



PHOTO BY DENNY WENDELL

A Journey to Bethlehem

Kaitlyn Park portrayed Mary, the mother of the baby Jesus, in Westlake Church of the Redeemer's "Journey to Bethlehem" live-interactive nativity experience on Dec. 14. Visitors traveled back in time and met King Herod, angels, shepherds, wise men and visited the manger. This annual event is in its 19th year and involved the participation of close to 100 members of the congregation. The indoor/outdoor experience also included live animals, music and refreshments. See more photos on page 6.

BAY VILLAGE CITY SCHOOLS

Attitude of Gratitude is contagious

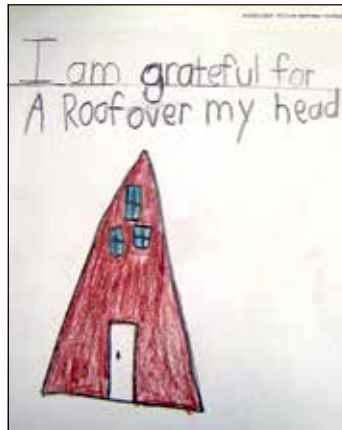
by KAREN DERBY

Reflecting upon the things one is thankful for is said to increase optimism, joy and happiness.

Staff and students in the Bay Village Schools are finding that gratitude also goes further than benefiting oneself. Gratitude includes expressing appreciation to others, as well as "paying it forward" to spread the kindness around.

Nikki Spriggs, the treasurer at Bay Village Schools, incorporated an Attitude of Gratitude month during November for school staff through the district's Wellness Committee.

"It is such a positive activity, and I knew our



A page from a Bay Village fourth-grader's Attitude of Gratitude book.

staff members would welcome it," she said. Employees tracked 30 gratitude acts on a calendar. The acts ranged from thanking a colleague to taking back someone's shopping cart – many days to contemplate reasons for gratitude, and many days to "pay it forward."

"We learned that staff members really enjoyed this," Mrs. Spriggs said.

» See GRATITUDE page 3



Children share their favorite holiday traditions

See pages 8-9

BAYarts' Future: Why it will take a village

by NANCY HEATON

Twelve short years ago, BAYarts almost didn't exist. The beloved Fuller House, John Huntington House and Train Depot (now Vento) were in need of substantial repairs. Fast-forward to today, BAYarts is a thriving cultural destination likened to the Chautauqua Institute in New York.

Many don't realize that BAYarts receives no funding from the city or Metroparks (free rent aside, all renovations and maintenance are on us). Although we do receive support from the Ohio Arts Council and Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, other funders (such as the Cleveland Foundation and the George Gund Foundation) will not fund organizations outside of the inner-Cleveland circle.

So how do we maintain the beautiful campus and offer great programming and dozens of free events each year? We earn it. Seventy percent of BAYarts' income is through programming; the rest through fundraising, sponsorships and grants.

When the Huntington Playhouse went dark, there was a call from the public for BAYarts to save it; for BAYarts, with classes that sell out and an audience that continues to grow, we were happy to oblige. The reality we soon found out was that the almost-50-year-old building does not meet today's standards for safety and function; the cost for even basic improvements far exceeded our expectations.

Thanks to initial funding from the state of Ohio and individual donors, we have raised enough to complete basic renovations of the former lobby; opening in January, it will double as temporary classroom/event space. The biggest, most exciting pieces of the puzzle – a multi-use theater, more classrooms and the outdoor common areas that surround it – depend on you.

BAYarts will kick off a capital campaign in 2019, we hope you will play a part in our next act; serving YOU and future generations. More information is online at bayarts.net/about/playhouse.



Thanks for a great 10 years!

As 2018 comes to a close with our final issue of the year, we offer sincere appreciation for the hundreds of volunteers who have helped create, edit and distribute the community's newspaper over the last 12 months. We are also grateful for our civic-minded advertisers, whose financial support makes each issue possible.

And of course, for the many thousands of readers who make the Observer the most popular newspaper in our community.

Happy holidays, Westlake and Bay Village. See you in 2019!

Westlake Rec holds winter outdoor display contest

by CRISTA ADAMCZYK

Whether it is a lighted Christmas tree or a snow family, festive yard displays around the city brighten up the holidays for everyone. Unfortunately they will be gone in just a few short weeks. The Westlake Recreation Center intends to preserve some of those sights through its first Winter Display Contest.

"We know that some of our residents express their creativity and invest hours of labor in their displays which delight their families and children of all ages," said Bob DeMinico, director of the Westlake Recreation Department. "We want to specifically showcase fam-



ily-friendly front yard displays that reflect the true meaning of the season."

The winning photo will be featured on next year's Winter Rec Gazette cover. The top 10 sub-

missions selected by the staff will also be displayed at the center and posted on the city's website.

The contest is open to Westlake residents and is for residential properties only. They can enter by sending an email with a digital photo of their display plus their name and street address to recinfo@cityofwestlake.org. Deadline is Feb. 15, 2019. No registration is required. ●



THE GREEN REPORT

Protecting Lake Erie from plastic pollution

by JENNIFER HARTZELL

On Dec. 4 the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland along with seven other local sponsors including the Bay Village Green Team, hosted a free public policy forum on the topic of "Plastics & Lake Erie." The forum was held at Rocky River Library and was well attended, with about 70 people in attendance. A video of the forum is available on Youtube, search "plastics and Lake Erie."

The forum was moderated by Elizabeth Miller, who is an environmental reporter for Ideastream. The participants in the forum were Jill Bartolotta, extension educator for the Ohio Sea Grant College Program; Crystal Davis, policy director for Alliance for the Great Lakes; and Erin Huber, executive director and founder of Drink Local Drink Tap.

The first topic discussed was the prevalence of plastics in Lake Erie. During beach clean-ups, 93 percent of litter found on the beach is plastic and of that 30 percent are plastic pieces, 15 percent are cigarette butts, and 11 percent are plastic cigar tips. Ohio beaches have the highest amount of smoking-related litter found on its beaches.

Health impacts of plastics were discussed next, and Erin Huber stated that every one of us is drinking and eating plastic every day. Recent studies on humans have found plastic in human feces. The problem of plastic in the Great Lakes affects each and every one of us whether we know it or not. Don't think you can switch to bottled water to avoid it. Bottled water is bottled in plastic so you are drinking plastic then too.

You may ask yourself what can you do to help this issue and protect our water? First, contact your state senator to tell them you oppose the bill recently passed by the Ohio House, House Bill 625. House Bill 625 forbids local Ohio governments from imposing any "tax, fee, assessment or other charge" on plastic shopping bags or other "auxiliary containers." This means that if a plastic bag tax were to happen in Ohio, it would have to come from the Ohio legislature, and I wouldn't hold your breath for that. This "ban of bans" is short-sighted and ties the hands of local governments, such as communities on Lake Erie, from passing legislation that is right for them.

The state senator for Bay Village and Westlake is Matt Dolan and his number is 614-466-8056. Please let him know that you are a constituent and that you oppose the "Ban on Bans" because you believe local Ohio governments should be able to pass legislation that helps solve problems such as plastic in Lake Erie.

Over 60 countries worldwide have plastic bag bans. This includes Rwanda and Bangladesh. In Rwanda, your luggage will be searched at the airport for plastic bags and the bags will be confiscated. In Bangladesh, massive flooding

had been occurring because of plastic bags blocking drains. A ban of plastic bags has solved that issue. Cities that enact plastic bag bans see an 80-90 percent drop in bag pollution.

Furthermore, Australia has recently cut its usage of plastic bags by 80 percent within only three months! This drastic reduction was the not the result of legislation enacted by Australia, it was a business decision by two of their largest supermarket chains. They stopped handing out free lightweight plastic grocery bags and instead replaced them with reusable bags that they charged 15 cents for. It is estimated that 1.5 billion bags in Australia were prevented from entering the environment based on this one change.

What else can you do? Please talk to the managers of the retailers where you shop and let them know you would like to see them stop or severely reduce the amount of plastic bags they distribute. Imagine if all of the grocery stores stopped giving away plastic bags! Lake Erie would be healthier as less plastic would be entering it, we wouldn't see plastic bags blowing around and hanging in trees, and retailers would save money in the end!

Please also check out the Plastic-Free Great Lakes toolkit from Alliance for the Great Lakes at greatlakes.org/plastic-free. The toolkit has background information on plastics in the Great Lakes and also outlines steps you can take as a citizen to help this issue. It offers tips on how to write a compelling letter to the editor; how to use digital tools to spread the message; how to organize and engage your community; and how to effectively communicate with elected officials.

Still looking for more action you can take? You can also talk to restaurants where you dine and let them know that you think they should not hand out plastic straws unless they are requested. This is a simple change that would prevent millions of straws from entering our environment.

My favorite analogy of the night was when Crystal Davis equated the plastic problem to a diet. You can't just stop eating junk and start eating salads and expect the weight to come off immediately. It's a series of good decisions that add up. If you are consistent with eating a salad instead of a cheeseburger over the course of a year, you will see your good decisions amount to weight loss, even if you slip up on occasion and eat that cheeseburger.

If you refuse single use plastics such as bags, straws, water bottles, etc., those individuals choices will add up to a lot less plastic entering our environment and waste stream. So please, refuse the straw, refuse the plastic water bottle, and refuse the plastic bag!

You can do it, and don't worry if you slip up and forget sometimes; remember, it's your series of good decisions that will create the biggest impact in the long run. ●

SPORTING VIEWS

Tribe doing what needs to be done

by JEFF BING

Honestly, folks, this was going to be another "Golly-I-can't-believe-how-great-the-Browns-are" column because I really am still giddy over how competitive the Browns have become. (Only in Cleveland do you wax incredibly optimistic over a football team that is – as of this writing – 6-7-1).

