



Westlake Community Service Officer retires after 40 years of police service

PHOTO BY ROBERT ROZBORIL

Westlake Community Service Officer Rodney Stemen, left, and Chief Kevin Bielozer share a laugh at Stemen's retirement ceremony.

by ROBERT ROZBORIL

After 40 years of service to the Westlake Police Department, Community Services Officer Rodney Stemen made the tearful decision to retire.

Westlake Mayor Dennis M. Clough and Chief Kevin Bielozer spoke glowingly of Stemen's work as an auxiliary officer and

a CSO over his career during a small retirement ceremony on Friday, Oct. 29. Mayor Clough recalled first meeting Stemen as a candidate for City Council in the early 1980s. Chief Bielozer noted that Stemen was a formidable opponent during a past defensive tactics training exercise.

Stemen reflected on some of his cherished memories

from his four-decade career with the city, including one instance near Christmas time when he purchased a tire for a mother whose car was in need of repairs that she could not afford. He said he believes there is good in everyone and that philosophy motivated him to strive to engender goodwill with everyone he encountered. ◆

Winning entries in the 8th Annual Scarecrow Festival

Westlake residents were invited to put their creativity to the test during the 8th Annual Scarecrow Festival. Entrants were given a scarecrow building kit to be completed and delivered back to the Westlake Recreation Center by the last week of October to be dis-

played for all to enjoy.

A balloon-toting "IT" clown scarecrow won first prize for "Scariest" entry. The "Most Original" title went to a Jack-o-Lantern-headed scarecrow with a friendly crow on its shoulder. And last but not least, a tattered black bird scarecrow, submitted by

the Tomkalski family, won for "Most Creative."

Two of the winning entries came courtesy of United Consumer Financial Services. The UCFS IT department entered the "IT" scarecrow (fittingly) and the company's underwriting department assembled the one crowned Most Original. ◆



This scarecrow took top honors in the Most Original" category.



An "IT" clown scarecrow won first prize for "Scariest" entry.



A blackbird scarecrow was crowned "Most Creative."

PHOTOS BY ROBERT ROZBORIL

Car wash leads to rescued dogs finding new homes

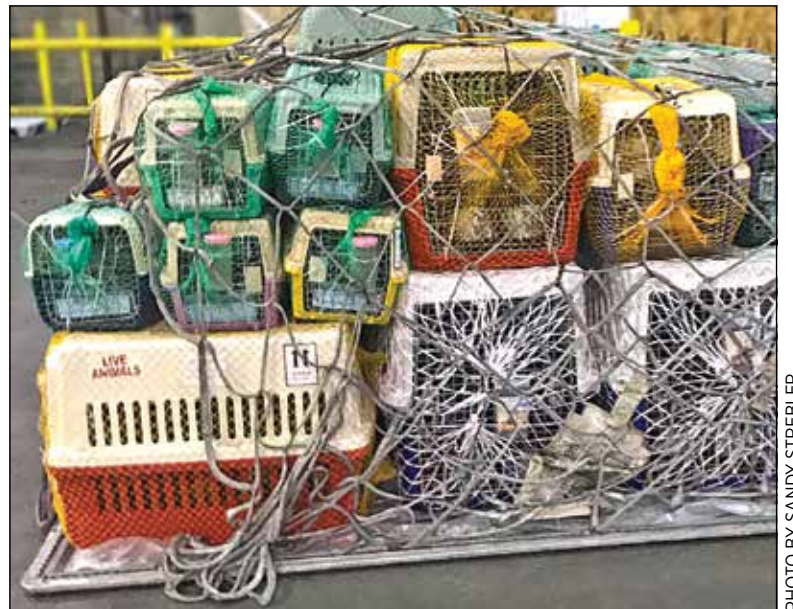


PHOTO BY SANDY STREBLER

Cages of dogs rescued from poor living conditions in China arrived at JFK airport to begin their new lives in the U.S.

by NANCY BROWN

An article published in the Observer in August shared the story of dedicated educators, their students and parents that helped less-fortunate four-legged creatures have a happy ever after. Bethesda Childcare Center in Bay Village held a car wash on July 24, raising \$750 for Lucky Paws and Golden Treasures animal rescues.

