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THE LAKEWOOD OBSERVER

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

Volume 21, Issue 14, July 16, 2025

"It's not the heat, it's the humility." - Yogi Berra

Lakewood Summer Meltdown Returns Saturday, July 19 Meltdown Celebrates Sizzling 17th Year

by Ava Olic

One of Northeast Ohio's most beloved summer traditions is back and better than ever. The

17th Annual Lakewood Summer Meltdown, presented by LakewoodAlive and sponsored by Cox, will transform the heart

of Downtown Lakewood into a bustling hub of energy and celebration on Saturday, July 19 from 4 to 10 PM.

Drawing nearly 15,000 attendees each year, the Lakewood Summer Meltdown has become a staple event for the city and surrounding region. The event takes place on Detroit Avenue between Marlowe and Arthur Avenues, bringing together residents, visitors, families, and friends for an unforgettable summer evening.

The Meltdown offers something for everyone! Runners and walkers of all ages are invited to participate in the Meltdown 5K Race--sponsored by CASTO--and 1 Mile Family Fun Run & Walk--sponsored by Lakewood Community Recreation & Education Department--both highlights of the evening that draws hundreds of participants to the streets of Lakewood. Race registration is now open, and proceeds benefit LakewoodAlive's programming to foster healthy homes and vibrant neighborhoods throughout the city.

While the race energizes the crowd, the surrounding street festival--sponsored by Bee My Baby Lakewood--is in full swing, featuring local vendors, delicious food offerings, and games that delight attendees of all ages. The event will also see the return of the AliveOutside Active Lifestyle Zone--sponsored by Cleveland Vegan--at the Eastern end of the street festival, which will feature fitness demonstrations and activities. Additionally, the Lakewood Summer Meltdown will feature a skate park--sponsored by Voodoo Tuna--in front of the Lakewood Public Library on the Western end of the festival.

A crowd favorite every year is the Healthy Lakewood Foundation sponsored "Water Moose," a giant sprinkler park that provides a welcome cool-down for kids (and kids at heart) on a hot July evening. For those looking to unwind, the Gary K. Bish Memorial

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Lakewood Chief of Police Kevin Fischer enjoys the parade along with Lakewood's finest goodwill ambassador, Timmy. We all know Timmy from the Lakewood Giant Eagle.

Lakewood Arts Festival

by Katherine Isenhardt

For one breezy summer day, Detroit Avenue from Belle to Arthur on Saturday, August 2, 2025, 10am-6pm, becomes a creative oasis and brings artists of all disciplines together with 15,000 collectors and art lovers. The juried festival hosts over 175 regional and national artists displaying painting, prints, photography, art glass, ceramics, sculpture, jewelry and more.

Fine art prints and painting selections include works by Eileen Dorsey capturing meditative forests of light and color, emphasizing our connection to nature, Emily Haggard our "Best of Show 2024" offers abstract

acrylic paintings of dreamy botanicals. Akron native Rich Cihlar stencils and spray paints intricate layers and shadows on found objects like skateboards. Fine print artists are represented by the hand carved and hand colored Lino block prints of Micki Mencin and the illustrative whimsy of Brian Andrew Jasinski of Grey Cardigan.

Returning to the festival this year will be Billy Ritter featuring handmade ceramics, crafted from stoneware and porcelain and Yumiko Goto offering one-of-a-kind ceramics vessels, featuring delicate petals,

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FirstEnergy Promises To Try To Deliver 3rd World Power To Lakewood

By Jim O'Bryan

In a series of letters back and forth between city officials and First Energy Management, First Energy offered Lakewoodites a third world solution: "Rolling brown-outs during peak energy times."

Yep, you heard right, we pay our bills, tolerate their wires, poles, exploding substations and transformers, the thanks we get, at some point or points during the week, they will shut your power off with no warning. But just for a bit, even though your power grid is working fine.

You know that weekly food you just put in the

fridge? Don't count on it not spoiling. You know Grandma on oxygen? No problem, she will probably make it. You know those things you need to finish? First Energy said forget it for now. Your fish tank of prized tropical fish? Oh well. Your security lights and cameras? Not an issue according to them.

First Energy told our city officials it is hoped that this only lasts until 2027 or so.

It should be remembered that FirstEnergy was just fined \$20 million a year ago, in connections with charges of "epic utility ripoff that featured more than \$61 million

Everyone Loves Lakewood's Independence Day Parade



You can see all of our photos from the parade and fireworks at: lakewoodobserver.com

LAKEWOOD OBSERVER



photos by Jim O'Bryan



Above, Melissa Garrett (center) surrounded by her crew that puts together the parade, and well, most of the city's big events. These people are rock stars! Don't forget if you want to see all of our photos and some from your friends and neighbors stop by "lakewoodobserver.com." While you're there, sign up and share some of your own observations, stories and photos. 20 years of serving Lakewood at no cost.

Christmas In July Sale

by Gina DeSantis

Nationally renowned ceramic artist Gina DeSantis is hosting a one night in person sale of her artwork. Gina has been part of the Screw Factory Artists since 2008. Her work has been featured in over 400 retailers across the country including Uncommon Goods and Anthropologie. Most recently her work has been featured in Food & Wine Magazine. In order to do some "summer cleaning" she is bringing back a sale she hasn't hosted in over a decade. Customers are invited to shop sale items for individual purchase or fill a bag for \$100. Rules apply so please visit her site for details. Full priced work will also be available for purchase.

