

Storefront vacancies challenge Cleveland Heights

Jeremy Hebebrand

A drive around any of the 12 commercial districts in Cleveland Heights will reveal a growing inventory of vacant storefronts and office space above them.

All of the busiest districts in the Heights have vacancies (see box at right). Coventry Road, for example, is home to a variety of stores and restaurants and still has about six notable vacant storefronts. The same goes for the Severance Town Center, which has 10 vacant units.

There is no entity that tracks vacancy rates at this level, so reliable percentages of commercial occupancy don't exist. But for anyone who knows the area well, it's apparent that the number of empty storefronts and available space has been rising rather than falling.

There is no organized effort to turn this around.



This storefront on Mayfield Road is one of many vacancies in the Heights. See more photos of Cleveland Heights vacant storefronts at www.heightsobserver.org.

The City of Cleveland Heights maintains a listing of commercial vacancies on its Web site, but it's not a serious economic development program. The list is updated through word-of-mouth communication, and though city officials intend for it to be updated monthly, that simply doesn't happen. The list that was available online in July was dated April.

Listings are also spartan; there are no pictures or prices and listings are not organized by business district—all of which makes the list of minimal value

for would-be tenants. Available space is also noted in *Focus*—the official Cleveland Heights publication, which this year was sliced from quarterly to just twice a year due to city budget cuts.

Owners struggle

"I know the city means well," said Joel Lancry, a landlord with commercial space on both Lee and Taylor roads. "But by the time the information comes out, it's so old that it's not very helpful."

"Vacancies are a part of life. It really is the natural ebb and flow of commercial

District	Store fronts	# Vacant
Cedar Fairmount	40	1
Coventry Road	90	5
Severance Center	45	10
Mayfield Lee	47	6
Noble Monticello	20	7
Cain Park/Taylor	52	8
Cedar Taylor	46	8
NM-Warrensville	44	1
Fairmount Taylor	13	1
Noble Taylor	6	1
Noble Nela	20	1
Cedar Lee	90	8
Total	513	57

Information gathered by the Heights Observer staff via an informal sidewalk survey of each district.

areas," said Susanna Niermann O'Neil, director of community services for the city. "However, in Cleveland Heights we have a very good track record of spaces being filled pretty quickly. Of course in the present economy everything is at a much slower pace."

In addition to the city's listing, Lancry markets his vacant space on Craigslist and puts up signs in his windows. Lancry said that people are not spending money, and landlords feel the

continued on page 3

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'Step It Up' sketches ideal candidate

Jeremy Hebebrand

What does it take to be an effective leader in Heights government?

A group of concerned citizens calling itself Step It Up Cleveland Heights has some ideas. The group, formed in early spring, is setting goals for city council candidates with an eye toward the election coming up in November.

At a July 16 public meeting, citizens were encouraged to come and share their thoughts on what candidates need to address in the upcoming election. "We did not want to be passive about this election," said Sheldon Glave, a member of Step It Up. The group plans to use ideas presented at the meeting to create questions for a team formed to interview candidates and report back to the public. Step It Up members Russell Berusch and Mark Chupp led most of the discussion as candidates in attendance were asked to refrain from input and merely observe.

Vision

Step It Up's first issue for candidates is the creation of a vision for the city as a 21st century suburb that includes financial and environmental sustainability. Berusch commented that the city has been struggling with financial issues like everywhere else. "This city has great character, but it is expensive to live in. It is hard to run a business and it is energy inefficient," Berusch said. Some of the citizens made comments about working collaboratively with businesses to promote entrepreneurship in the city. All were in agreement that the city

continued on page 5

Some not aware of CH commercial recycling

Kaitlin Bushinski

Eco-conscious businesses in Cleveland Heights may be unaware that the city's division of refuse and recycling offers free recycling services to commercial properties as part of its recycling initiatives.

Sam Bell is the owner of the Lusty Wrench, a mechanic shop on Lee Road that is committed to eco-conscious car care.

Bell said he paid for a private contractor to collect his recycling until he noticed city recycling bins in the lot behind Seitz-Agin hardware store.

"I said gee, why are they getting recycling and I'm paying \$250 a month for recycling through a private contractor?" said Bell.

Bell spoke with city recycling officials and now has bins for mixed-use recyclables, cardboard and paper in the back of his garage. The city comes to



Sam Bell, owner of the Lusty Wrench, loves recycling. He painted the label on the recycling dumpster located behind his shop.

collect the recyclables when Bell calls them about every three weeks.

"Not only do we use [the bins], several of our business neighbors also use them," said Bell.

Tony Torres, the supervisor of refuse and recycling for Cleveland Heights, said he "got the OK" from the city government to expand commercial recycling

continued on page 3

Best of the Heights Awards, Sept. 14

Heights Observer Staff

FutureHeights will recognize winning merchants of the 5th Annual Best of the Heights Awards at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 14 at Nighttown, 12383 Cedar Road in Cleveland Heights. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The diverse and unique local businesses in the Heights neighborhoods are among the area's greatest assets.

Each year FutureHeights, a nonprofit organization dedicated to civic engagement and quality of life, hosts the Best of the Heights Awards to recognize

local businesses in several categories.



Vote for your favorite merchants at the FutureHeights booth at the summer street fairs, on the back page of the *Heights Observer* or online at www.futureheights.org. One vote per person, please.

Submitting a ballot automatically enters your name into a drawing for a chance to win a FutureHeights gift package.

For more information e-mail jane@futureheights.org or call 216-320-1423.

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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PUBLISHER
Deanna Bremer Fisher

ADVERTISING
Jim Kuth
216.513.307 or 216.320.1423
jekdoc@yahoo.com

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DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Mazie Adams, Maryann Barnes, Ellen Barrett, Deanna Bremer Fisher, David Budin, Kaitlin Bushinski, Adele Cohn, Jill Connors, Mary Courtwright, Kathy Dawson, Wendy Deuring, Doug Freer, Kathleen Fairweather, Cavana Faithwalker, Carol Gibson, Tonya Gibson, Robert Haas, Jeff Haynes, Jeremy Hebebrand, Meredith Holmes, Lillian Houser, Susie Kaeser, Christine McBurney, Anne S. McFarland, Fran Mentch, Susan D. Pardee, Lisa Peters, Bob Rosenbaum, Dawn Rucker, Loren Sonkin, Judith Soppel, Peggy Spaeth, Allison Urbanek, Tom Woodworth, Blanche Valancy

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Supporting the new superintendent

I was disappointed in the negative tone apparent in the July 7 article on Douglas Heuer's selection as CH-UH superintendent. Let's start with the ludicrous suggestion that he may be unqualified because his current district has "only" 5,000 students compared to CH-UH's 6,000. How close do we need to come? Why would the *Observer* even print such nonsense?

As a 40-year veteran of the classroom (30 in a public school system with an overwhelmingly African-American population), I have always felt that the superintendent's chief function was to be an effective communicator of the school system's mission and policies to students, staff, parents and the general public. While Christine Fowler-Mack is obviously well-liked by many on a personal level, I thought her oral communication, both in prepared speeches and in exchanges with the board of education, was mired in "EdSpeak," the sterile, vague and self-important jargon of professional education. We've all heard phrases like "facilitating assessment-driven competencies" and "strategizing outcome-based models" and wondered what those mean in English.

Let's give Heuer a chance. To me it's significant and positive that he speaks about improving "higher learning and

education" rather than obsessing about scores on the mind-numbing Ohio achievement tests. As he suggested, scores will improve as a natural outcome of good classroom practices and support from home. He has worked successfully in a district where about half the students are economically disadvantaged.

Many have expressed the hope that the election of President Obama in 2008 would usher in an era of "post-racial consciousness." Unfortunately, for some in our community, the ethnicity of the new superintendent and that of the families in his former district carry more weight than his record of achievement. The real clientele of this or any school district are neither board members nor agenda-driven citizens but the district's children. From my years in the classroom, I can attest that students respond not so much to the ethnicity of a school system's staff as they do to the staff's competence and commitment. From his record and his recent words, Mr. Heuer would seem to qualify regarding both of those criteria.

Cary Seidman
Corydon Road
Cleveland Heights

Siedman is a Heights High graduate from the class of 1965, has taught in the East Cleveland City Schools from 1969 through 1998, and has taught at Ruffing Montessori School in Cleveland Heights since 1998.

RTA rapid station

RTA wants to build a new station at the bottom of Cedar Hill. This is being touted as "the Gateway to the Heights."

I am having difficulty understanding why it takes \$1 million to plan a new station and another \$10 million to build it. There is also a new station being built on the west side for \$9.5 million. Why does it take a Taj Mahal to board a bus or rapid train?

Many years ago there was a fairly substantial revamping of the entire rapid system. It seemed to be forgotten, however, that people who ride the Green and Blue Lines might go to Cleveland Hopkins Airport. As a result, one needs to change trains at either East 34th Street or the Terminal Tower which is incredibly inconvenient, especially if one has luggage.

