping us make this year's GardenWalk Lakewood the most colorful and delightful one yet! We look forward to seeing you on Saturday, July 19th!

Melissa Kress is a longtime Lakewood resident who tries very hard to garden (with mixed results) and is on the board of GardenWalk Lakewood.

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Roman Fountain is one of the most well-known and loved pizzeria in Lakewood, Ohio. Roman Fountain has been serving up pizza since the mid 1950's with award winning pizza, calzone, stromboli, subs, pasta, wings, and salads.

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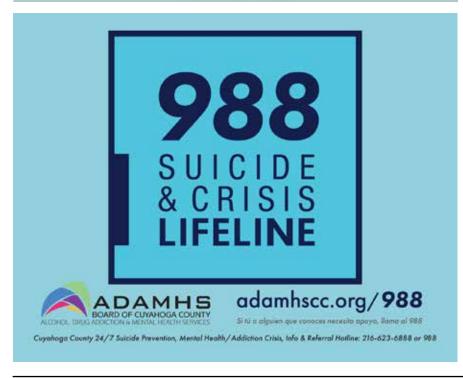
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## HEDGE WI+CH



Rev. Melissa Dean-Pardo

Voted Best Local Startup 2025! Cleveland SCENE Magazine

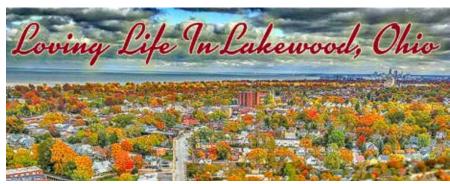
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## **LAKEWOOD OBSERVER**



## Parent Magazine Chooses Lakewood As Best Place To Raise A Family And More

continued from page 5

### Best Playground Winner: Lakewood Park

It's not difficult to see why this is a family favorite. The park, at the intersection of Belle and Lake avenues has something for everyone. Kids Cove Playground area has plenty of climbing structures, slides for all different ages to play in the fenced in area. Families also can enjoy a picnic in the pavilion close to the playground. The park also has a splash pad, summer concerts,

scenic views of the lake, sports fields and a skatepark. — lakewoodoh.gov

## Best Place for Ice Skating Winner: Winterhurst Arena

Winterhurst Ice Arena is a premier ice sports facility located in Lakewood. Winterhurst has been a cornerstone for the community, offering a wide range of ice skating activities and programs for all ages and skill levels. The arena features two full-size ice rinks, providing ample space for public skating, figure skating, hockey leagues and private rentals.—winterhurstice.com

### Bullock Runs For Reelection

## To Keep Lakewood A Place Where All May Find Opportunity, Quality Of Life

### continued from page 1

was the only smart option. We overcame that through disciplined budgeting, management improvements, and fearless challenge to the way things had always been done. The payoffs for Lakewood residents have been no tax increases, high quality services, and a 180 degree reputational turnaround as our neighborhoods became desirable, our parks improved, and our commercial areas flourished with interesting, locally-owned businesses," said Bullock.

"Today, we face new pressures from home prices that are straining affordability, national inflation, and a federal government unleashing wave after wave of uncertainty on workers, businesses, and the economy," noted Bullock. "I see Lakewood as a vital haven for working families and a leader that can show the way on how our country can keep its promise to the middle class: by providing an affordable quality of life, resilient neighborhoods, and stability where rule of law, tolerance, and neighborli-



ness still form the foundation of how we interact with one another."

"Some of this calls for direct action by city government; some of it requires leadership by example. All of it inspires me and will get 100 percent of my effort every day," said Bullock.

## Bullock outlined priorities he intends to work on if reelected to a new term:

- Continued equitable investment in parks, with a focus on the second largest, Madison Park;
- Strengthening neighborhoods by focusing on housing quality and a diversity of housing options to ensure people of all means and abilities can call Lakewood home;
- Building a stronger walking and biking culture through infrastructure investment and enhanced traffic enforcement;
- Supporting our vibrant retail corridors and finding new ways to attract and retain unique local businesses;
- Strong leadership at City Hall built on customer service balanced with fiscal responsibility;
- Making Lakewood a haven for decency and common-sense values in a contentious national political landscape.

