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Nighttown celebrates 50 years in the Heights

James Henke

Nighttown, the restaurant located at the top of Cedar Hill in the Cedar Fairmount Business District of Cleveland Heights, is observing its 50th anniversary this month. On Feb. 13, the restaurant will host its biggest anniversary celebration, which will feature a concert by the Manhattan Transfer, the Grammy-award-winning vocal quartet. In addition, the restaurant is putting together an all-star Cleveland band for a performance on Feb. 5, and is planning numerous other anniversary celebrations over the course of the year.

Nighttown opened on Feb. 5, 1965. The space it now occupies comprised four separate stores back then. Original owner John Barr first bought one of the middle storefronts—the Silhouette Lounge, a 40-seat bar that featured a pool table—paying \$18,000 for the space. Barr, who's now 84 years old and lives in Cleveland Heights, owned other restaurants in the Cleveland area, including the Lonesome Dove, which was in



Nighttown owner Brendan Ring with the restaurant's founder, John Barr.

the Rockefeller Building at the intersection of Mayfield and Lee roads in Cleveland Heights; the Raintree in Chagrin Falls; and the Watership Down in Moreland Hills. He named Nighttown after the Dublin red-light district in James Joyce's book *Ulysses*.

In 1968, Barr purchased the space immediately to the west, which had been occupied by the Cedar Hill Café. Four years later, he bought the space to the east, and, finally, in 1978, he took over the entire building. "My fondest memory is when we bought

the space to the west and opened the dining room," said Barr. "Prior to that, it was just a bar. But it was a lot of work getting the dining room ready. We had to work all night to put in a wood floor, then I put in a charcoal broiler. I was both the chef and the clean-up guy!"

Nighttown's current owner, Brendan Ring, previously owned a restaurant in New York City called Joxer Daley's, named after one of the characters in Sean O'Casey's play

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Cardale Jones visits Heights High



Cardale Jones (far right) spells out O-H-I-O with Miyana Williams, administrative assistant, LeAndrew Woody, Heights football player, and Zoraba Ross, administrative principal.

Joy Henderson

Ohio State quarterback Cardale Jones stopped by Heights High on Wednesday, Jan. 14 to see his former Glenville coach Scott Niedzwiecki, a Heights

science teacher. "I have always kept in touch with Coach Scott and I just wanted to check in with him today," said Jones.

As he walked through the hall-

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Reaching Heights sponsors Severance Hall student concert

Krista Hawthorne

More than 450 student musicians from all of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools will have the rare opportunity to perform onstage at Severance Hall on Feb. 24. Geoffrey Golden, a Heights High graduate and the recent seventh-season winner of "Sunday Best," a televised gospel soloist competition, will speak and perform.

Reaching Musical Heights, a quadrennial project of Reaching Heights, is also a gala benefit for the organization. The event brings student vocalists and instrumentalists from the CH-UH elementary and middle schools and the high school to the Severance Hall stage. Remembering the 2007 and 2011 performances, John Hubbard, Reaching Heights Board of Directors president, said, "Listening and watching our young people perform so well together in this amazing hall is overwhelming. This concert should not to be missed."

Planning began a year ago, as did fundraising to cover the expenses of rehearsal and performance space at Severance Hall, music and production costs, and advertising and promotional expenses. "It truly is a community event," said event chair Kim Conklin, "and I am so grateful to all the volunteers and donors who will make this event memorable for the performers and the audience!"

This event showcases not only

continued on page 4

Mosdos withdraws offer to purchase Millikin; district announces building is no longer for sale

Angee Shaker

After years of efforts to negotiate the sale of the former Millikin Elementary School building to local private K-8 school Mosdos Ohr Hatorah, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, the City of Cleveland Heights and Mosdos jointly announced that Mosdos has withdrawn its purchase offer.

"Mosdos found after investigation that it is not able to secure necessary financing due to renovation

costs," said Alan Rapoport, attorney for Mosdos Ohr Hatorah.

"We spent many years working on this deal and are disappointed, but we certainly understand the situation. We wish Mosdos the very best," said Nancy Peppler, CH-UH Board of Education president.

"However, while we wish the sale had gone through," added Peppler, "we have also identified a district need for the Millikin space and we intend to start using it again as soon as possible to house our tradesmen and grounds



The former Millikin School.

crew. Since we won't be renovating the space for classroom use, but simply converting the building for use for our trades, our costs will be minimal."

Officials from the City of Cleveland Heights had also been hopeful that the sale would go through. "Our

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Letters Policy

The *Heights Observer* welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, along with the writer's name, phone number and e-mail address, to: www.heightsobserver.org/members or e-mail: info@futureheights.org

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

The *Heights Observer* is a citizen-based news source published monthly by FutureHeights, a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to civic engagement and quality of life.

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Does something about this paper look different?



OPENING
THE OBSERVER

Bob Rosenbaum

You may notice the appearance of this publication looks a little bit different this month. If you're not able to put your finger on exactly why, here it is: The columns of type are 1/8-inch narrower than they used to be; and the gutters—the white space between each column—are 1/16-inch wider.

I'm always amazed at how much impact a sixteenth of an inch can have on the page of a newspaper or magazine.

If you look through the paper, you'll notice that every ad is either one, two, three or four columns wide. So the change means all of our advertisers have had to make small changes in the width of their ads.

It's been a lot of work, and we're not finished. Only about half of the ads have been changed over so far. We've had to do some jury-rigging to make two different sets of slightly different ad specifications fit together in a single issue.

That's why some pages may look more raggedy than normal; it will improve over the next couple months as we get the rest of the ads re-sized to fit the paper's new format.

To be honest, I don't think the change makes the paper look better, and it actually reduces the amount of text that fits on a page (though not by very much).

So why did we do it?

The *Heights Observer* is one of seven publications affiliated with the Observer Media Project. The others are in Euclid, Collinwood, Lakewood, Rocky River, Westlake/Bay Village and Parma.

Each of these publications runs independently of the others; our only real connections are the software we use to operate, and a community-building vision that takes a slightly different direction in each publication—depending on the community and on the individuals managing the paper.

But we are working cooperatively to sell advertising to organizations that want to reach some or all of the communities these publications serve. To do that effectively, we all need to offer the same advertising sizes so a business or institution doesn't need to submit up to seven slightly different versions of the same ad.

The changes you see represent the adjustment we had to make in

order to match our advertising specifications to those of every other Observer publication. Why our specifications were different in the first place isn't much of a story; it goes back to a couple of decisions that were a good idea at the time we made them in 2008.

In short, we made the change for the money. But don't worry; this doesn't mean we're suddenly soliciting the likes of Walmart to advertise.

Over time, you may begin to see a few more institutional advertisers like Tri-C and Hospice of the Western Reserve—two examples of organizations that have been running in multiple Observer publications.

Be assured the *Heights Observer* exists for this community. Increasing its marketability to regional advertisers is part of making it financially sustainable. But it doesn't change our mission to foster transparency, citizen engagement and an environment that supports the independent businesses that make the Heights such a good place to live.

Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum, is co-chairman of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee, and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development. Contact him at brosenbaum@heightsobserver.org.

About the Observer

The *Heights Observer* is not an ordinary newspaper; it is a nonprofit publication for residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

The *Observer* has no writing staff; it is written by you—the readers.

Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. Anyone in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even just once.

Is there something you think should be covered in the *Heights Observer*? If so, please write it on your own, or with friends, neighbors or colleagues. Our volunteer editors will make sure it's ready to publish and contact you with any questions.

If you're writing a news article,

it should be clear and factual. If you want to express an opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it's about something specific to our two cities.

- To make a submission of any kind, go to www.heightsobserver.org and click on "Member Center" at the left.

- For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on "Become an Observer" at the left. For questions that aren't answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the March issue must be submitted by Feb. 9. But don't wait that long; we publish articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Thank you to the CH police and fire departments

[This letter, sent to the CH police chief, was also sent to the Observer and other media for publication.]

Dear Chief Robertson,

I've taken a bit of time to think back on all our encounters with the Cleveland Heights Police and Cleveland Heights Fire departments in the 60 years that our family has lived on Edgehill Road. Without exception, each response or interaction was professional in every way. Not the slightest complaint comes to mind when reviewing all these years, and only gratitude that we are protected by a police force with such high integrity. Sixty years is a long time.

In the years since my return to my childhood home, I have had reason to call the police quite a few times for break-ins, attempted break-in, car theft attempt, theft and fraudulent use of library card, tire cutting, bicycle theft, possible breaking into other houses on the street, an elderly neighbor walking in the street in a daze, etc. I have been politely, but firmly stopped twice for infractions: once for forgetting to register car license plates; the other time for riding a bike on the sidewalk without a helmet. I did not know this was a local ordinance. Each time the officers responded very quickly, were courteous, clear, firm, and fully professional as they should

be, and as they always have been over the many years that our family has been assisted by them.

I recently met investigator Quintero Q. Mack during a casual conversation while he was on duty. He could not possibly have been more responsive in offering police contacts and encouraging me to call with any questions, needs or concerns. What a personable, encouraging, compassionate, and unsolicited policing communication effort.

Over the last few years I had need of Cleveland Heights fire/ambulance emergency services a number of times at our home. I have also called twice this year for stumble drunks lying in the street or walking into traffic at other locations, and an injured bicyclist who had crashed into a pole on Cedar Hill. As with the police department, the response was fast, clear, compassionate, professional. One could not ask for better fire emergency services. These people in need quickly received the responses they needed to help them.

On behalf of my parents, my sister Joan Kish Shively of Gates Mills, and myself, and I'm sure many, many other residents, I thank the mayor, you as police chief, the fire chief, and the entire police force and fire department of Cleveland Heights for the 60 years of exceptional professional policing and fire services courageously, and, I'm sure, at times heroically, provided for our family, and so many others in this city, while protecting our property and lives.

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Excerpts from Observer blogs

Read the whole story at blogs.heightsobserver.org

Good Man, Good Deeds - Making a Difference

I would like to take a moment to brag a little bit about my husband, Shaul Janes.

Shaul and I moved to Cleveland Heights just over two years ago from Jerusalem. It has not been an easy move for him. I dragged him back to the States after he'd finally achieved a dream of his, to make aliyah and live in Israel.

I had to come back to the States to work and if we were going to build a life together, he would have to come back with me.

But as difficult as that was, that perhaps wasn't the hardest thing. Shaul has many skills and talents, from being a trained chef to painting and restoration, and more. Beyond that, Shaul is a people person. He likes to talk with people, help people and generally be of service to others. However, it was difficult to find a job here in Cleveland that could utilize his skills and also be something he could make a living from. Finally he got a break at Motorcars Honda. . . .

Chuck Gile, owner of Motorcars Honda, told his employees that he would like to be a Secret Santa to someone in the community. Did

anyone know someone who was in need? Shaul seized the opportunity to help the family that he had been working with. Having a dying mother at home had been a strain on the family both physically and financially. . . .

—Cheryl Stone

Citizens Police Academy - Part VII: Wrapping It Up

I had every intention of wrapping up my experience with the Cleveland Heights Citizens Police Academy back when it ended last fall. But I didn't know what to say.

That is until a Cleveland Heights resident named Samuel Taylor allegedly led police on a brief car chase through a residential neighborhood here. Then, after he reportedly stopped his car and ran in the police officer's direction, he took great umbrage that the police officer briefly drew his gun while sizing up the situation.

The incident occurred three weeks after Tamir Rice was killed by a Cleveland police officer, and the bulletin board at Cleveland.com was still afire with comments that the boy brought the shooting on himself by failing to follow police

instructions. . . .

We think of Cleveland Heights as a small place, but with 45,000 residents it's the largest city on the East Side except for Euclid (48,000). It's Ohio's 24th-largest city—way bigger than Massillon, Kent, Wooster and Sandusky, to name a few places we think of as significant urban areas. Also much larger than Shaker Heights (27,900), South Euclid (22,000) and Beachwood (11,900). . . .

—Bob Rosenbaum

Cleveland Heights Chronicles - Part 2

Our arrival in Cleveland Heights at 3157 Kensington Road took place in the summer of 1969. We moved from the Park Lane Villa in University Circle, where we'd been for three years. The Park Lane was a wonderful old building, recently remodeled, and we had an apartment on the 5th floor overlooking E. 105. We were there to see the National Guard tanks and trucks during the Glenville riots. Had I been who I am today, I would have been glued to the TV. However, at that time, I just shrugged them off as another interesting sight along 105. . . .

—Anne McFarland

MOSDOS continued from page 1

interest at the city was to support a viable educational entity going into the long vacant Millikin building," said Mayor Dennis Wilcox. "The neighborhood surrounding Millikin was eager to see the building returned to its original use. This was just not possible."

While the district is undergoing phase 1 of its Master Facilities Project, which includes the complete renovation of Heights High and two middle schools, the tradesmen and grounds crew needs to relocate from the Wiley building.

The Wiley campus is being modified to temporarily house Heights High students and staff during the two years the high school building is under construction.

Once the high school is complete, the Wiley campus will house middle school students and staff during the construction of the middle schools.

The district will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 4, at 6 p.m., to discuss changes now planned for Millikin to accommodate the school district's tradesmen and grounds crew. Representatives from Project Management Consultants, ThenDesign Architects and district administration will present information at the meeting, and answer questions.