Why not take some of the incredible amount of money that RTA, with its declining service and ridership, seems to have and rebuild the platforms so that one can ride the Green and Blue Lines to the airport?

Richard A. Hollis
Fairmount Boulevard
Cleveland Heights

More stories online
www.heightsobserver.org

Eight lighthearted tips for working moms: how to not lose your mind while you care for those you love

Mary Courtwright

For working moms who need suggestions for juggling responsibilities (or maybe just a good laugh), this list may be just what you're looking for. Note: Follow these tips at your own risk.

1. It is OK if the sink is rarely clear of dirty dishes during the work week, as long as they are rinsed and there is a scheduled rotation.

2. The dining room table makes a great staging area for laundry. I mean, who has time for dinner parties anyway?

3. To avoid complaints when packing lunches for the family, simply tell them they will either be responsible for packing their own or they will gladly accept what you pack. Nine times out of ten, complaints will cease.

4. Create a standard shopping list organized in the order of the stores you frequent.

5. For artistically driven little ones, invest in a set of "washable, non-toxic" markers. Keeping them occupied will enable you to cook dinner in peace.

6. There is something to be said for the "pick your battles" strategy, especially when parenting an adolescent. Remember that striped hair is trivial compared to some things.

7. Yelling is to be expected with your teenager, at least once in a while. Remember that the result is communication and, after all, that is the goal.

8. If you get the urge to have more kids, try getting a dog first. They look just as cute in clothes and you can leave them home alone. (Shopping, anyone?)

Finally, remember that laughter is an essential element of maintaining sanity while working and caring for loved ones.

Tip 5 contributed by Becky Swersky, mom extraordinaire.

Mary Carroll Courtwright is a teacher and writer. Her novel "Song of the Messenger", which is set in Cleveland Heights, was published in 2007. For more information, visit www.marycourtwright.com.



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Stan Soble



Seeds of Community Campaign is a success

Thank you all! Thanks to each and every one of you who rose to the challenge and donated generously to the FutureHeights Seeds of Community Campaign 2009.

FutureHeights raised \$15,310.17 and the \$15,000 challenge grant has been awarded for a grand total of \$30,310.17.

Thanks for supporting FutureHeights' efforts to build strong citizens and promote community collaboration through the *Heights Observer*, volunteer activities and a host of issues-oriented public events and forums.

Your thoughtful investment enables us to continue our work. And for that we

are most grateful.

Didn't contribute yet? It's not too late. FutureHeights accepts tax-deductible donations all year long. Visit our Web site www.futureheights.org to make your contribution.

Commitment to community is important especially in these challenging

times—and the community has voted its confidence in FutureHeights!

Thanks again,



Deanna Bremer Fisher
Executive Director, FutureHeights

Summer Matching Donors 2009



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VACANCIES continued from page 1

impact as much as their tenants do. Not many prospects have the money to open a store right now—let alone spend \$30,000 to \$40,000 on renovations that might be required. The economy has made people very cautious.

The small district at Fairmount Taylor doesn't seem to have much of a vacancy issue. The shops here are colorful, and the storefronts have been maintained over time, making them attractive to prospective tenants even when they are vacant.

In other districts, where storefronts are more dated, or tenants haven't made their existing spaces attractive, it can be hard to tell the difference between those storefronts that are vacant and those that are occupied. These areas appear to have higher vacancies, which may mean that there is a correlation between the occupancy and the quality of existing tenants.

It's the role of the property owner to manage these issues and to market the property. While there are some other marketing resources, the difference between occupancies and vacancies is really in the hands of the landlord.

For instance, the city is in the area served by the Heights-Hillcrest Regional Chamber of Commerce, which holds an annual expo that features local businesses. But its focus is on existing business rather than available space. Vacancies are also included on the Web site of the First Suburbs Development Council, in much the same fashion as the listing provided by City Hall.

Jim Barle, owner of the Rockefeller Building, 2479 Lee Blvd., has both retail and office space available. In his vacant

spaces Barle has put historic photos of his building to keep the space fresh looking for potential tenants. He uses word-of-mouth to look for quality tenants.

"I would rather have a space empty for nine months and get the right tenant who is a good fit for the building," Barle said.

Stan Wasacz is the owner of space in the Douglas Fine Arts building, 2140 Lee Road at the Cedar Lee intersection. He has been struggling with a visible vacancy in the corner storefront for more than a year. He's had prospects who would like to put a sit-down restaurant in the space. However, because of city regulations, his 52-space parking lot prohibits that from happening.

Wasacz said that a lot of people are struggling with bad credit and many banks are making loans much harder to get. To try to move property, he has reduced the rates for available space.

"Is that negotiable?" is the first question a potential tenant will ask," Wasacz said.

Some of the most organized marketing to fill space occurs in buildings located in special improvement districts.

Information about the area and available storefronts is generally found on each district's Web site. The Cedar Fairmount and Cedar Lee SIDs provide photos, lists of existing tenants and up-to-date contact information.

Jeremy Hebebrand is a summer intern at the Heights Observer and a senior magazine journalism major at Kent State University. This story was co-written with Deanna Bremer Fisher.

RECYCLING continued from page 1

opportunities about two years ago.

If they don't approach him first, Torres contacts business owners to arrange recycling collection, including materials such as cardboard, paper and "co-mingle" materials: glass, plastics and aluminum.

His department will often provide business districts with bins for recyclables, and it also operates a recycling drop-box at the Cleveland Heights Public Works garage on Superior Road.

"We were making money from [recycling] but the market has completely changed since January, and we're no longer making a revenue off it. But at least the material is getting recycled—it's not going into the landfill," said Torres.

Recycling saves the city money by lowering landfill costs.

Though more and more businesses are using the city's recycling program, the business recycling specialist for the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District, Beau Daane, said it's difficult to extend recycling opportunities to commercial properties in Ohio.

According to Daane, cities are not technically responsible for providing waste and recycling removal for businesses. It is the responsibility of the property manager and business owner to provide those services to tenants.

"It's really wonderful and generous that the city does that," said Daane of Cleveland Heights' program for commercial recycling. "It just goes to show how proactive the service departments are. Technically they don't have to do that."

Daane said that some cities do have mandatory recycling programs for both

residents and businesses, including Boston, New York City and Portland, OR.

Closer to home, the neighboring City of Lakewood, which has mandatory residential recycling, goes one step further than the Heights by offering free curbside pick up for small businesses' recyclables.

However, recycling for commercial properties, including apartment complexes, is not mandatory in Lakewood unless the city is the main provider of waste removal for those properties.

Lakewood's division of refuse and recycling manager, Carol Rothgery, said two years ago the city's recycle coordinator—a position that has since been eliminated—visited each small business to inform them of the city's recycling program.

"I believe [the businesses] are aware of it," said Rothgery of the recycling program, adding that many took advantage of it.

For now, Torres urges business owners to contact his department if they want to participate in a recycling program.

Residents with electronics such as televisions and computer monitors can call his department so he can collect it, for free.

Residents and businesses can contact the city's public works division at 216-691-7300 or pwd@clvhts.com for more information.

Kaitlin Bushinski is a recent graduate of Oberlin College and a summer intern at the Heights Observer.

More stories online
www.heightsobserver.org

Coming soon @ your library

Coventry Village Library

1925 Coventry Road 321.3400
 Step Out of Time:
 Thursday, August 13, 7 p.m.
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 August 4 & 18, 6 p.m.
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 Wednesdays, August 5 - 26, 10 a.m.

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road 932.3600
 Preschool Playart:
 Friday, August 21, 10 a.m.
 Teen Back to School Party:
 Saturday, August 22, 2 p.m.
 Cooking as Celebration:
 The Glamour of Spice:
 August 12, 7 p.m.
 Blood Drive:
 Monday, August 2, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Noble Neighborhood Library

2800 Noble Road 291.5665
 Stay and Play:
 Fridays, August 7 - 28, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
 Knitting Circle:
 Thursdays, August 6 & 20, 7 p.m.
 Mystery Evening:
 Thursday, August 13, 7 p.m.

University Heights Library

13866 Cedar Road 321.4700
 Senior Spot:
 Wednesdays, August 5 - 26,
 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
 Monday at the Movies:
 Mondays, August 3 - 31, 1 p.m. & 7 p.m.



Library offers courses to make homework easier

Tonya Gibson

Summer is flying by and soon school will begin. Get a jumpstart on your school year with the library's new series about quick and easy ways to do your homework. These amazing classes are designed for students age 13 and up.

Reference Tool:

Thursday, August 6, 7 p.m.

Learning Express:

Tuesday, August 11, 7 p.m.

