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FutureHeights
2843 Washington Blvd. #105
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Big Fun turns 25 in April

James Henke

On Friday, April 1, Big Fun will mark its 25th anniversary.

Owner Steve Presser said that he is delighted that his store has been around for 25 years. "It's unusual in this day and age to have any longevity," he said. "With the Internet and everything else, it's become very hard for retail stores to survive. But fortunately, we have made it! And the idea is for people to come into the store and shop and have the experience."

In celebration, on April 1, the iconic toy store, located at 1814 Coventry Road, will offer 25 percent off the price of every item in the store, and customers will be invited to enjoy slices of cake.

Big Fun will feature special giveaways, gifts and entertainment throughout the April 1-3 weekend, with a 15 percent discount offered on Saturday's purchases, and a 10 percent discount offered on Sunday.



Steve Presser (right) with his father Marvin Presser on Big Fun's opening day, April 1, 1991.

Big Fun opened on April 1, 1991. The store was originally located across Coventry Road from its current space, in the spot now occupied by Jimmy John's sandwich shop. It moved to its current location in October 2005.

Presser said that he has always liked toys, and has been a collector of things since he was a young boy. "When I was 4 years old, I started collecting rocks," Presser recalled.

"Then, I started collecting insects and then frogs and toads. When I became a teenager, I started collecting toys."

Presser, 58, grew up in University Heights, and graduated from Cleveland Heights High School. He then studied pre-med at the University of Michigan. "When I was in college, I became really active in buying vintage clothing, furniture and toys," he said.

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Center Mayfield faces possible demolition

Brenda H. May

The Center Mayfield Building may be demolished if the property owner does not find a buyer who is willing to preserve this historic building at the eastern gateway to Cleveland Heights.

Circle K representatives have submitted an application to Cleveland Heights City Council to rezone two residential properties on Vandemar Street.

In addition to demolishing the houses, Circle K intends to tear down the Center Mayfield Building, which includes a former movie theater and spans Mayfield Road from Vandemar Street to Noble Road, to build a 16-pump gas station and convenience store on the property.

The footprint for this development would be significantly larger than the BP gas station and convenience store located just one block



The Center Mayfield Building has been mostly vacant for several years. This photo was taken in 2013 by FutureHeights intern Kendra Dean during a survey of vacant storefronts conducted by the organization in 2013.

east on Mayfield Road in Cleveland Heights.

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CH holds master plan meeting, invites public to take survey

Deanna Bremer Fisher

On Feb. 23, the City of Cleveland Heights held the first of three planned 2016 public meetings to discuss the Cleveland Heights Master Plan. Cleveland Heights is one of four cities that is currently working with the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission to develop a master plan. (University Heights is another of the four cities.)

The planning commission has posted an online survey at www.tinyurl.com/clevelandheightsmpmsurvey with information from the Feb. 23 meeting. Residents are invited to complete the survey, and share it with neighbors, on or before March 13.

At the meeting, members of the planning commission introduced themselves and provided an overview of the planning process. The commission is working with city staff and an 11-member Master Plan Steering Committee comprising Heights residents selected by city council. Members of the committee are Michael Ungar, Howard Maier, Jeanne Diamond, Ken Dowell, Allison McCallum, Bill Mitchell, Saroya Queen-Tabor, Julia Kious Zabell, Kristin Hopkins, Yovan "Lou" Radiyevitch and Chuck Miller.

Patrick Hewitt, the lead planner on the project, presented Community Vision statements and goals that the project team has developed, and invited feedback. The project team analyzed current conditions within the city in a variety of areas, reviewed previous visioning efforts and the survey that the city conducted in 2014, and gathered input from city staff and

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Heights Libraries celebrates 100-year anniversary in 2016

Sheryl Banks

Heights Libraries marks its centennial this year and, starting in March, will celebrate in ways both big and small.

In 1915, John Barden was elected to the board of education of what was then the Village of Cleveland Heights. Part of Barden's election platform was a promise to start a public library for the village. In 1916, Barden headed a committee that selected the first members of the future public library board, which was established that



Cleveland Heights High School served as Heights Libraries' first home, in 1916.

same year. The fledgling library didn't have a building yet, so it was located in the high school.

When it was founded in 1916, the new library had one employee, librarian Helen Keeler, and fewer

than 2,000 books.

Today, 100 years later, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System has roughly 160 employees in four buildings, and its collection has grown to more than 418,000 items, including books, CDs, DVDs, mp3s, eBooks, eReaders, and digital music and movies.

Beginning in March, library staff will sport new purple centennial lanyards, and all four libraries will be decorated with banners, inside and out.

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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

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COUNCIL SEAT continued from page 1

members of the steering committee.

The Community Vision statements centered around nine themes: Vibrant Neighborhoods, Complete Transportation Network, Environmentally Sustainable Community, Business Friendly, Strong Business Districts, High-Quality Infrastructure, Hub for Arts and Culture, Diverse and Engaged Community, and A Healthy Community. Participants were invited to visit tables to vote for which vision statements and goals they felt were most important, and comment on the goals.

The planning commission will compile feedback from both the Feb. 23 meeting and the online survey, and meet with city staff and steering committee members over the next several months to revise the statements and goals and begin to formulate policies that could help the city achieve them.

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 April issue must be submitted by March 8. We publish some articles online as they come in—and still consider them for the next print issue. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

Two more public meetings are planned for 2016. In June, the city will host a meeting to gather residents' feedback on the proposed policies, and, in September, it will host a meeting regarding the proposed implementation of the master plan.

Residents who were unable to attend the Feb. 23 meeting are invited to review documents from the master planning process on the city's website at www.clevelandheights.com/master-plan and complete the online survey.

Residents can contact the Cleveland Heights Planning Department at planning@clvhts.com, and learn more about the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission and its work at www.countyplanning.us.

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

Are constitutional rights a local issue?

Carla Rautenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

Is amending the U.S. Constitution a local issue, and, if so, how?

Ever since an initiative by Cleveland Heights citizens placed Issue 32 on the November 2013 ballot, some residents have asked that question. Two city council members expressed opposing views on it at a Jan. 21 public hearing, where residents testified about abuses of corporate power and the corrupting effect of money in politics.

Issue 32 stated: "Shall the proposed ordinance entitled 'Political Influence by Corporate Entities,' establishing annual public hearings before City Council on this subject, and sending a summary of the public hearing to Congressional and State representatives, *and calling for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution declaring that only human beings, not corporations, are legal persons with Constitutional rights and that money is not the equivalent of speech, be adopted?*" (Emphasis added.)

With a resounding 78 percent "yes" vote, Issue 32 became Title XV, Chapter 183 of the Cleveland Heights Codified Ordinances. Similar laws have been approved by voters in six other Ohio cities, and in hundreds of municipalities across the United States. Another will be on the Toledo ballot on March 15, and citizens are collecting signatures for ballot initiatives in Shaker Heights, South Euclid and Cleveland.