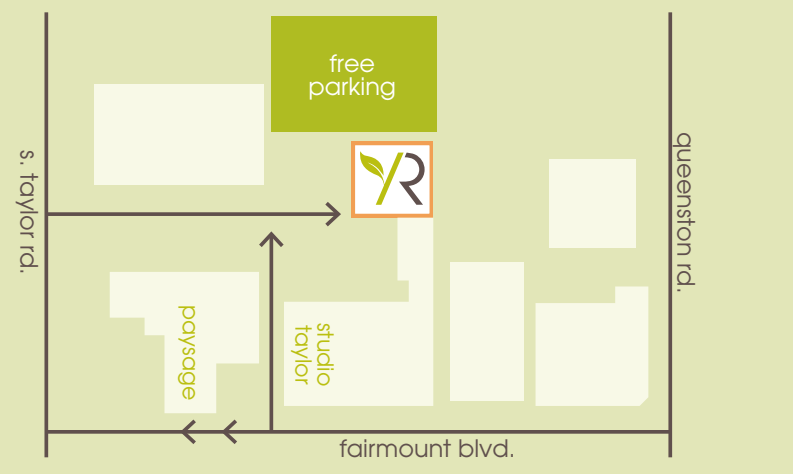
The meeting will take place at the Millikin School, 1700 Crest Road in Cleveland Heights.

Angee Shaker is director of communications for Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.



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REACHING HEIGHTS continued from page 1

the remarkable talents of the student musicians, but also the skill and dedication of the school district's music faculty. During rehearsals, students learn about the history of Severance Hall and its remarkable acoustics. They also learn about the Cleveland Orchestra and the work ethic of its members. "It would be a shame for our children who live so close to the [Cleveland] Orchestra and its concert hall not to have this experience," said Lisa Hunt, Reaching Heights assistant director.

This event is partially funded by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a Cuyahoga Arts & Culture grant. Concert tickets are available for \$10 to \$30 at www.clevelandorchestra.com, or by calling the Severance Hall box office at 216-231-1111. Benefit tickets (\$90 to \$250) are available



Heights High musicians performing in Reaching Musical Heights at Severance Hall in 2011.

from Reaching Heights at www.reachingheights.com or by calling 216-932-5110.

Krista Hawthorne is the executive director of Reaching Heights.

Coach Rotsky is an asset, not just a football coach

Annie Brust

Cleveland Heights High School recently lost an amazing asset and mentor to its football program, Coach Jeff Rotsky. Some people in the community believe that football is a pastime, a mere choreographed battle of athletes with no vision past 100 yards, but I beg to differ. I would like to share why I think the antiquated stereotype is wrong and how Coach Rotsky's departure will deeply affect our community. I petition you to listen.

I met Jeff Rotsky eight years ago when my oldest son began to participate in Cleveland Heights's youth football program. I heard the rumors about Rotsky's intensity and commitment but I had not heard about the strides he took to help boys become men. After eight years of unparalleled devotion, college camps and visits, countless scholarship recipients and a handful of NFL players, he is asked to resign. He is asked to leave, despite [his believing that he had] verbal agreement from two years prior about allowing him to watch his son play while remaining head coach; instead he was met with a brick wall.

We are a football family, watching our boys play, grow and mature. We cheer their wins and mourn their hardships, and by our sides each step of the way is Jeff Rotsky. I see a coach, a man, who shares a passion and a commitment to our children

and community like none other; he teaches them to lead by example. He impresses upon them the value of an education—to study hard, work hard and appreciate life. He reminds them to be considerate to those that do not have their advantages and to volunteer their time to help others. He demands excellence, on and off the field.

After all the years of football, the cold afternoons, the innumerable hours of practice and games, and the countless lives that he affects, I cannot help but focus on one memory: a hug. A seemingly simply gesture that carried with it promises and gratitude. He saw my child and thanked him. As we walked across Heights football field with my oldest son [at the end of] his high school career, he was approached and embraced by Coach Rotsky. He was told how much he was loved. Every moment up to that day dissolved into one precious gift: to see in the eyes of others what I see everyday. This amazing man gave my son and so many other young men true compassion and guidance. It reduced me to a blubbering pile of goo.

He loves our boys as his own. He provides a safe haven and true academic experience for boys to become better men, successful students, and hopefully future community leaders. For this memory and so many others I would like to say thank you and give praise to an individual who rarely takes a moment's praise for himself.

So, I ask, is he not important? I know football players and families are only a small part of our district but we have a voice, don't we count? What happens to the kids that do not have someone to stand up for them or keep them actively involved in school in a positive way? Is it really a good idea to refuse to listen and compromise when it is for betterment of the school community? Newsflash: it is not just football, it is their futures.

Annie Brust is a Cleveland Heights resident who has lived here with her family for more than 10 years. She has been a public high school teacher for 17 years.

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Noble Neighbors celebrate the group's first anniversary

Brenda H. May

Noble Neighbors celebrated our first year together with storytelling and raising our glasses in shared gratefulness. What began in a living room in January 2014, with a group of people concerned about a crime against one of our neighbors, has grown into a much larger movement of people working together to change the story of our neighborhood.

It delights us that several of our guest speakers have said, "I had no idea so many people would be here," as they apologized for bringing too few business cards.

Noble Neighbors attend every Cleveland Heights City council meeting. We're listening for decisions that affect our area and we're watching for trends. City council members are also listening to our concerns and looking for ways to address our concerns.

We've seen a resurgence of block watch groups and block parties throughout the neighborhood. Several groups now display "block watch" signs in their windows. Neighbors use phone and e-mail lists, and Nextdoor.com to communicate concerns, forward contractor recommendations, and find lost pets.

As we learned that neighborhood beautification is directly linked to crime reduction, we stepped up our efforts. Pick Up for Pride was a quick-and-easy, but surprisingly powerful, event that gathered 50 neighborhood residents to remove litter along Noble Road. With the help of Jan Kious, local gardening expert, perennial plants were installed in three new public flowerbeds—two at the Noble and Monticello intersection, and a third surrounding the city sign at Monticello and Belvoir boulevards.

We launched a website, www.nobleneighbors.com to help tell the story of our neighborhood. It provides a wonderful platform to showcase our best. People beyond our city are beginning to track our progress, and the website is used to introduce prospective buyers and renters to the neighborhood. Our e-mail list increased seven-fold in 2014.

Following a neighborhoodwide meeting last April, Cleveland Heights

City Council members invited us to the CH Police Academy to voice our concerns. The city continues to respond. We were especially pleased when the public works department heard our pleas about the condition of Noble Road, and worked to find funding for repairs. In early January, we learned that our neighborhood's main street will be repaved in 2015-16.

Cleveland Heights officials and officers have helped us champion our cause. Police Chief Jeffrey Robinson relocated a monthly Meet Your Police to the police academy, and has sent officers to speak with us at our meetings. We learned how to spot certain crimes, and formed a partnership between residents and police to report suspicious behavior.

Our partnerships with several city departments are proving fruitful. Working with the city's law office, we were able to assist in closing a nuisance business by being available to testify about chronic public safety threats. Rick Wagner of the housing office has encouraged us to report housing violations and his staff has moved quickly to address each concern. The relocation office designed a new brochure to highlight the Noble neighborhood in the city's relocation packet. Community relations staff has been tremendously supportive with information, printing, and serving as liaisons between the city and Noble Neighbors.

Our fall event, Make Noise for Noble Neighborhood, brought out kids of all ages to join Adam Kukuk and his percussion instruments for a rhythmic, joyful parade around the Noble Elementary School block. Nearby neighbors waved and cheered from their front porches.

By far the most amazing change in the neighborhood is a growing sense of hope. Where neighbors once felt isolated, we now have a feeling of community. Where the expectation was for continued decline, we are sowing the seeds for growth, and we see that resources are being directed our way. It is a good time to live in the Noble neighborhood. Join us!

Brenda H May is one of leaders of Noble Neighbors. Check out the group's story at www.nobleneighbors.com.

NIGHTTOWN continued from page 1

"Juno and the Paycock." In 1992, when Ring's wife's company closed its New York office and she was transferred to Cleveland, Ring sold his New York restaurant, and moved here. He got a job as a daytime bartender at Nighttown. The following year, Barr asked him to be the restaurant's manager, and in 1995, Ring became a 20 percent partner in the business.

In 2001, Ring, now 51, was sitting at the bar next to Charlie Keane. "He said that I ought to own the restaurant," Ring recalled. "And I said that I didn't have any money and that I would need \$1.5 million if I was going to buy the restaurant. It turned out that he was a banker, and five days later he called and said he would give me the money." Two weeks later, Ring closed a deal with Barr and became the owner of Nighttown.

In addition to its fine food, Nighttown is known as one of the best music venues in Greater Cleveland. For the last seven years, *DownBeat* magazine has rated Nighttown as one of the best jazz clubs in the world. Barr began presenting music when he first opened Nighttown. "I had an old, beat-up piano in the bar, and Bill Gidney and George Peters both played there on a regular basis," Barr said.

Around 1978, Nighttown began presenting bigger-name artists. Some of the first artists to play there were Dick Hyman, a jazz pianist who wrote the scores for many of Woody Allen's films; Ralph Sutton, a stride pianist; and Dave McKenna, a swing piano player.

In 1999, Nighttown hooked up

with Jim Wadsworth, who had been booking shows at other Cleveland-area venues. Wadsworth's first concert at Nighttown featured jazz pianist Ahmad Jamal. "He recommended that we get a new piano," Ring said. "So I spent \$75,000 on a new Steinway piano." Since then, Nighttown has presented numerous legendary jazz artists, including McCoy Tyner and the Count Basie Orchestra. In the last year, Nighttown has expanded its offerings, presenting shows that feature a wide variety of music, including cabaret, folk, Broadway and classical.

Asked about his favorite memory of his years at Nighttown, Ring said it was probably Aug. 14, 2003, when there was a major power outage throughout Cleveland and beyond. Nighttown had an emergency generator system, and, as a result, was the only restaurant open in the Cleveland area. "We served about 750 dinners that night," he said. "Then I got a call from the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, and they said that Prince Albert of Monaco was staying there and needed a place to eat. He came to Nighttown and wound up staying for about four hours!"

Ring loves the fact that Nighttown has been around for so long that he now has customers who bring their children and grandchildren to the restaurant. "Since 1965, four generations of families have eaten here," he said. "And they still love the place!"

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley.

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Standardized testing is a debilitating silver bullet



THE COMMON
GOOD

Susie Kaeser

For a child, the 180 days of a school year can feel like an eternity, but this is not so for teachers.

Under the gun to squeeze more and more into the annual teaching window, teachers have too little time to effectively plan lessons and cover ever-expanding content, get to know children and respond to their needs, communicate with parents, overcome any effects of inequality, digest yet another set of standards (the Common Core) and the latest format for testing those standards (the PARCC assessments) and then administer all the mandated high-stakes tests.

Lawmakers have made tests the silver bullet for education reform in the 21st century, and, as Mark Swaim-Fox, a teacher who visits schools across Ohio, told me, it is "sucking the life out of the classroom." Children, the presumed beneficiaries of these policies, are paying a price for this unsavory elixir: greater pressure to meet standards and less opportunity to learn.

I interviewed five teachers in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights district who kept a running record of time they spent during the first 10 weeks of this school year complying with testing-based requirements. The test-taking burden is not uniform by grade level or subject, but all five teachers were upset by the loss of precious time for teaching and planning. They are disheartened by the dominance of test-driven education. It adds little value to learning, interferes with best practices and takes the joy out of teaching.

Time on task is crucial to learning, yet two new layers of tests are diverting even more time away from instruction. Ohio's new teacher evaluation system (OTES) requires that all teachers be measured by the growth of their students, and, in districts such as CH-UH that underperform, teachers are following the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP), which requires them to develop and administer "common assessments." More time taken up by tests.

Planning time, already a scarce educational resource, is also being sacrificed to test-related activities. Teachers use their planning period, lunch and family time to design and grade tests that don't help them, to enter data into a system whose use is unknown and to generate data that is either irrelevant or that they don't have time to use. These new hoops have little to do with supporting their effectiveness, and a

lot to do with increasing stress. It keeps them from focusing on what matters: teaching.

Darrell Lausche, a third-grade teacher at Gearity Professional Development School, told me, "Testing is driving instruction, not the other way around."

Responsibility for ensuring that his young students pass the state reading test weighs heavily on Lausche, who works a 10-hour day, skips lunch and loses sleep. On seven different days during the 47 days of the first quarter, his students spent between 30 minutes and three hours taking state-mandated tests, including the Ohio Achievement Assessment which will determine if they move to fourth grade next year, "common assessments" mandated by the Ohio Improvement Process and a math assessment by which he will be evaluated.

Lausche devoted four planning periods to grading assessments, and entering them in ThinkGate, the state database. In addition, his team met over lunch at least once a week to fill in forms in preparation for their regular weekly team meeting required by the OIP. For Lausche, "None of these assessments are as informative as working day to day with my students."

Karen Kastor teaches algebra to ninth-graders. During the first quarter, she spent an average of one out of every eight class periods giving some kind of state-mandated test. Her tests satisfied an OIP requirement or established value-added metrics by which she will be evaluated. Similarly, a large part of her planning time was spent on testing.

One of the days that school was closed for professional development was devoted to testing-related topics—not instruction. In addition, she spent the equivalent of approximately 14 planning periods out of a possible 47 writing, reviewing, grading or entering results of tests required by OIP or OTES.

What affects teachers affects children. In a witch hunt for recalcitrant teachers, our elected leaders have created a perfect disaster: a system that requires children to learn more and ensures that more and more children will fail and that the inspired teachers who know how to reach them will give up trying.

Susie Kaeser is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, former director of Reaching Heights, and serves on the national board of Parents for Public Schools.

University Heights City Council

Meeting highlights



DECEMBER 15, 2014

Councilman Phil Ertel was absent.

East Cleveland

Mayor Susan Infeld said she had been participating in a conversation with leaders of neighboring communities and Cuyahoga County to develop a plan for assisting East Cleveland with its need for emergency services in a way that is fair and equitable.

Dispatch consolidation plan

The mayor also announced that conversations are being held with Police Chief Steven Hammett and leaders of Cleveland Heights, South Euclid and Beachwood regarding a possible multi-city police dispatch unit, being organized under a Cuyahoga County consolidation plan. Regulations under the plan require that the centralized dispatch be located on higher property for better radio transmission, and Beachwood has the highest altitude of the participating cities. These same cities currently share a police SWAT unit. The county plan requires reducing dispatch units in the county from 44 to 4. The mayor and police chief prefer to choose now [what cities] to partner with instead of waiting to be assigned, but emphasized that this is still in the early stage of discussion. Funding will be cut severely if the goal is not met by 2018.