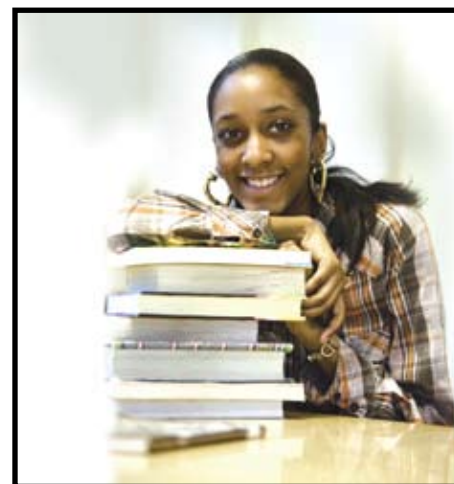
Searching Databases:

Thursday, August 13, 7 p.m.

Finding Research Articles:

Tuesday, August 18, 7 p.m.

Tonya Gibson is an employee of the Heights Libraries who enjoys writing and photography in her free time.



COURTESY OF MICROSOFT

Stop in to the Lee Road Library for a new series that will give you ways of cutting down your homework time!

Cassie debuts at the Lee Road Library

Judithe Soppel

A powerful, user-friendly software that automates the management of the library's computers and printers is coming to the Lee Road Library the first week in August.

The installation of "Cassie" will be done in the mornings that week and is expected to take several hours, during which the computers will not be available. The installation schedule is as follows: second floor computers on Tuesday, August 4; first floor computers on Wednesday, August 5 and the Community Office on Monday, August 10.

Free printing will have a \$2 per day limit. 10 cents each for black and white, and 50 cents each for color copies. A new sign-in screen offers clear and easy-to-follow prompts. Customers can reserve a computer from any sign-up station and may schedule up to 14 days ahead.

One word of caution: Once the computer shuts down at the end of a session, all work is gone and cannot be retrieved so users are urged to save their work often.

The Cassie system has many advantages over the previous one. It is faster and more reliable; customers don't need a password or pin number to sign in—just their library card or a visitor's pass; and customers can print documents one at a time or bundle them all at once.

The migration to Cassie is being rolled out throughout the Heights system. The pilot installation was at Noble Library and has been well-received. It has since been installed at Coventry Village and University Heights libraries.

In addition to all the customer benefits of Cassie, the new technology is less expensive than the old one, so it is more cost effective for the library.

Judithe Soppel is the public relations coordinator for the Cleveland Height-University Heights Public Library.

CH-UH Public Library Board Meeting highlights

JUNE 15, 2009

All board members present.

Dobama project manager praised

Project manager Julie Criscione reported the work on the Dobama Theater almost complete with most of the drawdowns made by contractors. Board members expressed thanks to Criscione for her work in managing the project and bringing it in at budget.

Fiscal officer appointed

Molly M. Riffle had been appointed as fiscal officer on June 1 at an annual salary of \$60,000. Board members and library staff recognized and thanked Frank Brichachek for his helpful service as interim fiscal director.

Technology discussed

In a discussion about technology issues and objectives, Library Director Nancy Levin urged the board not to underestimate what the staff, especially the Innovations Team, was already doing. She felt that the staff was immersed in technology, citing librarian blogs and the library's use of Facebook and Twitter. These means, along with instant messaging, were now the primary manner of communication among staff. She was also looking toward a "hand-held" library catalog.

Heights Parent Center

Executive Director Louisa Oliver talked about the HPC's mission as a family support service begun in 1982. In the last year, HPC served over 300 families with a total of 1,100 visits. Although HPC's main office is in Taylor Academy, the library's Activity Center houses Little Heights,



a family literacy playroom for children ages two through five, which seeks to educate parents on the importance of children's learning through play. The 500 toys in the HPC toy lending library are in a closed space in the Little Heights area with 12 catalog books containing photos of the toys to help parents choose the three toys that they can borrow for a two-week period. The toy lending library relies on volunteer help due to funding cuts common to social service agencies and may have to suspend the lending. In response to a query by Board Member Esther Moss, Oliver replied that she would love to have the library involved in the toy lending. Director Levin indicated that there had been some discussion between HPC and the library about this.

Financial news

Director Levin reported the good news that the decline in the June tax distribution between 2008 and 2009 is 8.55 percent as opposed to a year-to-date 15 percent decline. However, the Ohio Public Employees Retirement system, which covers library personnel, has lost over 20 percent of its value. Levin expects that legislation will be introduced in the next few months to address concerns with all aspects of OPERS being up for discussion.

Library volunteers

Friends of the Library is meeting again and plan-

ning book sales. The library is seeking volunteer landscapers. There are now seven volunteer grant writers.

Noble Library

Noble Library is experiencing heavy use. On June 4, for example, the door count was 2,006. Around 4:45 p.m. there were 45 children, teens and adults in the Children's Room, 11 to 15 teens in The Spot, and 40 adults and teens in the Adult Room. If East Cleveland Public Library has to close a branch, Noble will get even more use. Noble is the next library to get attention both inside and out.

LWV Observer: Anne S. McFarland.

Space restrictions sometimes require the deletion of some proceedings. For more complete summaries view online postings at www.heightsobserver.org.

These meeting summaries are abstracted from LWV observers' written reports. The summaries have been edited and prepared by Charlene Morse, Marilyn McLaughlin and Maryann Barnes. To receive e-mail postings of full reports, send an email to mbarnes9515@gmail.com or join through google groups using "lwv-chuh observer reports" as a search phrase.

These reports contain member observation and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters Cuyahoga Area. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.

Library gym space plans to be revealed

Judithe Soppel

The Heights Library is hosting two meetings to reveal plans for the final open space in the west side of the Lee Road Library. The duplicate meetings will take place on Monday, August 10 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. and again on Sunday, August 16 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The meetings will be conducted in the Activity Center at 2340 Lee Road. They are free and open to the public.

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear Studio Techne architect Jim Duber outline his design, and may take a walk-through of the 4,000 square foot former gym space. A question and answer period will follow the presentation.

Judithe Soppel is the public relations coordinator for the Cleveland Height-University Heights Public Library.

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Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

MONDAY JUNE 15, 2009
All council members present.

Parking variance in Kenilworth

Elliot Posner of Kenilworth Road thanked council for delaying its decision, made at a June 1 meeting, on a parking variance request by the Benjamin Rose Institute located at 2373 Euclid Heights Blvd. Neighbors who had quickly organized into an association were concerned about the possibility of the narrow Kenilworth Lane turning into a "parking lot" due to the institute's planned increase in residents. Kathy Browning, also of Kenilworth Road, brought up the same concerns and thanked the city for its quick response to neighborhood concerns. Posner suggested that council include the new Kenilworth Road Association in future discussions about the neighborhood.

Response to parking concern

Later in the meeting Council Member Nancy Dietrich reported that before approving the Benjamin Rose Properties' request for a parking variance, the Board of Zoning Appeals had approved an amendment to make a minor alteration to the code that brought the city's zoning requirements in line with HUD requirements and addressed the parking and traffic concerns of Kenilworth neighborhood residents.

Traffic study

Mayor Kelley reported that the city was studying traffic in the western part of Cleveland Heights in partnership with Regional Transit Authority, Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency and University Circle. They hope to make it more bicycle-friendly.

Infrastructure work awarded

Water main work on Yellowstone Road was awarded to the Camino Construction Company, for \$309,027. The bid of the Burton Scott Company for \$1,530,856.25 was accepted for street resurfacing work.

Survey for water leaks

The city manager was authorized to contract Consulting Engineering, Inc. for a waterline



survey for not more than \$40,000. The purpose of the work is to check for leaks.

Strategic plan revisions under review

The planning commission will be reviewing revisions to the city's strategic plan that had not been updated since 1993. The review of the plan will place a new emphasis on economic development so the city will be well placed to grow when the economy turns around.

More financial cuts announced

The city continues to make adjustments in appropriations and other expenditures, mostly reductions of general fund expenses. Council Member Kenneth Montlack presented on first reading an ordinance with a long list of recommended cuts including 10 unpaid furlough days for police civilian personnel, all education programs, vehicle maintenance, the Cain Park wading pool and Community Relations' staffing. Montlack was especially concerned about cuts in the latter, calling that department "the tripwire" for alerting the city staff and council about problems. He urged citizens to call the police at 291-2323 about any neighborhood problems.

Nonprofits to receive CDBG funds

Council agreed that the following three nonprofit corporations would receive Community Development Block Grants funds:

- The Center for Families and Children \$27,810 for assistance with its PINPOINT Program at the RapArt Center
- The Home Repair Resource Center \$20,000 for its Nutrition and Afternoon Out Program;
- The Noble-Nela Merchants Association \$5,000 for assistance with the administrative costs of the Association and its activities.

LWV observers: Carol Gibson, Lisa Peters.

MONDAY JULY 6, 2009
All council members present.

