

West Life

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680 Moore Rd. Ste. 206, Avon Lake, OH 44012
(440) 871-5797 • WestLifeNews.com

Published every Wednesday
by P.I.C.T Partnership (USPS 675-560)
Periodical Postage Paid at Avon Lake, Ohio 44012

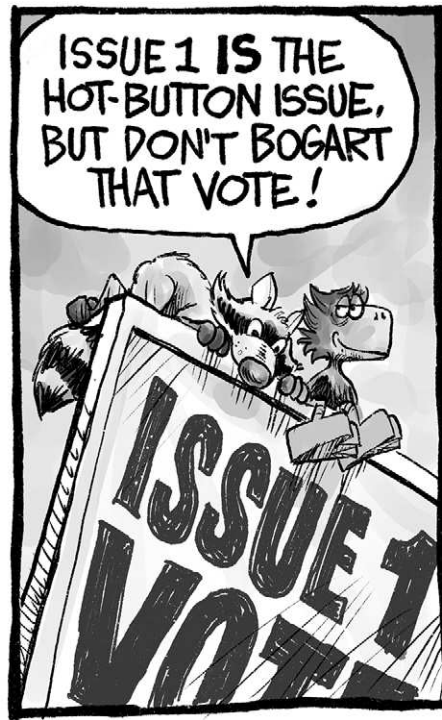
Winner of the Ohio News Media Association
Newspaper of the Year in 2021

West Life is a newspaper of General
Circulation in Avon, Avon Lake,
Bay Village, North Olmsted,
North Ridgeville, Fairview Park,
Rocky River and Westlake.
Subscriptions \$52.50 a year



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We also use environmentally friendly soy ink in our printing.

West Life News does not offer refunds on subscriptions.
POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS



Commentary

National days features days of liquid refreshment

For those who like to enjoy having something to drink, the next four days is your cup of tea.

Every day of the year has four or five events that are “national days.”

The last four days of September involve things to drink. Today is National Chocolate Milk Day. This is a day that will definitely be celebrated in elementary schools and Air Force bases. It’s a day to celebrate with pre-made jugs of the wonderful substance or to purchase your can of Quik or Hershey’s so it can be celebrated on other days as well.

No one knows the origins of National Chocolate Milk Day, but those companies that produce it are milking it for all its worth.

Thursday is National Drink Beer Day, like there’s only going to be one day to celebrate this. Many people celebrate this on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays as well as this Thursday.

Perhaps it should be combined with National Pretzel Day, which everyone knows the next one is April 26.

Instead of National Drink Beer Day it should become National Try A Different Brand of Beer Day With One You Can Savor Day. Bud drinkers could find that drinking a stout is something more than getting a buzz.

Friday’s Day is not necessary. It’s a lot like National Drink Beer Day. Friday is National Coffee Day. Coffee, the drink you only rent, is the morning drink of most of America. According to the website Joe’s Garage, 66% of adults in the United States drink coffee – and perhaps about 32% are liars – and that 400 million cups are drunk each day.

Coffee contains caffeine, a natural diuretic, which many people need each morning for that get-up-and-go necessary to make it through the day.

If you do not drink the stuff, there’s alternatives: Nothing is better than coffee-flavored ice cream.

Saturday is the ultimate Fall day: National Mulled Cider Day. Ohio is one of the top-10 producers of apples in the nation, thanks to the legendary Johnny Appleseed. His real name was John Chapman, and he did exist. He brought apple seeds to several states including Ohio. His purpose was not for the settlers to have the crispy treats to eat or make pies. Instead, he wanted them to make hard cider. It was a way the early American could store a large harvest.

Today, most cider is non-alcoholic. It can be purchased at any grocer.

But don’t confuse it with apple juice. According to Southern Living, “Apple cider is fresh, unfiltered, and often unpasteurized. It’s also considered a seasonal drink and can be hard to find outside of the autumn months. Apple juice, on the other hand, is filtered and pasteurized, which gives it a longer shelf life, a sweeter taste, and a smoother texture.”

Celebrate these next few days. The great thing is you can enjoy any of these on any day.

Letters to the editor

West Life reserves the right to accept or reject any Letter to the Editor. Each letter requires a name, address and daytime phone number for verification purposes. Letters should be no more than 400 words.