Rick Jackson honored

University Heights resident Rick Jackson of Ideastream was recognized as 2014 Citizen of the Year. In addition to his work on behalf of the community through his work at WCPN and WVIZ, he has also served on the Citizen Recreation Advisory Committee. His son was chosen Youth Citizen of the Year in 2008.

Budget legislation

Council approved appropriations for expenditures for the period commencing Jan. 1, 2015 and ending Dec. 31, 2015. Mayor Infeld noted that this was the second time, since Larry Heiser became the finance director, that the city has passed a budget before the end of the prior year.

Committee appointment authority

Legislation relative to the mayor's authority to appoint council members to committees was presented on first reading. Currently the mayor assigns committee memberships in January but the charter says that council is to organize the committees. This ordinance proposes giving this authority to the vice mayor, with committee assignments to be made by the second meeting in January.

Council compensation

Council approved, on emergency, legislation increasing the compensation of council members for the terms beginning Jan. 1, 2016. Only council members who are elected in 2015 will receive this rate increase of \$200 per year. Council members whose term is continuing in 2016 will remain at the current rate. The last time action was taken to increase council pay was in 2009.

LWV Observer: Wendy Deuring.

JANUARY 5, 2015

Vice Mayor Susan D. Pardee was absent.

Demolition on Cedar and Fenway

Ken Fisher, the attorney for Larry Weiser, asked permission to demolish four houses on

Cedar Road and Fenway Drive to make way for commercial development. He claimed the houses were a public nuisance and safety hazard. When asked, Fisher stated that no contract was signed for any tenant. Councilman Mark Wiseman asked why an inspection was last done in 2013, but the building commissioner, who is new, could not answer.

Home demolition through the land bank
Council authorized an agreement with Cuyahoga County for the county's property demolition program. The agreement is necessary if the city wants to use the Cuyahoga Land Bank to demolish any homes. The county has issued \$50 million in bonds for cities throughout the county to use for demolition. Council also authorized an agreement with the land bank for demolition funding made available by Cuyahoga County.

City engineer

Council approved 2015 engineering fees for GPD Group. This will retain Joe Ciuni as the city's engineer. Ciuni noted, however, that any time a large project entails costs beyond his retainer a council-approved contract would be necessary. This engineering group works with 15 cities. The rate increased slightly from last year. Councilman Mark Wiseman asked if the city compared other companies' rates. The mayor said there was no need to do so. She said that not only is the city happy with the current company, but a change would be disruptive because GPD has historical knowledge of city projects.

Council committee appointments

Council passed legislation amending the city code regarding the mayor's authority to appoint council members to committees. Councilwoman Adele Zucker voted no. The ordinance was changed to have the vice mayor make appointments. The mayor wanted it on record that she disagrees with the amendment.

Sinkhole

The service director, Joe Pokorny, said there is a plate on Dysart Road where there is a sinkhole. The service department is taking steps to discover the source of the sinkhole and is monitoring the size as well.

LWV Observer: Michele Weiss.

Look for earlier, and often expanded, postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org.

These meeting summaries are abstracted from LWV observers' written reports. The summaries have been edited and prepared by Anne McFarland, Charlene Morse and Maryann Barnes. To receive e-mail postings of full reports, send an e-mail 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.

JONES continued from page 1

ways, Jones drew quite a bit of attention. Fellow Buckeye—and former track team captain—Principal Zoraba Ross congratulated Jones and his performance.

"We are all so proud of you and the way you represented our city and state," said Ross.

Heights High football player LeAndrew Woody was happy to be in the right place at the right time to meet Jones and share in an "O-H-I-O" photo. "Yes, that was cool," said Woody.

Also on Jones' agenda was a visit to teacher Shawn Washington, a family friend, fellow church parishioner and wife of a Glenville coach.

"It was a great to see him!" said

Washington. "We always knew that he was prepared and ready to step up if needed. He worked so hard for this win, we are all so proud of him."

On Jan. 12, Jones, a sophomore at The Ohio State University, led the OSU Buckeyes to a 42-20 upset over Oregon to win the national College Football Playoff championship.

"He has always been a great kid, and now he is a fine young man," said Niedzwiecki. "Cardale is a very humble and generous guy—we all saw that today as he took time to talk to so many people."

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.

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Heights historical photo of the month



COURTESY CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

This photograph from 1935 shows men working in the street in front of two small food markets. The shops are long gone, but the building shown is still standing somewhere in Cleveland Heights today. Do you know what store is there now?

E-mail your guess to heightshistory@gmail.com, and we'll randomly select a correct answer to win a free one-year membership to the Cleveland Heights Historical Society. Be sure to check out our Facebook page later this month, when we'll announce the winner.

This photo was selected by the Cleveland Heights Historical Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to discovering, preserving and promoting the heritage of Cleveland Heights, Ohio. For more information, and to view additional historical images, visit www.chhistory.org or www.facebook.com/clevelandheightshistorical.

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Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights



DECEMBER 15, 2014

All council members were present.

2015 budget presented

City Manager Tanisha Briley reviewed the city's 2015 budget with a PowerPoint presentation, which is part of the online record of this council meeting, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIKHBk apEX4&feature=youtu.be>. The total budget is \$91,223,965. General fund expenses amount to \$42,084,804, an increase of 2 percent over last year. The budget being presented for 2015 is balanced. She reviewed the city's major funding sources as well as the effects of expense reductions—mainly a reduced workforce (16 percent since 2013). The coming year will see a wage freeze for all employees, with non-union personnel also paying a larger share of their healthcare costs. She reviewed the positions that will be eliminated or will remain vacant. The capital improvement budget is about \$7.9 million, with 64 percent of that for streets.

Budget legislation

Council amended the 2014 budget ordinance, to reflect appropriations and other expenditures for the 2014 fiscal year.

Council approved the appropriations for current and future expenses and expenditures for the Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2015 fiscal year. Before the vote, Mayor Dennis Wilcox noted the impact of the loss of state funds and the recent passage of House Bill 5, which limits the ability of individual municipalities to control their own tax collection process at the local level.

Citizen appointments

Council approved the following appointments:

- Recreation Advisory Board: Kenneth Dowell (Jan. 1, 2015 through May 31, 2018)
- Board of Zoning Appeals: Nancy Dietrich (Jan. 1, 2015 through Jan. 31, 2019)
- Citizens Advisory Committee: Kim DeNero-Ackroyd, Jeffrey Bendix, David Benson, Melissa Bilanchi, Vetella Camper, Jessica Cohen, Douglas Dykes, Jonathon Goldman, Christine Henry, Anthony Mattoz Jr., Allison McCallum, Marian Morton, Donalene Poduska, Kahil Seren, Amanda Shaffer, Keba Sylla, Steve Titchnel, Diana Wellman, Sarah West, George Witherspoon, Parker Zabell and Kevin Ziegler (Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2015)

Retirees recognized

Mayor Wilcox thanked Eddie Carter, who is retiring from his long-held position as assistant city manager, and Judy Hayes, who is retiring from her position as secretary to the city manager.

Council Member Boyd

Mayor Wilcox and other council members acknowledged the service of Council Member Janine Boyd, who is joining the state legislature in January. Wilcox also commended Boyd's mother, Barbara Boyd, for her many years of public service.

LWV Observer: Katherine Solender.

JANUARY 5, 2015

All council members were present; there was one vacancy as Janine Boyd, former council member, took office in the Ohio House of Representatives.

Labor agreement

Council gave final approval for the compensation rates and benefits proposed by the tentative labor agreement with the National Production Workers Union Local 707 of Cleveland for the time period covering Jan. 1, 2015 through Dec. 31, 2017. This agreement had been ratified by a supermajority of the public works union on Dec. 16, 2014. Council Member Jeff Coryell commented on the importance of the collective bargaining process, stating that this agreement was a great example of how it works properly.

Public works

Public works projects for 2015 and 2016 include:

- The Lee Road streetscape from Dellwood Road to Superior Road.
- Mayfield Road signals, for which funding was previously obtained through the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA).
- The repaving of Cedar Road in 2016.
- Noble Road repaving in 2016, which has been granted funding by Cuyahoga County.

Alcazar conversion

Kirt Montlack of The Alcazar, 2450 Derbyshire Road, is planning to convert The Alcazar from 62 apartments and 122 lodging units into 96 apartments. Zoning laws would require an additional 34 enclosed parking spaces, which is not possible. With Council Member Cheryl Stephens abstaining, council approved a variance. Parking permits will be available in nearby city lots and protected bicycle parking will be provided.

Loan agreement for Medusa property

Council authorized an agreement with GMG Cleveland, LLC, to issue a loan of approximately \$470,537 to assist its acquisition of commercial property located at 2930 and 3008 Monticello Blvd. Council had determined in 2012 that renovation of this commercial property—the "old Medusa property"—would eliminate a blighted condition in the neighborhood. At that time a loan was authorized to Medusa Holdings, LLC, for \$500,000, under the city's Commercial Revolving Loan Fund Program to renovate the old Medusa property. However, the holding company was unable to meet the terms of that loan, so it was terminated and a new agreement made with GMG Cleveland, the real estate holding company of the Motorcars Group. The agreement includes a promise to create or retain on its own behalf, or through its tenants, 15 full-time equivalent permanent jobs with a minimum of eight of those jobs to be held by low-to-moderate-income persons within one year of the closing of the loan.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

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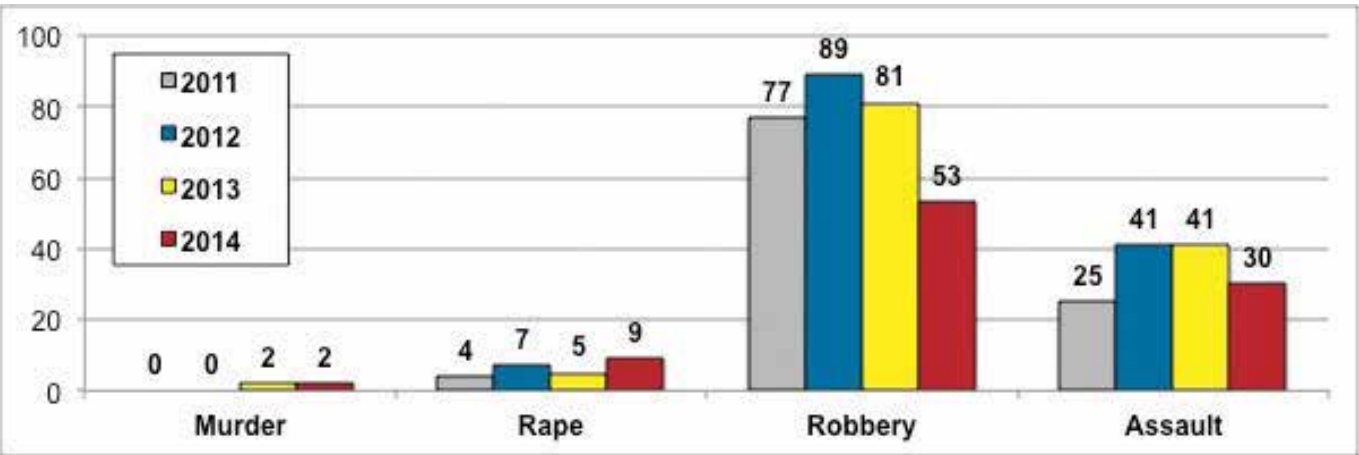
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Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 7.

Understanding crime in Cleveland Heights: Correction

Violent crimes committed in Cleveland Heights, January-October, 2011 – 14 (lower is better)



Bob Rosenbaum

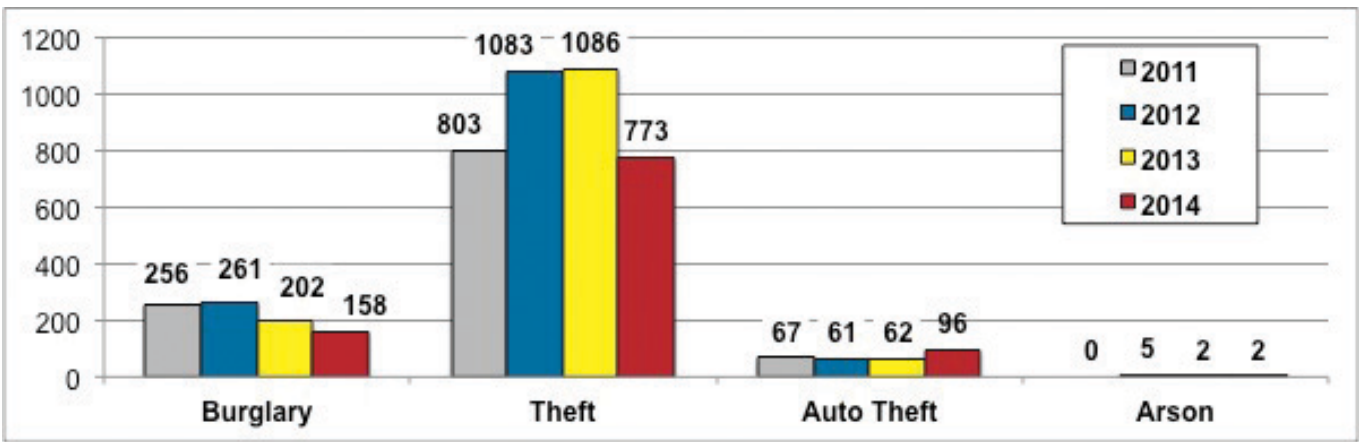
In last month's initial statistical report about crime in Cleveland Heights, the *Observer* intended to run three charts, but inadvertently omitted one while running another twice. We're publishing all three charts as originally intended. We apologize for any confusion.