Golden Treasures golden retriever rescue was able to secure and accept dogs from a meat market in China. Their journey was stressful. Some of the dogs were relinquished by family, others were rescued from packed dog-meat farms and off the streets.

A dedicated rescue group in China legally coordinated their complete vetting, boarding and transporting to arrive safely in the U.S. Several more dogs will be arriving in the next few months.

Upon arrival, the dogs received additional vetting for health check clearance and were then passed off to foster families to decompress and begin new lives. Some are fostering right here in the Westshore area and will begin the process of seeking their forever homes.

I applaud the community for supporting the Bethesda children and staff so that they can be part of a really big rescue story and plant the seeds and memories of the importance of kindness and compassion. ◆

DIGGING DOVER – BAY VILLAGE

History of Dover Bay Park's Dodge Cottage

by WILLIAM KRAUSE

One would never suspect that the attractive French style home at 24715 Wolf Road (just east of Forestview) was once a Shingle-style summer cottage on Lake Erie for the prominent Dodge family of Cleveland.

Douglas Dodge's ancestor Samuel was a carpenter who

built a barn for an early settler in Cleveland. The settler paid for the barn with land instead of cash. Land on what would later become Playhouse Square. This helped make Samuel Dodge's descendants wealthy. East 17th Street was once known as Dodge Street and there is still an alley named Dodge Court behind the theatres.

► See DODGE page 4

Westlake Community Services hosts Halloween Parade of Cars

by ROBERT ROZBORIL

Staffers and volunteers passed out treats to patrons at the Westlake Senior and Community Services Center on Thursday, Oct. 29, as part of the facility's first Halloween Parade of Cars event.

Patrons were asked to dress up in their "Halloween Best" and to bring cereal boxes to donate to the Westlake Food Pantry as the price of admission for the event.

Staffers and volunteers from the organizations sponsoring the Halloween-themed event showed up dressed for the occasion as well. ●



A driver drops off cereal boxes at the Westlake Senior and Community Services Center.

PHOTO BY ROBERT ROZBORIL

Bay High School honored for college preparedness

Bay High School was recently recognized as a 2020 College Success Award winner from GreatSchools.org. This award honors public high schools doing an extraordinary job preparing students for college and beyond. Bay High School was one of only 2,158

public high schools across the country that was recognized.

GreatSchools.org is a national nonprofit organization that provides ratings and school information to help parents find the right school for their family, and educational opportunities for their children. ●

Recycle your campaign signs

Westlake and Bay Village residents are encouraged to recycle political signs after Election Day. Signs may be dropped off at the Bay Village Service Garage at 31300 Naigle Road on Nov. 4, 5 and 6 between the hours of 7:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. There will be a drop-off box near the front entrance of Westlake City Hall, 27700 Hilliard Blvd., from Nov. 2 to Nov. 13. ●

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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 the participation of the 1,100+ community volunteers. All Westlake and Bay Village residents are invited to participate.

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.

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QUESTIONS? Contact: staff@wbvobserver.com or 440-409-0114

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

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WESTLAKE SENIOR & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Reinvention in challenging times

by LYDIA GADD

The year 2020 provided us with plenty of routine busters. Essential employees adapted to plexiglass, masks and sealed-off water fountains. Others worked from home with house slippers and Zoom a part of their new normal. Parents of school-aged children juggled classroom

instruction into their work-life balance. And these were the lucky ones, because they still had jobs.

This chaos leads to the road of reassessment. As long as we are already pushed out of our comfort zones, we may as well start dreaming about the next chapter. Whether that next chapter is retirement, a career shift, or the process of recovering

from a job/income loss there are ways to prepare for successful life transitions.

On Friday, Nov. 13, at 11:00 a.m. (consider your lunch hour if you are still working) the Westlake Center for Community Services is featuring a free Zoom presentation on this topic. The program facilitator, Christine Stadler, local business advisor and founder of the consulting services firm BDS Inc., helps us explore the reinvention challenge.