So, how is the proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution a concern of local city councils and mayors?

Corporate agenda-setting has led to much less effective regulation and to the slashing of funds for safe water, clean air, public education, roads and bridges, public health and decent jobs. Budget cuts at the state and federal levels return less of our tax money to municipalities, thereby impoverishing our cities and school districts.

With the passage of Issue 32, Cleveland Heights joined a grassroots, nonpartisan, national movement of citizens, Move to Amend, which arose in response to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision. That decision built upon long-standing (though obscure) precedents of treating corporations as legal "persons" and money as constitutionally protected free speech. After the 2008 presidential race, up to then the most expensive in history, Citizens United made an already terrible situation dramatically worse.

It makes sense to build support for a federal constitutional amendment from the local level up. Once approved by Congress, an amendment must be ratified by three-fourths of the states. Local initiative campaigns educate citizens and prepare them to pressure state governments when the time comes for ratification.

The annual public hearing affords any citizen the opportunity to place into the public record evidence of how, in the guise of legal personhood, corporations usurp the sovereign rights of We the People.

On Jan. 21, 17 area residents cited dozens of ways that corporate lobbying and secret campaign contributions have degraded the ability of government to address our most pressing problems, including:

- damaging effects on public education of for-profit charter schools and the corporate-funded Common Core State Standards;
- Ohio's failure to regulate energy costs;
- lack of access to health care despite the Affordable Care Act;
- the squeeze on local government budgets when corporations and wealthy individuals win sweeping tax breaks as a result of their "investments" in the campaigns of state legislators and governors—the loss to Cleveland Heights, \$2.5 million per year;
- loss of jobs, tax revenue and national sovereignty to past and future international trade agreements.

They connected the dots: policies serving the needs of unaccountable, unelected corporate interests too often negatively affect our daily lives.

After listening to the public testimony, Mayor Cheryl Stephens thanked citizens for their contributions and asked council members if they had any remarks.

Council Member Mary Dunbar suggested that council's time would be better spent working on specific local problems. She cited as examples the lack of suitable housing for senior citizens who wish to remain in Cleveland Heights, and the priority set by the Ohio Department of Transportation on funding new roads rather than repairing existing ones. "I just don't feel this is the best use of my time, and I know that's not a popular message to this group," Dunbar stated.

Council Member Melissa Yasinow disagreed, and said, "[W]e are the most basic and important intersection between the people and their government. . . . If we can't have one night a year on this issue for people to come and say what matters to them and what matters to their democracy, then I think we've failed as a local government."

You can watch the third annual hearing on video, posted on the city's website.

Jan. 21 was the sixth anniversary of the Citizens United decision.

Carla Rautenberg is an activist and a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident. Deborah Van Kleef is a musician and writer. She grew up in Cleveland Heights, and has lived here as an adult for 30 years.

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SPEAKEASY

CH should reject Vandemar rezoning application

To the Editor:

I write to urge that Cleveland Heights City Council reject Circle K's application to rezone two residential properties on Vandemar Street to enable yet another gas station—this one with 16 pumps and a convenience store that will clearly encroach on a residential neighborhood, likely with lights and traffic well into evening hours. I have lived in this community long enough to remember when you could not come out of the parking lot with a rental movie and make a right hand turn onto Vandemar. It is a residential street after all. Let's keep it that way!

My objection to this project goes beyond the obvious impact on the residential neighborhood. Cleveland Heights needs economic development, for sure, but a 16-pump gas station within feet of another gas station is not my idea of the kind of development that will jump-start this community and strengthen the area north of Mayfield Road that suffered most from the predatory lending/foreclosure crisis which has resulted in vacant, deteriorated properties and deteriorating property values in these neighborhoods.

So, I urge rejection of this rezoning request, but I also hope that the CH Master Plan, currently in process, will include a vision of what could be possible in this area. For example, what if the city would/could find another place to house what is in/on the old Hillside Dairy property it owns, and the day-care building on south Noble Road, and the vacant lot which held the former Medic/Pick n Pay, and the investor-owned Center Mayfield buildings could be brought together in a package of land for redevelopment? Imagine the possibilities!

In the meantime, while we wait for/look forward to the CH Master Plan and the hiring of a new economic development director to guide its implementation (an essential step; kudos to council), I urge council to reject the Circle K rezoning application. The proposal is not good for the neighborhood, and it is definitely not the kind of development that this community needs or wants.

Diane Woodbridge
Cleveland Heights

Deny the petition to rezone Vandemar Street homes

Ian Griffith

At its Jan. 15 meeting, Cleveland Heights City Council acknowledged receipt of a petition to rezone the two occupied residences on Vandemar Street closest to the Center Mayfield Theater, from residential to commercial (C-2). The rezoning is so that they can be demolished, along with the Center Mayfield Theater and Mayfield Noble Building, to make room for a 16-pump Circle K gas station/convenience store.

The planned gas station is destructive. It would turn two occupied homes; two buildings that, until last year, housed four businesses, including a day care; and a historic building into one large gas station. It would turn two backyards and a small playground into a "greenspace" between the convenience store and the neighboring house. (I do not expect this "greenspace" to be just as well-kept and family-friendly.)

The draft for the Community Vision section of the impending Cleveland Heights Master Plan (www.clevelandheights.com/master-plan) sets a course for development in our city. It says lots of good things. It says we want walkable business districts. It says we want to "continue to promote the preservation of historic homes and buildings." It says cleaner and greener.

Gas stations prioritize driveability. This gas station proposal cheapens the character of our neighborhood and displaces existing historic homes and buildings. This gas station goes against almost every stated goal of the CH Master Plan.

We want to invest (to commit resources in hope of gain) and encourage others to invest in our city and in our neighborhoods. This gas station would do the opposite: We would be committing resources sure of a loss.

The tax base lost four businesses already and would lose two households and their property tax (two houses is 8.5 percent of Vandemar's total houses). Property values of the nearby area would take a hit.

The business this gas station would do will be lost to the BP station a block away and the nearby Shell and Get-Go stations. And nothing says

"Cleveland Heights! Great place to move to!" like a 16-pump, 24-hour, mega interstate-style gas station. At least they haven't asked for a tax abatement and a liquor license. Yet.

Here's a fact: Gas stations pollute. Here's some of the ways: Fuel vapor and car exhaust pollute the air. Spilled gasoline, oil, hydraulic fluids, and antifreeze run off into our sewers (and neighboring yards). Leaking underground tanks leach gasoline into the surrounding soil. Gas stations have incredibly bright lights and loud noises 24 hours a day, and in this case one would be directly across the street from and adjacent to homes on Vandemar. Litter increases around gas stations. The proposed gas station would pollute our neighborhood in expensive and lasting ways.