Shoppers can also check out her membership studio during the event. The membership space provides 24/7 studio access for a monthly fee for ceramics hobbyists and artists. This space is perfect if you do not have the space or money to invest in equipment such as kilns, wheels or glazes. This space does have a membership application and limited spaces opening September 1st. To apply visit <https://www.ginadesantisceramics.com/>



A sampling of the ceramics being sold.

pages/membership-studio

When: Friday, July 25th from 6pm-10pm

Where: Studio C323, 13000 Athens Ave in Lakewood, OH 44017

Contact: GinaDeSantisginadesantisceramics@gmail.com/440.785.5409

For more information visit: www.ginadesantisceramics.com



Your Independent Source for Lakewood News & Opinion

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Upcoming Submission Deadline

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Friday, August 15, 2025

Publish Date

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Wednesday, August 20, 2025

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THE MAYOR’S CORNER

Lakewood City Hall Space Challenges Stem Largely From Growth And Evolution Of Police Department

by Meghan George
Mayor/Safety Director, City of Lakewood

As some of you likely know, the City of Lakewood is currently working to address the longstanding space challenges at City Hall. What some of you might not know is that a large part of this space challenge comes from the growth and evolution of our Lakewood Police Department (LPD) over time. It also involves our effort to better align the amount of working space our police have available to better reflect national industry standards and also what is being provided with peer departments here in Greater Cleveland.

Back in 2023, the City of Lakewood engaged Weber Murphy & Fox (WMF), an architecture and design firm, to help us better understand the challenges at City Hall and explore potential solutions. What became even clearer

during the ongoing analysis was just how cramped things had become for our police officers. Research conducted by our planning department provided further documentation of this issue.

We are all proud of the excellent police work being done by Chief Fischer and LPD day-in and day-out. When City Hall opened in 1960, the total number of officers was 30 fewer than today. Over the past 65 years, the department has evolved with the times to bring in expertise and capacity focused on SWAT, narcotics, crisis intervention and de-escalation, and many other specialized elements. While this work keeps the people of Lakewood

safe, it also has helped cause an undressed space crunch for LPD.

What we see in the national market is that the industry standard for square feet per officer is two to three times what Lakewood is providing to our team at LPD. Beyond that, local peer departments – everyone from Bay Village and Westlake to Cleveland Heights and Strongsville – are providing 100% to 200% more space than Lakewood. As we compete with these other local departments for excellence in talent, our inability to provide the baseline for space is a clear disadvantage in recruiting and retention.

Beyond the issue of basic square footage the matter of basic fairness for our female officers is a glaring problem. When the current City Hall building was completed in 1960, Lakewood had a grand total of zero female officers. While I am very proud to say that today

we can claim that nearly 20% of our force is female, I am dismayed to report that although the city has invested twice in enhancements over the last decade, our female officers lack adequate locker rooms. We must address this situation, and it is one of the reasons we need more space across the board than exists in our current footprint.

There are several other meaningful space challenges at City Hall beyond those faced by our police, but LPD’s issues are major and glaring. They are ones that have been known generally for some time, yet left unaddressed and it is time to take them head on. As we work towards the solution to the City Hall space crunch, I am committed to continuing in an active dialogue with our city staff and City Council, as well as with Judge Neff and Lakewood Municipal Court, who are also another key element of the discussion. I look forward to reporting out more on our progress in the near future.

Updates On City Of Lakewood Efforts City Pushes FirstEnergy For Solutions

by Meghan George

The City of Lakewood continues to push FirstEnergy to address the frequent and severe power outages that have been plaguing Lakewood. As many of you know, on June 27th I sent a letter to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) in part-

nership with Councilmen Kazy and Slife of Cleveland to demand action regarding FirstEnergy Corporation’s chronic failure to consistently provide power to Lakewood and Cleveland’s west side over the past year. PUCO is the only governmental entity in Ohio

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FirstEnergy Promises To Try To Deliver 3rd World Power To Lakewood

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in bribes and a \$1.3 billion bailout” Marty Schladen, August, 2024.

That’s right, fellow Lakewoodites, while we worked and paid our electric bills through many cost increases, First-Energy was scheming to find how to get more of our money through increased taxes and bribes. While they were winning and dining public officials and others in an attempt to get their hands on more public cash and help. They for-

got to keep our service updated. They decided your grandpa on life support, or your groceries, just no longer mattered in their bottom line.

I would hope our Mayor and Council can get behind a bill that’s going through Barberton City Hall where they were told exactly what we were told. If the power goes out, First-Energy pays while making residents whole for the trouble, and any and all losses. It is only fair, and what is right.

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LAKEWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY EVENTS

Upcoming Events

by Lisa Calfee
Meet The Author - Poet’s Night with readings by
Cora McCann Liderbach, Stephanie Ginese, Dar Montonaro,
Haylee Schwenk and Michelle Tackla Wallace
Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.in the Main Library Auditorium
Enrich your Wednesday night with poetic reflections from five local writers.

Presentation - British Royal Scandals Part II with Julie Koenig
Wednesday, July 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.in the Main Library Auditorium
Julie Koenig from Royally Amused spills the tea on scandals that have rocked the British monarchy.

Literary Cleveland Presents:
Write Now: Poetry Writing Group instructed by Jenna Martinez
Third Saturday of the month: July 19, August 16 and September 20, 2025
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room

Write Now: Fiction Writing Group instructed by Johnny Caputo
First Saturday of the month:August 2 and September 6, 2025
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room

Write Now: Nonfiction Writing Group instructed by Jen Jones Donatelli
Second Saturday of the month:August 9 and September 13, 2025
10:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room

Literary Cleveland Presents: Poetry Open Mic during the Lakewood Arts Festival
Saturday, August 2, 2025 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the Main Library Front Porch
Join us on the Main Library front porch during the Lakewood Arts Festival and enjoy poetry readings by experienced poets, participants from the writing groups and even inspired festival goers. We encourage everyone interested in sharing their own poetry to sign up at our table during the festival or www.litcleveland.org/events to register in advance.