So why am I bailing on the best football team this town has seen in – literally – decades (including the paper lion team of 2007)? The thing is, the Browns have their future directly in front of them, with plenty of upside and excitement ahead as long as their owner doesn't get too involved in running the franchise.

The Cavs' future is presently so far down the road that there is a very good chance that not a single player on their current roster will be around when the Cavs are even a playoff contender (yes, they are that bad). In other words, don't ask Santa for Cavs tickets this year. Or the next. Or the next. You'll need the Hubble telescope to find the Cavs in the playoffs again.

That leaves the Indians, who have been competitive for the last half decade, and even unto itself that is a pretty impressive stretch. The flip side – which is equally unimpressive – is that the Indians have slid backwards in each of the last two years after reaching the World Series in 2016. At the time, the Indians shocked all of baseball with their incredible run to the World Series with a shell of a pitching staff.

That success gave the Indians swagger, and in 2017 they had an air of confidence – of "mojo" if you will – that took them rocketing into the playoffs after a team record winning streak and 100+ victories. The Indians talked tough, and backed it up. They played tough; they were the neighborhood bullies.

The bullies won the first two games against the New York Yankees in a best-of-five first round playoff, and then the wheels came off. They lost three straight, were eliminated from the playoffs, and have been searching for that mojo ever since. They were pathetic in 2018, looking totally overmatched while being swept in the first round against the Astros.

Thankfully, Indians GM Chris Antonetti has recognized the problem and has attempted to inject new life into the roster, bringing in old pal Carlos Santana and rising star Jake Bauers while unloading Edwin Encarnacion and Yandy Diaz. Encarnacion always had decent stats but did so "quietly" – in such a manner that he never seemed to impact games when we needed him – and Yandy Diaz is a good hitter who never could seem to win a starting job with the Tribe.

More changes loom. Don't be surprised if Jason Kipnis, Yonder Alonso, Lonnie Chisenhall, and maybe even a few others are not on the roster when training camp opens in a couple of months.

The Indians have one of the best pitching staffs in baseball, but the window is slowly closing on the Indians' World Series Championship opportunities for the near-term.

The good news is that Chris Antonetti is not afraid to stick his head through that window. ●

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The Westlake | Bay Village Observer is a hyperlocal community newspaper and website written by, for and about the residents of Westlake and Bay Village, providing perspectives and information about topics and events in our community. The mission of the Westlake | Bay Village Observer is to inform, involve and energize the community through citizen participation of the 900+ community volunteers. All Westlake and Bay Village residents are invited to participate.

Observer Guidelines

- Want to submit an article to the Observer? We'd love to hear from you! Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when writing for the Observer:
- Anyone who lives or works in Westlake or Bay Village is encouraged to contribute.
 - Aim for 300-500 word articles.
 - Photos should be jpegs & a minimum of 2 megabytes in size.
 - Submit original stories and photos. Don't copy others' work and remember to credit your sources and list the photographer of photos.
 - Don't use stories to promote a business – that's what ads are for.
 - Review our Observer FAQs on our website at: wbvobserver.com.
 - Ask questions! We're here to help you at every step along the way. Don't hesitate to come to us for advice or help with topics, content or the submission process. Staff contact information is listed below.

To join in, sign up through the Member Center at wbvobserver.com/members to submit your stories, photos and events.

All content should be submitted through the online Member Center, not by email.

Letters to the editor (max. 300 words) may be sent to tara@wbvobserver.com. Please include full contact information.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Westlake | Bay Village Observer staff.

PRODUCTION OFFICE
451 Queenswood Drive
Bay Village, Ohio 44140
440-409-0114 • Fax 440-409-0118

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GRATITUDE

from front page

“I hope it added to an environment of kindness and thankfulness in our buildings, as well as to a sense of happiness for those who participated.”

Fourth-graders at Westerly Elementary have been working all year on their Attitude of Gratitude Books. Once a week or

so, they think about something in their lives for which they are grateful and create a description and illustration page for it in their book.

“We believe that young people are often accused of being self-centered, but have been given little opportunity to care about others,” said teacher Barb Woodburn of herself and co-teacher, Mary Jo Mahall. “We feel that is our responsibility to

provide the opportunity to serve. We see gratitude as the key ingredient in guiding students toward that goal.” The teachers share their own examples each morning, modeling the kinds of things the children might consider.

Those things evolve through the year from the concrete (for items like a toy), to the more reflective (the efforts of others like the school custodian), to the more abstract (like living in a free country).

The students, with the support of Bay Village Kiwanis and Bethesda-on-the-Bay Lutheran Church, also make and deliver fuzzy, warm fleece blankets to children less fortunate.

Helping others is a long tradition in the Bay Village Schools. There are literally dozens of service projects that take place throughout the school year. But the newly popular habit of purposefully contemplating what we are

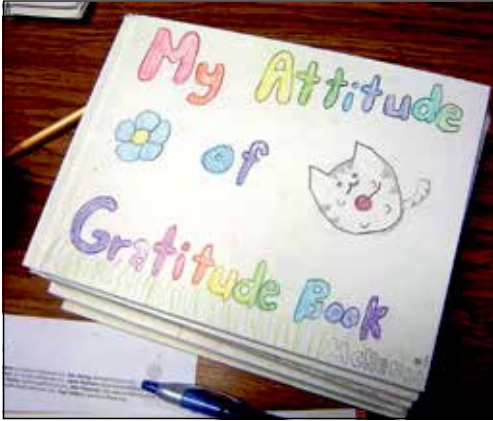
thankful for is just beginning to spread beyond traditional celebrations, like Thanksgiving and Veterans Day, at school.

“Our fourth-graders will be able to look back on all they were grateful for during their entire fourth-grade year with these books they made,” said Mrs. Woodburn.

Sounds like something we could all look forward to doing if we start our own Attitude of Gratitude books in the new year! ●



Westerly fourth-graders in Mrs. Woodburn's class share why they are grateful during a “circle of gratitude” time.



A Bay Village fourth-grader's Attitude of Gratitude book.



“Grateful for my school!”

PHOTOS BY KAREN DERBY



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Westlake Toastmasters #497 named President's Distinguished Club

by MARILYN MONGEON QUILL

Westlake Toastmasters #497 walked away from the Toastmasters International District 10 2017-18 Awards with a boatload of winnings. One of 104 clubs in District 10, Westlake Toastmasters #497 club members won 20 awards this year. District 10 named the club itself a President's Distinguished Club.

Alicia Smith-Kirk, 2017-18 Vice President of Education, won District Director and Triple Crown awards. She also earned a Competent Leader, Dynamic Leadership 1, Competent Com-

municator, Dynamic Leadership 2, Persuasive Influence 1, Advanced Leader Bronze, Advanced Communicator Bronze, Dynamic Leadership 3 and Persuasive Influence 2 educational awards.

Christian Giardini, 2017-18 Club President, won a Triple Crown Award and earned Advanced Communicator Bronze, Advanced Leader Bronze and Leadership Excellence educational awards. Crystal Muscatello, 2018-19 VP of Membership, earned Competent Leader and Competent Communicator educational awards; and Marilyn Mongeon Quill, 2018-19 Club VP of Public

Relations, and Joan Therese Szczepanik, Sergeant-at-Arms, earned Competent Leader educational awards.

Alicia Smith-Kirk and Club Treasurer Loren H. Dill were named Triple-Crown New Member Sponsors.

"2017-18 Club President Christian Giardini, VP of Education Alicia Smith-Kirk and their team did an extraordinary job in distinguishing our club," said 2018-19 Club President Danielle Ross. "They have set a high bar for next year!"

Westlake Toastmasters #497



PHOTO BY CRAIG GERLOCK

Alicia Smith-Kirk, Loren Dill, Marilyn Mongeon Quill and Adam Brown accept the President's Distinguished Club Award on behalf of Westlake Toastmasters #497.

meets Wednesdays from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. at Westlake Porter Public Library, with an informal meet and greet starting at noon. Toastmasters is designed to help increase self-confidence, leadership, extemporaneous and

public speaking skills. The club welcomes guests of all ages and backgrounds. For more information, go to www.497.toastmastersclubs.org, email westlake.toastmasters497@gmail.com or call 216-496-3295. ●

Patricia Heaton can act *and* cook

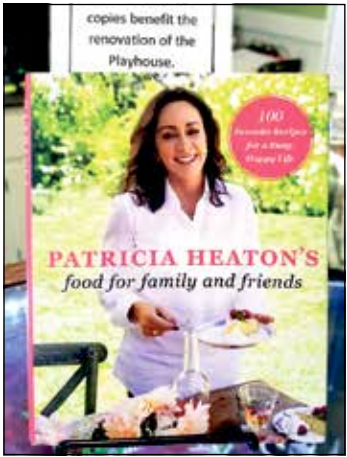
by JESSICA STOCKDALE

Bay Village native Patricia Heaton is best known for her acting roles ("Everybody Loves Raymond," "The Middle," a new series coming this fall called "Carol's Second Act") and now she has published a book of her favorite recipes.

"Food for Family and Friends: 100 Favorite Recipes for a Busy, Happy Life" draws

on Patricia's roots of growing up in Ohio. Her mother cooked simple, good food like meatloaf and pot roast. Having raised four sons, Heaton is a fan of budget-friendly recipes like the ones she grew up with. Signed copies of the cookbook are available for holiday gift-giving at BAYarts and will benefit the renovation of the former Huntington Playhouse, a place close to Patricia's heart.