Nuisance property donated and sold

Council accepted the donation to the city of the property located at 1528 Crest Rd. and authorized the sale of that property. The owner did not wish to rehabilitate the property, which had sustained fire damage and been declared a nuisance, and offered to give it to the city. A neighboring property owner will purchase the property for \$5,500 and demolish the house. Residents that had discussed the matter with the city were pleased with this solution.

City manager authorized to buy houses

City manager was authorized to use Neighborhood Stabilization Program Funds to purchase, without prior council approval, properties in four designated areas: 1) Lee, between Mayfield and Cedar 2) Caldonia 3) Monticello and 4) Randolph at a cost of up to \$75,000 for a single family home and \$125,000 for a double.

Financial legislation

Council passed an ordinance decreasing appropriations in several areas of the current city budget that Council member Kenneth Montlack had presented on first reading and given details at the preceding council meeting. Council member Mark Tumeo noted that council had worked hard to be forward looking as to finances, ensuring that the city will be able to prosper with the economic recovery. Mayor Kelley said that the budget showed fiscal responsibility at its best. The council authorized the city manager to amend the 2009 Community Development Block Grant Consolidation Plan to allot \$140,000 to storefront renovation. The 2010 Tax Budget was presented on first reading.

LWV observers: Blanche Valancy, Lisa Peters.

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See disclaimer on page 4.

STEP IT UP continued from page 1

has to be more appealing to outsiders.

Education

The group received strong public support in its desire for candidates to advocate for and actively promote the Cleveland Heights-University Heights schools as a major community asset and means to attract families to move to Cleveland Heights. Step It Up members told the audience that candidates should be held accountable and do what they say they will for the system. One citizen commented that the schools are the backbone of the community and they must be given more positive attention.

Economic development

Formulating a strategic economic plan was the next issue. Candidates should envision ways to increase population and shape the city. By working collaboratively with every section of the city, merchants and businesses would be able to essentially "have each other's backs," one attendee wrote. "We have to deal with diversity, jobs, religion, business and the schools and figure out a way to make them work together," Chupp said.

Housing

It is no secret that the housing crisis has hit Cleveland Heights. Step It Up suggested candidates work collaboratively with all sectors of the community to create effective responses to the housing crisis, to convert vacant and deteriorating property into positive resources for the city.

There was a strong support for maintaining housing and attracting younger homeowners to the area.

"What can be done to change the bad properties into good ones for the city?" Chupp said, questioning both candidates and citizens in the audience.

Promoting diversity

Finally, Step It Up supports policies that continue to encourage the diversity that is so valued in the community. "Many people are attracted to Cleveland Heights because of its rich diversity," Chupp said. "There are many ethnic groups other than black and white. Individuals have to be comfortable talking about diversity, and they have to become 'cultivators' of the city," Chupp said.

It was suggested that neighborhoods need to come together and celebrate one another.

"I love Cleveland Heights because of the diversity," Glave said.

Jeremy Hebebrand is a summer intern at The Heights Observer and a senior magazine journalism major at Kent State University.

Step It Up CH to hold council candidate forum

Susie Kaeser

Step It Up Cleveland Heights will continue to promote public discussion of its Citizen Agenda at a public forum to be held on Sept. 16 at Forest Hill Church. The 7:00 p.m. event will engage candidates for Cleveland Heights City Council in a discussion of key issues affecting the city's future and how prospective city council members see themselves working for the community.

A five-issue Citizen Agenda is available at www.heightsobserver.org/step-it-up.

Susie Kaeser is a community volunteer and advocate for public education.

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University Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

MONDAY JUNE 15, 2009
All council members present.

Improvements at Bellefaire

Council approved the continuance of capital improvements at Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau, 22001 Fairmount Blvd., with new exterior lighting throughout the campus. Through funding from the state of Ohio, the lighting would be standardized and controlled by sector. Light pollution into neighboring properties would be negligible.

Variance for a shed

Mr. and Mrs. Joel Libava of 14408 E. Carroll challenged the variance granted to Matthew and Jennifer Bauman of 14398 East Carroll Blvd. by the Board of Zoning Appeals on June 10. Due to a miscalculation, the structure exceeded the zoning requirements by 0.82 percent. The Libavas' concern was that, at 15 feet tall, the structure was more like a barn than a shed and too large for the small yard. Council agreed that the structure was too big and the appeal to the zoning variance was approved. The Baumans would have to reduce the size of the structure's footprint. The Baumans also planned to move it more toward the center of their yard, away from the Libava's property line. They can appeal this decision with the Court of Common Pleas.

Fingerprint system

With the exception of Councilman Frank Consolo, council approved an ordinance authorizing the purchase of an electronic fingerprint system for the police department. The system would enable prints to be shared with the state crime lab and the F.B.I.

Anthony Ianiro, director of finance

Council approved the appointment of Anthony Ianiro as director of finance on a part-time basis.



He was finance director for University Heights before Arman Ochoa. Ochoa has been on an unpaid leave of absence since the beginning of June due to an investigation by state auditors.

CRC's final report

Council accepted the final report of the Charter Review Commission and approved submitting the proposed charter amendments to the electorate on Nov. 3. Vice-Mayor Adele Zucker abstained.

Senior Transportation Connection

An ordinance to contract Senior Transportation Connection was presented on first reading. The previous provider (TC3) will be out of business at the end of June. STC is run by a county agency and will be taking over the services provided by TC3.

University Parkway reconstruction

The resolution to contract Mr. Excavator for University Parkway Roadway reconstruction was tabled because the application for funding submitted to the state committee had not been approved yet. Council has 60 days to approve this contract.

House on Ashurst

Building Commissioner Menn reported that Farrow Group had been hired to clean out 2603 Ashurst Road for \$1,372. Once cleaned, the engineers will determine if the house needed to be torn down. Menn planned to meet with Gus Frangos of the Cuyahoga County land bank regarding the disposition of this property. Councilman Steven Sims suggested that if the house was determined to be sound, there should be an open house for the neighbors to enable them to

see the house and dispel their concerns. Menn was also seeking Neighborhood Stabilization Funds from the county for this property. The application deadline is June 30. It was suggested that a grant writer be hired to help.

LWV observer: Wendy Deuring.

Special council meeting
MONDAY JUNE 29, 2009

Councilman Kevin Murphy excused.

Update on 2603 Ashurst Road

City Engineer Joe Ciuni and Building Commissioner David Menn toured the vacant house at 2603 Ashurst and found the house to be structurally sound and recommended rehabilitation for resale. Menn suggested that the city hold an open house so that neighbors could see that the underlying structure was sound.

Law director Ken Fisher pointed out that although the house could be rehabbed, council hadn't decided whether to rehab or raze it and then put it on the market.

Residents questioned the practicality of rehabbing the house in light of the current housing market and urged council to look into further options for the property.

Ashurst Road residents saw no need for an open house since they all had been in the house, but felt that council should take a tour of the property. Council decided an open house would be held on Thursday, July 9 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Senior Transportation Connection

Council addressed many issues involving the Senior Transportation Connection before they decided whether to contract this company. Councilman Peter Bernardo was concerned about the high cost of the service since his parents could take cab rides that cost about \$10 per one-way trip. Councilman Frank Consolo was concerned because of *Plain Dealer* articles about their finance director. He also noted contradictions in the contract, inconsistent language and

a referral to an appendix that was not included. The contract provided to council on June 15 had to be signed or service to seniors would terminate on July 1, therefore inconveniencing or harming those who rely on this service. Councilman Steve Bullock stated that council needed to be more proactive rather than simply taking the proposal handed to them. Councilwoman Frankie Goldberg agreed and stated that she wished the STC representatives were at the meeting to answer questions. Vice Mayor Adele Zucker stated that both Shaker and Mayfield had had questions, investigated the service, and chose to contract with them.

Consolo requested two promises from the mayor: that she would continue to search for good options for this service, and, that if other good options were found, she would exercise a 90-day-out option in the contract to end the city's association with STC. Goldberg added that within 90 days, council should receive a report from Walter Stinson, University Heights community coordinator, with details about other alternatives.

Council passed a motion for a one-year contract with STC with a 90-day out clause where the mayor must provide options to council or terminate the contract.

Purvis Park tennis courts

Council authorized submission of an application for stimulus funds through the Community Block Grant Development program to rehabilitate the Purvis Park tennis courts.

LWV observer: Susan D. Pardee.

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CH-UH Board of Education Meeting highlights

TUESDAY JUNE 16, 2009
All board members present.

Superintendent vote

Board President Kal Zucker explained to dissenters protesting the vote on the new superintendent that public addresses were reserved for regular meetings and that this meeting was a work session.

The board voted, four to one, to appoint Douglas Heuer superintendent of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school system. Ron Register placed the one negative vote. He had previously moved to table the vote to hear public opinion, but no board member seconded the motion. Heuer was hired for \$140,000 with a three-year contract as of August 2009.