The program promises to identify practical steps for choosing your next path. To reinvent means letting go of those things currently holding

you back from something that truly satisfies you. Whatever word you choose: transitioning, reinventing or rewiring, the dynamics are the same. You reach a turning point in your life when outside forces and an inner unsettledness combine, convincing you that you need a new path.

Call 440-899-3544 to reserve your Zoom spot and join fellow community members who are also negotiating life transitions.

For more information about this and other virtual program offerings, look for our newsletter at www.cityofwestlake.org/community-services. ●

Flag retirement ceremony planned

by JIM POTTER

Stan Zeager, commander of the American Legion Post 385, reminds everyone that flags are being collected for retirement on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. Flags can be deposited in the collection box located on the front porch of the post home, 695 Cahoon Road, Westlake, next to the White Oaks Restaurant.

Each year the Bay American Legion retires flags on Flag Day and Veterans Day. Last year over 1,000 flags were retired using official retirement protocol at the post home. ●



PHOTO BY JIM POTTER

THE DIGITAL WORLD

Digital-world butler to your rescue

by TAK SATO

I wish I could have a butler who will do all my assigned household chores so I can be a 21st century couch potato. In the real world, I am “Tak who does windows [grudgingly]” but I’m more comfortable cleaning “Windows” in the digital world, i.e. the operating system from Microsoft for the computers.

In the digital world, though, I already have butlers and that probably goes for you too. We don’t have to be millionaires and the only requirement is that we own a computer, smartphone, tablet, or any wired or wireless (Wi-Fi) gadget that connects us to the digital world.

The latter is basically an electronic object prefixed with the word “smart,” like “Smart TV” or “Smart Speaker.” All smart gadgets connect to the internet, aka the cloud, and can be controlled by the owner (Smart Plug for example) or stream content, i.e. TV shows, movies, music, etc. like what Smart TV does for our enjoyment.

I’m certain many of you use these butlers, aka digital assistants, already. Names such as Siri (Apple), Alexa (Amazon), Google Assistant, and Cortana (Microsoft) are at your service. You can ask questions such as “When does the Westlake Porter Public Library close

today?” or give commands like “Call the Bay Village branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library.”

Digital assistants did evolve over the past nine years since Siri first arrived on the fifth iteration of Apple’s smartphone (iPhone 4S) in 2011. By itself, their core competency is literally to assist you. For example instead of googling “where is the closest ATM?” into the small virtual keyboard on your smartphone while driving, you can summon your digital assistant verbally by a trigger word/phrase such as “Alexa,” “Hey Google,” “Hey Siri,” or “Hey Cortana” followed by your query and it will fetch your answer.

The true power of a digital assistant is realized when it works in conjunction with other apps or smart devices. In the above query example, if you had an Android smartphone, Google Assistant will not only tell you the closest ATM but also ask you whether you want turn-by-turn directions using the app Google Maps on your smartphone.

Another example might be to tell your digital assistant to increase the temperature on your Smart Thermostat which is a smart device that falls under the Smart Home umbrella.

Like Oscar’s Best Picture winning movie which not only has a fine plot

but a great leading actor/actress and a superb supporting cast, digital assistants work well with other apps and smart devices to accomplish things asked by the owner. If you haven’t already, you may want to explore what digital assistants can do on their own and with other apps and smart devices. Just be cognizant that, explicitly or implicitly, they are collecting your usage data and many privacy advocates often question these digital assistants always listening for the trigger word/phrase. ●

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DODGE

from front page

Douglas Dodge's name does not appear on any recorded land deeds in Cuyahoga County, though his name does appear on a lawsuit his family filed against the City of Cleveland regarding their downtown land. It appears that he may have preferred golf to land ownership. Douglas' ownership of the cottage is based on information in the Bay Village Historical Society archives and their book "Bay Village: A Way of Life." He is listed as one of the organizers of the Colony and a golfer. The names that do appear on the Dover Bay Park Association land records include Washington H. Lawrence, Myron T. Herrick and James Parmalee, other important Clevelanders of the Gilded Age.