For more background and detail on the *Observer* project to publish Cleveland Heights crime data, see the original article on the Heights Observer website at <http://tiny.cc/chcrimestats> or by scanning the QR code.

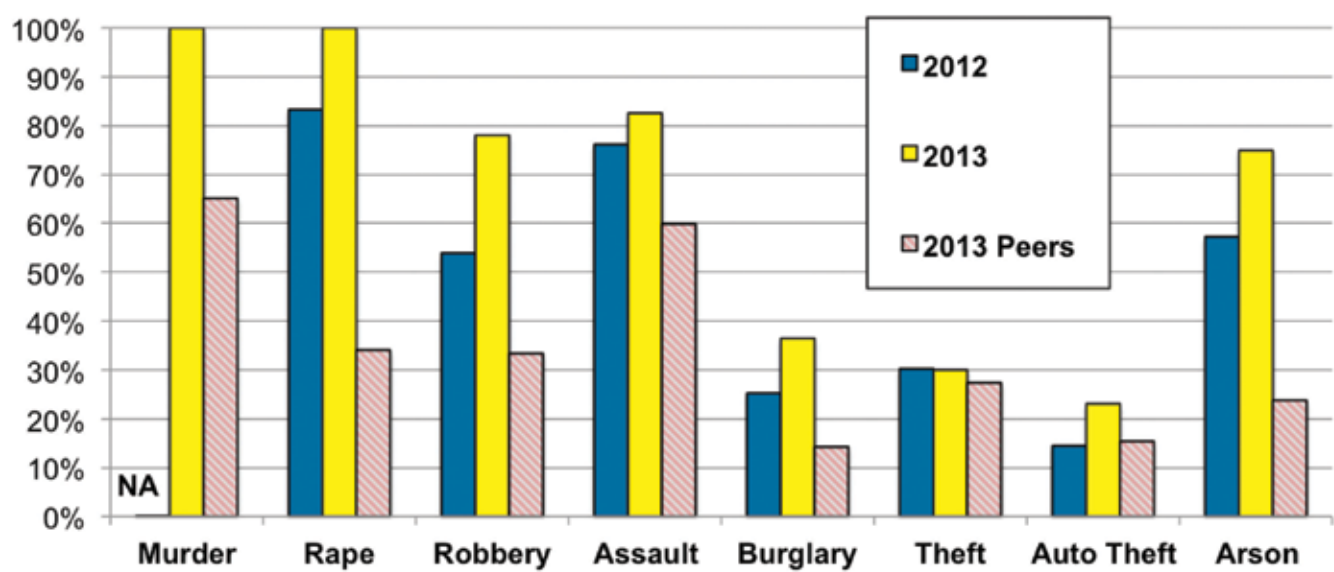
Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum is co-chairman of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee, and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development.

Property crimes committed in Cleveland Heights, January-October, 2011 – 14 (lower is better)



A statistical decline in burglaries is an example of how the CHPD is applying its increased emphasis on accurate crime reporting, according to Police Chief Jeffrey Robertson. In 2011, there were 318 burglaries reported for the full year. That's the same year an undercover Crime Suppression Team was established. Its job, Robertson said, is to understand current crime trends; follow up quickly and aggressively on reports of upward-trending crimes; investigate and arrest offenders, recover property; and provide ongoing feedback about the case to victims.

Percent of crimes cleared in Cleveland Heights for the full year, 2012 – 13 (higher is better)



Clearance rates measure how many crimes are solved. A crime is cleared, by FBI definition, when at least one person has been arrested, charged and turned over for prosecution. On rarer occasions, it may be cleared through exceptional means, in which case the offender(s) has been identified and located and charges prepared, but an arrest cannot be made due to circumstances beyond police control, such as the suspect's death or a victim's refusal to cooperate. Recovery of property does not constitute clearance of a crime. The comparison of CHPD's clearance rate with peer agencies (the striped bar on the chart) is based on the average clearance rate for all agencies in cities of similar size to Cleveland Heights—those with a population of 25,000–49,999. (The 2013 population of Cleveland Heights, according to the U.S. Census, is 45,394.)

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Developer looks to transform Grace Lutheran into housing

Deanna Bremer Fisher

On Dec. 29, Grace Lutheran Church signed a Letter of Intent with SRC Investments Corporation of Mentor. In the letter, Richard Ferris, SRC owner, stated his intent to adaptively reuse the landmark church building at 13001 Cedar Road for housing. Fifty-five of 58 church members present at the Dec. 29 meeting approved the signing of the letter.

Sources at the church—who did not wish to be quoted—emphasized that the church is in the early stages of negotiating a purchase agreement for the building, and that nothing is final. “The building is not sold, and the congregation has not disbanded,” said a member of the church’s management team.

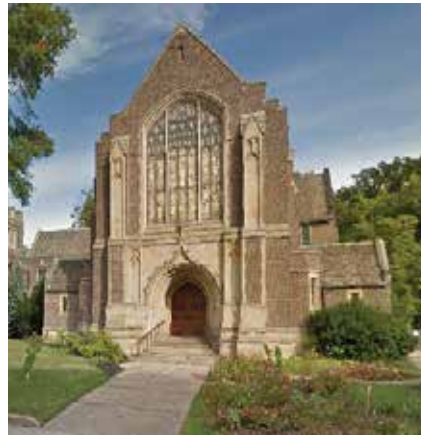
According to the letter, the developer has 12 months to conduct due diligence, assess the project’s economic feasibility and navigate the city’s permit and approval process. Richard Wong, director of planning and development for the City of Cleveland Heights, said that the city had not received any plans from the developer, but that city staff plans to set up a meeting with Ferris in the

near future.

The church building, an English Gothic structure designed by architect J.W. Corbusier and dedicated in 1927, was designated a Cleveland Heights landmark in 1977. At its peak in the 1950s, the congregation, which dates from 1898, had more than 1,000 member families. Church officials estimate the number of members now at about 100.

The congregation had been considering its sustainability for some time, and had plans to redevelop the church building as senior housing and a center for the arts prior to 2008; however, historic tax credit funding never materialized and other funding fell through as the economy sank into recession.

The church is home to numerous arts and cultural organizations, including Heights Chamber Orchestra, Western Reserve Chorale, Choral Arts Cleveland, and Cleveland Messiah Chorus, and houses numerous community activities, such as book clubs, AA meetings, Ohio contra dancing, and rummage sales to support the Heights High band and orchestra programs. The church is the site of the Food Not Lawns com-



Grace Lutheran Church, 13001 Cedar Road.

munity garden that provides food for the local food bank and the congregation’s community meals. The church also provides overnight accommodations for the homeless through Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry.

A member of the church’s management team said that the church is trying to be as proactive as possible. It has informed the building’s users of the Letter of Intent and has promised to keep them updated as the process unfolds.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.

CH Democrats Club recommends Roe for CH City Council vacancy

Mike Gaynier

The Cleveland Heights Democrats Club has voted to recommend to CH City Council that Carol Roe, a 35-year resident and Noble Neighborhood activist, fill the council vacancy left by the resignation of newly elected Ohio State Representative Janine Boyd.

At the club’s Jan. 8 meeting at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, three club members, Roe, Kahlil Seren and Keba Sylla, articulated why they should be appointed by city council and responded to questions from the audience.

Club members selected Roe, who is a registered nurse and licensed attorney, on more than 50 percent of the ballots cast.

Cleveland Heights City Council fills mid-term vacancies by soliciting applications from residents wishing to serve. After review, council members usually select a small group of qualified applicants for group interview, and then vote to determine which finalist will be appointed to fill the vacancy.

The term of the current vacancy runs until Dec. 31, 2015. Applications were being accepted until Jan. 15.

This club endorsement process provided an opportunity for club members seeking council appointment to generate support for themselves, and club members hope it will enhance the likelihood of their being selected as applicant finalists by city council. Jeff Coryell and Jason Stein, city council members, observed the presentations.

The event was very well attended, in spite of the very cold weather. Club members packed the meeting room and patiently waited while the ballots were tallied to determine if any or all of the presenters would achieve the club’s recommendation.

Ryan Pierce, club officer, summed up the audience’s sentiment: “As an organization, it is very important for us to foster high-caliber candidates, and our members are enthusiastic about participating in the process. Whether for council vacancies or other elected positions, our members are excited to be active and engaged.”

Anyone wishing to review the council applications submitted by Roe, Seren and Sylla can view them on the club website, www.clevelandheightsdems.com. For more information, contact president@clevelandheightsdems.com.

Mike Gaynier is a leadership consultant, community activist, Red Cross Disaster Action Team Leader, and president of the Cleveland Heights Democrats.



“Judson’s artist-in-residence program connects mom with her love of music.”

—K.J. Montgomery, daughter of Judson assisted living resident Goldie Montgomery

Goldie Montgomery enjoyed a prolific career as an opera singer in Cleveland during the 1950s. One of the gowns she wore when performing for visiting dignitaries is now part of the Western Reserve Historical Society’s permanent collection.

When the time came for her family to look at assisted living options, they chose Judson Manor.

“The artist-in-residence program, where Cleveland Institute of Music students live at Judson Manor, was a huge pull given mom’s background” says daughter K. J. Montgomery. “As she adjusted to the environment, the welcoming staff gently encouraged her to attend programs, while also respecting her privacy. Knowing she has options and choices, she couldn’t be happier!”

For more information about Judson’s assisted living program, please call (216) 791-2004 today.

Judson
at University Circle



Visit www.judsonsmartliving.org and click Assisted Living

Black History month at Forest Hill Church

Vikki Nowak

February is Black History Month and, for the fourth consecutive year, members of Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, 3031 Monticello Blvd. in Cleveland Heights, have organized events for each weekend of the month, designed to “educate ourselves, strengthen our ties with one another and stir our souls.” All events are free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.fhpcpresb.org or call 216-321-2660.

- Feb. 1: A talk by LaDon Headon, hip-hop historian and former musician, on Hip Hop 2.0, 12:30–2 p.m. This presentation will explore the history and development of this genre of music, and the hip-hop culture.
- Feb. 8: Cajun Treats and Jazz Music, 12:30–2 p.m. This event, for all ages, features a Mardi Gras masks activity, in anticipation of Fat Tuesday.
- Feb. 15: A talk by Ron Hickman, Ph.D., R.N., on the Challenges of Gaining Entrance and Mobility in Nursing Medicine, 12:30–2 p.m. Hickman is a young African-American nurse researcher and assistant professor of nursing at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU).
- Feb. 20: Friday Movie Night, 7–10 p.m. This family-friendly evening features hot dogs, pizza and popcorn,

and a showing of the Spike Lee film, “Crooklyn,” with a brief discussion to follow.

- Feb. 22: Soul Food Pot Luck and Book Discussion, 12:30–3 p.m. Dr. Faye Gary (who will also speak at the 11 a.m. worship), will lead a book discussion on *The Immortal Life Of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot, and on the National Institute of Health’s recommendations for future research protocols. Gary is the Medical Mutual of Ohio Professor for Vulnerable and At-Risk Persons at CWRU.
- Feb. 22: Evening Worship Service: A celebration of African Music, 7–9. This evening of poetry, stories and music, will be led by Caleb Wright and feature internationally known gospel singer Mother Willie-Mae Wright, Peter Williams, and others. Willie-Mae Wright has been performing and advocating for the poor since the 1960s. She sang for Pope John VI at the Vatican in 1975. Wright is the matriarch of the Wright Family Singers, featuring seven of her eight children. The group performed for President Bill Clinton at the White House in 1994.

Vikki Nowak is a 10-year resident of Cleveland Heights and vice president at Nottingham Spirk.

Unitarian Universalist Society congregants can now clearly “hear the word”

Walter Nicholes

Despite wearing hearing aids, several congregants at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland (UUSC) labored to understand messages from the pulpit. Those hearing-impaired listeners can now experience new clarity due to the installation of an induction-hearing loop in the church sanctuary, said Rev. Joseph M. Cherry, UUSC minister.

Commenting on the new technology, currently available in only a few places in Greater Cleveland, Cherry said, “We’re a community that prides itself on welcoming diversity, including persons who are physically challenged in one way or another. The new hearing loop helps us live this mission.”

The hearing loop system consists of a copper wire, inconspicuously installed around a space, which emits electromagnetic signals picked up by a tiny receiver—the T-coil. T-coils are used in most modern personal hearing aids. With this receiver in the “on” position, listeners are connected di-

rectly to the pulpit microphone, thus eliminating interfering background noises.

Cherry noted that hearing loop technology is decades-old in Europe, where it is available in airports, hotels, theaters, banks and taxicabs. Today, about 70 percent of U.S. hearing aids can receive loop signals. A recent push by the American Academy of Audiology and Hearing Loss Association of America is promoting wider use, he added.

Brown Audio Service, of Tallmadge, installed UUSC’s loop. Brown’s first installation was at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Akron, in 2013. Since then, it has installed dozens more throughout Ohio.

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland is located at 2728 Lancashire Road, Cleveland Heights. Visit UUSC’s website at www.uucleveland.org.

Walter Nicholes, resident of Cleveland Heights for more than 50 years, now resides in Shaker Heights. He continues to appreciate the diversity of the Heights.

Annual meeting for Heights gardeners is Feb. 17

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Heights Community Garden Network (HCGN) will host its annual meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 6 p.m., in meeting room A at the Lee Road Library. HCGN was created to help Heights residents and community gardeners share information. The group offers an informative website and an e-newsletter, a small grants program for community gardens, technical assistance for new gardens, workshops and volunteer opportunities.

In 2015, the group will host several workshops and activities, including a clean-up day at Oxford Community Garden on April 11, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Volunteers are needed, and lunch will be provided.

To volunteer for the cleanup, learn more about the HCGN, or RSVP for the meeting, visit www.growingheights.com.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.

Profile of a winter cyclist



LIFE CYCLE

Heights Bicycle Coalition

Winter cycling is cool. Sometimes it is actually cold. But, with the proper clothes and equipment, it is a great way to be outside and experience the awe and beauty of winter in both the city and on the trail.