Barbara Steffek-Hill Five-Star Matinee- “Anna Christie” (1930)
Sunday, August 3, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in the Main Library Auditorium
starring Greta Garbo

Children’s And Youth Services

by Jeffrey Siebert

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

Science Heroes: Adventure of the Missing Color
For the whole family. Join Science Heroes on the Adventure of the Missing

Color. Along the way, the audience helps the performer conduct exciting science experiments that bring this story to life. Experiment with chemical reactions, air pressure, physical explosions and more. Don’t miss this exciting and interactive STEM learning adventure. No registrationrequired.
Friday, July 18, 2025 at 3:00p.m. in the Main library Multipurpose Room

Bricks and Books
For Students in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. In this hands-on experience, kids will use Lego building bricks, gears, and figures to design and construct amazing structures and imaginative creations. Alongside their building, we will be exploring the library’s extensive collection of Lego-themed books, offering inspiration, challenges, and stories for all levels. No registration required.
Sunday, July 20, 2025 6:00p.m.-7:30p.m. in the Main Library Activity Room

Science Heroes Experiment Lab
For Students in Sixth through Twelfth Grade. In this science workshop for teens, we’ll work together to explore and investigate amazing science concepts using confetti cannons, soda bottles, nail polish remover and more. Through hands-on experiments and exciting STEM challenges, workshop participants will get to test out their ideas and discover the actions and reactions of physical science. Registration required. Register in person or call (216) 226-8275, ext. 140.
Thursday, July 24, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. in the Main Library Multipurpose Room

Harry Potter Birthday Extravaganza and Storytime
For students in first through sixth grade. Join us in celebration of Harry Potter’s birthday in an extravaganza filled with reading, music, crafts, games and play. Dress up, discover your dormitory, choose a name, make a wand, test your Hogwarts knowledge and send Harry a birthday card. No registration required.
Saturday, July 26, 2025 from 2:00p.m. to 4p.m. in the Main Library Activity Room

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

Summer Meltdown Returns Saturday, July 19 Meltdown Celebrates Sizzling 17th Year

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Beer Garden, generously sponsored by First Federal Lakewood, offers the perfect spot to relax with a cold beverage and enjoy the lively festival atmosphere. This year the Beer Garden will feature beer from Lakewood's own Immigrant Son Brewery as well canned hard iced tea and non-alcoholic options.
As the sun begins to set, the event continues to come alive with live music from local artists Post Saga and Jul Big Green on the Meltdown Stage--sponsored by Cleveland Property Management Group--creating a soundtrack for the perfect summer night.
Join us on July 19 as we celebrate community, summer, and everything that makes Lakewood shine. Whether you come to race, shop, play, or simply soak in the community spirit, the Lakewood Summer Meltdown is an experience you won’t want to miss.
For more details about the Lakewood Summer Meltdown, visit lakewoodalive.org/r/lakewood-summer-meltdown-2025.
The Lakewood Summer Meltdown is made possible by the following sponsors:
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OBSERVER

LREF Class Of 1961 Legacy Scholarship Winner:

Ava Cuffari

by Christine Gordillo

Ava Cuffari is a true stand-out—athlete, scholar, leader, and compassionate volunteer. With a passion for helping others and a drive that never quits, Ava exemplifies what it means to be a Lakewood Ranger. She plans to study Biology on the pre-med track and has already been recognized with the Governor’s Scholarship and a Rotary Speech Contest award.

Ava is a captain on the varsity cross country, basketball, and track teams—balancing her busy athletic schedule with academic excellence, earning Distinguished Honor Roll and holding the highest GPA across all three teams. Her commitment extends well beyond the classroom and field.



Ava Cuffari

As Co-Visionary for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society’s Student Visionaries campaign, Ava is leading 40 teams in a massive fundraising

effort, aiming to raise \$50,000 in just seven weeks. Her leadership, event planning, and relentless determination have already brought the team more than halfway to their goal.

In addition to over 200 hours with LLS, Ava has volunteered with Special Olympics, H2O programs, youth sports camps, and even served as a camp counselor for Ohio Heritage Camp. Whether helping young athletes, delivering groceries to nursing homes, or leading community events, Ava’s spirit of service shines brightly.

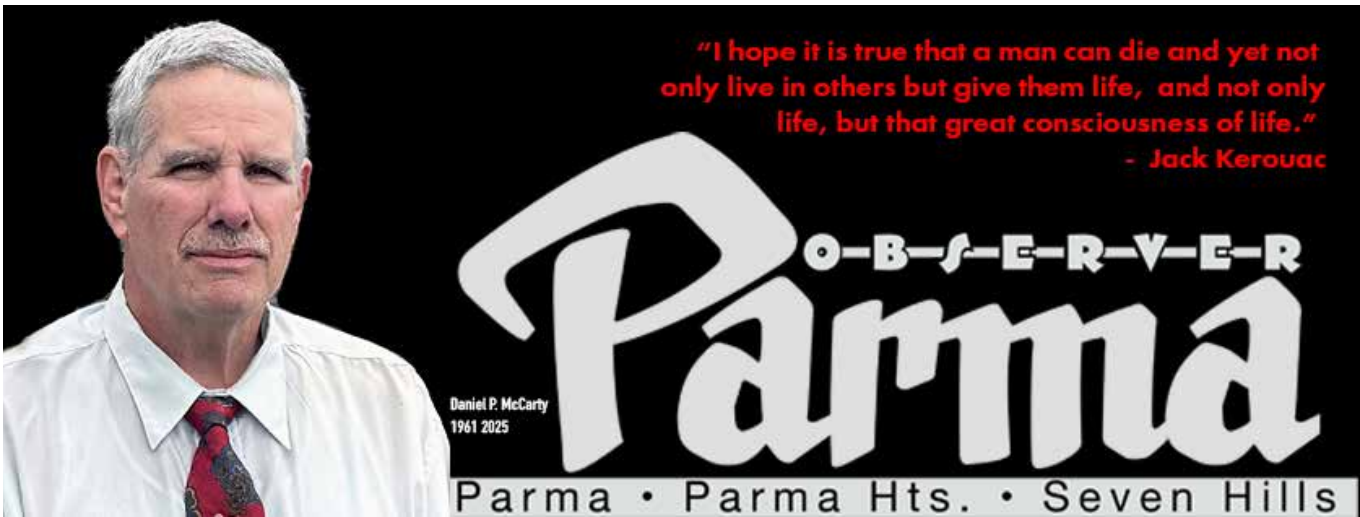
What’s most remarkable about Ava is her personal journey—from a self-described shy, uncertain middle schooler to a confident leader who has found strength through sports, service, and friendships. Her story

is one of transformation, resilience, and inspiration.