Letters for publication on Wednesday must be in the West Life office on the prior Thursday at 5 p.m at 680 Moore Road, Avon Lake, 44012 or emailed to letters@westlifeneews.com

Lake Erie Nature and Science Center shows compassion to all animals

It was one of those weeks when it seemed everything was upsetting. Those weeks are perfectly normal — not something to whine about, but rather to “wine” about (sorry, I couldn’t help that).

Occasionally, life stresses and emergencies lead to learning something wonderful and meeting really impressive people. Such was my experience two weeks ago. I was already on-edge because I had broken my hand — the first bone I had broken in a (very) long and apparently lucky life. I was upset not because of pain, which was minimal, but because it was very difficult for me to type. Writing and editing are my life and have been for 40 years. Words are my thing. I don’t even think about how they flow from my brain to my fingers to the screen.

With the fingers of my right hand immobilized, I was tense and upset. I couldn’t type. I could write. I couldn’t edit. I didn’t want to deal with any other emotional upsets as I tried to assure myself that lots and lots of people have it worse than me.

Four days after my fall, as life would happen, was a Monday morning. My morning coffee was interrupted by a cacophony of barking from my dogs who were doing their business in the backyard. They had surrounded a squirrel who



Susan Condon Love
Managing editor

looked scared. My husband and I rushed out and got the dogs inside. The squirrel looked stunned but fine. We finished our coffee and took off for the office.

Seven hours later, I pulled into the driveway and my heart sank. The squirrel was still in the driveway. It was alive, but obviously injured. Its right hind leg looked scraped and while it was moving, it didn’t seem to have much power.

I was not going to let the little thing be in pain. I quickly called the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center in Bay Village. I had done a story a couple of years ago about their rescues of owls and other birds who had been hit by cars and in other accidents.

“Yes,” said the kind man answering the phone at the Wildlife Education & Rehabilitation Program. “We will be glad to look at the squirrel if you can get it to us.”

After a wild chase worthy of the Keystone Cops, my husband and I managed to get the little guy into a box. I had put a blanket in there for comfort. My

husband drove off to the wildlife center, which is on Wolf Road.

He came home with a business card for the center and assurances from the workers there that they would do their best for the squirrel. We should call in about five to seven days, they said.

Of course I couldn’t wait. But I had another reason for calling. I wanted to talk to the people working at such a wonderful and humane center. I connected with Kyle Koprowski, the lead wildlife specialist. He was the one who had talked me into getting the little guy into the box a couple of days prior.

“On average, per year, we usually take in close to 1,800 animals,” he said. Most, he said, are brought in during the spring when it is baby season. “Right now we are seeing about seven intakes a day. It just depends. Sometimes days are quiet and we see like three. And sometimes we get 12. But no more than I would say 40 a week.”

There are two full-time employees and two part-time workers at the center. “We are certified and trained under a couple of different organizations” such as the Ohio Wildlife Rehabilitation Association and the International Wildlife Rehabilitation

Turn to Love on Page 5

Remembering a life well-lived and a father to emulate

My dad passed this August, concluding a long, satisfying life of coaching, teaching and grandfathering. He was from a small town in Pennsylvania, where his dad was — among other things — a professional boxer who helped build roads under the Works Progress Administration of Roosevelt’s New Deal.

While he was never in the military, Dad had five uncles in World War II — and a German POW camp in his tiny town. It was enough to stoke an interest in history. The result was a long career spent teaching about our Revolutionary, Civil and World Wars — with plenty more in-between. Trying to create lesson plans (as well as football plays) during The Cuban Missile Crisis was always his most extraordinary story.

If I could select one thing to honor his career in education, it would be to urge you to help Veterans Day return to prominence in your community.

It’s a tall task, that’s for sure. Americans are nothing if not adept at distorting the true meanings of our most popular holidays. Our most patriotic observances are no exception.



Tim Piai
Freelance writer

As the guest speaker at the Chagrin Falls Memorial Day observance in 2022, Dad recalled the ceremonies of his youth, when parents of sons and daughters who had lost their life serving in the Armed Forces tossed wreaths off a downtown bridge and into the river. The stillness and silence that fell over the crowd as the wreaths floated downstream never left him.