The planned gas station is destructive. It goes against almost every stated goal of the CH Master Plan. We would be committing resources

sure of a loss. The proposed gas station would pollute our neighborhood. Because of these reasons, there should not be a gas station at Vandemar Street and Mayfield Road. Because of these reasons, Cleveland Heights City Council should join hands with its citizens and do the right thing for everyone, safeguarding our neighborhoods and our character: Deny the petition to rezone the homes on Vandemar Street.

North Mayfield residents and other concerned citizens are organizing support to deny the petition to rezone. You can catch up with them at mayfield.nextdoor.com. Noble Neighbors has set up an action group for this issue as well. Information can be found at www.nobleneighbors.com.

Ian Griffith lives on Vandemar Street in Cleveland Heights. He is the office manager at the Lusty Wrench, and a Cleveland State University graduate.



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CH Teachers Union embarks on listening initiative in schools

Ari Klein

Most people probably think that teachers are better at giving information than receiving it. Over the summer, the leadership of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union had discussions about what we don't know, including what the parents of our students want from teachers and the schools. We have always worked closely with parents through PTAs and in other ways, but we figured it could be interesting to dig a little deeper and have conversations to see what common interests we have with parents of varying backgrounds.

We came up with a way to find out more through small listening sessions with parents at as many schools as possible. Teams formed and trained to meet with parents and ask four questions:

- What do you like about your child's school?
- What changes do you believe would help your child be even more successful in school?
- What other services would be helpful to the community that might be offered though the school?
- How can we, as local teachers, assist in advocating for your children?

Listening teams were instructed

to listen without comment—just to listen and record what they heard (which was probably the hardest part).

So far, we've conducted sessions in eight different schools involving about 65 parents from PTAs and other groups, as well as other parents. Although the groups were small and in no way a perfect sampling of the incredibly diverse families that use the district's schools, these sessions identified some interesting commonalities.

Many parents were surprised that our union is interested in [learning] what they think is important. Parents and teachers are natural allies, but don't always realize that working together will be mutually advantageous. Like parents, teachers want the best for our students—and many of us are parents. In fact, part of our union's vision statement speaks to creating and maintaining supportive environments conducive to learning and teaching.

Many of the additional services that would be helpful to our parents fit nicely under the "wrap-around services" umbrella that I wrote about in the December 2015 *Heights Observer*: fitness and enrichment classes, parenting classes, open gym, affordable after-school care, English Language Learners classes, and more. Parents have great ideas for what could happen at school.

Some of the ideas were about helping orient parents to the school and finding more time to meet with teachers. The thoughtfulness of parents who were able to participate in these conversations was gratifying. Some teams have taken the summaries from their schools to building leadership, to discuss if there are issues that can be addressed right away. I have shared every summary with Superintendent Dixon, to make her aware of what parents are saying so that administration might act on some items as well.

When we started this project, we did not know where it would lead. Every team that I have spoken with felt that its conversations have all been resoundingly positive, even though some team members were reluctant to ask these questions of parents, concerned that there would be unpleasant reactions.

I think most people are happy when someone listens to what they have to say, without being defensive or judgmental in response. I know our teams of teachers might have had things they wanted to say, but that was not our mission. We still have to discuss this within our own organization, but there are probably good reasons to try to refine this process and repeat it in the future. There are always things that teachers can learn.

Ari Klein is a lifelong community member, math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, and president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.

BIG FUN continued from page 1

After graduating from college, Presser decided not to pursue a medical degree. Instead, he started working for PVA Circle of Homes. "It's a nonprofit organization that provides direct care to people suffering from severe mental retardation," Presser explained. He left PVA in 1983 and took a job as a stockbroker at Paine Webber and Company in Beachwood.

Meanwhile, in 1982, while on a trip to Chicago, Presser discovered a store called Goodies. "When I walked into that store, it changed my life," Presser said. "It was a small store, but it had all of these old toys that were still in new packages. They just had a lot of new old stock. It was like going to a rock concert for the first time."

Presser became friends with the store's owner, Ted Frankel. "I told him I was interested in opening a toy store," Presser said. "And I started going to 20 or 30 house sales a week. I was accumulating merchandise, which I stored in my parents' basement."

Frankel eventually closed Goodies and opened a store called Uncle Fun. He was also helping Presser with his plan to open a store. Originally, Presser was going to name it Starvin' Marvin's Fun House (Marvin being Presser's father). Then, Frankel suggested Big Fun, and that became the store's name.

Asked what his favorite toys are, Presser said he loves Rock'em Sock'em Robots. "Also, I really like toys from my childhood," he added. "I grew up in the '60s, so I like 'Lost in Space,' 'Man from U.N.C.L.E.' and 'The Munsters.'"

Big Fun gets visitors from all over the United States. "We're fortunate in that we have been on a lot of best-of lists," Presser said. "And, in fact, *Playboy's* website named us one of the 20 coolest stores in America. So when people come to Cleveland, a lot of them will come to Big Fun and check us out."

The store draws some famous customers, as well. "A lot of bands will come here when they are in town for a show," said Presser. "Fred Schneider of the B-52's has been here a lot, and Anthrax, Pantera and other bands have come by." He noted that comedian and actor Paul Rudd has also been to the store.

Presser said he loves being part of the Coventry neighborhood, and really appreciates how many people have helped him along the way.

"I'm blessed to have a handful of people who have been mentors and who made me appreciate life," said Presser. In particular, he praised Tommy Fello, the owner of Tommy's restaurant, two doors down from Big Fun. "Tommy is not only a mentor, he's a good friend," he said. "As a human being, he's been innovative. He offers a lot of kindness to his staff and his customers, and he's a tireless volunteer. He is not only involved in his business, but in the neighborhood around him. And I am very proud of what we have done with this neighborhood."

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is on the board of FutureHeights, and is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee.

Choice in education benefits the community

Kathleen Tark and Yitz Frank

Choosing the appropriate type of education and school for our children is a fundamental liberty. In Cleveland Heights and University Heights, options range from public schools to parochial schools, private schools and homeschooling. Unfortunately, for many families, the tuition of parochial and private schools eliminates these options. The time commitment required by parents for homeschooling eliminates that option as well, leaving many families a single alternative—the public system.

There are a variety of reasons parents desire a choice in education: It may be that a child is not thriving at a particular school; a child may be having social problems with a particular group of children; parents may disagree with teachers and/or the curriculum being taught; they may desire a more faith-based approach to learning. It also may be that parents are opposed to the national Common Core Standards now used in the public schools, and are seeking a more creative, locally based approach. Ohio's EdChoice Program gives families who reside in underperforming districts some alternatives in their choice of schooling.

The EdChoice program works like this: If a child is assigned to attend a local public school that is, for lack of a better term, chronically underperforming, the state provides the resources for that child to go elsewhere. Nothing requires the child to leave, but that is an option. When a child leaves to go to a nonpublic school with an EdChoice Scholarship or to another public school district through "open enrollment," funding (up to \$4,650 for K-8 EdChoice Scholarships and \$5,900 for public schools) follows that child to his or her school of choice. The district has combined revenues (per pupil) from federal, state and local sources of approximately \$16,500, which is far more than the scholarship amounts, and the difference (more than \$10,000) remains with the district. So, EdChoice and other public school choice programs in Ohio allow more local dollars to be left for the remaining students in the district of residence.