Board comments on Heuer

Zucker described Heuer as a strong financial leader; similarly, Board Member Nancy Peppler noted that Heuer had a good track record with school achievement and community partnerships and that he had articulated his dream that a majority African American school system would have an "excellent" rating. Moreover, Board Member Eric Coble stated that under Heuer's leadership in Austintown the middle schools had met 25 out of 30 Ohio standards and he had kept the community united. Vice President Ronald Register said that we are a unique school system with an 82 percent African American population and that Heuer was not the man for the job.

Thank you to the interim superintendent

The board thanked Christine Fowler-Mack for her work as interim superintendent.

Equity and Access Audit

Dr. Rossi Ray-Taylor, a special presenter for the Equity and Access Audit, along with the administrative staff and Christine Fowler-Mack presented the following areas for review: achieve-



ment outcomes/access and equity, special program referral and placement, discipline and behavior intervention. The results of the audit are available in the online version of this article. The presenters recommended policy changes and next steps.

LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.

TUESDAY JULY 7, 2009
All board members present.

Administrators travel to China

Joseph Micheller, director of educational services, presented an update of administrators' trip to China. Interim Superintendent Christine Fowler Mack, Sally Levine, and Micheller met with leaders of two colleges in China. Jay McLoughlin, from the College of Education at Cleveland State University, will assist in the development of a new high school economics course that will look at economics from both the U.S. and Chinese perspectives.

Roxboro Middle School

Board Member Michael Cicero commented on incorrect information that appeared in a letter to the Sun Press regarding student eligibility to participate in end-of-year activities at Roxboro Middle School. He stated that the board had not told the superintendent to take any action, and that the superintendent had told the principal to make the decision regarding student eligibility.

LWV observer: Adele Cohn.

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Parenting Q & A

Romance Telepathy

Ellen Barrett

Q. I have a six-month-old baby and am planning on attending a family reunion this summer. My son is starting to go through a phase where he only wants me to hold him. How can I protect him from my well-intentioned relatives wanting to pass him around? How can I get a break to enjoy the vacation too?

A. Depending on your accommodations, one thing you'll want to try to establish is a "relative-free zone." This should be an actual physical space (a bedroom, a chair in the corner of a room or maybe just the back seat of the car!) This is where you can retreat whenever your son is feeling stressed. Hopefully, it will be comfortable enough for you to feed him, let him play and be a place where you two can take a break. It would be great if you could tell a few close family members your situation and have them run interference for you. That way you won't always have to be the one to deny everyone access to your beautiful baby. You'll also want to try to stick as



close to a good sleep schedule as you can. If your baby is overtired he'll be even more prone to crankiness, and that will not be any fun for you or anyone else. Although you may feel pressured to have your baby smile and respond like you know he usually does, try and relax and know that this phase will pass. It may not be a perfect visit this time but there will be others.

Ellen Barrett, a parent educator at Heights Parent Center for the last 12 years, fields questions from parents about the daily ups and downs of parenting. The same issues affect many parents. If you have questions for Ellen, e-mail her at ebarrett@heights-parentcenter.org.

Kathy Dawson

You and your mate don't have to be separated by land or sea to feel like you're in a long distance relationship. Sometimes even living in the same house can feel miles apart. Different work shifts, busy schedules and fatigue can separate you. When this happens, a simple technique called "romance telepathy" can go a long way to keep you and your mate feeling connected.

My first exposure to romance telepathy was serendipitous. My mom had died in 1995 and I was cleaning out her attic. I opened an old shoebox to discover over 100 letters my dad had written to her during World War II. In one of the letters, he suggested romance telepathy as a way to stay connected to her. Here is an excerpt from that letter:

Darling, I'm going to send you a kiss every morning at 8:00, then again at 1:00, 6:00, and 10:00. I want you to do the same, will you? I'm memorizing these times so I won't

get it wrong, and I want to know that when I'm doing this, you are doing the same thing. Let's start this schedule Wednesday morning at 8:00, your time. Okay?

Your emotions live in your heart, but did you know that your imagination can be just as powerful as your heart in communicating those emotions? When your imagination and heart work in tandem, you and your mate will create an unbreakable connection.

For answers to your relationship questions, send an e-mail to Kathy@kathythecoach.com.

Kathy Dawson is a Cleveland Heights author and relationship coach. To learn more about her, visit www.kathythecoach.com.

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Heights Youth Club offers

summer fun for area kids

Jeff Haynes

The Heights Youth Club is now halfway through its third annual summer program. The club kicked off the summer with its first annual "Taste of Heights" fundraiser where members of City Council and residents came out to enjoy food from over 20 area restaurants and to support the club. Special thanks to

Jimmy O'Neill for his hard work and dedication to making the evening an overwhelming success.

Since the event, club members have enjoyed various activities in the gym, games room, computer lab, art room and teen floor. All of the activities are age specific and all members get a chance to be in every area of the building at some point dur-

ing each day. Members also enjoy a full hot lunch every afternoon when they arrive.

This summer members have participated in Social Responsibility Trainings, Fifty Nifty States, Stranger Danger Self-Defense, Talent Shows, Story Writing/Telling, Video Game Tournaments, Sports and Game Room Tournaments and many other programs.

Membership in the club is only \$10 for an entire year. Enrollment is open all year round for kids 6 to 18. Come to the club to check it out and pick up a membership application. The club is located on the corner of Lee Road and Washington Boulevard. Contact us at 216-321-CLUB. Hope to see you!

Jeff Haynes is the Heights Youth Club's assistant director.

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Felice

a renovation of good eats and warming hospitality

Jeremy Hebebrand

Margaret Mueller was 78, in great health, spending most of her days in front of the computer playing spider solitaire. She wanted a change. Then one day, on a drive down Larchmere Boulevard, she noticed an abandoned house with tires and other junk scattered across the yard.

"Someone should buy that house and do something with it," Mueller said to a friend. Three days later the house was hers. At first she had the idea of turning the place into a basic apartment for people. No, too boring. She decided to turn it into a restaurant and Felice was born.

Having little to no experience in running a restaurant, she needed help. Ricardo Sandoval, owner and chef of Fat Cats Restaurant in Tremont, heard of Mueller's plans and jumped onboard. Sandoval was put in charge of the kitchen and its menu.

"He just said 'yes' instantly and even I was shocked," Mueller recalls.

Mueller hired a handful of construction workers who fixed each part of the house to her liking. After nearly three years of work (and a robbery when thieves took copper and other construction materials), the restaurant was finally finished and opened on May 5, 2008. Mueller used her own funds to pay for the restaurant reconstruction.

Serving up a variety of fresh food with just about every ethnic influence and flavor, Felice is a small hidden gem on Larchmere. The restaurant's name actually comes from the last names of Mueller's granddaughters.

Mueller's experience before Felice was varied. She was a volunteer, she ran for Congress as a Republican, she was a social worker, and she earned a master's degree in education. "You name it, I have done it," she laughs.

Mueller and her late husband's families have lived in the area since the



JEREMY HEBEBRAND

Felice, 12502 Larchmere Blvd., is open for brunch Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and for dinner Tuesday through Thursday 4 - 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 4 p.m. to midnight.

mid-1800s and she has been a resident of Cleveland Heights all of her life. "I honestly get nervous traveling too far from here," Mueller confides.

Felice has a peaceful ambiance—no TVs, no radios, just a relaxing atmosphere to enjoy a meal or a drink. There is a built-in bar and a patio outside, and Mueller says she may open a bar in the small garage near the patio, hoping to attract younger adults. There is also a garden outside that one of her employees takes care of during the summer.

She said she takes pride in her

project and has enjoyed every minute of making it come to life, and she loves meeting different people who come through her doors every day.

"I am really not in this for the money. I think the best thing is that I have created jobs for people by turning this place into a restaurant. They could go anywhere else, but they don't. They work hard here and it is really nice to see that kind of dedication," Mueller said.

Jeremy Hebebrand is a summer intern at the Heights Observer and a senior magazine journalism major at Kent State University.

After 32 years, there's still plenty of kid stuff at Mac's garage

Bob Rosenbaum

When Stephon Smith completed the auto repair program at Baran Institute of Technology in Connecticut, he came home to the Heights to look for a job. But first, he had to survive a welcome-to-the-real-world internship at Mac's Marathon on Taylor Road.

"They're not too tough on me," he said of the guys at Mac's—a close-knit team of pros who have been helping kids get into the auto repair business for 32 years.

Mac's is a Cleveland Heights institution, owned by brothers Scott Berman and Ken Block since 1977. They bought it from John "Mac" Maglosky, who had owned it for about 30 years before that.

One condition of the purchase was that they had to keep Andy Edmonds on the payroll. He was 12 at the time, and worked for another five or six years before leaving to pursue his own career doing electrical work and a bit of this-and-that. Edmonds has remained friends with Berman and Block, and still stops by the station to visit.