The hearty winter cyclists that keep the pedals turning all year long are brethren to skiers, ice skaters and ice fisherman, and use some of the same equipment.

Warm mittens, snow boots and pants, parkas and goggles are all noncycling-specific clothing that are perfect for winter cycling.

Then there is the bike; skinny tires are out, replaced by knobby or other specialty tires for needed traction in snow and ice, disc brakes are good for more consistent stopping power, and a hearty frame will better withstand lots of salt.



Alice Stratton in her driveway, ready for her daily ride to Fairfax Elementary School.

While winter cyclists are still a minority, more people are seeking fitness and transportation on two wheels in the winter.

One of the Heights’s winter bike commuters is Cleveland Heights resident Alice Stratton. She rides one mile to her job as physical education teacher at Fairfax Elementary School.

“Normally,” said Stratton, “I ride on any day that it isn’t too icy.” When she first began winter riding, she would abandon the bike as soon as temperatures dropped to below freezing. Now, she rides as long as the temperatures are above 20 degrees.

Stratton said she gets odd looks at school—from other teachers. “They think I’m crazy,” she said. “But one teacher commutes by car from Hudson, and she said she felt like crying because she’s so envious when she sees me on my bike.”

Stratton’s winter commuting machine is a mountain bike with fat nubby tires “because of potholes,” said Stratton, adding, “it’s better on snow and ice.” She

takes main roads when it’s snowy, because they’re better plowed than side streets. “But, side streets have less traffic and are a more relaxing ride,” she said.

“It feels good to begin and end the day outdoors, using a different part of your brain and breathing fresh air,” Stratton said.

Cyclists interested in learning more about winter cycling will find information and advice at www.icebike.org.

The Heights Bicycle Coalition was formed in 2010 to make the Heights more bicycle-friendly. The group’s mission is to educate and encourage citizens to use bicycles as a sustainable and healthy form of transportation and recreation. And . . . to have fun!

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Area Cubans hope change will come to their native land



Cuban immigrants (from left) David Alvarez-Carbonell, Elia Pestana Knight, Eldis Rodriguez and Raudel Napoles, hold a Cuban flag at Napoles' house in Cleveland Heights.

James Henke

This past December, President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro announced that the United States and Cuba were beginning the process of normalizing relations between the two countries. The plan is to lift some of the travel restrictions, allow more U.S. companies to

do business in Cuba and open a U.S. embassy in Cuba. The small group of Cuban immigrants in the Heights area is somewhat optimistic about the changes that may result from these negotiations.

Raudel Napoles, who lives on North Park Boulevard in Cleveland Heights, said, "I think it's a step in the right direction to establish

relations. Right now, you never see anything from the U.S. in Cuba." Napoles, who's 37 years old, left Cuba in 2004 and moved to Wyoming before coming to Cleveland in 2005. He's a Pilates instructor at White Cloud Studios on Fairmount Boulevard.

David Alvarez-Carbonell, who's 43 years old and a scientist at the Case School of Medicine, added, "I'm very happy that Obama has made this decision. But the civilized countries of the world must demand that the Cuban government give their people more freedom." Alvarez-Carbonell left Cuba in 1993 and moved to Canada before coming to the U.S. in 2003. He moved to Cleveland in 2011.

Elia Pestana Knight, who's 47 and a pediatric doctor at the Cleveland Clinic, said, "The infrastructure has to change so that people have freedom of expression. And the economy will have to change. They will have to open the doors so that people can come in and create businesses." She moved from Havana to Cleveland in 1999.

All three of the Cuban immigrants, as well as Eldis Rodriguez, a 44-year-old artist who lives in Cleveland Heights, said that conditions in their native country are absolutely horrible. "If you

are a Cuban, just about everything is illegal," Rodriguez said. "And there's no food, no transportation, no nothing."

They noted that conditions got even worse after the Soviet Union ended its control of Cuba in 1989. "After the Soviets left, the country went into a deep recession," Knight said, "There was no food, no jobs, no electricity. It's dark and dirty there, and there's garbage all over the place. They keep cracking down on freedoms. I wish my relatives there had a food supply, but they barely do."

"Cuba has been deteriorating and is in economic chaos and moral chaos," Alvarez-Carbonell added. "The younger generation is uneducated, and it has no morals and no values. Everything has been deteriorating."

Those conditions were what prompted all four to leave Cuba and come to the U.S. "We are all freedom seekers," Alvarez-Carbonell said. "That's why we came to the U.S. We were very restricted in Cuba. We lacked opportunities to do what we wanted to do."

They estimated that there is little more than a handful of Cuban immigrants in the Heights, and only about 100 in Greater Cleveland. Among them is a musician who plays with the Cleveland Orchestra, as well as doctors, and professors at Kent State University, the University of Akron and Case Western Reserve University.

While they are happy that President Obama is trying to improve relations with Cuba, these Heights-area residents are concerned that it might not be enough to improve conditions in their native country. "I'm very hopeful, but my expectations are very low," Napoles said. "The U.S. cannot come to Cuba and change the social situation. Economically, they can make some changes, but much more is needed."

"I believe Obama has good intentions," Rodriguez added. "But it's hard to believe that the Communist government in Cuba is going to bring about the many freedoms that are needed down there."

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley.

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Heights Perelman selected for All-Ohio soccer team

Joy Henderson

Heights High senior soccer player and team captain Zander Perelman is one of 18 players selected for the Ohio Scholastic Soccer Coaches Association's All-Ohio Soccer Team—an honorary designation chosen by division 1 (large school) coaches. Cleveland.com also selected him for its 2014 All Star Team.

"Zander is a shining example of the student-athlete," said Sean Sullivan, Heights High soccer coach. "He brings sportsmanship, integrity and competitiveness to the field every day." He also put the ball in the net 57 times, scoring in every game of this past season and breaking the



Heights High senior soccer player Zander Perelman.

team record of 30 goals in a season.

"I like the feeling of scoring—the excitement of that is like nothing else," said Perelman. "Playing striker

lets me be involved in most plays and make a difference for the team."

Perelman also enjoys the team camaraderie, and values being part of the Heights soccer program. "My favorite thing about being on a team is getting to know my teammates and knowing that I can have an impact on them and the team," he said.

He recognized his coaches, especially Coach Sullivan, for guiding and teaching him. "I know that Coach Sullivan really cares about me," Perelman said.

Sullivan noted that much of Perelman's success stems from his focused mentality. "When he walks on the field, he switches on an intensity that was great for our

entire team," said Sullivan.

The team advanced to the second round of playoffs this season, playing in the sectional final, despite fielding a young team that lost five senior starters last year.

While soccer is his primary sport, Perelman also plays baseball and will wear the Tiger's uniform on the diamond this spring.

Perelman has made a verbal commitment to play soccer at Bucknell University in Pennsylvania, a division 1 school. He has a 4.2 GPA and plans to study animal behavior at Bucknell.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.

Heights Youth Theatre seeks new location

Devon Turchan

As a few remaining volunteers and staff prepared to bring the twelfth truckload of Heights Youth Theatre (HYT) props, costumes and set pieces to a temporary home, a light-bulb along the back wall of the stage cast dramatic shadows across a barricade of chairs and wooden fragments of castle doors.

Calvin Knight, HYT's technical director, oversaw those carrying items as they loaded them in the back of a full-sized U-Haul. Stage right, a giant metal letter "E" and multiple guitar cases rested on a plastic bin full of glitter-covered hula hoops.

The group is looking for a new stage to perform its approximately four shows a year. They have been performing at the Frank L. Wiley Middle School for the past 60 years,

but, this fall, because of the CH-UH City School District's renovation plans, high school students will have classes at Wiley and use its theater.

So the building blocks used to create decades of shows have been moved to a 65-by-65-foot shop at 3620 Perkins Ave. in Cleveland. HYT's next show, Disney's "The Little Mermaid Jr.," will take the stage at Monticello Middle School. Beyond that, the future is uncertain.

Pam Fine, HYT executive director, said she and the board have anticipated the move. "Three and a half years ago one of our goals was to form a facilities task force because we knew there were imminent changes," she said. A year and a half ago, with the district's decision to close Wiley, HYT and the school district began to discuss the future.

"The district wants to help us as

much as they can," said Fine, "but they have thousands of students that have to take priority over what we do."

Fine said options for the future appear to be: a new auditorium at Heights High, back to the Wiley space, staying at Monticello, alternating between the two, or some other solutions.

"You can put shows on anywhere," she said. "And yes, it's great to have a great theater space, but really what creates the magic are the people who are designing your sets, lighting, the actors, crew. So you can be in a garage and put on a great show."

For more information about HYT and to donate to the program, visit www.heightsyouththeatre.org.

Devon Turchan is a local actor whose many friends have performed with Heights Youth Theatre.

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City Club announces high-school essay competition

Jewel Moulthrop

It's that time of the year when the City Club of Cleveland announces The Hope and Stanley Adelstein Free Speech Essay Competition, an opportunity for students to explore the complexities of our constitutional right to free speech while building essential writing and critical thinking skills—and win prizes.

The Adelsteins have been lifelong residents of Northeast Ohio, philanthropists and environmental activists for decades, establishing the Free Speech Competition in 2012 as part of the City Club's centennial. Although Stanley died in December, their legacy continues.

This year, the competition is open to all high school students, not just juniors and seniors. Students in grades 9–12 in public, private, parochial, charter and home schools in Cuyahoga and surrounding counties are encouraged to submit an essay on the topic "How can teens utilize free speech to inspire change in their communities?" Essays should be no longer than 300 words, and should be submitted at www.freespeech.com.

www.freespeech.com.

A panel of judges, selected from the City Club membership and the community, will choose the winning essays based on clarity, originality of content, and significance of the ideas expressed.

Judges will rank the top three of 20 winning essays. The top prizes are \$1,000, \$750 and \$500, respectively, and the winners will read their essays at a City Club forum and be recorded for podcast. Teachers of the top winners will each receive \$250. The 17 remaining winners will each receive \$100. Winners will be notified by May 1.

The 20 finalists and their guests will be invited to attend the essay competition luncheon forum and will receive a one-year membership to the City Club and a certificate of recognition. Winning essays will be posted on the City Club website.

The deadline for submitting an essay is March 1. All entries must include the entrant's name, age, home address and telephone number, and e-mail addresses of the entrant and his or her teacher. Entries should include a cover letter, signed by the entrant, that states the following: "This is

my original document and does not include any previous composition by another."

For more information about The Hope and Stanley Adelstein Essay Competition, contact the City Club at 216-621-0082, or send an e-mail to speechessay@cityclub.org.

Jewel Moulthrop is a Cleveland Heights resident and member of the Heights Observer's Advisory Committee.

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District votes to place 2015 operating levy on May ballot

Angee Shaker

[Editor's note: The Heights Observer received the following news release from the CH-UH City School District on Jan. 22, describing the district's plans to place an operating levy on the May ballot.]

Citing the need to protect academic progress and avoid additional, significant cuts, the CH-UH Board of Education (BOE) has approved the second and final reading necessary to place a 5.9-mill operating levy on the May 2015 ballot. The reading took place at the Jan. 20 board work session, where Scott Gainer, district CFO, and Jane Geneva, Lay Finance Committee (LFC) chair, provided a recap of a report that was presented in December, and responded to additional questions from the board.

Geneva stated, "After a lengthy, thorough review of district finances and projections, two things are very clear. First, the district has made careful use of our community's funds, has reduced costs, and continues to find ways to economize while protecting classroom education from budget cuts. Second, because of the way that Ohio funds its schools, the district must pursue additional operating funds this year, or we will face major cuts that will impact the classroom, and we would face a much larger need for operating funds next year."

In light of current economic conditions and the need to keep the costs as low as possible for residents,

the board directed the superintendent after the December meeting to come back with reductions to get the millage amount under 6 mills. The superintendent reviewed the budget line-by-line and successfully lowered the needed operating levy to 5.9 mills. This would cost the owner of a home valued at \$100,000 about 17 dollars a month more in taxes.

"Due to the financial need and recognizing the possibility of a crowded November ballot, we determined that a May 2015 special election provides the best opportunity for success," stated Nancy Peppler, BOE president. "With cuts and belt-tightening, the district managed to stretch the 2011 operating levy an additional year. We asked Mr. Gainer and the LFC to determine what would happen if we delayed putting it on another year, but it proved to be harsh: we'd need to make deeper cuts that would inevitably impact our educational programming and we'd be forced to ask for a double-digit millage levy in 2016. This would be bad for our students and community."

"Thanks to the support of this community, we are making great strides in terms of academic gains and renovating our old school buildings so they will provide up-to-date learning opportunities for our students and will be less costly to maintain," said Talisa Dixon, CH-UH superintendent. "The needed operating support is completely separate from the funding residents

approved for facilities improvements, none of which can be used to pay for operations."

Like every school district in Ohio, the CH-UH City School District is unfortunately forced to periodically ask residents for increased operating support to pay for educational necessities such as teachers and educational programming. While the district is always finding ways to economize, cut costs, and accomplish its mission with less, the funding it receives from residents is prohibited by state law from rising with inflation and the usual increases in costs that we all face. Many school districts are forced to ask for an operating levy every three years, but the CH-UH district has stretched finances and made careful cuts to make the last operating levy last for four

years—a year longer than anticipated.

By Ohio law, school districts cannot campaign for issues or expend funds for their passage, so the BOE recognized and welcomed once again the efforts of Citizens for Our Heights Schools (CfOHS), an independent group of resident volunteers who will campaign to support this operating levy as they have for previous levies and issues. The BOE asked for a public briefing from CfOHS on its efforts at an upcoming BOE meeting. CfOHS co-chairs for this campaign will be district residents and parents Patti Carlyle, Krissy Dietrich Gallagher and Alvin Saafir.