Heaton got the acting bug growing up in Bay Village and performing at the Playhouse. Hopefully, she will grace the renovated stage in the future. In the meantime, she is the honorary chair of the fundraising campaign and, along with her husband, actor David Hunt, made the initial gift of \$50,000 to kick off the campaign. This spring she will be the special guest at "Encore 2," a fundraising event



for the playhouse completion (date to be announced).

A limited number of copies

of "Food for Family and Friends" are still available.

"People around Cleveland love Patty and they love cooking, what better holiday gift is there?" says BAYarts board president Mary Conway Sullivan. "We couldn't be more grateful to have her behind this campaign."

The BAYarts shop is open seven days a week until Christmas. Hours are Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.; Thursday until 8 p.m. Visit bayarts.net for more details. ●

Giant menorah lights up Crocker Park

by RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

The Festival of Lights, as Chanukah is known, was a particularly bright one for the West Side Jewish community this year.

More than 250 people joined in the annual Chanukah celebration at Crocker Park. Adults and children alike enjoyed a round of ice skating to Jewish music right outside the Hyatt Place, while games, crafts, strolling entertainment and free drinks were enjoyed by participants inside the hotel.


State Rep. David Greenspan joined to light the giant nine-foot menorah as onlookers sang and celebrated their Jewish heritage.

The annual menorah lighting and Chanukah celebration has become a yearly fixture in Crocker Park and is anticipated by families and individuals each year across the whole West Side. ●

Rabbi Mendel Jacobs (center) and Ohio State Rep. David Greenspan (left) prepare to kindle the giant menorah Dec. 2 at Crocker Park.



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Church of the Redeemer UCC members tell the story of the first Christmas



King Herod (Chuck Zaugg) is protected by his guards, Andrew Hille and Graham Foote.



Cory Svette guided visitors on their journey.



Roman centurions Aaron Barnes and Jeff Kirkby question travelers on their way into Bethlehem.

PHOTOS BY DENNY WENDELL



Angels portrayed by Erin Williams, Nola Foote, Melissa Hille, Madison Ehase and Alex Ehase herald the arrival of the newborn king.



Visitors feed sheep as the shepherds keep watch over their flock at night.



The Three Wise Men – Andy Bischof, Jim Stone and Chuck Mealy – bear their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for baby Jesus.



The nativity experience concluded in a stable with Joseph (Matt Armstrong), Mary (Kaitlyn Park) and baby Jesus in a manger.



BUILDING INSPECTOR EXAMINATION | CITY OF BAY VILLAGE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2019 AT 6:00 p.m.
BAY VILLAGE CITY HALL, 350 DOVER CENTER ROAD

The City of Bay Village Civil Service Commission will conduct a competitive examination for the position of Full-Time Building Inspector on Wednesday, January 9, 2019 at 6:00pm. Applications and instructions may be obtained from the City of Bay Village website, www.cityofbayvillage.com, or at City Hall, 350 Dover Center Road. Applications must be returned completed and notarized by 4:00pm on January 2, 2019.

If returning by mail, application must be postmarked by January 2, 2019.
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THE DIGITAL WORLD

What's on seniors' minds at the end of 2018?

by TAK SATO

During the Center for Aging in the Digital World's 2018 holiday party for the graduates of our Discover Digital Literacy! program, now up to 58 alumni after three years, we took a survey of what they would like to learn in a shorter duration program with a singularly focused topic.

Since they have successfully discovered digital literacy, we wanted to offer a path for continued lifelong learning while concurrently growing our

flagship program of 16 weeks in new venues.

I thought the responses will be all over the place but I couldn't have been more wrong! Whether their topics of interest list was short or long, the lists included this topic: photography using smartphones and tablets with curation of the Kodak Moments in the cloud (aka internet).

Photography being on most graduates' minds actually does not surprise me after all. For decades, both before and after the arrival of the internet, the

answer to the question, "What would you take with you from a burning house?" almost always had memory-related mementos such as pictures and scrapbooks as being irreplaceable.

We're pretty certain that one of the topics for this new pilot program for our graduates in 2019 will be taking and curating digital photography in the always-connected (to the cloud) era.

I also believe that a little glimpse of digital world photography basics to close out 2018 may help my readers in case they find a new smartphone or tablet under the tree this holiday season.

Smartphones and tablets usually have two camera lenses: back- and front-facing kinds. The latter is also referred to as the "selfie" lens because you

can take a picture of yourself when facing the smartphone screen. Ladies, this functionality can become your compact mirror too!

After you tap the "Camera" icon, which should be one of the ubiquitous "apps" on smartphones and tablets alongside the "Dialer" (only smartphones), "Contacts" and "Calendar" trifecta, the screen should show what the back or selfie lens sees. How do you like not having to squint your eyes into the viewfinder of the film-based camera of yesteryear to frame your shots?

You'll also notice that there are several "icons" present on the screen. The biggest circle button, probably solid white in color, is the shutter button that you can tap to take the picture. A set of circular arrows that you

can tap behaves like a toggle switch to change between the back- and front-facing lens. An icon that looks like a video camera (or the word "Video" which is also tappable) should be there too.

Yep, while photo camera and video camera were two physically separate gadgets in the past (digital cameras were the first to introduce this dual functionality), smartphones have the capability to become a photo camera or video camera through this tappable toggle switch.

Holiday gatherings of family and friends is an opportune time if you haven't yet explored what your smartphone can do other than make phone calls. In 2019 we will cover more of what a smartphone or tablet can do! ●

READERS' OPINIONS

Stop killing our deer residents

by DILLON CHRISTIAN SLAMAN

I am 20 years of age and have lived in Bay Village all my life. I am extremely saddened to learn about culling being used as the means to decrease the population of deer. I do not agree with this.

Genesis chapters 1:26-29 tells us that God grants us dominion over all animals. When He created the animals, His intention was for us to never be alone.

God gives us a choice between living with or harming His creations, but we are all held accountable in the end. We are to care for them, not treat them less than us, eat them or shoot them when they become too many. Pulling the trigger may not cause pain to you, but you are not the deer.

It is Christmas, and I wanted to ride my bike through the Metropark and feel much needed peace, but I could not because the police stopped me with flashing lights and sirens telling me I could not go home my normal way because hunters were present. The following day, I wanted to rake my back yard and enjoy the crisp air, but I could not because I heard 4 gunshots in the Metropark behind me.

I should have NEVER heard that. I felt as if you had put a gun to my own head. I felt immense grief and pain with each shot. It felt horrific, and I am forever scarred from this. Bay Village is my hometown and you hunters are not welcome here.

I am not the only one who knows this is wrong. Cincinnati is one city that already has a deer sterilization project approved by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. We can do that here too. Deer feel pain. Deer have families and kids. The mother and father want to see their offspring succeed in life as we do our own.

Baby fawns need their mothers and stay by their side for the first 2 years of their life. They are traumatized by loss just like we are. They were made by God's hands as we were.

Please, from the bottom of my heart, stop this bloodbath. The abundance of trees and deer play a huge part of what makes Bay Village so special. We live with nature, and nature lives with us. The deer are beautiful animals. They are community and family.

The world is full of easy-way-outs. Killing will always be easier than finding a new home for our deer or sterilization. You may just be trying to reduce the numbers, but killing is still killing. You just sugarcoat it. Culling is killing, sounds the same and is the same.

The illusion and lie that issues will be solved with gun violence is what the world is now, and the Bay Village Police Department and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources set a perfect example of this. Deer are living, you and I are living – why do you see a target when I see a best friend?

The benefit of pretend plays

by PRAGYA JHA

I have often seen children engaging in pretend plays. They pretend to be doctors examining their friends, who pretend to be patients, or young girls pretending to be princesses with everyone around their subjects. It always amused me as to what pleasure there could be in such play. Everyone has to come back to their realities, so how can such play for a small time bring joy to kids?

While working as a behavior therapist to kids with autism, I came across a 5-year-old girl who always used to pretend she was going to McDonald's with her mom. When I talked to her mom, she revealed that her daughter likes going to McDonald's with her but due to time constraints, she was unable to fulfill her daughter's demands as frequently.

Then it dawned on to me that pretend plays are not just plays, instead they are powerful weapons to fulfill those wishes and desires which can't be accomplished in real life. These are the dreams that we see with open eyes. We can we whatever we want or do anything we like, with nothing ever stopping us.

Still, I had no idea that adults also engage in such pretend plays. This realization came to me one day when I had

gone to a hair salon. My hair stylist was a new girl, who was quite fond of talking. She started with her job, her boyfriend, her family and hobbies.

When all those topics were exhausted, she started talking about me and asked about my family. Usually while talking about my son, I share about his disease and his developmental problems; even with strangers.

However, on this particular day I decided against it. Maybe I was too tired due to a series of nights out with my son. I just went along with the flow and answered in monosyllables in the beginning. As she probed deeper, I just answered that my son started high school this year. I had no idea that this response of mine would open a plethora of queries and dialogues. Had I known such, I would have kept quiet.

Nevertheless, words once spoken can't be taken back. So here I was, answering tons of questions from this girl; whom I had met just a few moments back for the first time. It so happened that her nephew had also started high school and she started drawing similarities.

We talked about how my high school teenager son never likes going to parties with his parents, how my he discusses about all his new

friends with me, how he becomes shy when I ask him about his girlfriends. I even shared about my son's driving lessons and how I am worried that he drives so rash. We discussed potential career options for my son.