In fact, it seems that there has always been at least one kid around Mac's. For a short time this summer, that kid was Smith—a University Heights resident and Heights High graduate, Class of 2008. "I used to watch my granddad work on cars in the backyard," Smith says.

Berman works the office and plays the role of grizzled manager, continually shaping the business to fit the changing world around it. He's shortened the station's hours over the years, from 90 hours a week in the 1980s to just under 60 hours today. He got rid of the wrecker a few years back because the level of profit didn't justify the investment in a new truck.

Mac's Marathon is really about fix-

ing cars, which is Block's role as lead technician. To stand around and watch for an hour is to witness Block and others shuttle between the cars on the racks, while squeezing in a bunch of good deeds—inflating a tire for a mom in a hurry or filling the tank for an older driver—while Berman shakes his head and acts grumpy.

There's a constant parade of people, all of whom are treated like friends who've been coming around forever.

It's a full-service shop where you can get everything from a tire change to a new transmission. On a new car, they'll give you the best parts money can buy. On an old car, if you're looking to save money, they'll offer to locate rebuilt parts and will give you some straight talk about what to fix just to keep the car running.

"We're pretty old-fashioned," Berman says. "We'll do what you want us to do, as long as it's going to fix the problem."

The common theme of the place, however, is the steady procession of young trainees who move through the garage. At least one former apprentice has opened his own service station in another part of the region. Others have stayed in the auto trade or, like Edmonds, moved into other jobs. For the last two summers, John Borden, son of a prominent neurosurgeon, has worked in the shop.

Outside of the garage, Block serves on the advisory board for the automotive Career Prep curriculum at Heights High.

"When we first took over the place," Berman says, "a day didn't go by that some kid wouldn't stop by on his way home from school and ask for a job. We've hired a lot of kids over the years."



BOB ROSENBAUM

On nice days, co-owner Ken Block often drives his vintage automobile to work at Mac's Service.

Stop by sometime. Mac's Marathon is at 1828 South Taylor Road, phone number 216-321-3113.

Bob Rosenbaum is a Cleveland Heights resident.

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Chef Ngo takes innovative approach to Japanese and Malaysian cuisine

Kathleen Fairweather

Looking for ocean-fresh sushi and a taste of exotic Malaysia? It's right here on Coventry Road in Cleveland Heights. Chef/owner Freeman Ngo, spent 13 years in New York as a sushi chef before opening Pacific East. With more than 360 items on the menu, there truly is "something for everyone."

Winner of the 2008 Silver Spoon Award, *Cleveland Magazine's* 2008 Best Japanese Award, and Best of City Search 2008, Pacific East has been serving up fresh, flavorful sushi in Cleveland Heights for more than seven years. Sushi fans across the U.S. would be wise to add this gem of a restaurant to their "things to do" in Cleveland list.

Pacific East's sushi and sashimi plates, include miso soup, rice and salad, and start at \$16.95 for the regular dinner and go up from there. Each one features delectable presentations of ocean-fresh slices of fish and shellfish. Ask for the Chef's Choice (market price) and Chef Ngo will custom select a variety pieces that may include the freshest melt-in-your-mouth *toro* (fatty bluefin tuna belly), *hamachi* (yellowtail), oysters, *tai* (red snapper), *uni* (sea urchin), and *shake* (salmon)—just to name a few of the many items to choose from.

I also tasted the tempura and found it to be flavorful and crunchy and not too oily or over-battered. Selections include, shrimp, chicken and a variety of vegetables.

Pacific East also boasts a Malaysian menu of more than 100 menu items including curries, satays, clay pots, and noodle and rice specialties flavored with exotic combinations of coconut, chili, peanut, lime and mango.

I sampled *roti chanai* (\$4.95) a favorite Malaysian appetizer featuring a



Sushi chefs work their magic at Pacific East on Coventry Road.

griddle-fried, unleavened ghee pancake served with a curry chicken dipping sauce. It is now my personal favorite as the warm, crisp pancake blends nicely with tender chunks of curried chicken.

The casual dining area and sushi bar quickly filled with locals and lucky tourists enjoying aromatic meals and lively conversation. The friendly wait staff was attentive to detail, offering the most pleasurable dining experience.

Unfortunately, I was stuffed and unable to report on other dishes. But now I have an excuse to return and try the other items on the menu. I recommend you do the same.

Kathleen Fairweather is a Hollywood refugee, documentary filmmaker, journalist, turned Cleveland Heights resident. She has never lived in snow, but has seen it on TV.

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1763 Coventry Road
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M-TH 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., 5 p.m. - 10 p.m.
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S 12 p.m. - 3 p.m., 5 p.m. - 11 p.m.
Sun 3 p.m. - 10 p.m.



Chef's Choice Sashimi Platter is one of the impressive selections on a menu that includes more than 360 items.

La Cave du Vin, a local treat for wine lovers

Loren Sonkin

The Heights wine scene is fortunate to have several wine bars. The oldest is La Cave du Vin on the corner of Coventry and Euclid Heights. It offers an assortment of wine and beer from around the world, and a limited food menu. Many wines are available by the taste, glass or bottle; others only by the bottle.

I began with a glass of 2005 Laurenz Gruner Veltliner from Austria. The wine was crisp and delicious with flavors of minerals, lime and a pinch of white pepper. I tasted three wines from Portugal, each a healthy 2-ounce pour. The 2006 Urban, made from a Spanish Tempranillo grape, was luscious and full bodied with complex cherry fruit. The Irreverante, made from Touriga Nacional grapes grown by a co-op in Portugal, is light and easy to drink. Its bright acidity goes well with food. The last, Aliança Terra Boa Old Vines, unfortunately, came from an off bottle, but I was not charged for it.

Erich Lasher, La Cave's proprietor, recommended one more wine to taste. Chateau L8 oEscalle from Bordeaux (2005), at \$12 a bottle, is a serious wine with lots of cassis, cherry, vanilla and even cocoa nuances—rich, ripe and very good.

Two great things about wine bars—tasting wines in a pleasant setting without buying the whole bottle, and the bartender has actually tasted most of the wines and can give you reliable recommendations. Find a wine you like and buy a bottle to go, or have your local vintner order one for you.

Walking down the stairs into La Cave is like walking into a cellar in Europe—a metaphorical trip to a place where you can taste wines and enjoy lively conversation. Cleveland Heights is lucky to have this one close by.

Loren Sonkin lives in Cleveland Heights and writes for Into Wine.com. He welcomes your comments and suggestions at Sonkinesq@sbcglobal.net.

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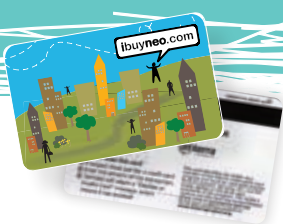
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HeightsWrites Cleveland School of Dance leaps into the future

Meredith Holmes

There are lots of diseases to worry about these days, but this poem describes an illness that’s done more damage than all the pandemics in human history combined.

Devils’ Plague

by Cavana Faithwalker

When the plague is present
others feel the fever
at arms length they keep you.
There is a stench
it turns their heads downwind.
They lock their car doors
when you walk by.
Women’s hands and arms grab
with an
involuntary pinch
at purses as they huddle
and hurry their young.
Men pat pockets
and quicken their steps.
“Those minds are predisposed
to violent thoughts, you know
steal and rape and kill”
they think.
Eyes follow you
and thrust daggers deep
into your flesh. If you
are blessed, you are alive
one more day.
From whence comes their contagion
that affects you so deeply
who is to say?

Cavana Faithwalker lives in Cleveland Heights and works at the Cleveland Museum of Art. He is a poet, the father of a nine-year-old, and a visual and performance artist.

Kathleen Fairweather

Stepping inside the Cleveland School of Dance is like being transported to a New York dance studio, complete with live music, hard-working young dancers, and dedicated teachers.

Founding directors Gladisa Guadalupe and husband Lawrence Minadeo opened the doors in November of 2000, and the Cleveland School of Dance is now home to more than 150 students ranging in age from 4 to 18.

Guadalupe began her dance career at age 13 with Ballet de San Juan in Puerto Rico. At age 15, she moved with her family to New York City to accept a scholarship to train with the prestigious School of American Ballet. She has since toured South America, Europe and Asia, and was principal dancer with the Cleveland Ballet before retiring from the stage to become active in the Cleveland community teaching dance.

Guadalupe describes what is unique about her dance studio: “Cleveland School of Dance has a prestigious faculty, comprehensive curriculum and quality training in dance and its related arts. We are the only pre-professional dance school in the city annually performing at the Playhouse Square Center, the second-largest arts complex in the nation.”

Guadalupe finds educating the community about the need for funding the biggest challenge to her business. “Cleveland School of Dance is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that offers

scholarships, but the economy has taken its toll,” says Guadalupe. “Monetary donations have been in constant decline for a few years and that has had an effect on the availability of scholarship funds.”