This explained his genuine dismay when inexperienced organizers over the years began incorporating more and more tributes and speeches to all military members — lost or living — on Memorial Day. Moments of silence were now being held for aged veterans who had only recently passed away. “This is strictly for those who had made the ultimate sacrifice,” he would say with a wince — before surmising that if we were to stretch our Memorial Day remembrances,

that it should be for law enforcement and First Responders who also had lost their life serving their country.

To him, this was not only disrespecting Gold Star Parents and their dead, it was diluting the power of Veteran’s Day

You could imagine, then, his reaction when we’d come across a Fourth of July ceremony honoring our military.

“The Fourth of July is for the people!” he’d exclaim with the intensity of a firework finale. “The citizens are the heroes today. We signed the Declaration of Independence.”

To be sure, Dad valued our service members as much as anyone — probably more. And overpraising our military heroes is hardly a fault. He simply believed in the original intent of each observance, and the power that each day held.

Veterans Day is next up. It is November 11, and observed on the 10th. There are roughly 16 million living Veterans we could honor, and many more to remember.

Dad would thank you for reaching out, and spreading the word.

Tim Piai is a freelance writer in Rocky River. We offer him our condolences.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

On September 16th the School Bus Safety Alliance participated in Avon Lake's "Big Trucks Event" with an information table on the "Seat Belts in School Buses" Issue that's currently being reviewed by Governor DeWine's School Bus Safety Working Group. More than 250 attendees, mostly from the Avon Lake School District, enthusiastically signed a petition to the Governor/OH Legislators for having lap-shoulder seat belts in all school buses because these safety tools are: Effective; Safety Tested; Low Cost; Trustworthy; Widely Recommended (Ntsb+Oh Pta); Behavior Improvers; Permitted (Oh); Mandated In Some States; Mandated In Some School Districts (Beachwood); Found In Every Car; Protecting Priceless Children.

School districts are still making the same old, tired, easily disputed arguments, i.e. seats are costly; used as weapons, limit bus capacity, effect evacuation time, will not be used, and not able to be quickly released by the kids (Time it!). We are adults concerned about the safety of our kids. In the US, ~100,000 school buses have seat belts now with no significant resistance to their use apparent from the kids and/or their parents.

*Rudolph J. Breglia
Avon Lake*

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my support for the Lorain County Metro Parks' levy, Issue 23. As an employee with the park district, I am well aware of the struggles the organization faces on a daily basis to maintain and preserve

the parks at the level we expect. As a mother and lifetime county resident, I also know how important these spaces are to our environment, wildlife, watersheds, and social communities. The parks are only on the ballot every ten years, and the current levy is based on 2004 property evaluations. A replacement levy will bring that up to today's values and will allow the parks to continue to protect the prized natural resources we often take for granted. A lot has happened in the last 20 years, including rising costs and a pandemic, which made so many of us realize the importance of our parks. I am proud of my own hard work and role at the parks. I am proud of the public access the parks provide to ALL Lorain County residents. I am proud of the greener future the parks offer to my children. I am proud to VOTE FOR ISSUE 23!

*Mariah Deitz
Amherst, Ohio*

Love continued from Page 4

Council."

How do you handle wild animals in pain? Koprowski has a simple answer for that: "We always work with thick gloves that are either leather-based or sometimes welding gloves."

He added, "We're trained on how to handle animals, as well. We are all vaccinated for rabies. But we're always really careful."

While my contribution to their work day was a common gray squirrel, they have seen a selection of more exotic wildlife that has included a black-headed Grosbeak, which is a Western species more likely found in California, and even a long-tailed Jaeger, an Arctic species usually found in the tundra.

"We specialize in birds here," Kosproski said. "Plus, we're the only facility that's been taking birds for the last two years because of avian influenza. Even people in Lake County are driving all the way to us."

Each animal, however, receives the same compassionate care, whether it is a rare bird or a common squirrel. "You know, with wildlife rehabilitation, there is a lot of death, unfortunately. But it's always good to see a patient that was in critical (condition) that may bound back and get stable., and then we're able to release them in a correct habitat," he said.

"I think that's the best part of my job is to be able to see an animal get released back into the wild."

With that, I had the courage to ask about my squirrel. And I was sad to hear that he didn't make it. He might have fallen from a high tree in my neighbor's yard, but he had brain damage. But he didn't die alone and he didn't die a slow, painful death.

For that, I thank Koprowski and the Wildlife Education & Rehabilitation Program at the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center.

