

Lakewood Proves It's Cooler By The Lake

Lakewood Is The "Coolest" To Visit

by Margaret Brinich

When Travel and Leisure Magazine recently named Lakewood one of the "Coolest Suburbs Worth A Visit" the buzz around this national distinction here in Lakewood was full of excitement. I too was thrilled to see the word getting out about the place I have called home since before I can remember. The article was brief, with nine other suburbs on which to report, none of the articles were more than two or three sentences. Lakewood's description included our close proximity to Lake Erie, our successful (and unique) food scene, and of course, cultural diversity. Not bad, not bad at all for our moment in the sun in the national press.

Outside of Lakewoodites, what I heard in response to this positive press was a bit disheartening. Several of my colleagues from work were stunned by Travel and Leisure's declaration. They live in either far eastern or far western suburbs and were shocked that little Lakewood would be at the top of the list in a nationwide competition. To them Lakewood isn't an oasis of music, art, and food- mixed in with a vibrant culture of, as Travel and Leisure put it,



The view from Pier W, mentioned in the Travel and Lesiure's article about "Coolest Places To Visit." We also think a damn fine place to live, work and raise a family. "The young and urbane."

Given the national media attention Lakewood has received over the past year (e.g. the Business Week featuring Lakewood as "The Best Place To Raise Your Kids: Ohio") why do these accolades still equate to surprised faces when Lakewood turns out to be a great place to come visit? Until we help others see Lakewood through the same lens as the writer from Travel and Leisure or Business Week, Lakewood is a

pass through on the way home from work, a place to move away from when you decide to have kids.

Although these national magazine awards are a good start, a couple sentences will not change everyone's mind. We each have a part to play in promoting our City for the gem that it is. Take a moment to think about what you have seen in the past year, five years, twenty years as Lakewood has evolved. Talk up the good stuff, think

critically and discuss the not so good stuff with your neighbors and community groups.

We may be the best place to raise kids this year and a cool place to visit, but we need to work together a unified community to keep it that way. How can we make sure the list of Lakewood's assets continues to grow? How can we convince those in Lakewood who may not see the beauty of where our City and its residents stand today, that what we have to share is of value? That fostering our unique image in the midst of an ever expanding suburbia, is what draws the attention of both the national news and new residents?

I don't have an answer, but we can start by embracing and projecting what we find in our everyday lives as Lakewood residents. So ask yourself, what would you add to the list of praises bestowed upon Lakewood?

In the photos below you will find a few Lakewood favorites that were recognized in more regional publications over the past year. These and each of the unique businesses found in Lakewood undoubtedly each played their part in the "Coolest Suburbs Worth A Visit" designation.



The Winchester also won "Best Music Venue" in a recent poll.

Besides being voted the coolest many of Lakewood's businesses have won "Best of In The Area" by The Sceneand/or Cleveland Magazine. Here is a sample of those businesses that make Lakewood so cool!

Photos by Frank Lanza

"Best Pizza" - Angelo's



"Best Bowling Alley" - Mahall's 20 Lanes



"Best Place to Trim Your Locks" ---Crazy Mullets



Rozi's Wine House, "Best Wine Shop"



"Best Vegetarian Restaurant"-Aladdin's



"Best Skate Shop" Westside Skates.



"Choc. Dessert" -Malley's Chocolates



"Best Cup of Jo" - The Root Cafe

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