Guadalupe would also like to grow the school from three to four studios and provide more community classes. She realizes that will be a challenge in this current economic environment as well.

Despite these challenges, Guadalupe wouldn’t be anywhere else. “The best thing about Cleveland Heights is the multicultural diversity. We have students with Indian, African American, Italian, Oriental, Hispanic, and Greek origins. What a joy to have the opportunity to teach a class with a variety of cultures.”

Kathleen Fairweather is a hollywood refugee, documentary filmmaker, journalist, turned Cleveland Heights resident. She has never lived in snow, but has seen it on TV.



Kimberly Clark, 16, has been a student at Cleveland School of Dance for three years. She travels to the school daily from her home in Avon Lake.



The Minor Parks development near Cain Park included Hyde Park Avenue. Find out more Cleveland Heights history at www.chhistory.org. The Cleveland Heights Historical Society promotes the history of our community through public programs, an informative Web site and fact-filled newsletters. Join today!

CROSS-NUMBER PUZZLE by Robert Haas

a	b	c	d	e	f	g
h						
i						
j					k	l
		m		n		
o	p		q		r	
s						

Across

- a. Heights Observer phone (216) _____
- h. 20³ x Scheherazade
- i. 270 x X, where Y - X = 3504 and Y - 2X = 811
- j. Sesqui score
- k. F₇ - 2, where F₁ = 1, F₂ = 1, F₃ = 2, F₄ = 3, F₅ = 5, F₆ = 8, ... are the Fibonacci numbers, each being the sum of the two previous ones
- m. Demuth, Chanel, or Beethoven number
- o. Adult
- q. Declaration of Independence
- s. Heights Observer ad phone (216) _____

Down

- a. 5⁴ x Y (see i Across)
- b. Perfect vision
- c. James Bond
- d. Tchaikovsky overture
- e. Retirement plan ____ (k)
- f. Visionary film
- g. 2⁵ - 2
- l. Mid-April headache + 20, or Hastings - 6
- n. F₉ x 5 (see k Across)
- p. Browns
- q. F₇ (see k Across)
- r. Trombones in the parade + 1

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Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest. -Mark Twain

"Micro-Festival" at Cain Park celebrates spirit of Woodstock

David Budin

Forty years ago this summer, I was a young singer-songwriter living in New York City and recording for a then-small (now-big) label, Sire Records. I had a ticket for the Woodstock Festival, but at the last minute I decided not to go (that's another story) and gave my ticket to a friend.

I spent that weekend listening to radio news reports of what was happening at the festival and wandering around a nearly deserted Greenwich Village, seemingly the only one my

age still in town.

On Aug. 14, which is technically the 40th anniversary of the beginning of Woodstock (it's not the same date, but it's the same Friday in August), I'll be performing in a "micro-festival" on the stage of Cain Park's Evans Amphitheater, that will, in some ways, celebrate the spirit of Woodstock.

"Soul and Heart: A Two-Hour Festival of Folk, Blues & Pop-Gospel" will feature four musical artists performing individually and in various combinations with each other. Long Road, a '60s-style folk group; pop-influenced

gospel group the Prayer Warriors; contemporary blues singer and guitarist Kristine Jackson; and singer-songwriter Noah Budin will perform a wide variety of songs—many from the '60s—seamlessly blending from one artist to another.

It is a unique event that promises to be entertaining and at times moving. For tickets (\$20), call Cain Park at 216-371-3000, or visit www.cainpark.com for more information.

David Budin is a freelance writer living in Cleveland Heights.



Kristine Jackson

COURTESY OF KRISTINE JACKSON

Historian to lecture on the Rockefeller's local legacy at Cedar Fairmount Festival

Kaitlin Bushinski

Cedar Fairmount festival goers can learn how the richest man in the world at the turn of the 19th century, John D. Rockefeller, and his family made their mark on Cleveland Heights.

Local historian, activist and author Sharon Gregor will give a lecture about the Rockefeller's legacy at the festival based on the research for her first book, *Forest Hill: The Rockefeller Estate*.

What is now Forest Hills Park was once a sprawling, 300-acre estate with its own golf course and a 40-room Victorian mansion, a summer home to the Rockefellers during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Gregor hopes to "reintroduce the Rockefeller legacy in the Greater Cleveland area," because, she said, "no one has written about this legacy in over 30 years."

For her presentation, Gregor will discuss little known stories about John D. Rockefeller, including a surprise visit that made headline news in the local papers. Gregor will also show previously unpublished photos of the Rockefellers that she uncovered during her research.

"You can touch a story, even though we're sitting here 70 years later," Gregor told the *Heights Observer* during her interview at the Heights Rockefeller Building on Lee and Mayfield roads. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. built the center



Local historian Sharon Gregor will lecture about the Rockefellers' legacy in Cleveland.

as part of a model community development, along with 81 homes.

Gregor, a Cleveland Heights resident, coordinated the effort to put the 81 Rockefeller homes on the National Register of Historic Places and she was one of the founders of the Forest Hills Historic Preservation Society. She has also just completed her second book, *Rockefeller's Cleveland*.

Gregor's lecture will be held at the Alcazar from 2 to 3 p.m. Aug. 9. For more information please call 216-791-3172 or visit www.cedarfairmount.org.

Kaitlin Bushinski is a recent graduate of Oberlin College and a summer intern at the Heights Observer.

Knitscape

Peggy Spaeth

What is tall, striped and fuzzy and keeps time? A knitscaped parking meter.

Heights Arts, in partnership with businesses and nimble-fingered helpers throughout the area, is presenting Knitscape, a temporary community public art project under the creative oversight of artist Carol Hummel, in residence at Heights Arts Gallery in August 2009.

Knitscape will create a visual line of color and pattern in the Cedar Lee and Larchmere business districts, with parking meter poles and selected trees being covered by colorful knitted and crocheted cozies.

The purpose of the project is four-fold:

- to demonstrate on a temporary basis how art can visually unify the streetscape
- to create a community around an art project
- to enliven daily life with unexpected art
- to support local businesses

For a one-time \$5 registration fee to help defray materials costs, attend a Knitscape gathering and be part of creating a public art project. No experience is necessary! Meet the artist and get to work.

Lessons, patterns, refreshments and friendship will be at the following Knitscape gatherings:



Carol Hummel works on a prototype in front of Heights Arts Gallery.

COURTESY OF HEIGHTS ARTS

Saturday, August 1, noon-3 p.m.

Registration begins at Heights Arts Gallery
2173 Lee Road, 1 p.m. artist talk, 216.371.3457

Sunday, August 2, 2-4 p.m.

FinePoints, 12620 Larchmere Blvd., 216.229.6644

Wednesday, August 5, 1-3 p.m.

Loganberry Books, 13015 Larchmere Blvd.
216.795.9800

Friday, August 14, 6-8 p.m.

Boommodern, 2218 Lee Road, 216.320.1784

Wednesday, August 19, 1-3 p.m.

Wool & Willow Needlepoint, 13002 Larchmere Blvd.
216.791.7952

Thursday, August 20, 6-8 p.m.

Abrash, 2150 Lee Road, 216.320.9300

Saturday, August 29, noon-3 p.m.

Knitscape Finale Party! 1 p.m. Knitscape Slideshow
Heights Arts Gallery, 2173 Lee Road, 216.371.3457

For additional events and a list of generous business sponsors, please visit www.heightsarts.org/publicart/#knitscape. Support your local businesses—they support the arts!

Peggy Spaeth is the executive director of HeightsArts.



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Heights-area lawns crave organics

Douglas Freer

Gardeners and farmers alike know that regularly adding organic matter builds healthy soil allowing plants to flourish. In the natural environment, plants die and decompose, returning nutrients and organic material to the soil. We interrupt this natural cycle in our urban landscapes because in most cases it's necessary to clean our yards of landscape debris, piling leaves, sticks and grass clippings on the tree lawn for the city to haul away to a nearby compost facility.

A few gardeners compost yard and kitchen waste, but rarely generate enough compost to impact more than a small garden area. In most cases the bulk of our yard waste is composted at some facility and is returned only when we buy composted products and spread them in our landscapes. However, homeowners often do not return enough compost to replace the material that has been removed or that is necessary to sustain healthy soil.

The lack of organic material is easy to spot. Try sticking a pencil or pen into the lawn and see how far it penetrates. Be careful you don't break your pencil pushing too hard. For comparison, try a maintained flower or vegetable garden. Ah, yes, quite a bit easier.

Despite our best hopes and intentions, it would appear that our lawns have become the second-class citizens of our yards. As the pencil test demonstrates, the soil in our lawns has very little organic material, primarily because it's rarely, if ever, replaced, as opposed to your gardens and beds, which have

much better soil.