Angee Shaker is director of communications for Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

Beaumont School celebrates the opening of a \$9.5 million addition

Anna Beyerle

Beaumont School marked the Jan. 5 opening of its new building addition for student classes with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. A formal dedication ceremony is planned for May.

The \$9.5 million investment includes eight new STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) classroom labs and four lab prep rooms, designed to propel Beaumont forward as a leading school in STEM curriculum. Although many Beaumont students excel in STEM subjects, the school's current science wing is more than 50 years old and lacks the infrastructure to support new technologies.

Construction on the two-story, nearly 25,000-square-foot building began in September 2013. In addition to new classrooms and prep rooms, the LEED-certified building also features a new student commons, guidance suite, clinic, and administrative offices, and creates a new main entrance and an additional parking lot for the school.

Over the past several years, Beaumont's curriculum has expanded to include new STEM-focused subjects and extracurricular activities, including a pre-engineering program and a nationally recognized robotics team. By emphasizing a strong foundation in STEM subjects, the school expects that students will be better able to

analyze and solve problems, work collaboratively toward solutions, and have greater comfort with technology.

Over the past 10 years, Beaumont has invested nearly \$18 million in its campus, showing its dedication to the future of its students and its campus in Cleveland Heights, where the school has been located for more than 70 years. In addition to the new building, Beaumont has also invested in:

- The construction of the Spiritual Life Center, which includes a chapel and theater, in 2004 (\$5 million);
- The renovation of athletic and science facilities in 2006 (\$1.6 million);
- The purchase of eight acres of land and the Painter Mansion, which houses the school's administrative offices, from the Ursuline Sisters in 2009 (\$1.4 million);
- The construction of a new courtyard in 2012 (\$216,000);
- The renovation of music facilities in 2012 (\$141,000).

Van Auken Akins Architects, LLC, owned by Beaumont alumna Jill Van Auken Akins '78, designed the building addition. The Albert M. Higley Company served as the building's construction contractor. The \$9.5 million addition is being funded by a capital campaign, and will not raise student tuition costs.

Anna Beyerle is the public relations and marketing manager at the Beaumont School in Cleveland Heights.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

DECEMBER 16, 2014
All board members were present.



Course offerings for 2015-16

The board discussed the proposed 2015-16 high school course offerings. Year-long courses in U.S. government and finance, AP (advanced placement) U.S. government and finance, AP psychology, AP economics, and AP comparative politics were recommended. These are currently semester-long courses. The mathematics models course will be modified to mathematical decision-making. Honors English Three will not be offered; students will be encouraged to take AP language arts instead. Small school designations will be eliminated. Courses will not be offered if fewer than 15 students register. Given the new graduation requirements, the district will explore partnerships with local colleges to permit students to gain college credit. The courses completed within a specific pathway toward a college degree will appear on the college transcript.

2015 school levy recommended

After examining district finances and school funding realities, the Lay Finance Committee recommended a 2015 operational levy of 6.5 mills. State funding has decreased due to foreclosures and monies going to charter schools. The board asked whether reducing the millage to less than 6 was feasible.

Career tech education at Delisle Center

As part of the facilities enabling projects, the career tech education program (CTE) has been moved to the Delisle Options Center, resulting in a decision to permanently house CTE at the center. Housing CTE there would permit program expansion and have educational benefits. Some programs at Delisle and the information technology staff would need to be relocated.

Public comments

CTE program location: Four community members asked the board to consider keeping all CTE programs at the high school campus. Students in the CTE program would have to walk from the high school to the Delisle Center, missing instructional time and programs such as the breakfast program. They encouraged speaking with CTE teachers about the proposed shift of CTE to the Delisle Center.

LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.

JANUARY 6, 2015
All board members were present.

Public comments

Football coach's request: Jeff Rotsky, Heights High head football coach, spoke tearfully to a roomful of football players, families and alums. Although he had resigned, he said he would like to continue as head coach and asked the board to allow the team's home games to be

played on Saturday afternoons for the next two years, which would allow him to watch his son play on his own school's football team on Friday nights.

Family Connections

Executive Director Joanne Federman gave a presentation about the working relationship between her organization and the school district. Family Connections programs provide parenting support, prepare children for entering school, and assist children who are at risk of not reading at grade level.

Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN)

MSAN advisor David Peake and MSAN students gave a presentation about their work and recent trip to the MSAN Conference in Detroit. MSAN members tutor students in algebra and geometry, which are the most frequently failed courses at Heights High; produce a quarterly newsletter to highlight students' academic success; pair underclassmen with senior mentors; and are about to begin an initiative to prepare more students to take AP and honors classes.

Equity issues

Allison Byrd, director of research, data, and assessment, continued a presentation from Nov. 19 on using disaggregated data to address equity issues. She stated that superintendents of the 28 school districts with MSAN programs have initiated an effort to address the achievement gap by identifying and changing school practices and structures that keep the gap in place, also known as organizational barriers. She reported that disaggregated data shows that African-American students make up 73 percent of our district population yet receive 93 percent of suspensions and represent only 38 percent of the population identified as gifted. Board members asked questions about longitudinal trends and how our district compares to other MSAN districts. The discussion will be continued as further information is gathered.

Operating levy

The board approved the first resolution to place a 5.9 mill operating levy on the May 5 ballot. The lay finance committee recommended 6.1 mills, but the superintendent and treasurer have identified potential budget cuts that would bring the needed millage down to 5.9. The board must pass another resolution by Feb. 5 in order to place the levy on the May 5 ballot.

LWV Observer: Nancy Dietrich.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 7.

Some doctors still make house calls



SENIOR SCENE

Judith Eugene

The idea of medical house calls conjures up images of bygone days when the local “healthcare system” was a doctor with a satchel who knew each patient by name and visited their homes when they were ill. The healthcare system as we know it today is very different. However, it’s comforting to know that there are still certain cases when doctors and other medical professionals will call on patients when needed.

MD2U (216-502-3220) is a national medical house call company that serves those who are homebound, disabled, or have difficulty getting out of their homes. Natalie Barbastefano, a clinical nurse practitioner, opened the MD2U’s Cleveland office last year. “I saw the need

in my community and wanted to help the seniors and disabled people here,” she said. “The goal is to help people live independently for as long as possible.”

University Hospitals Case Western Reserve House Call Program (216-464-6210) offers a similar service, with the goal of providing comprehensive primary care to help clients avoid unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

The MD2U and University Hospitals programs are designed for people who may already have a primary care doctor, but whose health or mobility makes it difficult to go to the doctor’s office. These programs bridge the gap by bringing the care to them. They provide primary care for many acute and chronic conditions, and work with the patient’s doctor to develop a care plan. The programs accept Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurance.

One patient helped by MD2U was a Cleveland Heights resident in his late 80s who had been hospitalized several times for seizures. He was too weak to go to his doctor for medical care, but

didn’t want to go back to the hospital. His doctor called MD2U and it took over his care, in coordination with his doctor. They were able to stabilize him and keep him at home.

Family EyeCare Clinic, serving several local counties, has a Mobile Eye Clinic (440-946-0009) that makes house calls for people who are homebound or have other difficulty getting out for eye care services. Its optometrists help with eyeglass prescriptions, evaluations for dry eye and surface disease, treatment of infections, and checkups for macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetes. They accept insurance, however, there is an additional out-of-pocket charge for the house call.

Dr. Sally Schkolnik (216-291-6000), a podiatrist located at Severance Circle, also makes house calls for patients who are homebound and have difficulty getting to her office. She provides basic nail and callus care, diabetic foot care, and treatment of wounds, infections, fungus and bursitis. She can also arrange for

home X-rays when needed. Schkolnik accepts insurance, and there is no additional charge for the house call. House call hours are limited, although emergencies are accommodated as quickly as possible.

Rainbow Veterinary Clinic (216-291-3931), located on Noble Road in Cleveland Heights, makes house calls for dogs and cats who need basic medical care, but whose guardians are unable to bring them to the clinic. Services include examinations, vaccinations and blood draws for blood tests. The veterinarians make house calls throughout Cleveland Heights and University Heights. Calls should be scheduled in advance (they are not able to accommodate emergencies), and there is an additional charge for the house call.

Judith Eugene is a native of Cleveland Heights who provides life-enrichment classes and activities for senior adults and those with physical and mental challenges through www.lovinghandsgroup.com. She can be reached at 216-408-5578 or judith@lovinghandsgroup.com.

Senior Citizen Happenings

Senior Citizen Happenings, sponsored by the City of University Heights, are open to all senior citizens. Events take place on Thursdays at 2 p.m. at the University Heights Library. For information, and to suggest program topics, contact the UH Office for Senior Services at 216-397-0336 or info@universityheights.com. To receive the monthly schedule by e-mail, call 216-932-7800, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

Feb. 5: Rick Jackson, UH’s 2014 Citizen of the Year and host of “Morning Edition” on WVIZ’s Ideastream, and Bob Perko, UH’s 2014 Employee of the Year and member of the UH Fire Department, will each reflect on their respective occupations and contributions to the community.

Feb. 12: Grace Gallucci, executive director of Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), will discuss the work of the agency. Organized in 1968, NOACA is authorized by the U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development to fulfill the metropolitan planning function for the counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina, with respect to environmental issues, transportation services, water and air quality, trails and greenways, Euclid Creek watershed, street revitalization and neighborhood improvement.

Feb. 19: Rebecca Brady is director of L’Arche Cleveland, one of 137 communities in 40 countries where individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities share their lives with assistants in an environment of trust, friendship, joy and belonging. Brady will talk about the organization, which marked its 50th anniversary in 2014.

Feb. 26: Carole Wallencheck, reference associate at the Lee Road Library, will reflect on “The Artistry of Words.” Wallencheck characterizes books as “carriers of knowledge and beauty over all these centuries,” and she will explore how the dynamism of modern culture is indebted to the anchors of literature and art.

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Library talk honors women spies of the Civil War

Julia Murphy

Harriet Tubman is well-known as the former slave who led more than 300 people to freedom as a conductor in the Underground Railroad. She was also a spy for the Union Army.

While she was volunteering as a cook and nurse, Tubman was recruited to help establish a network of spies in South Carolina. She and many other women used their feminine status to perform feats of espionage during the Civil War.

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library has been exploring the Civil War era in a series of programs, Tales and Chronicles of the Civil War, developed in conjunction with Dobama Theatre's holiday season production of *A Civil War Christmas*.

At 7 p.m. on Feb. 23, the Lee Road Library will welcome Vernice Jackson for a program titled Women

In History: Civil War Spy Mary Elizabeth Bowser. Jackson will portray Bowser, a freed slave who returned to the South at the urging of her former mistress to become a spy in the Confederate White House of Jefferson Davis.

"Each time I step into a costume, I open the door to the past and enable my character's voice to be heard once again. I take pride in presenting details about her life and times that few people are aware of. I want my audience to know the woman as well as her historical contribution," said Jackson, who is president and managing director of Women In History.

"Women In History has been sharing stories of women in American history—famous, infamous and obscure," Jackson said. "Mary Elizabeth Bowser is obscure, a woman lost in time. I take pride in bringing

her story to light."

Fans of this topic may enjoy a related program, the Original Voices Book Club, a new monthly book discussion that explores the other side of well-known stories. February's topic is the book *Liar, Temptress, Soldier, Spy*, by Karen Abbot, which features the stories of four women who risked everything to become spies in the Civil War.

The characters include a Southern belle, Belle Boyd, who uses her "feminine wiles" as a courier and spy for the Confederate army; a woman who disguised herself as a man to enlist in the Union army; and a wealthy abolitionist who hid behind her Southern manners. The fourth is Elizabeth Van Lew, who owned and freed Mary Elizabeth Bowser, and helped her orchestrate one of the greatest feats of espionage in the Civil War.



Vernice Jackson portrays Mary Elizabeth Bowser, a former slave who became a spy.

The discussion of Abbot's book will take place at the Lee Road Library on Feb. 11, at 7:30 p.m.

Julia Murphy is the marketing assistant for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.



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Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights



DECEMBER 15, 2014

Rob Fischer, vice president, was absent. Two new board members, Susan Beatty of Cleveland Heights and Christopher Mentrek of University Heights, attended and will begin their terms in January.

Sunday hours to begin in spring

The board approved a resolution to restore Sunday library hours for each of the four branch libraries. Commencing this spring, each library will be open from 1-5 p.m. on Sundays. The board granted permission for the hiring of additional full-time staff and making other preparations for the Sunday openings.

Brian Hare to head Ravenna's Reed Memorial Library

Brian Hare, youth services manager, has resigned to accept directorship of Ravenna's Reed Memorial Library. Sam D. Lapides, special projects coordinator, will be interim youth services manager.

Balanced Scorecard report

Kim DeNero-Ackroyd, deputy director, presented highlights of the Balanced Scorecard Measures of Success for November, focusing on signups for the "3 for Me" library cards by children at Gearity Professional Development School and Church of the Savior Daycare; revision of the feedback form for computer classes; and the 400 participants who took part in the various programs around the community-wide reading of Sherman Alexie's book, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*.

E-newsletters available for patrons

The library produces several e-newsletters including the bimonthly What's Going On @ Your Library, and the monthly Tech-Knowledge. A new e-newsletter, We Recommend, covering staff reading recommendations, received positive feedback on its launch.

Jim Posch finishes seven-year board term

This was Board President Jim Posch's last

meeting on the board. Nancy Levin, library director, presented a resolution in his honor, cataloging the different board committees he had served on, his role in the library levy, and his establishment of the technology committee to create an inventory, a chain of responsibility and a long-term planning structure.

Library's centennial is in 2016

Planning is beginning for the library's centennial in 2016. The marketing department will meet with the cities, the library's partners and other supporting organizations.