Supporting and enabling parents to make informed choices (particularly through data from tests, which all public school students, and non-public school students who use a voucher to attend a private school, are required by law to take) is a role that districts are uniquely positioned to fill. Ensuring that parents are aware of the performance of their child's school is an important piece to improving our schools and allowing all students the opportunity to succeed. Coupling this knowledge with real school choice is a powerful tool for student success.

An opportunity for school choice is particularly important in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights area.

For families with school-age children, the public school system is often the determining factor in deciding where to live. Because many suburbs have public schools that are viewed as superior to CH-UH schools, many families choose to leave the Heights in search of another choice. People leave the Heights for other reasons as well, such as lower taxes, city services, or larger properties. Offering them choice in education is an incentive to stay. Fewer residents means less income tax for the community and less property tax revenue to fund the public school system. If more people knew they had options in education they might choose the Heights as a place of residence, and contribute to the income and property tax base, rather than move to places like Solon or Orange.

We should not view EdChoice as a threat to the CH-UH schools, but as a win-win. EdChoice can remove a roadblock for many choosing to raise a family in the Heights, with the net effect of benefiting the entire community.

Kathleen Tark, a Cleveland Heights resident since 1996, is an architect and urban designer. Yitz Frank, a resident of University Heights and father of two, is a government relations professional with experience in education policy. The opinion expressed here is that of Tark and Frank, not of any organizations with which either is affiliated.

DEMOLITION continued from page 1

At the Feb. 1 Cleveland Heights City Council meeting, residents who live near the site voiced their opposition to the environmental, light pollution and noise impacts of the proposed demolition and re-development, citing several research sources.

Other residents voiced concerns about quality of life, property values, and traffic and safety issues.

Almost all of the speakers described their appreciation for the historic building, with its walkable neighborhood curb appeal. Many cited specific businesses they had patronized at the site, until they were vacated recently.

Residents understand the need for development planning for the "Triangle"—the district bounded by Mayfield, Noble and Warrensville Center roads. Some suggested restaurants or arts-related businesses, while others offered retail-residential ideas.

The overwhelming sentiment expressed by residents is that they want to be involved with the city, property owners and developers to find businesses that will thrive and that will support the strong neighborhood vibe.

They echoed the priorities published in the Cleveland Heights Community Vision draft document that the Master Planning Steering Committee published on Jan. 22, regarding vibrant neighborhoods and an environmentally sustainable com-

munity.

This new effort to save a historic building and maintain the integrity of the neighborhood recalls the successful grassroots campaign that stopped a large Giant Eagle grocery store from dead-ending Grandview Avenue and radically altering the Cedar Fairmont neighborhood in the early 2000s.

Through the efforts of community members, Cedar Fairmont was able to maintain its pedestrian-scale architecture and walkable neighborhood appeal.

Residents who live near the Center Mayfield property are hoping that the wisdom and experience of such community organizers will help find the resources to restore the historic building and maintain the integrity of the Mayfield/Noble/Warrensville Triangle neighborhood.

For more information, visit www.nobleneighbors.com.

[Zoning petition documents and the Cleveland Heights Community Vision document are available on the City of Cleveland Heights website, www.clevelandheights.com, and at www.nobleneighbors.com.]

A public hearing on this rezoning request will be held on March 3, at 6:30 p.m., in Council Chambers at Cleveland Heights City Hall.

Brenda H May is one of the leaders of Noble Neighbors (www.nobleneighbors.com).

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presbyterian

Maundy Thursday
6:30 pm: Community Supper
7:30 pm: Tenebrae Service of Shadow

Good Friday
12 - 3 pm: Community Ecumenical Service at St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Holy Saturday
7:30 pm: Easter Vigil Begins with outdoor watchfire

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Change happens: Rap Art closes its doors



THE COMMON
GOOD

Susie Kaeser

After more than 40 years of close-up work with adolescents in Cleveland Heights and surrounding communities, Rap Art, a community fixture, has closed its doors.

Jewish Family Services started Rap Art as a drop-in center for adolescents in a former pool hall near Cleveland Heights High School around 1973. In 1977, Rap Art became a program of the Center for Families and Children, and Paula Atwood took the reins. In 1997, the agency moved to a new building on South Taylor Road, which became the home base for this touchstone program for struggling adolescents and their families.

The building at 1941 S. Taylor Road will now be called The Centers McMillan Early Learning Center, and services offered there will focus on expanded early childhood education. The Heights Family to Family Collaborative will remain at this site.

Rap Art was a unique community-based service that used the arts to promote behavioral health and positive social skills among adolescents. Over the years, hundreds of youths and their parents have benefitted from these programs, which were designed to support good decision-making and avoidance of risky behavior. It's a loss for our community.

Pam Bradford directed Rap Art Center starting in 1992. "I'm an old-fashioned social worker. I believe deeply in community-based programs for youth, and in hands-on, interactive programming," explained Bradford as she reflected on Rap Art's programs, strategies and influence. Drawing a deep breath, she broke into a wide smile and her eyes twinkled as she highlighted programs she had helped design and implement. Her commitment to her work with young people and their families was obvious.

She remembered receiving calls from three different parents asking for help for their children whose school behavior had led to out-of-school suspension. "I couldn't ignore that call for help," recalled Bradford. The result was Pinpoint, a program to help suspended and expelled students keep up with schoolwork and tackle the behavior that landed them in trouble.

For the last 20 years, the City of Cleveland Heights has funded Pinpoint with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The Citizens Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations on the city's use of its CDBG funds, and city council gave it high marks. "We are disappointed to see Rap Art close. I don't know anyone who is

doing anything like Pinpoint," said Nancy McLaughlin, who administers CDBG funds for the city and has visited the program every year. She was impressed by how well the program was run and the impact it had. "They have helped so many kids get back on track. We really value what they did."

Bradford is emphatic that the arts made Rap Art unique and effective. Over the years she has designed or implemented programs that used dance, drama, debate, music and the visual arts to empower teen parents or struggling high school students and to strengthen connections between parents and adolescent children.

While Rap Art and all the lives it touched in a positive way is a source of pride for Bradford, so is another legacy: the more than 40 creative staff who, during their years running exciting programs at Rap Art, honed the skills needed to really help children at risk. She named Tony Sias, the new executive director of Karamu House, as one example.

Personally, I am grateful to Pam Bradford for her unwavering respect for her clients and belief in young people and the arts. Ten years ago, when Cuyahoga County's Department of Children and Family Services expanded its decentralized approach to child welfare, Bradford was willing to go to bat within her agency to become the sponsoring partner for Family to Family in the Heights. She was a wonderful collaborator when a committee of community volunteers that I chaired pushed for the new community resource. She took up the call. Her reputation and determination made it a reality.