Soil consists of three basic minerals (sand, silt and clay), organic matter, air and water. In the Heights area, of the three mineral components, clay is found in the largest concentration. Clay is also the smallest of the three minerals, comparatively, leaving little room for air. And when compacted, the soil has less air space, making root development even more challenging. A healthier lawn begins with building better soil.

Top dressing with bulk organic materials like compost, leaf humus or SweetPeet will improve the composition of the soil, making the existing clay more hospitable to growing grass, just as it does for your garden beds. For existing lawns, the challenge has been that making a meaningful difference requires adding a large amount of organic material. To spread approximately one-fourth-inch of compost requires about one cubic yard for every 1,000 square feet of area. This is enough to help the lawn without smothering it. Applying half again as much or double will not hurt the lawn, but it will become a little more noticeable. Larger volumes can be applied more frequently, but in smaller amounts to avoid smothering the lawn.

When starting over with a new lawn add one-fourth-inch to three-fourths-inch of compost per 1,000 square feet and incorporate it into the existing soil with a rototiller. Spreading a large volume of material by hand is labor intensive. Professional lawn care companies may have specialized equipment to reduce the labor and, therefore, the cost



Compared to spreading by hand, specialized top-dressing equipment allows for large volumes of organic material to be applied consistently and cost effectively.

for top-dressing your lawn. Depending on the type of compost material that is being used, spreading by hand requires placing small piles throughout the yard and then raking it out, so the material is very thin, then using a power backpack blower to further disperse and scatter the compost, which prevents smothering. A consistent and thin application is more difficult with this hand method particularly when the compost is dense or wet.

Applying the compost at any time of year is fine, but prior to or during the fall or spring growing season is preferable. Scheduling your spring and/or fall

lawn aeration at the same time as the top-dressing helps to further incorporate the compost into the lawn, improving the effectiveness of your efforts. Beyond basic fertilizing (traditional or organic), the next-best thing you can do for your lawn is to add organic material to improve the soil. You will be rewarded with a greener, healthier and lower-maintenance lawn.

Douglas Freer is a Cleveland Heights native and is the owner of Lawn Lad, Inc. Lawn Lad provides residential landscape services in the Heights area. Call 216-371-1935 or visit www.lawnlad.com

HRRC offers financial assistance for home repairs

Allison Urbanek

In the current economic climate, many homeowners are choosing to fix up their homes, rather than considering a move. Home Repair Resource Center, a nonprofit organization right here in Cleveland Heights, offers a variety of loan and grant programs to help make home repairs more affordable and less of a worry, as these two recent examples demonstrate:

Last winter was very tough on roofs and gutters, with the heavy snow and ice buildup. This spring, a young

woman with two small children met with one of our counselors to obtain a loan to fix her roof. She was very worried about taking on an additional loan payment because she was already on a tight budget. She was pleased to find that she could qualify for several grant programs that reduced her loan payment by half. Furthermore, she was able to fix her roof and still have an affordable monthly payment.

An older gentleman came into center recently with a list of violations from the city inspector. He had been at his job for over 25 years and earned a good income,

but because of some credit debt he was unable to get a loan through the bank. He wanted to fix his violations and was delighted to learn that the center offers a special loan program called the Challenge Fund, for people with credit issues. Not only was he able to get financing to fix his violations, he also received free credit counseling to help him get back on track with his budget!

All of the center's services are offered at no cost so make it your first stop when exploring financing options. For more information call 216-381-6100 or visit www.hrhc-ch.org.



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Allison Urbanek works for the Home Repair Resource Center.

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Mental health innovator celebrates 20 year anniversary

Tom Woodworth

When Ray Gonzalez started the non-profit Planned Lifetime Assistance of Northeast Ohio in 1989, the conventional service model was for individuals needing mental health care to visit a mental health care clinic. PLAN was founded as a grassroots organization, developed by families and staff who wanted something different.

“PLAN’s holistic home-based approach,” Gonzalez says, “provides the tools necessary to allow hundreds of our members [PLAN’s term for clients] living with mental challenges, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression, to achieve enduring emotional and cognitive recovery.”

Gonzalez says that during his 39

years of working with people with disabilities, he became convinced that doing therapy with members in their homes enabled him to see them in their natural environment, understand their daily lifestyle and provide more focused services. PLAN’s service model places high value on the family and includes them whenever possible in the recovery planning. “The family knows the member best,” he said.

In addition to individual psychotherapy and casework services staffed by Licensed Independent Social Workers, PLAN offers a menu of 60 to 70 hours per month of social and recreational activities, operates a National Alliance for Mental Illness award-winning program for members to perform volunteer work for other nonprofits, sponsors

a one-of-a-kind anti-stigma public education program, and operates a state-of-the-art psychiatric rehabilitation program called Cognitive Enhancement Therapy.

In the early years, PLAN was a home-based business operating out of Gonzalez’s third floor. He started serving four families and ended the first year with 24 families. Today PLAN serves 134 families from its ultramodern facility. As a long-time Cleveland Heights resident, Gonzalez is proud to claim that the first 20 years of PLAN’s existence and growth was based in his community.

Gonzalez is married to Pam Bertaud, an art therapist, and has two sons, Lucas and Noah.

On Sept. 12, PLAN will mark its 20th anniversary with a gala, “Celebrating the Art of Recovery,” at the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage. Milton and Tamar Maltz will host the event. For more information, go to



Alvah Chisholm studied art in France and now uses art therapy at Planned Lifetime Assistance of Northeast Ohio in his recovery for mental illness.

www.planneohio.org or call 216-321-3611.

Tom Woodworth is a retired advertising and public relations professional and currently volunteers as a business counselor with SCORE.

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Spreading the love



Carrie Claspy and her daughters, Anna and Maggie, work to replant the hostas purchased from the FutureHeights auction and donated to the Big Dig at Noble Elementary School. Mark your calendar for the 2009 FutureHeights online auction, Oct. 16 through Nov. 15.

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Wouldn’t you like to see what’s inside? Sunday, August 9th

Noon - 4 p.m. Continuous showing of HGTV’s show “Dream Drives,” focusing on the grand homes on Fairmount Boulevard in Cleveland Heights

1 - 4 p.m. TASTING, courtesy of Chef Ben Cyr, Green Planet Catering

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Lawn Lad joins Project Green Care to provide free service to military families

Christine McBurney

On a humid Tuesday afternoon in July, Doug Freer, owner of Lawn Lad, and his crew are mowing a client's lawn, fertilizing, and cleaning up some of the landscaping. It's a typical day on the job except this University Heights client won't be paying for her lawn care services.

Freer and his company are enrolled in a program called "Green Care," an initiative of Project Evergreen, a non-profit organization whose mission is "to preserve and enhance green space in our communities for today and future generations."

Green Care goes beyond creating tidy lawns. It connects families of servicemen and women with lawn contractors, like Freer, who agree to provide free lawn care while their spouses are deployed.

Project Evergreen also seeks donations to support this service to the community.

Even in this economy, Freer feels he is doing the right thing. "We're in business to be in business; to make a profit. But giving back to the community that supports us feels good. Some of my crew live in the Heights and they feel good about helping their neighbors. And I feel strongly about supporting our troops."

Today's client, who requested that her identify remain anonymous, is married to a National Guardsman on his second tour of duty in Iraq. Freer believes donating his company's services is the least he can do. "We put her husband's mind at ease; he knows that a burden has been lifted from her shoulders while he's gone so he can do his job more effectively. It's a minor way to give back for his service."

Although the Cleveland Heights-University Heights area does not, according to Freer, have a large military population, any support can reach families outside of our area. If you are



A Lawn Lad crew member mows a lawn for free as part of Project Green Care.

interested in becoming involved with Green Care you can contact Doug Freer at www.lawnlad.com/ or visit www.projectevergreen.com/gcft/.

Christine McBurney is the theatre arts department chair at Shaker Heights High School, a performer, writer, and proud Heights High soccer mom.

HCC aims for broader audience in conversations on race and society

Dawn Rucker

Heights Community Congress continues its dialogue series with two upcoming programs focusing on "Re-engaging the American Dream." These community discussions are part of HCC's broader series "Perception vs. Reality: How do we talk about race, class and in diversity in our community?"

"Reengaging the American Dream" examines our country's vision for itself and the different ways in which that vision is defined in the nation's past, present and future.

The programs, hosted by the Cuyahoga County Public Library, will be held on Thursday, Aug. 20 at the Parma Heights Branch and on Thursday, Aug. 27 at the Brook Park Branch. Both programs begin at 6:30 p.m.

"Reengaging the American Dream" developed in response to an HCC forum held at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in January 2009. The forum focused on differing perspectives of the "American Dream," and the intersection of race, class, ethnicity and other diversity issues.

For more information about the Heights Community Congress and its upcoming programs, call 216-321-6775, or visit www.heightscongress.org.

Dawn Rucker is the diversity program coordinator for Heights Community Congress, a Cleveland Heights resident, mom, dog owner and avid reader.

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