November Public Service highlights

- At Coventry Village Library, a six-week class in American Sign Language opened with 45 registrants and a long waiting list. Nineteen people with an interest in deaf culture and sign language meet in Deaf Gatherings.
- Constance Dickerson, Noble Neighborhood librarian, attended a Welcoming Heights Community Forum with 38 refugee parents and children at Noble Elementary School, along with teachers, and representatives from US Together, and Global Cleveland. A tour of Noble Neighborhood Library followed. Attendance has increased at Tuesday Welcome Hub programs at the library.
- In collaboration with the school librarians, Peggy Hull, youth services librarian, has been holding Tiger Lab Outreach at Heights High. Once a month, she sets up a table in the lunchroom to interact with teens and teachers, enabling the library to connect with teens who may not come to the branches. These connections are a high priority for the library.
- Three youth services librarians held a Pop-up Storytime the day before Thanksgiving for 18 children and caregivers.

LWV Observer: Anne S. McFarland.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 7.

With unemployment down, job search classes remain popular



Jackie Mayse (left), Heights Libraries technology trainer, helps Donna Simms fine-tune her résumé.

Sheryl Banks

According to a December press release from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio's unemployment rate was 5 percent in November 2014, down from 7.4 percent in November 2013. That's good news, but many people in Cleveland Heights and University Heights are still looking for jobs. Some are unemployed, some are looking for something better than their current situation, and others are looking for a change.

"I tell people that the hardest job they'll ever have is looking for a job," said Joseph Kaiser, the CH-UH

Public Library's technology training supervisor. Kaiser and his staff teach classes that help customers find jobs: how to effectively search for jobs online, how to write a powerful résumé and cover letter, and how to prepare for that job interview, once you get it. Each class also offers some one-on-one coaching by staff after the class has ended, time permitting.

At a recent class, Cleveland Heights resident Donna Simms worked with Technology Trainer Jackie Mayse to fine-tune her résumé using Microsoft Word. Simms, a former chemist with an M.B.A., runs a home-based business with

her husband, but decided to seek an additional part-time job during the day. Potential employers kept telling her that she was over-qualified for the jobs she wanted.

"I suggested that she put a summary at the top of her résumé that really focused on the position she wanted," said Mayse, "and also remove some of her experience that was more than 10 years old and not relevant to the job she wants. Her background is really impressive, but it's so varied that we needed to really focus it by just highlighting the relevant experiences, and focusing on that in her cover letter."

Another student, who is looking to leave her current job and so wished to remain anonymous, told Kaiser

that she partly needs to work on her confidence. "I've always been bad at selling myself," she said. "My ultimate goal is to run my own business, but first I need to figure out how to sell myself on paper, and that starts with a good résumé and cover letter. These free classes are a great way for me to get started."

In 2014, 73 customers attended these free employment workshops. More will be offered in 2015 as part of Heights Libraries' ongoing Employment Series. Details can be found at www.heightslibrary.org.

Sheryl Banks is the marketing and community relations manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

What's going on at your library?

Heights Libraries has something for everyone in February: Celebrate Black History Month at Noble Neighborhood Library, turn your attention inward at Coventry Village Library, learn about cancer prevention at University Heights Library, and immerse yourself in Civil War history at Lee Road Library. For a complete list of programs, and to register, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

Coventry Village Library

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400

Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m.

Step Out of Time: Meditation. Use breath and mantra techniques for a series of three meditation sessions.

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m.

WordStage: Civil War Love Letters. When he wasn't marching, fighting, or setting up camp, a Civil War soldier might take a few moments to write to his loved ones at home. The program is presented by WordStage readers Tim Tavcar and Agnes Herrmann and underscored with

poignant music of the Civil War era, played by violinist Mary Beth Ions.

Noble Neighborhood Library

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 7 p.m.

Beats and Sounds of Hip Hop. Love beats, rhythms, and the flow of a rap—learn how these play a role in the making of hip-hop music. Children ages 8–12 will get the chance to practice their emcee skills, create beats, and share in the hip-hop experience. This event is part of the library's African American History and Culture programs. Registration begins Feb. 10.

University Heights Library

13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Friday, Feb. 6, 1 p.m.

Cancer Prevention Series presented by University Hospitals Seidman Cancer Center. UH's Office of Community Outreach will provide information about breast cancer and awareness of risk reduction, screening and treatment for you or your loved ones. Registration began Dec. 26. A light lunch will be provided for registered participants.



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Tamar Gray, musician and educator



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Peggy Spaeth

Tamar Gray is a talented member of a musical family dynasty. Her grandfather, Clark "Deacon" Hampton, was a self-taught musician who moved his wife and 12 children from Ohio to Indianapolis in 1938. For decades, the whole family toured as the Hampton Family Band and second- and third-generation Hamptons are still performing today. Notable among them are Gray's uncle Slide Hampton, a trombone player and composer, and brother Pharez Whitted, the Chicago trumpeter. Gray and her husband, Leonard, who have three grown sons and four grandchildren, perform together for parties and weddings as Etiquette. Leonard also plays locally at Rockefeller's with the Lenny Gray Trio and elsewhere with the Totally Rhythm Syndicate.

Gray's musical training began when she was a toddler, and she always wanted to be a performer. But her mother, who had grown up in the traveling family band as one of the dancing and singing Hampton Sisters, advised her to "do it on the side" and get an education.

Today, Gray is the music teacher at Fairfax Elementary School, imparting her love of music to the next generation, and also fulfilling her dream to perform in supper clubs such as the world-famous local music venue Nighttown. Gray loves living in Cleveland Heights because it is like her hometown of Indianapolis: arts- and music-centered.

She won a place at a high school for performing arts with an audition of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," and, after three years of free voice lessons there, won a scholarship to college with "Send in the Clowns" and "Caro Mio Bien." Gray is musically inspired by the smoothness of Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald and Barbra Streisand, but Tina Turner and Gladys Knight flavor her performances.

Gray is "an expert at knowing how to engage young minds and how to use music to develop children," according to Susie Kaeser, retired founding director of Reaching Heights. Belying her vibrant youthful appearance, Gray exclaimed, "My first students are in their 30s!" She said of her students, "I want them to become citizens of the world who love music," and added that



Tamar Gray

she hopes to one day hear them say, "I'd like to thank Mrs. Gray for showing me music was FUN." If a recent winter concert of fourth- and fifth-graders is any indication, music is very fun for her students. Gray oversaw their performance with just the right mix of discipline and expression, letting their exuberant singing overflow with motion and joy.

Gray advocates for music education, and education in general, through involvement and leadership in many organizations. She is the Second Vice President of the Cleveland Heights Teacher's Union and a member of the teacher licensing committee; sits on the executive board of the Ohio Federation of Teachers; and facilitates Reaching Heights's Summer Music Camp and the upcoming all-district Reaching Musical Heights at Severance Hall. She also serves as assistant pastor of the Edgehill Community Church.

At the recent winter Fairfax Elementary School concert, Gray told a story of teaching the children "Blackbird" by Paul McCartney. One fourth-grader went home, looked it up on YouTube, and watched it over and over. "It touched my soul, my heart," he told Gray. Exactly.

Upcoming music with Tamar Gray and her students include the following shows:

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 7:30 p.m., at Severance Hall: Reaching Musical Heights (admission \$10-\$30). The fourth concert since 2003 featuring more than 500 instrumental and vocal students from the CH-UH public schools performing on the Severance Hall stage.

Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m., at Nighttown: Tamar Gray will perform as a member of the Klezmer Guy Trio (admission fee).

Sunday, June 28, 7 p.m., at Cain Park: Tamar Gray and the Workmen's Circle Concert (free).

Peggy Spaeth writes about Heights residents and their impact locally, regionally and worldwide.

Senior soloists featured at Heights High Midwinter Concert

Florence D'Emilia

The breadth of the instrumental music program at Cleveland Heights High School will ring loud and clear at the Midwinter Concert when two senior soloists take the stage. The performance takes place on Friday, Feb. 13, at 7:30 p.m., at the school's Dina Rees Evans Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$3 for students and \$5 for adults, and are available the day of the show.

Eli Kauffman will perform his own composition, *Piano Concerto #1*, with Symphonic Winds, and violist Mason Spencer will perform Bartok's *Viola Concerto* with Heights High Symphony.



Heights High senior musicians Mason Spencer (left) and Eli Kauffman will perform in the Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m. concert at Heights High.

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Kauffman characterizes his piece as modern classical with jazz influences. He began work on it last year, and continued to make minor changes as he rehearsed it with the 45 members of Symphonic Winds. He started composing during his sophomore year. Heights Jazz Combo performed two of his original works last year at Heights High's annual Jazz Night. He studies jazz piano and theory with Greg Slawson, and has received Outstanding Musicianship awards from the Lakeland Jazz Fest and the Tri-C Jazz Fest. At Heights High, he has played piano with Jazz Band and Jazz Combo, trumpet in the marching band, and percussion in the symphony and pit orchestra.

He also plays guitar, bass and ukulele. Kauffman is currently enrolled in the composition program at CSU and hopes to study composition in college next year.

Spencer, who studies under Mark Jackobs of the Cleveland Orchestra, began working on the Bartok selection several months ago as well. He was interested in the piece because of the challenges it presents. "It's a piece that stretches the soloist and the orchestra," explained Spencer. "It's very challenging and requires an emotional component from the musician. It was the last piece Bartok wrote before dying."

Spencer is principal violist with the Cleveland Orchestra Youth Orchestra (COYO) and participates in COYO's chamber music program. He has played with other groups, including the Contemporary Youth Orchestra, the Cleveland Philharmonic, and the Suburban Symphony, with which he appeared as a soloist after winning its annual concerto competition earlier this year. He has been a member of Heights High Symphony for the past four years, and has taken part in the school's chamber music program, participating in several groups whose repertoire range from traditional, classical music to originally composed pieces.

Kauffman and Spencer both plan to study music in college.

Florence D'Emilia is a Cleveland Heights resident and parent of a Heights High student.

Dutch vocal group to perform on Feb. 20

Loretta Dahlstrom

Arts in the Cathedral presents Quink Vocal Ensemble on Friday, Feb. 20, at 7:30 p.m., at Church of the Saviour in Cleveland Heights.

Since its first concerts in 1978, this group of four professional singers consistently ranks among the top a cappella ensembles of the world. The versatile Dutch musicians always strive for authenticity in the way they perform the different styles of music, with a repertoire that stretches from the Middle Ages to contemporary music. Extremely well-known in Europe, Quink is gaining recognition in this country through

its highly acclaimed U.S. tours and recordings.

With the resurgence in popularity of a cappella singing, this concert promises to delight audiences. The program will feature an eclectic combination of French Renaissance music, BiBaBo (a quirky, very fun and engaging piece written for Quink), and an assortment of beautiful, 20th-century settings by Barber, Finzi and Randall Thompson.

The *New York Times* praised "Quink's elegant phrasing, impeccable intonation and a purity of tone," while the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* wrote: "They delivered an astonishing array of music with

expert vocal technique, a finely calibrated sense of ensemble balance and an infectious sense of musical fun. . . . It was the seamless teamwork they showed that most impressed the audience."

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for students (18 and under). Tickets may be purchased in advance with a credit card at www.chsaviour.org, or with cash or check at the door. Church of the Saviour, located at 2537 Lee Road, has free parking and is handicapped-accessible. For more information, call 216-321-8880.

Loretta Dahlstrom is an administrative assistant at Church of the Saviour.

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'Wear Your Love Like Heaven'



SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

"Wear Your Love Like Heaven." The single by British singer-songwriter Donovan reached number 23 on the Billboard pop chart in November 1967. What did it mean, you ask? Well, while the words were typically obscure for that artist and, especially, for that era, "wear your love like heaven" meant, essentially, "be nice" and "don't be afraid to show it."

My father, in his later years, used to say, "People just aren't very nice anymore." He died in 1989. Imagine how he'd feel about that *now*.

A couple of weeks before my father died, I met and talked to Donovan. I had arranged to meet him after a concert he gave in Cleveland, to interview him for a magazine article. Though he has never really stopped performing and writing songs (never for very long, anyway), his biggest successes came in the mid- to late '60s and early '70s.

When Donovan played that concert in Cleveland in the late '80s, it had been a long time since he'd performed here. When I arrived at the venue, I was shocked to see that about three-fourths of

the audience members were dressed in full late-1960s hippie garb—possibly in clothes, glasses and belts, headbands and other accoutrements they still owned from that era, though I did overhear a couple of them say that they had scoured vintage clothing shops to find their outfits.

I thought it was completely stupid for them to wear that stuff to this concert, and kind of insulting to Donovan, too. And just to prove my point (to myself), when Donovan appeared onstage, he was wearing dress pants, an Izod shirt and loafers. Yay—I was right. Again.

Then, after the show, when Donovan and I sat alone in a small room, the first thing I said to him was, "Did you see all those people wearing hippie clothes?" And before I could follow that with what I really wanted to say—"Wasn't that stupid?"—he said, "Yes. Wasn't that nice of them?"

I took a breath and said, "Oh, uh . . . yes. Very nice." And as I was sitting there lying to him, I was thinking: This guy is SO much nicer than I am.

In the 25-or-so intervening years, I've become much more tolerant and less judgmental. Or maybe that's only in comparison to most of the rest of the world, which seems to have become less so. And I'm not talking about all the terrorists and warlords; I'm talking about regular people, like us (unless you're a terrorist or a warlord), and the little things we do to other people.

I thought of my father's words a

few days ago, when I was in my car, trying to pull out of a side street into a larger thoroughfare. Car after car refused to stop to let me out, even when there would have been the space to do that, and even when they had a red light and couldn't go anywhere, anyway. Finally, a nice woman stopped to let me out—until the man in the car behind her started BLASTING his horn and screaming at her to move up, thus rattling her and intimidating her enough that she quickly moved forward (so that HE could block me, while he waited for his red light to change).