"To me, 'good enough' isn't good enough for middle class families in Lakewood. My aim is to keep Lakewood as excellent and always improving," said Bullock.

This November, Lakewood voters will choose the occupants of all three Council at Large seats and two Board of Education seats. The offices of mayor, four ward councilpersons, three other Board of Education seats, and municipal judge will be on the ballot once again in 2027.

Eva Wolkowitz is a Lakewood resident on Cordova Ave.

## A Review Of Stephen Kinzer's "The Brothers"

### by Robert Blum

In his riveting duo-biography, \*The Brothers, Stephen Kinzer delves into the lives of Allen and John Foster Dulles, and I found this nonfiction narrative to be nothing short of electrifying. It illuminated the shadows of my past, revealing the intricate web of events that shaped my life: the tragic loss of my best friend, who was killed in action at the tender age of 25 in Vietnam; my own four-year stint in the military during the tumultuous Vietnam War era; and the heart-wrenching decision my brother made to flee to Canada to escape the draft.

Kinzer's exploration also transported me back to a pivotal moment in 1957 when my father took me outside to witness the historic passage of Sputnik across the night sky. The satellite glowed a brilliant white, low and hauntingly beautiful against the dark canvas of the universe. Yet, my father's words pierced the wonder of that moment: "This is something to be afraid of." The very next day, he drove me to the Nike anti-missile site in Parma, not to instill fear, but to unveil the reality that loomed over us—a reality that consumed the conversations of my classmates and echoed through the halls of our nation. Sputnik was a stark reminder that the Soviets had surged ahead of the United States in the race for technological supremacy.

In Lakewood, remnants of this era linger, particularly in the basement of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension, a former Civil Defense shelter. Its absence of windows and thick, imposing walls stand as a testament to a time when fear of nuclear attack was a palpable part of daily life. It is likely that many basements of Lakewood's public buildings still bear the scars of that anxiety, serving as silent sentinels of a past fraught with uncertainty and dread.

Allen and John Foster Dulles were raised in a household steeped in Calvinist tradition, where their parents imparted a profound belief: humanity is divided into two distinct catego-



Robert Blum

ries—the Saintly and the Satanic. In this stark worldview, the Dulles family, proudly identifying as the former, embraced a solemn duty: to convert or suppress those deemed Satanic. This mission, they believed, was not merely a personal obligation but a divine calling, a noble endeavor to reshape the world in the image of heaven itself.

In the shadow of impending global conflict, Allen embarked on a mission to gather intelligence for the U.S. Government long before the outbreak of World War II. By January 1953, he played a pivotal role in shaping the future of American diplomacy, assisting the newly inaugurated President Dwight Eisenhower in appointing John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State. With the world on edge, Allen assumed the mantle of Director of the CIA at a time when the iron grip of USSR Premier Josef Stalin had already suffocated the governments of Eastern Europe. Fear gripped the American populace, haunted by the specter of a Communist takeover.

Just weeks after Eisenhower took office, the world was rocked by the news of Stalin's death, ushering in a new era under the leadership of Nikita Khrush-

## Read the rest of this article online at: lakewoodobserver.com



## COVE COMMUNITY CENTER

### Meet At Cove

## Annmarie Gero-Engineer, Athlete, Survivor, And Friend

### by Nancy Feighan

If you've ever wondered what it looks like to live boldly, laugh heartily, and keep exploring—just sit down with Annmarie.

Born at the old St. John's Hospital in Cleveland, Annmarie was the 10th of 12 children. She weighed 9 pounds, 7 ounces, measured 22 inches long, and had a full head of jet-black hair. Her mom, who gave each child a nickname, called her "Moon" for her round face. With four older sisters, Annmarie always

had extra eyes looking out for her.

Always ahead of the curve, she started kindergarten at age four and later graduated from Lincoln West High School. Afterward, she took an unconventional route—joining the Civilian Conservation Corps in the Shawnee Forest. What began as a summer job turned into eight unforgettable months rebuilding creek walls, training to fight forest fires, and disassembling a 125-year-old log cabin to reassemble at the Adams County Fairgrounds.

Energized, she returned to school at Tri-C and Cleveland State, studying medical technology, disease research, and earning stackable certificates in quality engineering, computer repair, and networking.