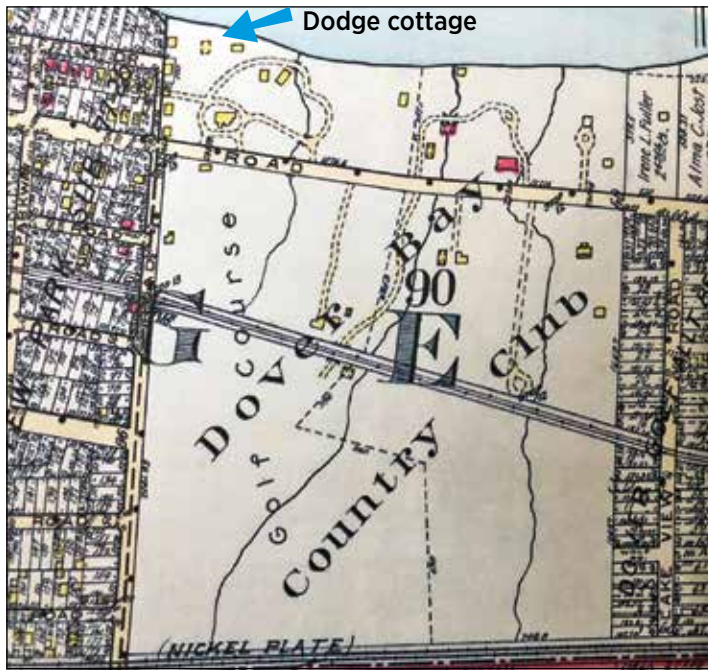
Myron Herrick, one-time governor of Ohio and U.S. ambassador to France, was Mr. Dodge's summer neighbor at Dover Bay Colony. It appears that some of the cottage owners were permitted to construct cottages on the Park Association land without owning the land beneath them. In fact, the Park Association sold virtually all 33 acres of the park back to Washington Lawrence for \$5,200 in 1892. One exception was a 40-foot by 100-foot parcel deeded to Myron Herrick by the Association on July 27, 1892.

According to an atlas published by George Cram in 1892, it was in the summer of 1892 when the cottages surrounding the Lawrences' original circa 1889 wood-framed cottage were first occupied by their illustrious owners.

It is safe to say that the Dodge cottage was among those first cottages constructed in 1892 since it occupies the most desirable lakeside location. It may be the cottage depicted just west of the dance pavilion in the 1892 artist's rendering which accompanies the article in the atlas, though the depiction does not exactly match later photographs. We have been unable to determine how long the Dodges owned their cottage.

In 1899 the brick-and-stone Lawrence mansion which we know today as the core of the Cashelmara development was largely completed. When Mr. Lawrence died in 1900 it was still partially unfinished. Descendants lived in it until 1948 when it was sold to the Sheppard family for conversion into Bay View Hospital.

By 1943 the dance pavilion which had been next to the Dodge cottage was gone. In 1951 the rest of the lakeshore property was split into lots for sale and a new wing was added to the mansion for the hospital.



1920 Hopkins Plat book showing Dodge cottage as small yellow rectangle on the lakeshore in the extreme northwest corner of Lawrence land.

This may have been when the City of Cleveland obtained the land northeast of Clague and Lake roads. They eventually constructed a utility building in virtually the exact location

that the Dodge cottage once occupied.

The couple who had the house moved were Russell A. Swanson, assistant city engineer for Cleveland, and his



Dodge cottage on moving day.

wife, Agnes. He probably saw an opportunity as a utility engineer when the City of Cleveland acquired the property and the cottage was destined to be demolished. He had the cottage moved the half-mile on Wolf Road to its new location next to Forestview school (since demolished).

A newspaper clipping at the time noted that some broken timbers and rain-

softened ground resulted in the house blocking traffic on a busy Wolf Road intersection for a day. Once it made it to its new location, they gutted the interior and made dramatic changes to the remaining shell, transforming it into a stylish 1960s French-inspired home. They had front doors salvaged from a Euclid Avenue mansion and a dramatic curved staircase to the second floor installed. Once completed, the project was featured in articles in both the Cleveland Press and Plain Dealer in 1961.