Ava Cuffari has already made an enormous impact at Lakewood High School—and there’s no doubt she’ll continue to do so wherever she goes next. We’re proud to support her as she steps into her next chapter. She has been awarded the LREF Class of 1961 Legacy Scholarship.

Congratulations, Ava!

Rest In Peace, God Speed Danny McCarthy



by Jim O’Bryan

It is with a heavy heart that I inform our readers and fellow Observers of the passing of Dan McCarthy, publisher of the Parma Observer.

Dan died from a heart attack suffered while riding his bike on the way to the Parma Independence Day parade. He was only 64.

I first met Danny as a kid. His grandmother lived at the end of our street and we bonded way back then. Many years later, as we shared a passion for music, we would run into each other at concerts and venues around town. One day, around 25 years ago,

Dan walked into our offices selling copiers. Friendship rekindled. His sales stops would turn into hours of conversation about any and every topic.

The man was a wealth of knowledge of Cleveland history and life in general. Years later, after seeing the Lakewood Observer flourish, Dan wanted to start one in Parma. No one knew Parma, Seven Hills, and Parma Heights like Dan did, and I can assure you, no one loved his city more. That was over 15 years ago. It was a perfect fit. Dan enjoyed giving kudos and a voice to his fellow residents.

What made Dan unique was

his ability to juggle all sides of discussions in three cities that seemed the same, but were radically different on the ground. Danny was the consummate professional and statesman who saw and sought the best that Parma could be. Our cities will be less without him.

One of eight children, Dan is survived by his four sisters, Mary Ellen (Leo) Riley, Carol (Timothy, deceased) Walcheck, Jean (Robert, deceased) Gandee, Lois Malak (Ted Zayda), and his brothers, Martin (Sheila), Joseph, and James P. Jr. Dan was the proud and beloved father to his daughter Ellyse Patterson.



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LAKEWOOD’S HEALTH

How To Keep Your Family Safe Around Water This Summer

by Elizabeth Krupa

After weeks of waiting, summer in Northeast Ohio arrived in full force. And even though our hottest days might be behind us, there’s still plenty of summer fun left to squeeze in before the start of school.

Water play can be one of the best parts of summer. It’s incredibly attractive to children, especially toddlers. Children love to explore.

But water also comes with risks. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children under 4 years old in the United States. It can happen within seconds or minutes, with no screaming or a lot of splashing.

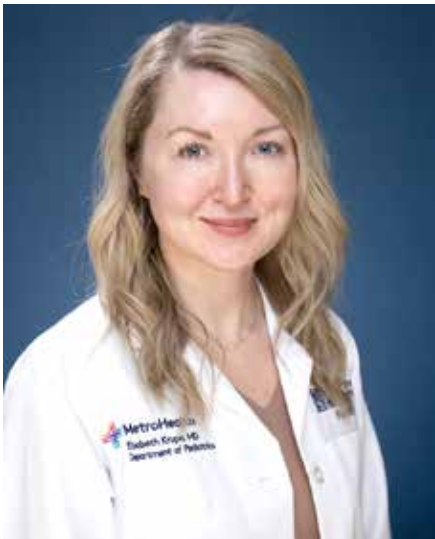
Drowning is silent and fast, and not always at a pool. A hike near an open body of water can quickly turn deadly.

That’s why it is important that you play it safe when it comes to water, whether it’s in a private or community pool, the Cleveland Metroparks beaches, or streams and lakes.

Constant supervision around water is non-negotiable. Be especially alert when:

- Kids are near home pools — including inflatable kiddie pools and hot tubs — even if they’re not supposed to be swimming
- Exploring parks, trails, or anywhere with ponds or rivers
- Older kids are swimming in lakes or oceans with unpredictable currents

Water safety isn’t just one action — it’s a system of precautions. Experts call it the “Swiss cheese model;” no layer is perfect, but together they make swimming safer.



Elizabeth Krupa, MD, is a pediatrician at MetroHealth Ohio City Health Center.

- Follow the model’s five key precautions:**
- Designate an adult water watcher (or several adults in shifts) who isn’t using phones or consuming alcohol, to constantly watch children, regardless of whether they know how to swim.
 - Introduce children to swimming lessons. Look for courses through the local American Red Cross or your local public swimming pool. Some classes take children as young as 1 year old.
 - Make children wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets on boats or in open water. Floaties (which are often banned at beaches) are not a substitute for a life jacket or swimming ability.
 - Avoid blue swimsuits, which are hard to see under the water’s surface. Instead, choose bright colors (like neon orange, neon green or pink) that are easy to see underwater.

- Secure home pools. A pool fence should be at least 4 feet tall, not climbable, and enclosed on all sides. Gates should swing outward, making it harder for toddlers to push open. Install pool surface alarms and door/window alarms for added protection. Anything that invites climbing or jumping over fences (toys, ladders, etc.) should be removed. Drain water after each use.
- Older kids may feel more confident around water, but they still need clear boundaries:**
- Always swim with a buddy—never alone.
 - Choose safe, designated swimming areas.
 - Don’t swim after dark or after drinking alcohol.
 - Watch for chilly water or changing temperatures, especially in lakes or oceans.