I even invented my little girl, who loved her older brother and accompanied him everywhere. A future that I had always envisioned even before my son was born.

When I was coming back from the salon, the realities of my life slowly started sinking in. I had to take an appointment with the neurologist about my son's increased seizures, talk to the orthotist about the new leg braces for my son, search the internet for a new wheelchair for him, talk to his physiotherapist, take referrals for a new speech therapist. The list went on and on.

But those few moments at the salon gave me a chance to be a typical mom to a typical teenager. I talked about all those issues that other moms probably talk every single day.

I am not unhappy with my life or my son. I absolutely adore him and would never trade him even for the greatest treasures of the world. Yet, those moments of pretend play were intriguing. I felt rejuvenated after a very long time.

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Westlake and Bay Village students share their favorite traditions

The holiday season has arrived, with all of the magic and wonder that make this time of year so special. It is a time for rejoicing, connecting with loved ones and creating memories that will last a lifetime. For the Observer's last-issue-of-the-year tradition, students from Mrs. Martha Fisher's third-grade class at Westerly Elementary in Bay Village and Mrs. Melissa Graham's fourth-grade class at Dover Elementary in Westlake share favorite family traditions. These are some of their responses; read all online at wbvobserver.com.

Christmas at the Tree Farm

Thunk! That's the sound of a falling Christmas tree. Every year we go to a tree farm and cut down a Christmas tree.

We have gone to a couple of tree farms in Medina and Wellington. We cut down our Christmas tree with a saw. This year we got a white pine. There is a tractor that tows a wagon where people sit.

Behind the wagon where the people sit is another wagon that carries the Christmas trees that the people cut down. There is a little shop where you can buy antique Christmas things and snacks. This year when we cut down our Christmas tree, it was 65 degrees outside. You also get free hot chocolate! Doesn't that sound like fun? Riding in a wagon, getting free hot chocolate, and cutting down a Christmas tree! Best Christmas fun ever!

– Caden P., Westerly Elementary

Visiting Family

I always visit my family on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in December. On Christmas Eve I visit my mom's side of the family in Cleveland. We enjoy eating dinner together. Everyone brings a dessert for our dessert table. My mom usually brings brownies every time we go because her brownies are really delicious. After dinner, my brother and I go to my aunt's room to open gifts. On Christmas Day, my family and I go to my grandmother's house in Westlake. First, we eat dinner. For dessert, we have chocolate and oranges. They make a good mix! Next, we open our gifts in the living room of our grandma's house. After opening presents, we play a game where someone tapes a picture of a food on someone's back. That person has to ask questions to the other people until they figure out what food is taped to their back. It is a really fun game to play. Most of all, I enjoy my family traditions because I get to see my relatives.

– Abigale M., Dover

Snow is Falling On the Best Family!

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way! Every year my dad reads the Night before Christmas to my family. Then we watch a movie. It's usually Rudolf the Rednosed Reindeer but sometimes we will watch Elf, Frosty the Snowman and more and, of course, we eat popcorn. Then put out 3 cookies for Santa and 8 carrots for the reindeer. We take turns putting out the cookies and the

carrots, youngest to oldest – Corinne, me, Isabel, then Jimmy. By now it's pretty late but then we decorate the rest of the tree. On Thanksgiving we decorate with just our red ornaments.

We wait until closer to Christmas to finish putting up the decorations. While decorating we listen to Christmas music. My dad is always so bossy about where to put the ornaments, same as my sister Isabel. Then we finally go to sleep except for my sister Corinne and I. She talks to me all night so I have to play a Christmas Story on our iPod and finally she falls asleep. Freedom! That's my Christmas Eve!

– Emma B., Westerly

The Christmas Express

Choo! Choo! Every year my family sets up a Christmas train.

We have three trains that we set up by our Christmas tree. Two of them are from the 1940's and were passed onto my dad from his grandfather.

They still work even though they are old! The third train is almost new because we got it two years ago. In the month of December, my dad and I go up to the attic and find the trains. Then, we carry them down the stairs and unpack the boxes. Next, my family sets up the tracks and train cars next to the Christmas tree. Once the tracks are put together, we set the throttle to 100%. We watch the three trains run through the Christmas village. The village lights up and the people move and sing songs for hours! After Christmas we have to pack everything back up. I really enjoy building the train tracks and watching them run!

– Peyton W., Dover

Merry Barry Christmas!

Merry Barry Christmas! Do you know what that is? It is when we celebrate every year with our family. Mum (my grandmother whose name is Mary Barry) produces a video of a bunch of photos from the whole year. Our cousins come over and we have fun watching it and laughing at ourselves. When it's over, we exchange gifts. We get dressed up and go to church on Christmas Eve. Then, we go to parties on my dad's side of the family after church. We go to parties on my mom's side of the family on Christmas Day. We have up to 23 people at our house. Crazy! It's a lot of fun and we get to stay up until 1:00 a.m. or 2:00 a.m. We have so much fun on Christmas! I love our Marry Barry Christmas and all of the fun parties.

– Caitlin H., Westerly

Baking Christmas Cookies

Every Christmas, my family and I bake delicious sugar cookies. We begin by mixing butter, milk, flour, sugar and eggs in a large mixing bowl.

This makes the yummy sugar batter! Next, we roll out the dough with a rolling pin and a little flour. We use cute gingerbread and ornament cookie cutters to make the cookie shapes. Next, we put them on a cookie sheet and bake them in the oven. I can

smell the delicious sugar cookies throughout the house while they are baking in the oven! When they are finished cooking, we put them on a cooling rack.

While they are cooling we make warm hot cocoa with peppermint crumbled on top. Then we enjoy the cookies and hot cocoa around the fireplace. I really enjoy making cookies every year!

– Emily H., Dover

So Many Christmas Trees

Fun! Fun! Fun! It is finally Christmas. I can get a Christmas tree. Every year I have so much fun going to my uncle's tree farm. I get to cut down a Christmas tree with a jigsaw. First I get a sled because Christmas trees are way heavier than you think. Sometimes I bring a jigsaw or sometimes

I borrow one. It is super boring and tiring because there are so many trees! It is also cool because I sometimes find old fashioned tractors and my mom or my dad takes a picture of it. When I find a tree and bring it back, my cousins arrive. My cousins are five boys. They are all older than me but our favorite thing to do is rough-house with each other. Afterwards we would all watch people put the tree on two machines: one shakes the tree and one drills a hole in the tree. Next we would help my cousins find a tree for them. Finally we would all go to a restaurant for a delicious meal. Next step, tree decoration. Can't wait!

– Danny M., Westerly

All About Ramadan

Ramadan is a holiday that reminds us to be thankful for what we have. I am thankful for my family and friends. Ramadan is set by the Islamic calendar and lasts for one month. Every year, Ramadan moves an extra ten days. We cannot eat until sunset and we start fasting again before sunrise. My family makes a big feast when it's time to eat. We invite my grandparents and cousins over. My favorite type of food is grape leaves that's made out of rice and meat. I also love to eat hummus and drink guava juice. When Ramadan is over, everyone comes together and goes to the mosque to pray. We stay at the mosque for a couple of hours until prayer is finished. After that, every person at the mosque goes out to eat and spends time with family and friends. Many people visit each other's houses and gather to have a good time. I can't wait to celebrate the next Ramadan!

– Moe A., Dover

Our Elves

It's past Thanksgiving and Christmas is coming. That means ELVES! I think our elves are pretty fun and crazy. Last year we had two

elves. One had a white outfit and the other had a red outfit. Last year the red one's first hiding spot was on the railing in the foyer by the stairs. He also hid where we keep all our special family stuff. Our white elf's spot was in the music room. One day

the white elf hid on the spot no one could get too. He did not come down. He is still there today. This year our two elves are red. The first place one of our elves hid was the box thing that held pencils, pens, markers, and crayons in the kitchen. Then the elf hid in the dining room near the fruit. The other elf hid in the lamp in the living room. The other red elf hid in the tree. It was in the foyer. Then he hid on the chandelier in the foyer. Our Christmas tree fell down. I think it was the elf on the chandelier who caused the tree catastrophe. My elves can be crazy!!

– Thomas H., Westerly

Our New Year's Birthday Party

New Year's Eve is extra special because it's my dad's birthday. Friends and family come to celebrate and we have a giant party. The best part is we get to stay up until midnight. In the morning, my family and I go to church. We celebrate my dad's birthday at my house and there are about 25 people that come. My grandmothers, our friends, and family come to have fun and celebrate. We always go shopping to get New Year's Eve things, like new fancy clothes. My family and I dance to Christmas music and we eat traditional Arabic food, like hummus. Last of all, we turn off all the lights when it is midnight we say "Happy New Year!" What is your favorite holiday tradition?

– Mary M., Dover

Lights on the House

Glow, glow, glow! Do you put lights on your house? I do every year. This year my mom let us have color lights! First we do the trees outside. One is green lights and the other is red lights. Next we do the bushes. They are just white lights. Then we put up our blow-up polar bear holding a penguin trying to put the star on the tree. It is five feet tall! Next we put up lights that shine on the house. The one on the side of the house shows snowflakes rotating in a circle. The three at the front of the house that have different settings. We have it on the Christmas setting that is red, green, and white. Then we put lights in the doorway and the garage. One, Two, Three. The house is so bright. There are lights on the trees and shining on the house and even on the garage and in the blow-up polar bear. I hope putting lights on our house is a tradition that lasts a long long time.