An interesting aside in the Cleveland Press article was a note that Mr. Swanson painted as a hobby and was a founder of an arts organization with friends, one of whom was named Jo Lawrence. Could she have been related to the Washington Lawrence family who once owned the land underneath Dodge cottage? In an amazing coincidence the newest owners of 24715 Wolf also have the Lawrence surname!

A more recent Plain Dealer article traces Washington Lawrence's family to Robert Lawrence of Lancashire, England, who was knighted by King Richard I. Time for research on Ancestry.com! ●



Artist's rendering of Dover Bay Park in Cram's 1892 atlas, Dodge cottage is shown right of the dance pavilion.



Dodge cottage in its original location at Dover Bay Park.



Front view of transformed Dodge cottage today (2020) at 24715 Wolf Road.



Undated photograph from Lake Road looking north toward the west end of Dover Bay Park, circa 1900.

PHOTO BY WILLIAM KRAUSE

SPORTING VIEWS

Faker ... or Baker?

by JEFF BING

I am often amazed by the fickleness of your average sports fan. You know, like when the Tribe loses 8 in a row (as they did earlier this fall), and most of us nod in agreement that, yep, these guys just don't have the offense to hang with the big boys in MLB.

You know, like when the Tribe rattles off 8 wins in 9 games (as they also did earlier this fall), and most of us nod in agreement that, yep, this team just might go all the way with the pitching depth they have.

And those scenarios played out *one right after the other* only a little over a month or so ago. And then, when the Indians were taken back behind the woodshed and spanked – unmercifully, I might add – by the New York Yankees, I wanted to take Shane Bieber, Brad Hand, and the rest of that “deep” pitching staff and deep-six ‘em. And, make no mistake, the wounds are still fresh enough that I haven’t really changed my mind yet.

I wish I could stand here and write, in a condescending tone, that yours truly is above all that, but obviously, I can't.

I’ve been pretty much the same with Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield:

In week one, the guy looked horrific (as did the rest of the team). Baker looked every bit as bad as he had during his lowest moments of last year’s train wreck of a season, and there were a plethora of lows to choose from. Prior

to the Ravens game, I had been hoping Baker’s poor performance could be partly attributed to inept head coach Freddie Kitchens. That didn’t appear to be as much of a factor as I’d hoped.

Baker appeared to get his act together in the 4 games that followed. The opponents were of lesser quality, to be sure, but for a city which was still feeling the sting of 1-15 and 0-16 seasons, no one was suggesting we NOT accept 4 consecutive victories. More importantly, Mayfield had seemed to grow more confident with each victory and showed flashes of the talent he displayed in his rookie season.

Then, in week 6, the Steelers game happened, and the Browns (and Baker) did a pratfall similar to the week 1 debacle. It hit most fans like a ton of bricks. I knew going in that we might lose, but I thought the Browns would give the Steelers a game, and it was over as soon as it started, thanks in part to a silly Mayfield pick. Back to the drawing board, right? And, by the way, Baker’s a bum.

Who would have guessed Baker would rebound against an improving Bengals team with a career-best 5 touchdown passes? He looked as good as any quarterback in that game. By the time you read this, the Browns will have played the Raiders, a team many felt would be a great measuring stick for the team and Baker, as the Raiders seem to be improving concurrently with the Browns.

So who showed up at QB for the Browns against the Raiders? Baker ... or a faker? ●

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BHS Key Club welcomes 71 new members

The Bay High School Key Club welcomed 71 new members on Thursday, Oct. 22. The induction took place outdoors in the high school courtyard. New members received a gift bag that included a club T-shirt and membership pin.

Induction project chairs Zoe Cox, Bay High School Key Club president, and Meredith Florez, Bay High School Key Club webmaster, led the event, which was “designed

to develop leadership and celebrate a new group of teens committed to serve others,” according to Anita Bauknecht, Bay High School family and consumer sciences teacher and Bay High School Key Club advisor.