- Water safety also means protecting your child (and yourself) from harmful sun exposure.
- Wear UV-protective clothing and wide-brimmed hats.
 - No direct sun exposure for infants.
 - Use broad-spectrum SPF 30+ or higher sunscreen every 2 hours (or right after swimming) on children 9 months and older.
 - Stay in the shade or indoors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when the sun’s rays are the strongest.
 - Remember: melanin-rich skin still needs sun protection.
- Ask your health care provider for swimming and sun safety advice at your next appointment.
- Elizabeth Krupa, MD, is a pediatrician at MetroHealth Ohio City Health Center.*

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LAKEWOOD SPORTS

Building Tennis Back Up In Lakewood

by A.J. Baumwell

When I moved into Lakewood in 2018 it was a goal of mine to get my children interested in one of my childhood passions, tennis. I was fortunate enough to play on a state winning high school team back in Pittsburgh, PA where I was raised. During my undergrad at Penn State, I combined my passion for working with kids and teaching to become PTR (Professional Tennis Registry) certified to teach/coach tennis. I was excited about the number of tennis courts Lakewood had to offer but unfortunately it seemed that one would need to travel outside of Lakewood to find beginner classes.

With the initial goal of starting some grassroots beginner classes I developed a great partnership with the Lakewood Recreation Department. However, since starting my 1-hour classes a few years back with the Rec, I saw the need/demand for a more intensive youth program to really help kids



Coach A.J. with members of his Lakewood Youth Tennis Camp.

learn the fundamentals of the game. This past month I launched my first ever Lakewood Youth Tennis camp the week of June 23rd (which just happened to be the hottest week of the year). From 9a - 12p Monday through Friday, I was joined by a few helpers (including two Lakewood High tennis

athletes) to focus on proper grips, footwork, forehands/backhands, volleys/overheads, serves and an understanding of how tennis is scored. The camp even featured a demonstration of two college level tennis players from Case Western who visited to show off their amazing hitting capabilities. A big

thank you to Lakewood's own Geiger's for pitching in t-shirts for everyone.

Coach A.J. is strongly considering putting together a spring/fall middle school tennis program to hopefully act as a feeder into the highschool. Help him reach this goal. Feel free to direct any questions to AJB5035@gmail.com.



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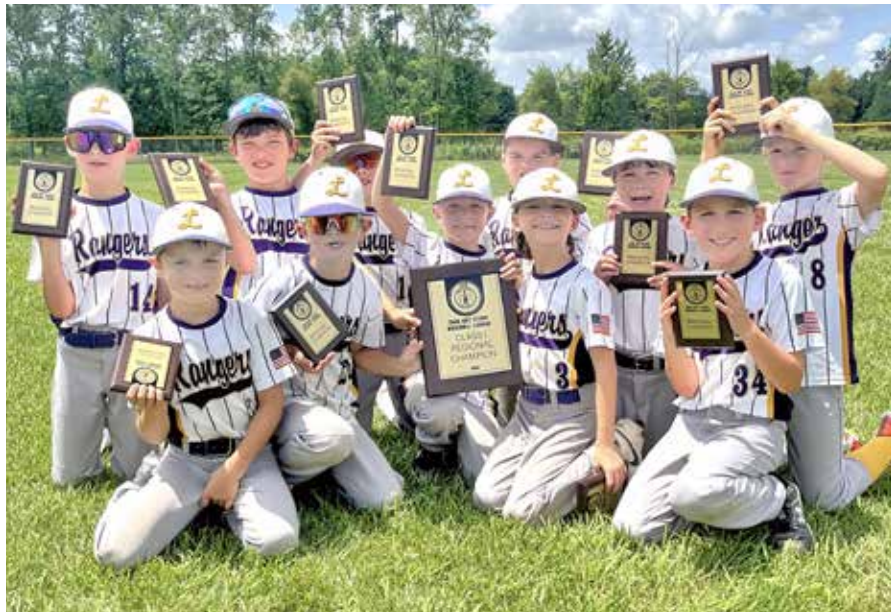
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FORUM

Letter To The Editor

Great Schools, Great Community

by Todd Phillips

Lakewood is thriving. This community has long been a wonderful, diverse place, and it will continue to be so if we take care of Lakewood and each other. Most people reading this will already know about the many fantastic attributes Lakewood has to offer. If you don't, come check it out. It's an incredible place to visit, live, and raise a family.

One cornerstone of any community is a quality education system. Successful schools require many things; among them are great students, enthusiastic and committed teachers, safe and functional facilities, and staff and administrators who support all stakeholders. I am confident and pleased to say that Lakewood has these characteristics covered overwhelmingly. Is there one characteristic that is more critical than others? For me, it is undeniably yes. It's the community.

Parents and community members who are engaged in a school system ensure that strengths are reinforced and deficiencies are improved. A dynamic community and defined process for growth empowers student education and development that is conducted in a manner consistent with the needs and desires of the community. I feel very fortunate to say that Lakewood demonstrates those attributes. The staff and school board agree. The mission statement of the Lakewood City Schools is the following:

In partnership with our families and community, Lakewood City Schools will develop responsible citizens, who are critical and creative thinkers, committed to life-long learning, invested in

a diverse society, and prepared for technological and global opportunities.

It's the teachers, staff, and school board's duty to consider and connect the community with every aspect of their daily actions. So, what happens if that goes astray and community engagement is lacking or is disjointed? A less connected and involved community might let things slide, might let things pass with the hope that our elected representatives or someone else will make things better.

Not in Lakewood. We see more action and more connection from various groups and individuals. This is being demonstrated right now with the current elementary school situation. I feel strengthened to see the response from fellow community members reinforcing our strengths and leading our future.

Can it be better? Of course. Continuous process improvement does not occur if it is not continuous, and that's the point. A community does not truly exist if it does not work together, and it is my belief that a school system is arguably the most important aspect of a community's ability to sustain growth and wellbeing for the long term. We must continually work together.

Thank you to all parents and community members for your endless energy and love that you dedicate to your children and our schools. Welcome to those new to the community or those looking to find a neighborly, connected, walkable and bikeable lifestyle unique to our region. You will find our family walking to and from school. I will be here when you need me. We all will.