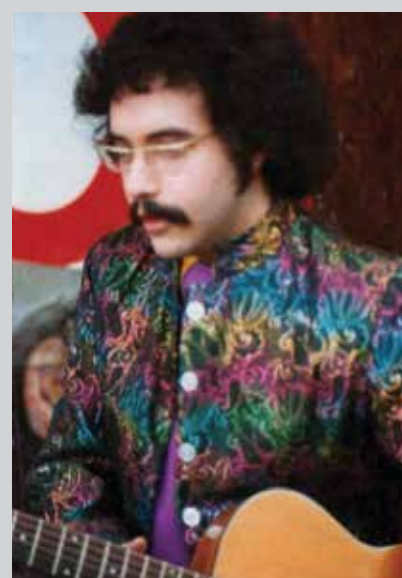
And there was that woman at the Heinen's at Green Road near Cedar one recent Sunday morning—a woman who refused to believe that she was being judgmental. I take my mother wherever she needs to go, including shopping, usually to that Heinen's. When I had called my mother that morning, which I do every day, at least once a day, she mentioned some medication that she needed me to pick up, but which I had forgotten to make note of. When we got to the bananas, I suddenly remembered about the medicine. I took out my relatively smart phone, which I use, among other things, as a notepad, when I don't have anything else to write with, and sent myself a very short message to pick up my mother's prescription.

As I was doing that, a woman came over to us with her cart and asked me, "Is that your mother?" I said that she was, thinking that maybe the woman knew her, which often happens. But the woman pointed to my phone and said, "Well, I think that you should be talking to her, rather than doing *that*."

So in two or three seconds of observation, she had the whole thing figured out: she knew that I was one of *those* people. I spent the next two or three minutes explaining to her—and, I admit, not very nicely—how many ways in which she was misguided in her assessment. In fact, I used that very word, assessment. Well . . . the first part of it, anyway. And I tried to



Donovan in 1968.



The author in 1968 (not that Donovan was a big influence or anything . . .).

point out to her how judgmental she had been. But, as you can probably imagine, she really didn't want to hear it.

People rarely believe things like that about themselves. Like the many people in the Heights area who would never think of themselves as racist, and yet they talk and write on social media sites constantly about how much the Heights is "changing," and, in their opinions, not for the better. But that's a topic for another time.

In the meantime, I'll try as hard as I can to wear my love like heaven. Until I run into that woman at Heinen's again.

David Budin is a freelance writer for national and local publications, the former editor of Cleveland Magazine and Northern Ohio Live, an author, and a professional musician and comedian. His writing focuses on the arts and, especially, pop-music history.

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Tip of the month

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Heights Arts presents music, visual art and poetry events

Mary Ryan

Even in the middle of winter—when neighbors may not see each other for months at a time—Heights Arts is providing plenty of reasons to thwart social hibernation with an enticing calendar of local cultural events.

On Thursday, Feb. 5 at 7 p.m., the public is invited to EKPHRASTACY: an evening of conversation with participating artists from the gallery's Light Show exhibition and reading of ekphrastic poetry. You may ask, "What kind of poetry?" The Greek word ekphrasis roughly translates as "ecstatic speech." Ekphrastic poetry is a form in which the poet responds in verse to works of visual art.

During the evening, curator Sharon Grossman and artists Claudia Berlinski, Dana Depew, Scott Goss, Nancy Luken, Ben Parsons and Andrew Simmons will share insights on exhibition works, process and vision. Heights Arts and Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate Kathleen Cerveney has invited poets Amy Sparks, Christine Howey, Adina Schoem, Damien Ware and Lake Erie Ink Teen Poet Laureate Moonisha Halim to create and read original poems written in response to



Theater District (photograph), by Claudia Berlinski, is on view as part of the Heights Arts Light Show exhibition.

works they select in the exhibition. A reception with refreshments will follow the talk.

Light Show, a group exhibition of nine contemporary Northeast Ohio artists who work with materials, process and visual languages that speak to the theme of light, is on view through Feb. 28 in the Heights Arts gallery at 2175 Lee Road.

On Sunday, Feb. 15 at 3 p.m., Heights Arts resumes its 2015 Close Encounters series—chamber music concerts performed in unique

venues by members of the Cleveland Orchestra—with a performance of "Bach Bartók Beatles" at the Midtown studio of Kalman & Pabst Photo Group.

Inspired by the famous works of three great masters from different eras and musical genres, this interactive and entertaining concert explores similarities and differences

in musical content of works, such as Bach's fiery "Brandenburg Concerto No. 5," inspired tunes by members of the Beatles, including "Imagine" and "Eleanor Rigby," and Bartók's "Burletta" movement from his "Sixth String Quartet." Words and poetry read by Cerveney accompany a journey to the inner workings of these great musical geniuses.

"Bach Bartók Beatles" will be performed by Cleveland Orchestra members Katherine Bormann and Isabel Trautwein, violins; Sonja Braaten Molloy, viola; and Tanya Ell, cello. Tickets can be purchased in advance for \$40-\$50 at the Heights Arts gallery or online at www.heightsarts.org. Discounted \$15 tickets are available for students ages 8-23.

"I am excited to move forward in the new year as we unveil another tremendous lineup of new collaborations, exhibitions, poetry readings and performances," said Rachel Bernstein, Heights Arts executive director.

Mary Ryan is on staff at Heights Arts, a nonprofit community arts organization.

'Klezmer Guy' trio to perform at Nighttown Feb. 25

Bert Stratton

Bert Stratton, the leader of the klezmer band Yiddishe Cup, will perform "Klezmer Guy," an original prose-and-music show, at Nighttown in Cleveland Heights, on Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 7 p.m.

Stratton reads comedic prose sketches and plays clarinet, accompanied by Alan Douglass on vocals and piano, and Tamar Gray on vocals. Stratton and Douglass are original members of Yiddishe Cup, and Gray has performed with the group for two years. She is the vocal music teacher at Fairfax Elementary School.

Stratton's writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Belt Magazine* and *City Journal*.



"Klezmer Guy" performers (from left) Alan Douglass, Bert Stratton and Tamar Gray.

In addition to klezmer music, the group will play Tin Pan Alley tunes, swing and Motown. Expect an evening of social commentary, plumbing tips and song—as if Garrison Keillor were raised on pastrami.

Tickets are \$10. For information, visit www.nighttowncleveland.com or call 216-797-0550.

Bert Stratton is a Cleveland Heights resident and the leader of the klezmer band Yiddishe Cup. He writes the Klezmer Guy blog at www.klezmerguy.com.

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Stove Oven celebrates 20 years on Lee Road

Deanna Bremer Fisher

On an icy January day in 1995, John Emerman and Tatyana Rehn sat nervously at one of the tables in their new restaurant and wondered if anyone would walk through the front door. “Minutes earlier, we had pulled the Kraft paper off the windows and given the café a final once over,” said Emerman. “After months of work, we now wondered if anyone would know we were there.”

Twenty years later, the Stone Oven Bakery Café has become a neighborhood landmark.

“I’m amazed,” said Emerman. “I’m not one to stay in one place for more than a couple of years. I could never hold down a job for more than two years because I’d get bored and I’d leave.”

“This has been really creative and fun,” said Emerman, who added that he enjoys owning the business,



John Emerman and Tatyana Rehn, owners of Stone Oven.

although being a local celebrity can sometimes be a bit overwhelming.

According to Emerman, the business evolved slowly. He and Rehn met as engineering students at Cleveland State University in the 1970s. They

married and settled on Queenston Road in Cleveland Heights to raise two children who attended Heights schools.

“Tatyana would have been happy continuing in engineering,” said Emerman. “But she got laid off from her job and decided to start a bread business. She had a passion for bread. She had no formal training, but she was from Russia and knew good European bread. No one was doing that here then.”

“I was bored with engineering,” said Emerman, who was working in the marketing department of the Illuminating Company at the time. “I encouraged her because I really wanted to do something on my own.”

“We had the bread business and I thought, ‘I’ll do my coffee thing. After we opened on Jan. 23, 1995, I stayed at my job for, I think, six months—I’d work at night and close the place down—until I saw that the business was picking up and that it would be enough to sustain us.”

Emerman said that he didn’t have a clear business concept when he started. “I really thought of myself as a café—obviously, bread had to be in the mix. The atmosphere of the place to me was more important than what we served. I wanted a place where people could relax for a while, and if I could make a living off of it, that was fine.”

“We grew very slowly and adjusted based on the demands of the business,” he added.

The store was originally located at the corner of Lee Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard, in a former Society

Bank branch. “It had an institutional feel, which was kind of cool,” said Emerman. “I kept the check-writing counters, which became our tables. I would have stayed there forever if our landlady hadn’t forced us to leave.”

The restaurant moved to its current location, just a few doors down the street, in a building the couple—now divorced but still business partners—owns. “We could do what we wanted to with the building without thinking about how long we were going to be here,” said Emerman, who had worried that business would decline with the move; instead, business increased by about 20 percent almost immediately.

Emerman said that although there have been ups and downs, the business has continued to grow.

Stone Oven has two additional locations, one at the Galleria at Erieview in downtown Cleveland, the other at the Eton Chagrin Boulevard shops in Woodmere. In 2011, the couple partnered with local pastry chef Bridgette Thiebault to open Luna Bakery Café in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood. Bread for all of the locations is produced at a warehouse in Midtown Cleveland.

Emerman believes it would be much harder to open a business today. “With social media, word travels very quickly if you fail. You don’t have time to react or you have to react superfast. If dinner is horrible, that can kill a business very quickly. You have to have everything in place from day one.”

Asked if he has considered retirement, Emerman admitted that he sometimes does think about doing something different. He has a wood-working hobby that he’d like to spend more time on, but said he wouldn’t feel comfortable handing the business over to someone else just yet. “I really feel that I want it to endure in a way that I envision it,” he said. He added that he feels a sense of obligation, and that it would be very hard to leave the Heights. “It’s my home. And I feel that the Stone Oven is so critical to the vitality of the area.”

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.

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Cedar Fairmount Business District welcomes two new businesses

Kaye Lowe

Keller Williams Realty Group and an AT&T authorized retailer have opened their doors, adjacent to one another, on Cedar Road.

After a soft opening in early December, the Heights office of Keller Williams Greater Cleveland (KWHeights) is up and running at 12451 Cedar Road, with 14 agents working from the new office. The agents chose the Cedar Road location because of its “easy access” to the heart of Cleveland Heights, University Heights, Shaker Heights and University Circle.

Keith Keifer, one of the agents, said, “Keller Williams offices are

each independently owned and operated. We believe real estate is a local service industry and our customers always come first.” The agents can be reached at 877-477-SOLD.

AT&T opened its 12459 Cedar Road store in mid-December, welcoming customers with bright orange and blue walls and extensive displays of wireless phones, tablets and AT&T wireless hardware. The staff (216-800-8265) is available to assist with AT&T wireless home services, home phones, and Internet and U-verse service.

Kaye Lowe is the executive director of the Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District.

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New owners plan to renovate historic Alcazar

James Henke

The Alcazar, the historic apartment building and hotel located at the intersection of Surrey and Derbyshire roads in Cleveland Heights, has a new owner, and, as a result, some changes will be coming to the building. Montlack Realty bought the Alcazar for \$1.4 million on Sept. 22.

The building currently consists of 184 units: 62 apartments, all of which include a kitchen and a bathroom, and 122 lodging units, which have bathrooms but no kitchens. According to Kirt Montlack, 48, whose family owns the real estate company, the plan is to eliminate the lodging units and increase the number of apartments to 96.

Montlack said the company will install new and larger kitchens in all of the apartments, as well as bigger, more modern bathrooms. The changes, which require the approval of the Cleveland Heights zoning board, will take place over the next year and a half. The company also plans other upgrades, including replacing much of the carpet, and painting much of the building's interior.

The Alcazar was built in 1923, and it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Architect Harry T. Jeffery based his design on the Hotel Ponce De Leon in St. Augustine, Fla. According to architectural historian Eric Johannessen, the building's design came about as a result of "the general



The Alcazar, located at the intersection of Surrey and Derbyshire roads in Cleveland Heights.

vogue for Spanish architecture in the 1920s... and the Florida boom of those years, especially around Palm Beach and Miami."

Over the years, many famous people stayed at the Alcazar, including Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Mary Martin, Cole Porter and George Gershwin. Back in the 1920s and '30s, single rooms with a bath rented for \$75 a month, while furnished suites with hotel service were \$150 a month. According to Montlack, once the renovations are completed, he expects rents to be in the range of \$550 a month for a studio apartment and \$1,500 a month for larger, furnished apartments.

In addition to the apartments, the Alcazar contains several common areas. A ballroom is located on the fifth floor, while the first floor includes a dining

room and a music room. There is also a beautiful lobby area, which features a small, shallow pool that's home to a few live fish. And the outside courtyard includes a fountain that is a copy of one in St. Augustine.

According to Montlack, the common areas are available for rent by the public. The ballroom, for example, can be rented for four hours for \$1,200, while the dining room is available for \$1,000 for four hours. The courtyard rental rate is \$500 for four hours, and the music room can be rented for \$300 for four hours. Montlack noted that his company will probably lower those rates in the near future.

Montlack also said that his family's company is considering opening a public restaurant in the building, but that would also require

a zoning variance from the city. After Prohibition ended in 1933, the Alcazar did include a cocktail lounge called the Intimate Bar.

Montlack said that his family has had a long attraction to the Alcazar, starting back in 1975, when his father opened an office above what is now Dave's Market in the Cedar Fairmount district.

"We used to look out our windows at the Alcazar and think, 'Boy, that would be a great place to own,'" he said. "But back then they were very secretive about who owned the building." It turns out that, for the last 51 years, the building was owned by an organization called the Western Reserve Associates. Montlack called from time to time, trying to buy the building, but he never got any response. Then, in September, he heard that the company was interested in selling.

"I think we have a vision of what this building could be, and we really understand the neighborhood," Montlack said. While many of the current residents are older, Montlack said he expects to rent some of the units to students in graduate school, as well as to recent college graduates.

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is also the author of several books, including biographies of Jim Morrison, John Lennon and Bob Marley.


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