



# Lakewood News

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FEATURE

## Jog-a-thon For Special Children’s Center

BY CHAYA BAUMWOLSPINER

Keeping summer with us just a bit longer, the Special Children’s Center Jog-a-thon, scheduled for August 25, is further proof that the Lakewood community is at the forefront of innovative fundraising initiatives. In preparation for the big day, we traced the route of the Jog-a-thon, an in-town sponsored race that’s now in its third year.

### What is the Special Children’s Center?

The Jog-a-thon is one of the few times in the year that most in the Lakewood community hear about the Special Children’s Center, even though it is a home away from home for 250 Lakewood special-needs children and their families. “We don’t advertise much. We’re too busy doing,” says Mrs. Chaya Bender, Lakewood-born and the center’s co-founder.

When they were still in high school, Mrs. Bender and Mrs. Jenine Shwekey, wife of singer Yaakov Shwekey, helped take care of a local family’s special child. Eventually more children joined this unofficial program, and the seed that eventually grew into the Special Children’s Center was sown.

Today, 14 years after it opened its doors at 1400 Prospect Street, the center is a round-the-clock respite and family support agency for children with disabilities. It offers a vibrant after-school program, Shabbos programs, an integrated pre-school for younger children, a post-camp summer program, case management, and other services, all at no cost to families.

Mrs. Bender says, “The center is there for these kids and their parents whenever there’s no school — on Sundays, legal holidays, when summer camp’s over, during

Continued on page C35



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INTERVIEW

## A Call to the Brave

Interview with Fire Commissioner Levi S. Loigman

BY A. DWECK

*Founded in 1870, Lakewood’s fire department has progressed from a single-ladder cart to seven fully-equipped fire stations. Mr. Levi S. Loigman, a practicing lawyer and Lakewood fire commissioner, gave us some time to discuss Lakewood’s respected fire department and to petition the klal for crucial support.*

### How did you become Lakewood fire commissioner?

I have deep roots in Lakewood and its environs. Both my parents grew up in the Lakewood vicinity and graduated from Lakewood High School. In the early 1950s my parents owned a farm in Jackson Township, only minutes from the heart of Lakewood. When I was four my family moved to Monmouth County. Several years ago, my wife and I decided that Lakewood was where we wanted to be. *Baruch Hashem*, I’m very happy to be back! We’ve found everyone very welcoming.

A couple of years ago, Lakewood officials were concerned about the budget and management of the fire department. They decided to elect a candidate to follow up on and resolve these concerns. I agreed to run for fire commissioner and was elected in early 2012.

### What exactly does your position entail?

The fire commissioner’s post is primarily administrative. This means that I have a say in the management and administration of the fire department — specifically in how the money raised in taxes is spent, and what sorts of policies and procedures the fire department will be following.

Recently we have made some procedural changes that will eventually pay off. We are also in the midst of revamping the membership and application process. *Bezras Hashem*, I believe that within the next few months we will see positive changes from these processes that will allow our membership to thrive.

### With your insider’s status, can you tell us how the Lakewood Fire Department operates?

Presently, the LFD employs several paid firemen who are on full-time duty. We also commission a number of part-time paid firefighters who function as fill-ins for any absent firemen. Considering our town’s size, these firefighters do not constitute much manpower, but fortunately we do have a good group of volunteer firefighters who are willing to respond day and night.

When a fire breaks out, the paid firefighters are dispatched first and the volunteers follow.

Continued on page C37

COMMUNITY NEWS

### Local Askanim Push For Stricter Computer Guidelines at Local Libraries

Local *askanim*, with the backing of the *Mashgiach* Harav Mattisyahu Salomon, *shlita*, have begun a push for stricter computer-use regulations at the Lakewood, Brick, and Jackson libraries which are frequented by members of our community, to help restrict use by teenagers. Currently the Ocean County libraries have no restrictions on internet use, and *askanim* have been told by teenagers themselves that they watched uncensored videos at the local library, underscoring that this is a serious issue for the teenaged boys in our community.

At a recent meeting, *askanim* brought up this issue to Ocean County Freeholder Joseph Vicari and head of the Ocean County Library system, Susan Quinn. In attendance at the meeting were Committeeman Meir Lichtenstein, Rabbi Nechemia Gottlieb and Reb Moshe Drew of TAG, and other *askanim*.

An idea the group suggested, already implemented in Middlesex County, N.J., and in Monsey, N.Y., would prohibit children under the age of 18 from using the computers in the library without written consent from their parents. *Askanim* pointed out that the library may not legally lend these items to the teenagers to take home, yet the

Continued on page C33