Lakewood High School Class Of 1947

A Swell Student

by Jeff Fritz
LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL,
1947

You never know what you might find at the Lakewood Library book sale.

I came across a yearbook that's more than three-quarters of a century old.

The owner, a girl named Eleanor, was very popular, as evidenced by the 100 autographs that filled every available space on the autograph pages.

A full thirty-percent of the signers described her as "swell." That was apparently the in adjective two years after the war ended.

Since then, other words have become more popular such as "groovy" and "awesome." Maybe even "boffo," which I found among a list of synonyms for "swell."

Okay, probably not "boffo."

Eleanor was involved in Red Cross, Latin Club, Violin Club, Public Speaking, and was president of the Friendship Organization.

I started to wonder what became of such a swell person. Luckily I was able to find the Lakewood High School Alumni Directory from 1995 at another Lakewood Library Book Sale.

I found that she had married,



acquired a new name, as was the custom in those days, and did freelance work for a small newspaper in Ada, Ohio.

Wondering where she went from there, and if she was still alive, I went to the Internet.

Sadly, I came across her obituary, dated 2013. I learned that she had been married for fifty years and was survived by her husband and two kids, a son and a daughter.

Her accomplishments were listed in her obituary. She graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University and then worked as a director for the YWCA. She was active in AAUW, PEO, and Twice Ten, whatever that is, and was listed in Who's Who in America. She enjoyed traveling, and was active in her church.

All in all, a swell life.

Historical Lectures At Church Of The Ascension Feature Lakewood's French, Andrews, And Hutchinson Families

by Corky Thacker

Mia Hutchinson Soosai, a descendant, will discuss "The French and Andrews Family in Lakewood History" on Wed., July 23 at 5:30 p.m. in Ascension Hall, second floor of Church of the Ascension, an Episcopal Church located at 13216 Detroit Avenue. Their large family-run farm was known in Rockport and later Lakewood for the production of fruit and specialized flowers. After the death of her Civil War veteran husband, Virginia French Andrews, with the help of her sons, kept the farm going. Several Lakewood streets bear these family names, and land that was donated by the family to the city created Andrews Field, which the city renamed Kauffman Park.

Jeff Hutchinson and Jennifer Cauffield will discuss the prominent Lakewood Hutchinson family, which built freighters and were known in Cleveland Society for their successful endeavors. Their family home was one of the great estates lost to time in Lakewood. Smaller homes, designed by Clarence Mack, still stand on the Hutchinson estate on Edgewater Drive. Pictures, old family films and stories will be shared in the nave of the church on Fri., July 25 at 5:30 p.m.

These talks conclude a series of historical lectures celebrating Church



Virginia French Andrews

of the Ascension's 150th Anniversary. Founded in 1875, it is the oldest continuously worshipping church in Lakewood, and the French, Andrews, and Hutchinson family names are found all through the church records. The events are free, and the public is invited. For more information about Church of the Ascension and other upcoming activities, please visit www.ascension-lakewood.org.

Corky Thacker is a novelist and a parishioner at Church of the Ascension, an Episcopal Church located at 13216 Detroit Avenue in Lakewood.

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LAKEWOOD CARES

Meet John Noran
Lakewood’s Latest Centenarian

by Jim O’Bryan

I received a tip that one of our fellow Lakewoodites was turning 100. I went to visit our latest centenarian,

James Noran, age 99 and 320 days old. Mr Noran was residing at O’Neill Healthcare Lakewood this past year, just a stone’s throw from his current Lakewood home on Manor Park.

As I reached out to shake Mr. Noran’s hand, I was taken aback by the strength and steadiness. Looking into his eyes, I could see the years, but also a bright spark that comes with living life.

With Lakewood being the big tiny town that it is, I probably know one of the kids or grandkids. So I took these rare minutes to speak with someone who had seen so many things invented, and then become obsolete.

The first thing he wanted me to understand was that he had helped get tennis courts at Lakewood High. This was in part due to his love of tennis and his personal success on the courts in college. His house is the only one I know of with a full size clay court in the backyard!

The other fact he kept coming back to was that 238 times he had legit brushes with death. I chuckled and said, “BS.” He smiled and started in: “Well there was the time I was in a cathedral in France during the war, and a bomb...”

As we continued speaking of his 100 years, he would stop, smile and say, “Then there was the time I fell asleep and woke up with a poisonous snake next to my head where I was sleeping...”

I said, “Ok, that’s 2, maybe.” He would talk of his family and life at O’Neills then suddenly say, “Then there was the time in the war...” I would say that’s 3, then 4, then 5.

It is rare to run into a 70-80 year-old with his amazing retention, and love for telling stories. I personally look forward to hearing the other 230 experiences over the next couple of years.

Happy Birthday!
Then the Mayor showed up to give John a special surprise.

A proclamation to honor and recognize
Mr. John Noran on the occasion



Mayor Meghan George sits with John Noran at O’Neill’s Healthcare Lakewood with the Proclamation the City issued for him on his 100th trip around the sun.

of his 100th birthday.

WHEREAS, John Edward Noran was born on July 13, 1925 in Chicago, Illinois. He moved to Lakewood, Ohio shortly thereafter and attended Taft Elementary School, and graduated from Rocky River High School; and,

WHEREAS, John was a PFC assigned to the 104th Infantry Division, the Timberwolves; fought across France, Belgium, and Germany, earning enough combat points in the European Theater that he didnot have to enter the Pacific Theater, and served out the remainder of his Army career in Southern California; and,

Whereas, For his military service, John was awarded the Bronze Star, the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, and a divisional Presidential Citation for actions taking over an industrial complex in Germany; and,

WHEREAS, John earned his degree from Muskingum University and married his college sweetheart, Lois McClarren, who thereafter moved to Lakewood, worked as a Plant Manager at the American Greeting Card Company and then as Director of Maintenance for University Hospitals, where he remained until his retirement; and,

WHEREAS, John and Lois have four children: John Eric, James Edward, Jerald Eugene, and Nancy, as well as many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; was an excel-

lent tennis player, a well-known soloist in the Greater Cleveland area, and a founding member of the West Shore Chorale; and,

WHEREAS, John lived for many years in his home on Manor Park before moving to O’Neill Health Care and has been a valued Lakewood resident for decades.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Meghan F. George, Mayor of the City of Lakewood, do hereby deem it an honor and pleasure to extend this Proclamation to Mr. John Noran for the occasion of his 100th birthday.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Lakewood to be affixed this 11 th day of July 2025.