– Madelyn L., Westerly

Elf on the Shelf

My Elf on the Shelf is the greatest thing in the whole world because he has magic powers! My elf's name is Flynn Rider. Flynn Rider reports to Santa in the North Pole each night. When he returns from the North Pole, he finds a new spot to hide in our house. Today, he hid in the freezer! Having the elf in our house does require us to follow some rules. The two rules you have to follow are you should never touch the elf and you should always behave. If you touch the elf he loses his magic powers and he won't move that night. If you misbehave you will not get any presents on Christmas morning. If you follow the rules, he will watch you open your presents

on Christmas. I really enjoy having Flynn Rider visit our house every year!

– Annabella P., Dover

25 Day Countdown

Yay! Yay! Yay! I'm so excited because the countdown of 25 day stockings! Everyday we pull out a piece of paper from one of the stockings that has stuff to do. Today the stocking said to email Santa. Yesterday we had to make a snowflake. One stocking told us to read under the Christmas tree. Another stocking asked us to give people who don't have toys a present. We also had to put Christmas lights outside and decorate the house. The stocking tells us to bake cookies for Santa Claus. It also tells us to get presents and go to the Christmas Story Movie. The 25 day stocking countdown is the best!

– Samantha E., Westerly

Eid and Christmas

Since I am new to the United States, I want to write about how Eid and Christmas are similar. On Eid, children get a lot of money from their families. On Christmas, children get a lot of presents from Santa. On Eid and Christmas people get together with their families. Also, on Eid we go to Masjid and pray. Some people go to church on Christmas to pray, too. On Eid, people try to help others who don't have money by giving them some of their money. On Christmas, people also give gifts to those who don't have any presents. On Eid, we dress up in beautiful dresses. The girls put on make-up and the boys wear dishdashas. On Christmas, people sometimes wear special clothes or pajamas. I have learned that Eid and Christmas are a lot alike!

– Hessah K., Dover

A Fox Family's Christmas

HO HO HO! Christmas is so much fun at the Fox house. Every year on December 1st our elves come and watch us. Who are the elves, you wonder? Our elves are named Tippy and Snowflake. They watch us to make sure we are good little kids for Santa. Then we put up our tree. We put lots of ornaments on the tree. Some are shaped as hearts, stars, and even more. While we do that we listen to Christmas music. My mom and I make a mess in the kitchen by making Christmas cookies. We shape the dough as stockings, gingerbread men, trees, and more. Then Santa puts presents under our tree. My elves so far have been on my gymnastics beam, my piano, in my tree, under my TV, a storage closet, little wooden sleighs, wooden words that say "Merry Joy Believe," and more. They have hid in a lot of places so far. My elves are very clever. Christmas is so much fun at the Fox house!

– Kellen F., Westerly

Before Christmas

My family has lots of traditions that we do before Christmas. On December 1st, my family starts an advent calendar. We also have some countdown cubes that we put on the shelf by the fireplace. Both of these help us count the days until Christmas. My dad and I go on the roof and decorate the house with shimmering lights. My parents invite a lot of kids in the neighborhood over to our house for a giant snowball fight! My family and I make cookies such as chocolate chip and Lebkuchen

cookies. (Lebkuchen is a German cookie.) This tradition was started by my great grandfather. Finally, on Christmas Eve night when it's dark and chilly outside, I'm nice and warm under a blanket. I get to open one present that has a Christmas movie and book to enjoy before bed. My mom makes hot chocolate and then we drink our hot chocolate and watch the movie together. My family enjoys the Christmas season!

– Michael T., Dover

The Day That is Christmas

Ho! Ho! Ho! Christmas is a jolly time! On Christmas Eve we go to my Grandma and Grandpa McCready's house. My ten cousins and my two uncles and aunts are there. We do Secret Santa with my cousins and it is a total mess in there. We eat a lot of ham and I love ham, m...m...m that is delicious. On Christmas Day we go to my Grandma and Grandpa Lewellen's home. Next Uncle Kenny, Aunt Stephanie and my little cousin Reese from Columbus arrive. Finally Uncle Ricky and Aunt Jill with my other cousin Stephanie come. We play tag with my cousins. Even though it's not a lot of people we still have a lot of fun. We also play hide and seek. Good hiding spots are hard to find. We open presents. I like watching my little cousins' reactions as they open presents. It is so funny. That is my wonderful jolly Christmas.

– Ethan M., Westerly

Christmas Eve

My family enjoys celebrating Christmas Eve together. I am very grateful because my dad gets to come home from military training in Indiana. First, we all go to church together in Westlake. When church is over, we go to my Granny's house in North Ridgeville. Everybody has an amazing time. The kids play games like hide and seek and four corners. After the cousins play for a while, we eat turkey, mashed potatoes and bread. Then, we bake gingerbread cookies and other sweets. We frost the gingerbread men and we enjoy eating them. We watch the "Christmas Story" movie together. When we're done watching the movie we do a gift exchange with my cousins. I enjoy seeing everybody's joy when they open their gifts. Finally, it's time to leave Granny's house. Our mom has to bribe us with candy canes because we don't want the night to end!

– Will E., Dover

Christmas at Grandparents

Did you know my cousins come to town for Christmas? Do you have cousins that visit you at Christmas? My cousins from Oklahoma come for Christmas. Their names are Maggie and Holly and they are both older than me. My other cousins, Natalie and Juliette, are younger than me and they live in Bay Village. We all celebrate Christmas Eve at my Nana's and Papa's. We have stockings with everybody's names. For dessert we have hot cocoa and ice cream. First we open our stockings then our presents. Then we open presents from Nana and Papa. They know just what we like. I love Christmas at my grandparents.

– Camille C., Westerly

THE MEDICAL INSIDER

Take the bite out of holiday heartburn

by DIANA PI, M.D.

My husband's family is Scottish Canadian. Frugal, reserved, hard-working, tough as the granite they farmed in Eastern Ontario. Thrive on dry humor. One thing they do with abandon: Christmas dinner. Every year, we cross the Peace Bridge to his family home, to herb-studded roast beef, glazed ham, bricks of cranberry jelly and fruit cakes, strawberry trifle in brandy and sherry, egg nog, Yule Log. And my absolute favorite: Yorkshire pudding (egg batter baked in beef drippings). It's a hard day's night of

eating – and heartburn. Heartburn presents differently in different people: burn, bile taste, hoarseness, lump in mid-throat, difficulty swallowing, coughing, worsening asthma or nothing. To treat reflux, over-the-counter medications work as well as prescription ones. You have three choices. 1. Alkalinizing liquid: antacid. 2. H-2 receptor antagonists (H2RA): cimetidine, famotidine, nizatidine and ranitidine. 3. Proton pump inhibitors (PPI): omeprazole, esomeprazole, pantoprazole, rabeprazole, lansoprazole and dexlansoprazole.

Which one to pick? For one to a few days or intermittent use, try antacid and/or H2RA. They work fast. But taken regularly, H2RA loses some effect. PPI is the bull, but takes *days* for peak effect. It's better for severe, frequent reflux, long-term use. I'd start with omeprazole (20 mg, starting at \$11 for a month). So why with these wonderful drugs would you still get reflux? First, keep in mind, you may not have reflux. Call your doctor. Second, even though drugs can neutralize stomach acid or reduce acid production (incompletely), they cannot reduce the *frequency* of reflux. Chronic reflux is an attack dog which needs a muzzle and a leash. Drugs are the muzzle, holding back bark and bites. Lifestyle changes are the leash, reducing the frequency of attacks. The basics:

1. Weight: Weight gain worsens reflux. Losing a few pounds can significantly reduce reflux episodes.
2. Gravity: For nighttime symptoms, avoid eating three hours before bedtime. Tilt your bed, head up. Also, sleeping on your *left* side might help.
3. Food choice: More controversial. While fatty food consistently burns, people have unique heartburn triggers: smoking, alcohol, spices, caffeine, tomato sauce, chocolate ... stress. My advice: listen to your gut. Recently I came across an interesting study on heartburn. I rarely jump at the first whistle. Nutritional studies, especially, have a lot of false starts. This study touched on the Mediterranean diet (my favorite), which is all about vegeta-

bles, fruits, whole grains. It's 90 percent plant-based, limiting meat to 3 ounces, 3 times a week with minimal dairy products. The study compared a group on daily omeprazole to a group on alkaline water and the Mediterranean diet. After six weeks, reflux symptoms improved equally between the two groups – about 60 percent. If you seek PPI alternatives or additional relief, try the Mediterranean diet for a few weeks. Can't hurt. The first time I had Yorkshire pudding, I was fired up. Had friends over for a proper Scottish meal. The venue featured haggis, which is steamed, minced sheep offal (lungs, heart, liver) mixed with oats and onions, stuffed in sheep stomach. My father-in-law heard and asked me straight-faced, "Do you hate your friends?" ●

Upcoming events at Westlake Porter Public Library

by ELAINE WILLIS

Wednesday, Dec. 19 (2 p.m.) WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON BOOK DISCUSSION – The selection is "News of the World" by Paulette Jiles.

Wednesday, Dec. 19 (5:30-8 p.m.) DROP-IN GIFT WRAPPING – Having trouble finding a private spot to wrap gifts at home? Drop by the library and wrap your gifts here. A self-proclaimed "excellent gift wrapper" will be on hand to help you with your wrapping skills. (Bring your own scissors, we'll have the rest!)

Thursday, Dec. 20, (3:30-6 p.m.) SUPER SMASH ULTIMATE TEEN TOURNAMENT: TEENS – The new Super Smash Ultimate for Nintendo Switch is finally out! Come try it out and battle to take the top spot. Plus, free snacks and pop. This tournament is for teens in grades 7-12 only.