Contact this reporter at editor@westlifenews.com or 440-871-5797.

ROCKY RIVER

Parents updated on principal investigation

School district officials last week sent a letter to all parents of students, updating them on the investigation into the principal who was placed on administrative leave in June after a complaint was filed by the parent of a former high school student. Heath Horton continues to be on leave from his post as Kensington Intermediate School principal and is barred from school district properties during the investigation.

On Sept. 14, the Rocky River Police Department released a redacted 66-page report detailing a long series of text messages between the 42-year-old Horton and 17 former students with ages ranging from 17 to 23. In those messages, Horton said "we can never share our relationship through education."

He said he had to be viewed "as their uncle or family friend."

On Sept. 20, parents received a letter explaining the district's approach from Superintendent Michael Shoaf, explaining that the district has hired an independent investigator "experienced in matters such as this one."

The investigator "is in the process of reviewing the information contained in the redacted Investigative Report, verifying its veracity, collecting other relevant information, and compiling a written report to the Board of Education containing a substantiated account of events and recommendations. The independent investigator's work is underway, but it is not yet complete."

Shoaf addressed the feedback from parents, guardians and community members that "some of you may feel the work of the district's independent investigator is unnecessary. However, we can, without hesitation, assure you that the district is following the careful process required in such serious matters. Much is at stake here, and we must allow the independent investigator to complete a thorough and sound investigation. This report will help to inform short and long term decision-making regarding this matter and the issues it raises."

He also noted that the Sept. 21 school board agenda was not going to address the investigation.

ELECTION '23

A topsy-turvy Issue 1 over language, presentation

By **BARBARA MOONEY**

The signs to "Vote No" on Issue 1 that sprang up before the Aug. 8 statewide constitutional ballot issue are now "vote yes on Issue 1" signs, and vice versa, making it a topsy-turvy election year worthy of a Gilbert & Sullivan show.

But the issues aren't the stuff of light opera.

The Issue 1 that would have made it more difficult for citizens to put before voters proposed changes in the state constitution was soundly trounced by almost 60% of the electorate that voted "no" on it in August.

The Issue 1 that voters will consider for the Nov. 7 election is about reproductive rights and abortion protections and would weaken, if not nullify, the state's "heartbeat" law, which bans abortion as early as six weeks into a pregnancy. The same type of pro-choice, left-leaning voters who were asked last time to vote no on Issue 1 are now being asked to vote yes on the Nov. 7 Issue 1. The inverse is true for anti-abortion advocates.

The confusion between the two Issue 1 votes

was the impetus for legislation proposed last week by two Republican Ohio lawmakers, who are co-sponsoring HB 271. The legislation would require different numbers be assigned to the title of ballot issues, instead of starting at Issue 1 for each election.

At the same time, the ballot language for Issue 1 was still being deliberated as late as last week by the Ohio Supreme Court, which allowed the term "unborn child" instead of "fetus" to be referred to.

As ballots began to be sent out to overseas voters last week, the Issue 1 ballot language was stood at this, according to the Ohio Secretary of State's website, ohio.gov:

- A Self-Executing Amendment Relating to Abortion and Other Reproductive Decisions
- Proposed Constitutional Amendment, Proposed by Initiative Petition
- To enact Section 22 of Article 1 of the Constitution of the State of Ohio
- A majority yes vote is necessary for the amendment to pass.

The proposed amendment would:

- Establish in the Constitution of the State of Ohio an individual right to one's own reproductive medical treatment including but not limited to abortion;
- Create legal protections for any person or entity that assists a person with receiving reproductive medical treatment, including but not limited to abortion;
- Prohibit the State from directly or indirectly burdening, penalizing, or prohibiting abortion before an unborn child is determined to be viable, unless the State demonstrates that it is using the least restrictive means;
- Grant a pregnant woman's treating physician the authority to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether an unborn child is viable;

Only allow the State to prohibit an abortion after an unborn child is determined by a pregnant woman's treating physician to be viable and only if the physician does not consider the abortion necessary to protect the pregnant woman's life or health; and

Always allow an unborn child to be aborted at any stage of pregnancy, regardless of viability if, in the treating physician's determination, the abortion is necessary to protect the pregnant woman's life or health.

If passed, the amendment will become effective 30 days after the election.

Contact this reporter at bemooney.83@gmail.com or 440-871-5797.



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