Last year, Rap Art's parent agency, the Center for Families and Children, merged with West Side Ecumenical Ministry and El Barrio. These three social service agencies, with 19 locations in the Cleveland area, are now known as The Centers. Their focus will be early childhood education and health and wellness for behavioral-health clients.

The change reflects some of the challenges human service agencies face as they seek to remain viable and sustainable in an era of limited funding and changing priorities. It will bring new opportunities to our community.

The Rap Art Center has been Bradford's home base for more than 25 years. She will soon relocate to The Centers' downtown headquarters.

Thank you, Pam Bradford and Rap Art. We will miss you. You made a difference.

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

University Heights City Council Meeting highlights

JANUARY 19, 2016

Councilman Phillip Ertel was absent.

State of the City address

Mayor Susan Infeld read her State of the City address, which will also be included in the newsletter to residents. Her goal has been to make the City of University Heights a place where people want to live and raise a family. The city has carried forward a \$2.5 million surplus into 2016 and will continue to seek grant funds to augment the budget. The \$1 million street repair budget for 2016 will allow the city to repave or improve more streets than ever before. She looks forward to the opening of the new community park and the repaving of several tennis courts. New swim programs have been successful and, in 2016, the city's senior citizens will be able to use the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center. Private investors have made significant improvements at Fairmount Circle, Cedar Green, and Cedar Center, and bondholders have taken back ownership of University Square shopping center. She thanked the city for allowing her to continue to serve as mayor, and thanked council for its work. She looks forward to continuing to work together for the betterment of University Heights.

Pedestrian safety and roadway improvements

Council approved an application to the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) for funding from the Transportation for Livable Communities Program for pedestrian safety and roadway improvements on Warrensville Center Road. There is no cap on the amount of grant money that can be requested, but \$500,000 is available for possible projects across five counties. University Heights will apply for the grant in an amount between \$100,000 to \$175,000 to install two mid-block crosswalks on Warrensville Center Road between Hillbrook and Traymore roads, and between Meadowbrook and Fairmount boulevards. Two parking spaces will be removed on opposite sides of Warrensville Center Road, replaced by a grass and concrete jut-out to shorten the distance required to cross Warrensville. (There is currently a graphic on the city's website displaying the proposal.) These two sections were chosen based on feedback and traffic studies. Councilman Steven Sims voted against the resolution, expressing concerns that these changes will impede the flow of traffic on Warrensville.

Bellefaire parking area

Council approved Bellefaire JCB's application for constructing a parking area on the north end of its campus. Councilman John Rach asked if there was a plan to replace the trees that are to be removed, some of which are quite large. Building Commissioner Eric Tuck-Macalla said that because this would be a temporary parking lot, as it is part of a larger proposal potentially including a new building, no landscaping plans and stipulations were needed. Additional plans will be brought before council and replacement of trees can be addressed then. Rach voted against the motion because of the loss of trees.

LWV Observer: Wendy Duerling.

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

Vice Mayor Susan D. Pardee was absent.

Park construction

Mayor Infeld reported that all park construction updates are being posted to the city's website. The work will resume early in spring as soon as the ground is dry. A number of change orders have resulted in an increase of approximately \$22,000 thus far, but the project is still



well within budget with room for possible additional changes.

Community survey

Council authorized the mayor to expend funds for the printing and mailing of a community survey for the city's master plan, with an additional clause to limit expenses to \$10,000. The mayor was still awaiting a cost estimate to provide return postage for using randomized one-in-five mailers versus return postage on all mailers. The mayor will also look into providing bar-coded envelopes so that only returned surveys are charged postage. The estimated cost thus far was \$6,800, but she was asking for approval of up to \$7,500. Council did not want any further delays for approval of additional costs, but also did not want to provide open-ended approval, so it settled on a cap of \$10,000.

2016 street repair

Council authorized a request to seek bids for the city's 2016 street repair program, with Councilman Mark Wiseman voting no. Joseph Ciuni, city engineer, reported that, with lower oil prices, he is hoping to receive a lower bid for street repairs, enabling the possibility of repairing additional streets or parking lots (primarily the lot adjacent to the new park or the lot by the Purvis Park tennis courts). Wiseman expressed concern that the list did not represent the streets in the worst condition. Ciuni and Mayor Infeld explained that the list considers a number of factors including the amount of traffic, the impact on traffic flow when repairing too many streets in one area, and expected waterline replacements. Council has budgeted \$1 million for street repairs in 2016.

LWV Observer: Wendy Duerling.

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 "lww-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.

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LIBRARY continued from page 1

Customers can trade in their current library cards for a limited-edition centennial card featuring the library's centennial logo.

Local history fans can learn about the library's past through an interactive timeline on the library's website, www.heightslibrary.org, which will also feature the audio remembrances of former library staff and board members.

Heights Libraries will celebrate its Centennial Kick-Off on Sunday, May 1, starting at 2 p.m., at the historic Coventry Village Library, 1925 Coventry Road. Local author Mary Doria Russell will give a special talk, followed by a time capsule burial, birthday cake, live music and children's activities. The event will be presented in partnership with the

Friends of Heights Libraries and the Fund for the Future of Heights Libraries.

Centennial-related programming includes activities for kids: a centennial poster contest (see article on page 14), and Picture Book Madness, which gives kids the opportunity to vote for the best picture book of the past century.

The results of both contests will be included in the library's time capsule.

Visit www.heightslibrary.org for information on all of Heights Libraries centennial-related programs.

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

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Maundy Thursday- March 24
Noon Service with Holy Communion
7:00 p.m. Service with Holy Communion

Good Friday- March 25
7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Service

Holy Saturday- March 26
7:00 p.m. Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday- March 27
Sunrise service at 6:30 a.m. on the front lawn of Church of the Saviour
Worship at 8:30, 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.
and Catalyst at 6:30 p.m.

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Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights



JANUARY 19, 2016

All council members were present.

Ruffing Montessori School students observe council

Mayor Cheryl Stephens recognized two
Ruffing Montessori School seventh-grade
students observing the meeting.

Rezoning residential parcels

The city has received a petition from Circle
K to rezone two parcels from residential to
commercial as part of a development plan
proposed for the site of the Center Mayfield
Building.

Bids and requests for qualifications

Council granted to the city manager authority
to obtain bids for sand, gravel and limestone;
and also to issue two requests for qualifica-
tions: the first for building inspection and plan
review services, and the second for executive
search firms to recruit an economic develop-
ment director.

County sewer maintenance services

Council authorized an agreement with
Cuyahoga County for services that will
help maintain the city's sanitary and storm
sewers and catch basins at a price that is
less than that of a private company. The
agreement will expire on Dec. 31, and the
total amount to be paid by the city shall not
exceed \$300,000.

New police chief

Kahlil Seren, chair of the Public Safety and
Health Committee, congratulated Annette
Mecklenburg on her appointment as the
city's next police chief, succeeding Jeffrey
Robertson, who is retiring. She will be sworn
in Feb. 1.