Thursdays, Dec. 20 and 27 (4-5 p.m.) CODE CLUB! – Learn how to build an app, design a video game, and change the world through code! Grades 3-4. Registration begins one week before each session.

Thursday, Dec. 20 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) SUPER SMASH ULTIMATE TOURNAMENT: ADULTS – The new Super Smash Ultimate for Nintendo Switch is finally out! Come try it out and battle to take the top spot. Plus, free snacks and pop! This tournament is for adults 18+.

Friday, Dec. 21 (4-5 p.m.) GOT SCIENCE? – Join us as we delve into the world of science. This month's topic: World of Bubbles! Grades 1 and 2. Please register.

Saturday, Dec. 22 (10:30-11 a.m.) MOTHER GOOSE ON THE LOOSE! – An interactive storytime featuring simple books, rhymes, songs and movement. For ages birth-3 years old with a caregiver.

Saturday, Dec. 22 (11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) ELF ACADEMY – Santa is extra busy this year and needs your help. Join in our reindeer games and train to become a "Certified Elf" by completing several elf-ercises. While supplies last.

Saturday, Dec. 22 (3:30-5 p.m.) STEAM-MAKER LAB – Make and run your very own Bristlebot! Grades 3-5. Please register.

Sunday, Dec. 23 (2-3 p.m.) AMERICAN GIRL DOLL CLUB – The stories of Nanea Mitchell, a native Hawaiian girl growing up in Hawaii during WWII, teach that Kokua – doing good deeds and giving selflessly – sometimes requires sacrifice. We will discuss traditional Hawaiian customs, play games and make a craft. Ages 6-11. Please register.

Monday, Dec. 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE: LIBRARY CLOSED

Tuesday, Dec. 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY: LIBRARY CLOSED

Thursday, Dec. 27 (2-4 p.m.) MOVIES @ YOUR LIBRARY – Join us for a movie matinee in which Mr. Incredible is left to care for the kids while Helen is out saving the world. Rated PG. All ages. Registration begins Dec. 20.

Friday, Dec. 28 (10-10:45 a.m.) COME PLAY WITH ME! – Open playtime with age-appropriate toys. For children ages 2-5 with a caring adult. Siblings welcome.

Friday, Dec. 28 (10 a.m.-noon) FIBER FANATICS – A time for needlecrafters to share, solve problems, and show off.

Sunday, Dec. 30 (2-4 p.m.) CHESS CLUB – Hone your chess skills or learn how to play the game. Recommended for ages 6+, but all ages are welcome. If you have a chess set, please bring it with you.

Monday, Dec. 31 (11:15 a.m.-noon) COUNT-DOWN TO NOON FAMILY STORYTIME – Join us for a special New Year's Eve family storytime celebrating our favorite stories, songs and rhymes. We'll make a simple craft and do our own early countdown to 12:00 (noon). Ages 3-5. Registration begins Dec. 23.

Monday, Dec. 31 – NEW YEAR'S EVE: LIBRARY CLOSSES AT 5 P.M.

Tuesday, Jan. 1 – NEW YEAR'S DAY: LIBRARY CLOSED

To register for any of the programs, please visit westlakelibrary.evanced.info or call 440-871-2600. ●

Upcoming programs at Bay Village Branch Library

by TARA MCGUINNESS

As we get ready to celebrate the arrival of 2019, the staff of the Bay Village branch library would like to thank you for your patronage this past year.

Our library will be closed on Dec. 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1. Our digital collection is always open, so don't forget to browse our ebook, emagazine, movie and music titles.

CHILDREN

Our weekly storytimes will start back up on Wednesday, Jan. 2. Please see the schedule below for days and times.

Weekly Storytimes:

- **Mondays & Tuesdays (10 a.m.) TODDLER STORYTIME** – ages 19-35 months.
- **Tuesdays (6:45 p.m.) FAMILY STORYTIME** – for all ages
- **Wednesdays (10 a.m.) BABY AND ME STORYTIME** – ages birth-18 months
- **Thursdays (10 a.m.) PRE-SCHOOL STORYTIME** – ages 3-5 (not yet in kindergarten)
- **Fridays (10 a.m.) FAMILY STORYTIME** - for all ages

Saturday, Jan. 5 (2 p.m.) FAMILY MOVIE – Join us for a special screening of a popular movie. Bring a blanket and pillow or sleeping bag. A parent/guardian must sign a release form before the program.

Monday, Jan. 7 (11 a.m.) HOME-SCHOOL: PIONEER LIFE – Grades 3-6: Explore pioneer times through activities and building a log cabin. Registration required.

Saturday, Jan. 10 (10 a.m.) PRESCHOOL STEAM – Join us for

stories and a hands-on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics) activity. Registration required. Sponsored by the Friends of the Bay Village Branch Library.

TEEN

Wednesdays, Dec. 19 and Jan. 9 (3 p.m.) TEEN ZONE – Grades 5 & up: Hang out with something fun to do after school – gaming, art, movies, technology and more!

Thursday, Jan. 10 (3 p.m.) WRITE ON! – Join us for fun, quirky and challenging writing exercises and activities to get your creativity flowing. Registration required.

Tuesday, Dec. 18 (6 p.m.) ROBOTIX BLOX: MOCKINGBOT – Grades 5-12: Program a robot to conquer challenges encountered by Katniss and Peeta in the popular "Hunger Games" series.

ADULT

Friday, Jan. 11 (10 a.m.) BAY-ARTS BOOK DISCUSSION – Join friends, neighbors and library staff for a monthly book discussion on the BAYarts campus. This month's title, "A Place for Us" by Fatima Farheen Mirza, is available at the library and BAYarts.

Saturday, Jan. 12 (2 p.m.) PLANT BASED COOKING – Chef Giulia shares ways to eat healthy. Learn about the wide variety of plant-based foods available, ideas for swapping plant-based foods into your current diet, and how to prepare low-carb snacks.

Please register to attend the programs online at cuyahogallibrary.org, call us at 440-871-6392, or stop in to the library at 502 Cahoon Road and register with a librarian. ●

WESTLAKE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Join a Fifty-Plus trivia challenge team

by LYDIA GADD

Here's a trivia question: What show has been running for the past 50-plus years, primarily on WEWS Channel 5 on Saturday night at 7:00 p.m.? Hint: Don Webster was one of the long-running hosts of this 12-time Emmy Award-winning program.

If you guessed "Academic Challenge," you are correct. If you are 50+ and guessed "Academic Challenge," you should try out for our team!

The senior center in the city of Westlake is participating in an Academic Challenge-style trivia contest which includes 30 senior centers from Northeast Ohio, and we need to form a team! You do not need to live in Westlake to participate, but you do need to be 50 or older, and enjoy trivia competitions.

Team try-outs will occur on Tuesday, Jan. 15, at 10:00 a.m. in our center on 29160 Center Ridge Road in Westlake. A team consists of 4 players plus 2 alternates. If you are interested, please call 440-899-3544 to register your team by Jan. 10. The questions will be fun trivia questions geared toward seniors, so please do not get intimidated.

The contest is called the Northeast Ohio Mind Challenge for the New Majority. (The

New Majority is the current buzzword referring to the expanded senior population. It replaces the less complimentary term, Silver Tsunami). Local municipalities will seat a team to compete against other cities in the Northeast Ohio region, mimicking the NCAA basketball bracket format. The Smart Sixteen will occur in February, Elevated Eight in March, Fact Finding Four in April and finally the Mind Challenge Championship in May.

In addition to bragging rights, the top 3 teams will receive cash awards for their senior centers, as well as gift cards for each winning team participant. All participants will receive a Mind Challenge T-shirt.

The early matches will occur regionally, hosted by the various participating senior centers. Other "west-side" teams in the competition include Lakewood, Rocky River and Strongsville. The final championship game will be held at the Solon Senior Center.

Incidentally, Solon High School does hold the Northeast Ohio Academic Challenge record for most wins ... but Westlake High School is the 2018 reigning champ. Perhaps we can get these students to scrimmage against us?

Please call 440-899-3544 if you have any questions or would like more information. ●



PHOTO BY JODI RODRIGUEZ

A Westlake trivia team in a recent competition that also included teams from the Rocky River and North Olmsted senior centers.

Area organizations help people transition from homelessness

by CATHY FLAMENT

North Coast Needlers Quilt Guild spearheaded a project to provide those who have experienced trauma, or have been homeless, rest a little easier this season. The Guild created 70 lap quilts that were included in bags filled with necessities such as towels, kitchen accessories, soap, etc.

The bags were provided to families at a special event, sponsored by FrontLine Service, to help celebrate the holidays. FrontLine Service reaches out to adults and children in Northeast Ohio to help end homelessness, prevent suicide, resolve behavioral health crises and overcome trauma. Adding to the festivities, 85 stockings were created to assist Santa as he travels through the area.

In addition, 60 fabric bags were sewn and filled with similar items for individuals transitioning into permanent housing in a new facility sponsored by Frontline. The bags will hopefully provide a bit of comfort and will welcome residents into their new surroundings after being homeless an average of three years.

Hundreds of items were donated for the bags with the help of Westlake High School, Bay High School Key Club, the staff of Devon Oaks, Walgreens and guild members. If you would like to assist next year with this initiative, contact Cathy Flament, 440-835-4472. There are numerous ways to become

involved. FrontLine is also looking for volunteers. Contact Jordan Rush, volunteer coordinator, at Jordan.Rush@frontlineservice.org. ●



Tim Gerent and Luca Della Vella of Westlake High School load donated items into a truck.