Bay High School Key Club has 151 members and is sponsored by Bay Village Kiwanis. Bay High School Key Club meets virtually every Thursday at 3 p.m.



Meredith Florez, Jhelysse Anthony, Sara Powers and Jackson Schelzig welcome new Key Club members.

Westlake Porter Public Library Upcoming early November events

by ELAINE WILLIS

Following is Westlake Porter Public Library's early November 2020 calendar of events. All programs are subject to change. Please check westlakelibrary.org or follow the library on Facebook and Twitter (@WestlakePorter) for the latest updates.

Wednesday, Nov. 4 (11-11:30 a.m.) **Sing and Dance! (Live)** – Join Miss Nancy on Zoom! Participants must provide an email address in order to receive Zoom instructions which will be sent the day of the program. Ages 2-6.

Wednesday, Nov. 4 (6:30-8:30 p.m.) **Horror Film Club: Online Edition** – The Horror Film Club returns for another online viewing! New members are always welcome, but children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult. Please register. The Club will meet online using the video sharing site Watch2Gether. To participate, please check the event on the library's website as early as 6 p.m. on the day of the program. There will be a link to take you to the site. You do not need an account with Watch2Gether to participate.

Thursdays, Nov. 5 and 12 (11-11:30 a.m.) **Library at 11 (Live)** – Join us on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube to see what family friendly video we have in store for you today!

Thursday, Nov. 5 (1-7 p.m.) **American Red Cross Bloodmobile**

Friday, Nov. 6 (All Day) **Got Science? Supply Pick Up** – Join Got Science and learn about Newton's Law of Motion. Kits will be available beginning today. Grades 1-2. Please register. Registering for this event will also register you for the Zoom event on Nov. 13. Participants must provide an email address to receive Zoom instructions, which will be sent the day of the event.

Friday, Nov. 6 (11-11:30 a.m.) **Foodies at 11** – Have you ever wondered if all those kitchen hacks work? Join us on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube as Miss Cathy and Miss Natalie test some popular kitchen hacks for you!

Monday, Nov. 9 (All Day) **Jewelry Junction: Fall Leaf Earrings (Take Home Kit)** – Pick up directions and supplies to create a pair of silver-plated fall leaf earrings using metal leaves with a hanging bead. No video or online program. Please register.

Monday, Nov. 9 (9 a.m.-8 p.m.) **Teen Craft Pick Up** – Stop by Youth Services to pick up a craft kit while supplies last.

Grades 7-12.

Monday, Nov. 9 (11-11:30 a.m.) **Creating Characters: NaNoWriMo Month Writing Tutorial (Live)** – Join us on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube for a writing tutorial series to support your NaNoWriMo month writing goals. For tweens, teens and adults.

Tuesday, Nov. 10 (11-11:30 a.m.) and Wednesday, November 11 (6:30-7 p.m.) **Family Storytime (Live)** – Join us on Zoom for an interactive storytime featuring books, rhymes, songs and movement. For families with children up to 2-6, siblings welcome. Please register. Participants must provide an email address to receive Zoom instructions on the day of the program.

Tuesday, Nov. 10 (1-3 p.m.) **Career Transition: Best Job Search Letters (Live)** – Sharpen your pencils and your writing skills. Learn about letter writing techniques for sending the best cover letters, cold call or networking letters, and thank you and follow-up letters. Learn the keywords that may be used to screen candidates in or out, and what employers are looking for in a letter. Get noticed and receive that all important interview! Please register. Participants must provide an email to receive Zoom instructions for joining the meeting.

Tuesday, Nov. 10 (7-8:45 p.m.) **Tuesday Evening Book Discussion (Live)** – Join us on Zoom for a discussion of “The Reckoning” by John Grisham. Please register to receive a Zoom invitation and instructions. Participants without a computer, tablet or smartphone can join using a traditional phone.

Wednesday, Nov. 11 (11-11:30 a.m.) **Storywalk (Live)** – Join us on Facebook, YouTube or Instagram for a virtual tour of WPPL's Storywalk at the Westlake Recreation Center.