Citizen appointments to architectural board

Council approved the following appoint-
ments to the Architectural Board of Review:
new member Michael Wellman for a two-
year term (Jan. 19, 2016 through Dec. 1,
2017); reappointment of Rich Bosick for an
additional one-year term (Jan. 19 through
Dec. 31, 2016); and alternate Eric Lund
for a two-year term (Jan. 19, 2016 through
Dec. 1, 2017).

LWV Observer: Katherine Solender.

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

All council members were present.

Public comments

Rezoning issue on Mayfield Road: Fourteen
residents spoke against the rezoning request
by Circle K to enable building a large gas
station and convenience store on Mayfield
Road at Vandemar Street, in the location of
the Center Mayfield Building. The develop-
ment would also require demolishing two
houses on Vandemar Street. Those speaking
pointed out that there were already nine
gas stations within the city; that better use
of the land might include family restaurants,
middle-income town homes, a youth center,
arts and culture facilities, or other more
creative and attractive development; and

that there was the potential for increased
crime around a 16-pump, 24-hour business
that sells alcohol, tobacco and snack foods.
One speaker, with a military and civilian
background in hazardous materials and
waste management, presented details about
air, ground and water contamination risks
from petroleum, and the effects on child and
adult health. Another speaker presented
detailed evidence about the effects of light
and noise pollution. Residents also spoke
about the possible architectural value of
the current building, the contradiction with
the city's proposed master plan for "strong,
safe vibrant neighborhoods," and the risk of
plummeting home values. Several pointed out
the importance of involving neighbors who
are directly affected in planning, and of the
vulnerability of the areas of the city north of
Mayfield Road.

Public schools coalition: Susie Kaeser,
representing the Heights Coalition for Public
Education, announced the We Are More
Than A Score rally at five CH-UH elementary
schools on Feb. 17. This is planned to "send
the message that Ohio's tests do not define
us and to show what we treasure about our
schools and each child." The public is encour-
aged to attend; specific places and times may
be found at chuh.net/coalition.

Pit bulls: Residents Lillian Pyles and
Marjorie Pyles Hurst shared their concerns
about recent mauling attacks by pit bulls, and
called for legislation to ban the breed in the
city. Each has had occasion to call the police
about serious situations. Mayor Stephens
responded that council has recognized the
problem and the law director has drafted
legislation that will be considered soon.

Intersection improvement

Council authorized submission of an ap-
plication to the Northeast Ohio Areawide
Coordinating Agency (NOACA) for federal
funding for improvements at the intersection
of Overlook and Edgemoor roads. The city
and University Circle Inc. have prepared a
Transportation for Livable Communities
Initiative planning study, The University Circle-
Cleveland Heights Bicycle Network Study, to
increase the number of bicycle trips between
Cleveland Heights and University Circle. The
study proposed changes to this intersection
for improved safety and comfort for pedes-
trians, bicyclists and motorists. If funding is
awarded, an agreement with NOACA may
require the city to fund a 20 percent match
for the grant. That amount shall not exceed
\$50,000 without council approval.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

Look for earlier and often expanded
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See disclaimer on page 7.

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Greater Cleveland Congregations identifies key challenges facing CH

James Henke

More than 80 Cleveland Heights residents came together on Jan. 31, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Fairmount Boulevard, to identify what they consider to be the biggest challenges facing Cleveland Heights.

Called the Cleveland Heights Listening Session, the program was initiated by Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC), an organization representing 40 different religious congregations in the Cleveland area, as well as partner organizations in Cuyahoga County.

GCC comprises diverse groups of Catholic and Protestant churches; the Islamic Center of Cleveland; Jewish synagogues and temples; and Unitarian Universalists.

Members of both St. Paul's and Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, located at the intersection of Monticello Boulevard and Lee Road, organized the program. Khalilah Worley, associate organizer of GCC, moderated. Two representatives from Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish's staff attended the event.

The two-hour program began with an opening prayer by the Rev. Richard Israel, associate rector at St. Paul's, followed by a brief history of Cleveland Heights presented by Joyce Roper, a member of Church of the Redeemer (United Methodist) on South Taylor Road.

The attendees then broke into

nine groups for a 40-minute discussion of what they considered to be the most pressing issues facing Cleveland Heights.

Ultimately, they identified the two biggest issues facing the city:

The first is the generally negative perception of the CH-UH public school system, especially in the eyes of outsiders considering moving to the area. This negative view is countered by the positive experiences of many residents whose children attend Heights public schools.

The problem is seen as being exacerbated by subjective school "ratings" on real estate websites, such as Zillow.com, which rate school districts based on state standardized tests. Currently, all CH-UH public schools are rated at the red-yellow "low" level, far from the green "high" level rating. A score of 2 out of a possible 10 is now assigned to Cleveland Heights High School.

The second most pressing issue is the ongoing decay of many Cleveland Heights houses and buildings. Many in attendance cited absentee landlords, a higher number of rentals in the area, and high income-tax rates that prevent some potential homeowners from purchasing homes in the city.

Worley acknowledged that the two predominant issues were related.

In addition to those two key issues, breakout groups also reported these concerns: improving community relations with city police; safety

in some neighborhoods and schools; juvenile misbehavior, while traveling to and from school; declining housing values and business districts, including Severance Town Center and Lee Road.

Residents also expressed concern about a proposed Circle K convenience store and gas station, which developers seek to build on the current site of the former Center Mayfield Theater.

GCC formed in 2011. "It was organized to be a voice for citizens so they could take a place alongside government and business interests to bring social justice to Cleveland," said Israel.

When GCC formed, Israel explained, it identified five key issues to focus on: healthcare, jobs, criminal justice, education and sustainable food. Since then, it has added gun violence as a sixth key issue.

St. Paul's became involved with GCC when the organization undertook a campaign to bring about an expansion of Medicaid coverage in Ohio.

"We managed to get the governor to put a Medicaid expansion in the state budget, and, as a result, 300,000 to 400,000 people who were previously uninsured were able to get healthcare," Israel said.

He noted that GCC also worked with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to help pass its school levy and to persuade the government to support the Cleveland

Plan, which gave more autonomy to local schools.

Israel added that the organization also managed to get Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson and the Cleveland Police Department to sign a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice to reform the police department.

After GCC's initial successes, many of which involved the city of Cleveland, the organization decided it was time to work toward similar successes in other cities, including Cleveland Heights, where nine of GCC's 40 congregations are based.

Cleveland Heights Council Member Mary Dunbar, who attended the Jan. 31 GCC event, invited participants to the Cleveland Heights Master Plan community meeting on Feb. 23, to discuss and set priorities for strategic development.

GCC is planning two future meetings to address the issues identified at its Jan. 31 session, so that the group can work collaboratively to find solutions.

More information about the organization can be found at www.greaterclevelandcongregations.org.