John’s birthday portrait.



John’s Army portrait

Below, John married his college sweet-heart Lois, and together raised 4 children on Manor Park: John Eric, James Edward, Jerald Eugene and Nancy, and so many grandchildren and great-grand-children we can’t mention them all here!



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AROUND LAKEWOOD

A Bloom With A View: Lakewood’s 4th Annual GardenWalk Beckons

by Melissa Kress

The countdown is on! In just a few days, Lakewood will be in full bloom for the 4th Annual GardenWalk Lakewood, happening Saturday, July 19, from 10 AM to 4 PM.

This free, self-guided garden tour is your passport to a day of discovery, where you’ll stroll through vibrant yards, meet fellow plant lovers, and soak up the creativity of our community’s most passionate gardeners.

Here’s how you can join the fun:

Tour the gardens

Bring your friends, your family, or just your curiosity. It’s a perfect day to explore. Maps and routes are available on GardenWalkLakewood.org.

Join our Social Media Scavenger Hunt

While you explore the 4th Annual GardenWalk Lakewood, snap photos of the items listed on our social media accounts and share them on Facebook or Instagram with [@gardenwalklakewood](#) or [#GWLKWD](#). Each tagged post = 1 entry! The GWL Scavenger Hunt runs from July 19 at 10 AM to July 20 at 11:59 PM EDT. Five winners will be chosen at random and notified via private message.

Cheer on your neighbors

Know someone whose garden is a part of the tour? Give them a shout-out



and stop by to admire their handiwork.

Pedal & Petal: Explore Lakewood’s Gardens by Bike

Thanks to our wonderful friends at Bike Lakewood—a resident-led advocacy group for Lakewood cyclists and a proud chapter of Bike Cleveland—your garden tour can take a two-wheeled twist! Bike Lakewood has created self-guided neighborhood bike routes, all powered by Ride with GPS that can be found on our website. So hop on your bike, follow the path, and let Bike Lakewood guide your journey.

Grab your sunhat and get ready for a day full of inspiration, fresh air and fun! Visit GardenWalkLakewood.org for maps, details, and more.

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

Lakewood Arts Festival

continued from page 1

seeds and buds, finished with her custom pastel glazes. Kathy Oda, glass artist from South Carolina creates large scale sculptures by layering glass to create glowing multi-dimensional installations.

This year’s stellar jewelry selection includes hand forged timepieces and jewelry by Alexander Draven of The ExCB and Mimi Antonetti of Nautilus Creations of Pittsburgh. Utilizing steel, titanium, copper and brass, Antonetti interprets variations of European, Persian and Japanese armor styles in her jewelry.

Live performance is another aspect of original art to appreciate at the Lakewood Arts Festival. Three stages of live local music: Center City

Park Stage (Cook/Detroit), Andrews Stage (Andrews/Detroit), and the NEW Boombox Stage (Warren/Detroit). This year’s performers include, Postsaga, Gene Schwartz, Chris Allen, Country Honk, Maura Rogers and The Bellows, Opus 216, Moon Echo Garden and more.

Originally founded in 1978, the Lakewood Arts Festival generates proceeds that fund local arts grants and an annual scholarship for graduating high school seniors from Lakewood, continuing to art school. Additional grants for arts funding include The Beck Center, Lakewood High School and more. To support scholarship giving, or for festival information visit www.lakewoodartsfest.org.



FirstEnergy indicates it might be able to sort out Lakewood’s power issues by 2027 or so. Call PUCO, let them hear we are tired of 3rd world power at prime rates.

Updates On City Of Lakewood Efforts City Pushes FirstEnergy For Solutions

continued from page 3

with oversight of public utilities – local government has no direct power over utilities, we can only advocate.

I am pleased to report that I received a response from PUCO Chair Jennifer French on July 1st which confirmed that PUCO had launched an official investigation in response to the joint letter. Chair French stated that the PUCO Board Members “share and appreciate the concerns outlined in your letter [and] I take the concerns in your letter very seriously [and] I can assure you that the PUCO is engaged in this important matter and we will follow up.” I have continued to communicate with Chair French by phone and email following her letter to keep apprised of the process.

In addition to my direct outreach to PUCO, I have been in direct contact with Governor Mike DeWine’s office to make him aware of the severity of the issue. The Ohio Governor is charged with appointing all members of PUCO, so it is important that Governor DeWine understands FirstEnergy’s failures. I was appreciative that a member of Governor DeWine’s team met with me personally at City Hall last week to discuss this matter.

While PUCO pursues its investigation, the City of Lakewood is directly pushing FirstEnergy to disclose the source of the problem and take action. On July 3rd, I spearheaded a meeting at Lakewood City Hall where I along with Cleveland City Councilman Brian Kazy (Ward 16), Lakewood Council

President Sarah Kepple, and State Representative Tristan Rader held a session with FirstEnergy decision makers to demand swift action and long-term solutions. During the meeting, FirstEnergy acknowledged that the issues do not stem from weather events, accidents, or acts of god, but are instead due to issues with their failing equipment and infrastructure.

In response to demands for a plan to solve the issues, FirstEnergy committed to over \$3 million in repairs and improvements to the substations serving Lakewood and Cleveland, including the replacement of a transformer and new breakers. Unfortunately, they will not commit to permanent fix until 2026 or 2027 which is completely unacceptable.