Wednesday, Nov. 11 (4-5 p.m.) **Teen Writers Group: Writers Room (Live)** – An online meet-up for teens in grades 7-12. This is an hour to just write, with the last 15 minutes reserved for any writer in need of some group brainstorming. Please register. Participants must provide an email address to receive Zoom instructions, which will be sent the day of the program.

Thursdays, Nov. 12 and 19 (3:30-4:30 p.m.) **WPPL Roblox Club** – Love Roblox? Then WPPL has a club for you! We have some private servers set up

for tweens in grades 4-6 to hang out with their friends and enjoy some of the most popular games via Zoom. Please register.

Thursday, Nov. 12 (2-2:45 p.m.) **Yoga with Miss Jen (Live)** – Calm your body, mind, and spirit in this live Zoom yoga class taught by Ms. Jen, certified yoga instructor. Recommended for kids and their families! Registration begins Nov. 5. Participants must provide an email to receive Zoom instructions, which will be sent the day of the program.

Friday, Nov. 13 (All Day) **Kindness Craft Bag Pick Up** – “Choose Kindness.” Join us in celebrating World Kindness Day. Stop by the Youth Services Department to pick up a bag of assorted crafts. While supplies last.

Friday, Nov. 13 (4-4:45 p.m.) **Got Science? (Live)** – Join us on Zoom and explore Newton's Law of Motion by conducting simple experiments! Grades 1-2.

Please register. Participants will need to provide an email to receive Zoom instructions, and will also need to pick up supplies in the Youth Services Department beginning Nov. 6.

Saturday, Nov. 14 (All Day) **Mystery STEAM Bag Challenge Supply Pick Up** – Pick up your Mystery STEAM Bag Supplies at the Youth Services Desk. Grades 1 and 2. Registration begins Nov. 7. Registering for the supplies also registers you for the Mystery STEAM Bag Challenge on Nov. 21.

Saturday, Nov. 14 (11-11:30 a.m.) **Pokemon Fun! (Live)** – Join Miss Rachel for a Pokemon Zoom meeting! We'll play a guess that Pokemon game and have time for show and tell. Feel free to bring a favorite Pokemon card or toy for show and tell! Registration begins Nov. 7.

To register for any of the programs, visit westlakelibrary.org/events. ●

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**BAY VILLAGE
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Nomination period opens for annual Bay Village honors

by TARA WENDELL

The final months of the year are an opportune time for reflection and appreciation. While 2020 is a year that most would rather just forget, one can always find hope in the good deeds of others. Whether it's a neighbor, member of a civic organization or fellow parishioner, those that give of themselves to help others deserve a moment of recognition.

The Bay Village Community Council has just opened the nomination period for the annual Bay Village Citizen of the Year and Project of the Year awards, to honor those who have made a difference in the community.

The Community Council will accept nominations until Friday, Jan. 22, and the selection committee will meet shortly afterward to choose this year's winner.

Citizen of the year nominees, either individual or couple, must be Bay Village residents that have provided significant community service without monetary reward. Although not necessarily an annual designation, special projects will be considered for Project of the Year based on community impact and the involvement of volunteers and organizations.

Nomination forms are available at wbvobserver.com, City Hall, the Bay Village Branch Library, and from members of the Bay Village Community Council. Completed forms may be submitted via email to tara@wbvobserver.com or mailed to Bay Village Community Council, 350 Dover Center Road, Bay Village, OH 44140.

The Bay Village Community Council is where Bay's civic groups come together. Representatives from member groups meet quarterly to discuss upcoming events and initiatives, share ideas and look for collaboration opportunities. Annual dues are normally \$20 per organization, but the Council has decided to waive the fee for 2021 in light of budgetary constraints caused by the pandemic.

For more information about the Bay Village Community Council or the Citizen of the Year/Project of the Year awards, please email tara@wbvobserver.com. ●

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Pete Mitchell: The man behind the ice cream

by DIANE REHOR

There's nothing sweeter than feeling like the most important person in the room! And that's how Pete Mitchell makes you feel. "It's all about the relationships," says Pete. "I tell myself to this day, 'Slow down, enjoy people and don't rush through things.'"