Sixty bags were filled with donated items to assist those transitioning out of homelessness.

Burneson Builders Club plays Santa's helpers



PHOTO BY VICTOR RUTKOSKI

The Burneson Middle School Builders Club shops for gifts for a family in need at Christmas.

by VICTOR RUTKOSKI

The Westlake Burneson Middle School Builders Club spent a night of Christmas shopping for their adopted family. The Builders' Club is a sponsored youth

group of the Westlake Kiwanis Club teaching young people leadership and values of community service by caring for others.

Other recent projects were collecting candy for U.S. servicemembers overseas and

food drives for the Westlake Community Assistance program.

The Builders Club raises money for their service projects through fundraising projects such as car washes and selling doughnuts in school. ●

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what's Next*

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6:00 pm
A BPC Christmas Eve

8:00 pm
A BPC Christmas Eve



10:00 pm
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440.871.3822 || www.baypres.org

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Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
3:00pm Children's Communion Service
5:00pm Family Communion Service
7:00pm Traditional Communion Service
(Childcare available at 3:00 & 5:00pm)

Christmas Day
10:00am Communion Service



Christ Church Westshore-Anglican
Worshipping at Anchor Church
32607 Electric Blvd., Avon Lake, OH 44012

St. Raphael Catholic Church

525 Dover Center Rd., Bay Village

Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve:	Christmas Day:
4:00 pm Church/PAC	8:00 am Church
8:00 pm Church	10:00 am Church
10:00 pm Church	12:00 pm Church

440-871-1100



Christmas at Church of the Redeemer

United Church of Christ

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CHRISTMAS, Dec. 25
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SUNDAY - Dec. 30
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Carols & Candlelight Service
Monday, December 24 at 6:30 p.m.
Parkside Church of the Nazarene
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www.parknaz.org



Candlelight Christmas Eve with Communion, 8:00 p.m.

2239 Dover Center Road, Westlake
440-871-1050 www.doverucc.org



DIGGING DOVER

Cooley historical marker contains error

by WILLIAM KRAUSE

The one thing that I am hoping for Christmas from Santa is a corrected Cooley historical marker under my tree. In an ongoing effort to bolster the importance of the Asher Cooley house at 2871 Dover Center Road, an error on the Ohio Historical Marker needs to be corrected. The marker was dedicated in 2015 and placed next to a meandering driveway off Dover Center Road, east of the current police station.

The marker, as well as the promotional material written at the time, states of George L. Cooley, the subject of the marker: “He was born on a farm at the northwest corner of Dover and Hilliard Roads in Dover Township.” This is not true. George L. Cooley was most likely born and raised on the family homestead, known as the Asher Cooley house, which still stands at 2871 Dover Center Road, south and across the street from the Porter Library drive which connects with Dover Center Road.

The inaccurate words could be chiseled out and replaced with “He was born on a farm near the southeast corner of Dover and Center Ridge Roads in Dover Township.” With a little more research we may be able to say: “He was born on his grandfather Asher Cooley’s farm on Dover Center Road in Dover Township.”

After Asher died in 1853, the homestead was purchased from the estate by George L. Cooley’s father, John McCrea Cooley, and it was where John and his wife, Lucy, raised George L. and his siblings. The Asher Cooley homestead was passed on to Arthur Cooley, George’s older brother in 1895, before John died in 1907.

The property then passed on to Arthur’s wife, Flora, when he died in 1927. When Flora died in 1933 it passed on to Arthur and Flora’s three children. In 1944 their son, Dr. Richard S. Cooley, sold the family homestead to Frank and Claribel Power. The home remains in the Power family today, though it is currently up for sale.



The George L. Cooley Ohio Historical Marker is located on land he and his wife, Clara, raised their children in the early 1900s. It is accessible from a driveway off Dover Center Road next to the police station.

At the time of the marker placement in 2015, I was asked to research the proposed location of the marker to make sure that it had been owned by George L. Cooley. It was, but only after the death of his wife, Clara. Clara Elizabeth Hall Cooley was deeded 34 acres of land by her parents, Reuben and Matilda Hall, in 1888, shortly after she married George L. Cooley.

It was on this land, in about 1890, that George L. Cooley constructed a house which was located just north of the driveway between the old Westlake Municipal Building and the Police Department garage. It was there that George and Clara raised their family.

The land remained in Clara’s name until she died in 1927 and it passed to their seven children, subject to her hus-



George L. Cooley grew up and was most likely born in the house built by his grandfather, Asher Cooley, at 2871 Dover Center Road.

band George L. Cooley’s dower rights. The circa 1890 house was most likely torn down when the old Municipal Building was constructed in 1954.

A “milk house” that George had built with his sons during the Depression survived at least until 1969 and was the location of the first offices of what later became Westlake’s Planning Department.

One thing is clear, Santa delivered many gifts to Cooley children up and down Dover Center Road for many years. Hopefully he always checked his list twice and got the right gifts to the right Cooley children! ●

Westlake Meals on Wheels welcomes volunteers, donations

by TRACY LEARY

I recently moved to Cleveland and began looking for opportunities to learn about my new community. I found an organization that not only warmly welcomed me but impressed me – Westlake Meals on Wheels (WMOW). The more I learned, the more impressed I became. Here’s what I mean:

- 43: The number of years WMOW has operated. Started in 1975!
- 80: The average number of residents currently served.
- 800: The number of freshly prepared meals each week (2 meals/day, 5 days a week, 80 clients). Yes, that is a *weekly* number!
- 170: The number of volunteers cooking, baking, delivering and supporting the WMOW mission
- 0: The amount of federal, state or local government funding WMOW receives
- 100%: The amount of dollars funded through community support. Thank you, Westlake and surrounding communities!

In addition to the above numbers that so accurately define the kind-serving, long-standing organization, I would add two phrases, “Independent Living” and “Peace of Mind.” These daily deliveries help to extend the independent living of so many of our neighbors along with the safety checks that help provide peace of mind to their families.

Need an organization to believe in? The WMOW may just be the answer and it’s right in our own backyard. To donate your time, talent or money, please visit us at westlakemealsonwheels.org.

Because of its success, the WMOW organization has expanded and built a new kitchen in Olmsted Falls – giving us new numbers to reach. We are hoping to move from an average of 80 clients to 120 clients. ●



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STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

One thousand days of positivity

by KATIE CIRINCIONE

Is the glass half empty or half full? If you ask me, I'll tell you that it's all the way full – half with water and half with air. I've always considered myself to be an optimist, and I really believe that positive thinking is a powerful skill. Like any other skill, it's important to practice it.

At the end of my freshman year of high school, I started a positivity journal. After each day, I would fill one line in the book with my favorite things about that day. Now, over two-and-a-half years later, I'm still continuing this tradition. On Dec. 14, I filled 1,000 lines in my journal for 1,000 days of positive thinking.

Flipping through the pages of my

book, I can really see how one quick, daily reflection has added up – and more than just on paper. Keeping track of the good things in my life has changed the way I act. I've learned to be grateful for what I have and to always look on the optimistic side of situations.

Of course, nobody has a perfect life with only happy memories. Sometimes, on really bad days, I have trouble thinking of anything good that had happened that day. However, this activity forces me to find *something* positive that came out of the past 24 hours. Not every day may be good, but there is something

good about every day. When I do have bad days, reading through old entries in the book remind me of this and can always make me smile. I've become more appreciative of and grateful for the little things.

I would definitely recommend trying out a daily way to practice the power of positive thinking, even if it's only for a few weeks. Doing a daily positive reflection could even be a good New Year's resolution! For me, I'll be continuing my positivity journal, hopefully for another one thousand days and more! ●

Katie Cirincione is a Westlake student.

SNIPPETS OF BAY VILLAGE HISTORY

Memories of Hahn's Grove

by KAY LAUGHLIN

My best memories of Hahn's Grove are from driving in the car west on Lake Road through Rocky River or buying ice and pop at Serbs gas station. I remember, in the summer, reaching Avalon Drive and starting down the dip (hill) in the road when like magic the temperature in the air got 10 degrees cooler and a nice summer breeze floated in through the windows of the car as Lake Erie came into view.

At the bottom of the dip was an area I grew up knowing as Hahn's Grove (today it is called Bradstreet's Landing). The driveway to the water filtration plant runs south through the property and there are apartment buildings today. There was a beach for swimming and a fishing pier. The Serb family had a gas station and ice house on the south side of the road near the township lines between Dover and Rockport. At the time I didn't know any more than that.

The Hahn family were early settlers of the near west side of Cleveland, arriving from Bavaria in 1850. The only information we have on the father is that his name was Frederick and he had two boys named Charles (Karl) and Joseph. We know this because the boys married two of the Rentschler sisters, also from the near west side.