As if that weren't enough, Annmarie also played professional women's



Annmarie Gero

football for three years with the Cleveland Brewers (now the Cleveland Fusion), competing against teams from Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky—and winning two championships. As a nose tackle and tight end, she could do 10 pushups in full gear without breaking a sweat.

She began her career in automotive engineering before shifting to aerospace, working at DuPont and Voss Aerospace, where she helped produce parts for aircraft and medevac planes. She thrived in that high-precision environment for over 20 years.

Then everything changed. After a routine surgery, Annmarie had a severe allergic reaction to pain medication. She aspirated, coded for 15 minutes, and was placed on life support, in a coma for two months. Doctors gave her a 10% chance of survival. But Annmarie beat the odds—waking up and relearning how to speak, move, and walk.

Adventure has always been in her DNA. She once hitchhiked with a friend from Columbus to California, camping in Yosemite and watching the sunrise over the Grand Canyon. No bear spray—just rope, a tree, and smart advice from a park ranger.

At 21, she began riding motorcy-cles and cruised into her 50s on Hondas and Kawasakis. In 2000, she swapped the bike for a Sea Ray Cuddy Cabin and trailered it to Marblehead and Port Clinton, often camping nearby. Though she's since sold the boat and camper, she still enjoys adventure—now it's often trying new restaurants with friends.

Annmarie came to Cove about a year and a half ago and quickly became a familiar face. She made friends easily and joined activities like arts and crafts, bocce, and the Cove Garden Club, where she's learning about flowers and plants.

Her story proves life has many chapters—and the most unexpected ones can bring the biggest transformations. After all she's endured and accomplished, she's found not just new hobbies and friendships at Cove, but a renewed lease on life.



### Day Trip

## From Cove To Marblehead

### by Nancy Feighan

Recently, two busloads of older adults enjoyed a sunny day at Marblehead Lighthouse State Park. They toured the lighthouse, the Keeper's House, and a replica of the 1876 U.S. Lifesaving Station. The weather was perfect, with blue skies and clear views of Lake Erie and Cedar Point.

The group wrapped up the day with a tasty lunch and wine tasting at Firelands Winery in Sandusky.

Neil P. said, "It was a beautiful day in Marblehead with friends from Cove. We enjoyed a delicious lunch, a wine tasting, and had a great time together."

Diane N. added, "The area was beautiful and peaceful. I wouldn't have minded buying one of those lakefront houses! The food was good, and I'm already looking forward to the next trip."

From start to finish, it was a relaxing and memorable day shared among friends.



### Kicking Off A Cove Favorite:

## **Potato Salad Season Is Here!**

### Nancy Feighan

This month, Senior Chefs at Cove welcomed a special guest, Ruth Hill, who shared her delicious potato salad recipe with the group. With summer almost here, it was the perfect time for a fresh, tasty dish! Everyone loved the potato salad and asked for seconds. It was so good, we're excited to share the recipe with you. If you try the recipe, we'd love to hear how it turned out.

### Potato Salad

Special thanks to guest chef, Ruth Hill **Ingredients** 

3 lbs. small white Potatoes
1/2 Cup chopped Celery
1/2 Cup chopped Red Onion
1 Cup Mayonnaise
1/2 Cup Buttermilk
2 Tbs Dijon Mustard
2 Tbs Whole Grain Mustard
1/2 Cup chopped Fresh Dill

### Kosher Salt and Black Pepper

### **Directions**

Place potatoes and 2 Tbs salt in a large pot of water, bring to boil, then lower heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes or until potatoes are barely tender when poked with a fork. Drain in a colander, then cover the colander with a clean, dry towel and let the potatoes steam for an additional 15-20 minutes.

In a small bowl, whisk the mayo, buttermilk, mustards, dill, 1 tsp salt, and 1 tsp pepper. Set aside.

When the potatoes are cool to handle but still warm, cut them in quarters and place in a large bowl.

Pour enough dressing over them to moisten. Add the celery, onion, 2 more tsp of salt and 1 tsp of pepper. Toss well, cover and refrigerate for a few hours to allow flavors to blend. Serve cold or at room temperature.



## The Back Page









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