I met Pete in passing years ago. I wanted to know more about the man, one of two brothers behind the ice cream. During our conversation, Pete reflected on his journey to growing this community staple. "When my brother, Mike, and I first opened our ice cream shop in Westlake 21 years ago, we just thought it would be a fun, small business to be creative with," says Pete.

What surprised Pete was that it was so much more. "Ice cream is such a nostalgic product that people can develop memories around." As many of us can attest, it's associated with celebrating a dance recital, a school play, or a big win against a football rival. "We did not see that coming when we got started, but it's a very rewarding part of what we do," says Pete.

"My brother and I feel so fortunate. We enjoy what we do very much," says Pete. "The joy of our work is in the relationships we've made and the positive contribution we try to make in each community."

Was being an ice cream entrepreneur always in the plans? "Definitely not – we stumbled into this idea," says Pete. "Our goal has never been to become bigger than our home city of Cleveland. We like that things feel personal and intimate. We see how we make a positive impact in the

community."

Pete's mother was very influential in shaping these values. "She was a single mother and a speech therapist in the Cleveland Public Schools System," says Pete. "She worked with kids who had difficult challenges and was always an advocate for people. She taught not only me, but my sister and brother to treat people well and see the opportunity within each person."

But values and skills are two different things. "I wouldn't say we were natural leaders," says Pete.

Pete reminded me he began his career as a salesperson. He only had to manage himself. "When we first opened the Westlake shop in October 1999, it was my brother and me and four part-time high school students.

As we grew, it took time for me to get comfortable leading and bringing out the best effort in a group of people."

How does Pete maintain his passion? "By far the two most rewarding things are receiving an unsolicited compliment about our friendliness and making progress over time!" says Pete.

What has been the biggest take away of Pete's 21-year adventure? To no surprise, Pete answered "relationships!"

"Just a few days ago, I was thinking about one customer, Tom. Early on in



PHOTO BY ANGELO MERENDINO

The owners of Mitchell's Ice Cream – Pete, standing, and Mike Mitchell.

our business, Tom, visited the Westlake store daily to 'take the treatment' as he called it: a large sundae, vanilla ice cream, strawberry topping, Spanish peanuts and whipped cream. He would order that for years. If we weren't busy, my brother and I would sit and chat. He was charming. Years passed; Tom relocated, traveling to Cleveland on occasion.

I was in our Solon shop six months ago, and guess who tapped me on the shoulder? Tom, ordering the same 'treatment' as always. Just yesterday, I received a really nice text from Tom with a photo of himself at our new Westlake shop, congratulating us. These are the things we can do for decades to come. When I'm old and done, these are the things I'll look back on and feel good about." ●

Youth basketball league to begin at Westlake Rec

Westlake Recreation is offering a youth basketball league for children in grades K-12. This program is open to any child who is a member of Westlake Recreation, lives in or attends school in Westlake.

The program is designed to instruct the fundamentals of basketball while having fun. Participants in the kindergarten program must be currently enrolled in kindergarten. Volunteer coaches are needed for all divisions. Head coaches will receive one \$20 household credit and assistant coaches receive a \$10 household credit. Practices will be held one day during the

week with games being played on Saturdays.

Practice begins the week of Dec. 7. Games begin on Jan. 9. Season ends on March 6.

Deadline to register is Nov. 15.

All programs are run with CDC and Cuyahoga County Board of Health guidelines.

For more information, call the Westlake Recreation Center at 440-808-5700, ext. 3426, or visit www.cityofwestlake.org/Recreation. ●

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Shining a light on community accomplishments

Congratulations to the Observer for continuing to cover community news in a positive light. In view of some recent columns in local publications concerning Bay Village and the other western communities, it's good to read cheering news of what we accomplish on a continuing basis.

These are difficult and challenging times for everyone, no matter what the personal situations may be. It's refreshing to have our community and residents in a good light.

– Doris Gorgas,
Bay Village Citizen of the Year 2014

**Gobble.
Gobble.
Gobble.**

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