While their track recent record of failing to provide reliable power to our community does not give me much faith, I left the meeting with clear commitments from FirstEnergy that PUCO can use to hold them accountable. We will keep the pressure on FirstEnergy to meet these commitments and continue following up with PUCO on their own independent investigation of these chronic power outages. I continue to urge any of you that experience outages to directly contact PUCO as well. The more voices the better so they fully grasp just how severe this problem has become. I will keep our Lakewood community updated on our progress ongoing to address this situation.

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COVE COMMUNITY CENTER



Meet Me At Cove: Jean Smith, “Sweet” On Gardening

by Nancy Feighan

Jean Smith, née Sweet, fell for Cove’s Community Garden the moment she heard about it after a slow flow chair yoga class last year. She instantly knew, “That’s where I’ll be next season.” Now she’s happily tending her raised bed and connecting with fellow gardeners—including one whose son went to school with hers.

A Cleveland native who spent childhood weekends with cousins in Lakewood on Cranford Avenue, Jean always had a soft spot for the city. In 1985, she made it her permanent home. This year, her Lakewood house will be featured on the Lakewood Garden Club Walk—an honor rooted in family tradition.

Gardening runs deep in Jean’s family. Both her grandmothers were avid gardeners who passed down natural, time-tested tips she still uses today:

- Hand-weeding is best—gentle and effective.
- Keep ants away by mixing crushed eggshells with cinnamon and sprinkling around the plant base.
- Deter squirrels, rabbits, and chip-

- munks with red pepper flakes.
- Welcome the helpers—spiders eat aphids, worms enrich the soil.
- Cherish legacy plants—Jean still grows her grandmother’s “Seven Sisters” red rose, now thriving in Lakewood for 40 years.

Jean also shared her love for gardening with her preschool students at “Growing in Faith,” where they grew veggies, flowers, and even beans in an old sandbox. After 40+ years as an early childhood educator, she continues tutoring bilingual and special needs students at GiGi’s Playhouse, where she was once named Tutor of the Month. Once a teacher, always a teacher.

At Cove, Jean loves the intergenerational spirit. She now creates garden pavers with youth from the H2O program and says, “It’s a place where young and old truly come together.”

With a heart as sweet as her name, Jean keeps growing beauty, knowledge, and community—one garden bed at a time.
Nancy Feighan is Project Specialist II, Department of Human Services, City of Lakewood.

Bocce At Cove – League 1 Wrap-Up & League 2 Kickoff!



Bocce at Cove: League 2 Meet & Greet. Their season runs from July 16 to September 3.

by Nancy Feighan

We just wrapped up an exciting first session of Bocce at Cove—congratulations to Bella Bocce Donne for taking home the win! Their teamwork and tosses were top-notch!

A big round of applause to the other seven teams as well—their spirit, sportsmanship, and fun energy made League 1 lots of fun from start to finish.

To celebrate the season and kick off League 2, we hosted a lively Meet & Greet where new teams enjoyed refreshments, mingled, and caught the final games of the first session. The energy was high, the snacks were tasty, and the camaraderie was strong.

Here’s to another great season of friendly competition and fun on the bocce court—let the good times roll!



Bocce at Cove Session 1 Champs!

Congratulations to Bella Bocce Donne—this season’s winning team! Pictured left to right: Dana Sorge, Melissa Eisel, Wendylee DiMario, and Megan Mars

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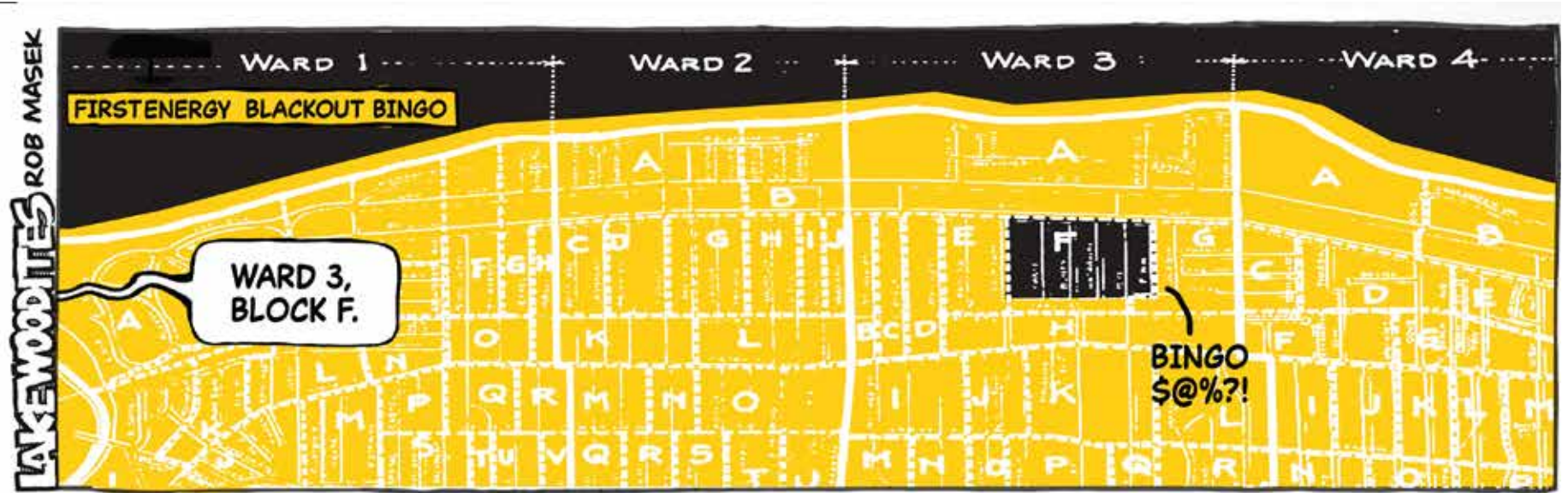
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