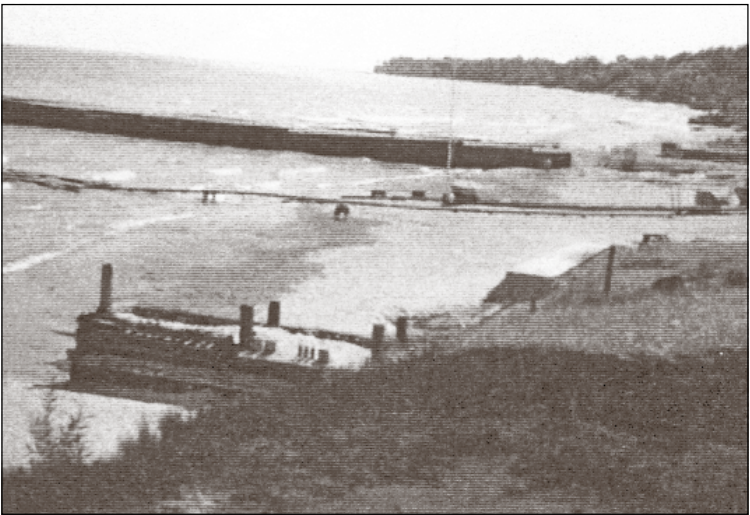
Regina Lapp Rentschler and Jacob Frederick Rentschler immigrated from Germany about the same time as the Hahns. They also lived on the near west side. They had five daughters: Regina Katharina Rentschler Wischmeyer (married Henry Wischmeyer Sr.), Caroline Rentschler Wolf (married Alfred Marion Wolf), Adelheide Rentschler Hahn (married Joseph Louis Hahn), Sophia Wilhelmina (Mina) Rentschler Hahn (married Charles Hahn), and Fredericka Rentschler Kruger (no information available).

Mina married Charles Hahn on Aug. 26, 1855. Regina Wischmeyer's will shows Mina inheriting everything from her

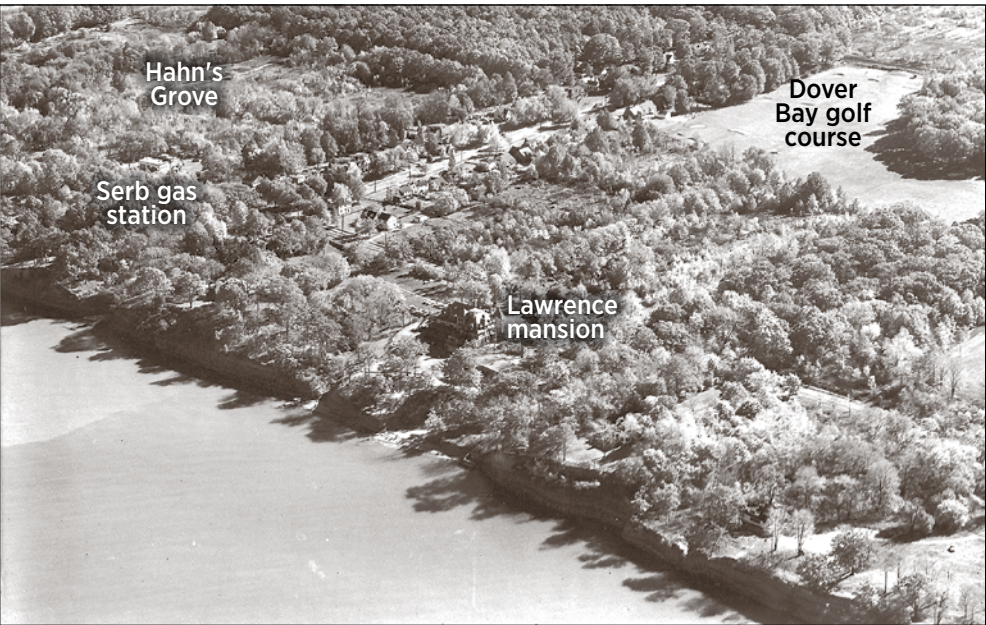
mother. Wilhelmina died in Rockport, Ohio, on Dec. 30, 1900, leaving two children, Charles and Bertha Hahn Boylan. Her services were held at the residence of her brother-in-law, Henry Wischmeyer, in Dover, Ohio, followed by the funeral at Schifflin Christian Church, at the corner of Dodge and Superior streets. Her hus-

band, Charles, died in 1893.

Adelheide Rentschler Hahn married Joseph Louis Hahn on Dec. 17, 1863. She died on Nov. 28, 1907, after a long illness. She returned from Europe while ill in September, that year after a prolonged stay abroad and had been in poor



Hahn's Grove beach and fishing pier are pictured in 1960.



An aerial view of the Washington Lawrence estate shows the Hahn property on the left side of the picture. The Lawrence mansion is now the main building of the Cashelmara development. The Serb gas station is also visible.



Annie Nureberg married Charles Hahn and lived at Hahn's Grove.



The Hahns' big house and surrounding cottages, pictured in 1960.



Arthur Hahn astride a horse in an undated photo.

health since. She was the mother of Mrs. Vernon H. Burke, Joseph Oscar Hahn and SJ Hahn.

The Wischmeyer family is well known in the history of Bay Village. Henry Sr. and Regina Katharina Wischmeyer

settled on two acres of Lot 96 along Lake Road, planted grapes, built a wine cellar and a hotel for serving summer tourists and merchants and eventually purchased the whole Lot 96. They lived on their property until their deaths.

Being sisters and good friends Sophia and Adelheide moved west to Rockport Township to farm and be closer to Regina and Henry in Dover Township. Their property was situated on the north and south sides of Lake Road near the Dover Township line. The farm was in Rockport and on the west side was Dover Township, the railroad track was on the south, the top of the hill near Avalon Drive today was east and Lake Erie on the north. The interurban stop number was 9. They had a natural sandy beach.

The Hahn family were farmers. Most farmers had an orchard of fruit trees: apple, peach, plum, pear or cherry, hence the word Grove became part of the name. In the 1920s they built cottages like most of the farmers along the lake. The Hahn children kept the farm and worked it.

Mina and Charles' son, Charles S. Hahn, married Annie Nureberg and lived at Hahn's Grove. Their children were Gertrude, Arthur and Carl. Charles died in 1918. He was killed at age 62 by an interurban train at Stop 9 close by to where he lived on Lake Road. Annie died in 1931.

Their son, Arthur, married Marie Loftus, who had emigrated from Ireland in 1912. They had two daughters, Annamae and Ruth. Arthur Hahn was a general contractor. He died in 1935 from burns/suffocation from a fire in his home. After his death, his wife, Marie, and his brother Carl Hahn were survivors of the Hahn property. Their sister, Gertrude Allen, passed away in 1943. Marie Hahn lived in the big house on the cliff and daughters and family members lived in the cottage on and off until the property was sold.

I'd like to thank Nancy MacKenzie for her help with this article. Her husband is the grandson of Arthur Hahn. ●

Dover sixth-graders take novel approach

by KIM BONVISSUTO

Dover Intermediate School sixth-grader Luke Melikian typed his 50,000th word in class as part of a novel writing unit in his sixth-grade language arts class.

As part of National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) in November, Jessica Ranallo's students were working on their own novels. Luke typed his 50,000th word in front of the class. NaNoWriMo, part of the young Writers Program, encourages

K-12 students to write a novel in 30 days. Last year more than 100,000 students and educators from over 9,000 classrooms around the world participated.

This year's theme was "A Shot of Caffeine for my Creative Life." Luke's story, "Mr. Allan," is about a man named Allan, a newly discovered reincarnation of Mr. Arnaldus de Villa Nova, and his ongoing pursuit to finally destroy his antagonist, McDonald, who has an incredible headache.

Ranallo's students typed a

total of 275,246 words in the challenge. Her top writers were:

- Luke Melikian: 50,000 words
- Julia Gonzalez-Cueto: 15, 046
- Riley Minear: 14,704
- Emily Monachino: 12,775
- Bella Puchmeyer: 9,707
- Kristen Evans: 7,500
- Isabella Frankito: 7,145
- Anna Mancino: 5,904

Students will spend the next few months working on revisions and editing their novels. They will have the opportunity to publish their novels into a paperback copy, complete with their own International Standard Book Number (ISBN). ●



The top writers in Jessica Ranallo's sixth-grade class at DIS: (front row) Anna Mancino, Isabella Frankito, Kristen Evans; (back row) Julia Gonzalez Cueto, Emily Monachino, Riley Minear, Bella Puchmeyer, Luke Melikian.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Post your group's free community events online at wbvobserver.com

Wednesday, Dec. 19, 6:30-8 p.m.
ASTRONOMY CLUB

Explore the world of astronomy in a fun, social environment. NASA JPL Solar System Ambassador Bill Reed will share what's new in space, the latest gadgets, "astro-tainment" and mind-blowing facts. Enjoy movie nights in Schuele Planetarium, workshops, telescope observing and more. For pre-teens through adults. Free to members of Lake Erie Nature & Science Center.

Lake Erie Nature & Science Center, 28728 Wolf Rd., Bay Village

Friday, Dec. 21, 7-9:30 p.m.
HEALING CONCERT AND LABYRINTH WALK

All are invited to celebrate the joy of the Christmas season and to remember and proclaim that peace in the world is possible among people of goodwill. The evening will include songs, stories and healing, and an ancient Winter Solstice labyrinth walk ceremony honoring the sacred divine and her healing waters. Register online at uscwestlake.org. A love offering of \$10 is suggested. Call 440-835-0400 with questions.

Unity Spiritual Center, 23855 Detroit Rd., Westlake

Monday, Dec. 31, 8 p.m.
NEW YEAR'S EVIL MASQUERADE BALL

The Cleveland Haunt Club invites you to come dressed in your most chilling masquerade attire! Raffles, prizes, music & dancing. Appetizers & cash bar. Hotel restaurant is offering a dinner package. This is a separate option. Guest rooms \$99. Tickets \$50 (\$45 for Cleveland Haunt Club members). Space is limited. Email clevehauntclub@gmail.com.

DoubleTree Westlake, Canterbury/Dover Room, 1100 Crocker Rd.

Wednesday, Jan. 2, 1-2:30 p.m.
FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

Members of Cuyahoga West Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society will offer assistance to the public. If you have data recorded to pedigree and/or family group sheets, please bring these forms with you, to help volunteers help you.

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