James Henke, a Cleveland Heights resident, was a writer and editor at Rolling Stone magazine for 15 years. He is on the board of FutureHeights, and is co-chair of the Heights Observer Editorial Advisory Committee. Andrea C. Turner, Heights Observer managing editor, contributed to this article.



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A remembrance of Monique V. King

Halida Dinova

Monique V. King (née Wolf), a long-time Cleveland Heights resident, died Feb. 3 in Tucson, Ariz., where she had been living for the past 25 years. She was 84.

Born in Paris, King survived the German Occupation during World War II and came to the United States in 1948 on an American Field Service scholarship. In 1950 she married Richard C. King, according to an obituary published in the *Arizona Daily Star*.

She graduated magna cum laude from Case Western Reserve University in 1954 and, from the same school, earned a Ph.D. in chemistry in 1959 and an M.D. in 1965. She received training in psychoanalysis from the Cleveland Psychoanalytic Institute, and became a training/supervising analyst there in 1983, according to the obituary. On moving to Tucson, she worked to build a psychoanalytic community in Southern Arizona. Committed to lifelong learning, King helped to form the Splendido Intellectual Pursuits Program—a mini-university offering courses to area residents—and, among her many other pursuits, organized a series of chamber music concerts with artists from the Tucson Symphony Orchestra.

I met Monique King while studying piano at the Cleveland Institute of Music; I was taking English writing lessons from her husband (who died

in 2007).

They both took an interest in my concert performances and followed my career over the years. After they moved to Arizona from their home on Mornington Lane, we communicated frequently and I always received their encouragement, advice and affection. They were fully aware of how difficult life could be for a young artist from a foreign country.

I will never forget the encouraging gifts they gave me, such as air miles that allowed me to travel to Europe for performances and recordings; monetary donations for recording projects; and even a warm coat in a cold winter, when they discovered I was ill with bronchitis.

Monique King was a brilliant and disciplined person. I marveled at how she continued to practice medicine in Tucson, passing the difficult qualifying exams to obtain a medical license in Arizona at age 62. Soon after, she purchased a Steinway piano and, starting as a beginner, became proficient enough in three years' time to perform Mozart's *Sonata in C major* for friends.

She always enjoyed learning and never accepted any idea of "being too old to do it." This quality in her has always inspired me. In one of our last conversations, she said, "Nobody should ever hear the 'organ recital'"—meaning the list of health complaints about growing old. "Instead, there is so much to see, learn and think about."

University Heights resident Halida Dinova was born in Kazan, Russia, and is a globally acclaimed concert pianist.

COTS hosts talk on lead exposure dangers

Connie Cribfield

Anyone following the news out of Flint, Mich., or Sebring, Ohio, knows that lead poisoning is serious.

Exposure to lead is especially dangerous for young children and pregnant women, and, here in the Heights, we have many old homes with old pipes.

On March 16, at 7:30 p.m., Dorr Dearborn, M.D., will discuss the current status of lead issues and lead poisoning in the Heights and in Greater Cleveland. The talk will

take place at Church of the Saviour (COTS), Calvary Hall, 2537 Lee Road.

Dearborn has done research and treated children with lead poisoning, and is active in getting children screened for lead exposure.

All members of the community are welcome to attend. For more information, call the church office at 216-321-8880 during normal business hours.

Connie Cribfield is a member of Church of the Saviour's Health Ministry Team.



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Pets provide many benefits



SENIOR SCENE

Judith Eugene

Pets do more for us than just keep us company. They also provide us with many health benefits. According to The Centers for Disease Control, regular walking or playing with pets can decrease stress, and lower blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels. The companionship that pets provide also can help manage loneliness and depression.

Mayo Clinic studies have found that pets help reduce stress and anxiety in medical patients, increase the survival rate for heart attack victims, and help increase the appetite of underweight elderly patients.

Dr. Julie Sheil of Cleveland Veterinary Acupuncture in Cleveland Heights (216-630-1450) noted that having a pet helps increase the quality of life for her senior clients who live alone or have chronic health issues. Pets also help maintain their owners' health. "Clients have told me, 'If it weren't for my dog, I would never leave the house,'" said Sheil.

Dr. Linda Mitchell of Rainbow Veterinary Clinic in Cleveland Heights (216-291-3931) said that pets provide valuable unconditional love that helps one feel connected and secure. Many of her clients can't imagine not having a pet. "A client in her mid-80s lost her cat and was devastated," said Mitchell, "but she soon adopted another one."

Adrienne Brockway, owner of Animal Zen in Cleveland Heights (216-402-6513), a company that provides various services for pets, has observed that her senior clients

are especially diligent about taking care of their pet's health, and that seniors and their pets have strong bonds. "When we pet-sit for seniors," Brockway said, "they let us know all of the animal's likes and dislikes."

If you are thinking about adopting a new pet, make sure to choose one that you are able to take care of, and that is safe for you. Some dogs pull too hard when they are being walked. Some dogs and cats walk between legs or lie on the floor, becoming a tripping hazard. It may be difficult for some seniors to reach up to clean a bird cage, or bend down to clean a cat litter box.

The American Veterinary Medical Foundation recommends that one research the specific needs of the animal before making a decision.

Some questions to consider are: What does the pet eat and how much does it cost? How much exercise does the pet need? What else does the pet need to stay healthy? What is its personality? How large will it become? How much will veterinary care cost? Am I able to properly care for and clean up after the pet? Will neighbors complain? How long will the pet live? Who will take care of it if I no longer can?

The physical and emotional benefits of living with pets are many. The right pet will not only enrich your life, it will also help you stay healthier.

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.lovinghands-group.com. She can be reached at 216-408-5578 or judith@lovinghands-group.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. To receive the monthly schedule by e-mail, call 216-932-7800, ext. 205, or send an e-mail to info@universityheights.com.

March 3: Krystal Culler, director of the new Center 4 Brain Health at Menorah Park (27100 Cedar Road, Beachwood), will outline services and programs that can enhance memory and thinking skills, including brain aerobics classes, memory assessments, support groups, memory screenings, Bright Minds book club, and special cognitive fitness sessions.

March 10: Irwin Weinberger, an art educator and musician, will discuss his experiences performing with the Yiddische Cup Klezmer Band, and teaching middle school art courses. Weinberger plays guitar, ukulele,

mandolin and banjo, and has a special passion for impressionistic painting from the early 1900s.

March 17: Instrumentalists and vocalists from the Cleveland Institute of Music will perform.

March 24: Today's speaker will be Anda Cook, vice president of Cleveland Cultural Gardens Federation, a haven of plants, monuments, sculptures and fountains in landscaped gardens along East Boulevard and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The federation is preparing to celebrate its 100th anniversary.

March 31: Today's speaker will be Amanda Walsh, who started playing piano when she was 7, is a 1998 graduate of University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music, and teaches piano at Motter's Music in Lyndhurst. Walsh is a songwriter and performer [who appears] on various occasions with guitarist Rick Szeke-lyi, and a Heights resident who loves the diversity of the community.

CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

The Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC), located in the CH Community Center at 1 Monticello Blvd., offers a wide variety of programming for Cleveland Heights residents 60 and older.

SAC is the recipient of a grant from the Ohio Arts Council—part of its Creative Aging Ohio Initiative to encourage new, innovative arts programming. SAC will use the grant to focus on storytelling from a personal perspective.

The program, Our Stories: Portrayals of Life, is free, but can accommodate only 12 participants. Register soon to reserve a spot.

Participants will meet at SAC on Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., beginning April 2 and culminating in a reading at Cain Park on June 15. Arts profes-

sional Joanna Hunkins has been hired to direct the group in play reading, essay writing, theater games and thoughtful self-exploration.

Starting March 2, SAC will offer classes in Basic French (\$25 for an 8-week session).

The Senior Activity Center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. A complete schedule of programs is published in the community center's newsletter, which is available at Cleveland Heights City Hall, local libraries, the community center and online at www.clevelandheights.com. For more information and to register for any program, call 216-691-7377.

Amy Jenkins is supervisor at the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging and the Senior Activity Center. She can be reached at 216-691-7379 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com.

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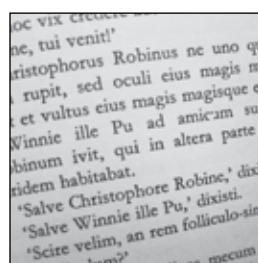
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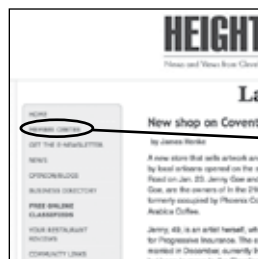
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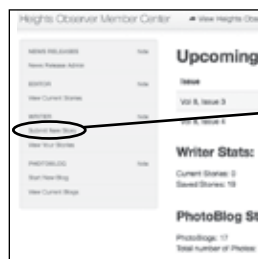
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LEI to host fundraiser and Kids' Comic Con

Cynthia Larsen

Lake Erie Ink: a writing space for youth (LEI) is holding two special events this month. The fourth annual Giant Bananagrams Tournament will take place on March 12, 2-4 p.m., at Cleveland Heights High School (Wiley campus). Then, on March 19, LEI will host its fourth annual Kids' Comic Con, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., featuring workshops with professional writers and illustrators, including keynote speaker Marc Sumerak, an Eisner and Harvey Award-nominated comic book writer (for *Franklin Richards: Son of a Genius*).

LEI's Giant Bananagrams Tournament is a fundraiser that celebrates words and teamwork. Teams of two to four players will compete against one another in front of an audience for prizes. Other entertainment includes a banana-inspired haiku contest, food, door prizes and a cakewalk. If you want to go bananas with words, visit www.lakeerieink.org for more information, and to register.

On March 19, LEI's 2016 Kids' Comic Con will give young people a chance to work with local independent comic creators during four hours of workshops. In addition to Sumerak, guest artists include: Jake Kelly and John G. (*The Lake Erie Monster*), Bryn Adams (*The Crooked Cuyahoga*), Lee Smith (*The Ohio Chronicles*), Miguel and Michelle Hernandez (*4th Hanzo* and *Karate Coco*), and freelance artists Sequoia Bostick and Clare Kolat. Workshops will cover both drawing and writing comics, as well as the ever-popular

"create your own comic character in clay." This year, LEI will also facilitate a panel on "Girls and Women in Comics—as Characters and Creators."

Attendees will have the opportunity to purchase comic books, art and graphic novels at LEI's Artist Alley. Lunch will be sold on-site or attendees may bring their own. Costumes are encouraged, but super heroes and super villains should leave their weapons at home.

The Comic Con is open to young people ages 8-18. Adults are welcome if they are accompanied by a kid, and teachers may attend if they show a staff ID. Admission is \$10, with scholarships available on request. On-site registration begins at 9:30 a.m.; pre-registration is available online at www.lakeerieink.org or by calling 216-320-4757.

The fourth annual LEI Kids' Comic Con is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.

Lake Erie Ink is located at 2843 Washington Blvd. (the Coventry School building) in Cleveland Heights.

Lake Erie Ink: a writing space for youth is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 that provides creative expression opportunities and academic support to youth in the Greater Cleveland community. LEI offers programming all year long, including summer camps for youth in grades 3-8. Camp registration begins March 1.

Cynthia Larsen teaches writing at Lake Erie Ink: a writing space for youth.

Families invited to March 2 kindergarten information night and March 9 open house

Cathan Bricker

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District will host its annual kindergarten information night on Wednesday, March 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Noble Elementary School, 1293 Ardoon Street in Cleveland Heights.

Representatives from each of the district's seven elementary schools will occupy a classroom where parents can meet CH-UH kindergarten

teachers from their school and ask questions about the program. Parents will also receive information about before- and after-school programs, student services, food service and transportation.

District leaders will speak briefly on kindergarten readiness, curriculum, registration and related matters.

"This event is a great opportunity for families to meet the educators and learn what their child can expect when coming to kindergarten," said Superintendent Talisa Dixon. "I look forward to meeting our future Tiger Nation students and their families."

The event is free and childcare will be provided by Family Connections. For more information, contact the Early Childhood Center at 216-371-7356.

On March 9, 9:30-11 a.m., each district elementary school will host an open house. Parents can tour the schools, meet with teachers and principals, and observe the learning that is taking place in the classrooms.

Cathan Bricker is the communications administrative assistant for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

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Edwards sisters hope to play hockey internationally

Jennifer Holland and Gennifer Hurtt

If you've recently attended a Heights High hockey game, a AAA Pee Wee boys hockey game, or a 14U (age 14 and under) girls hockey game in Cleveland Heights, you may not have been able to identify who was beneath those massive helmets. Chances are good, however, that you were watching one of Charone and Robert Edwards' four children tearing up the ice.

For the Edwards family, hockey is a lifestyle. Robert, a local painting subcontractor, played for Heights High as a teen and has been involved with adult men's hockey leagues. Bobby, 17, is a senior at Heights High and captain of the Heights High hockey team. Colson, 8, plays youth hockey. Chayla, 14, and Laila, 12, both started playing in the Cleveland Heights Youth ADM Hockey Program, based at the Cleveland Heights Recreation Center, before they were 8 years old.

Ever since they started playing, the girls have progressed impressively, playing elite hockey (AAA) with boys for the Cleveland Jr. Lumberjacks and Cleveland Barons respectively, competing against the top boys' teams from other cities. Laila and Chayla also participate in the Pittsburgh Penguins Elite Girls hockey program, one of the top girls programs in the country. Last year, Chayla made it to the national championship game with the Penguins.

Having positive female role models early on inspired the girls to pursue their own success in the sport. They watched other Heights players, such as sisters Kasidy and Kendal Anderson, Ann Marie Fitzgerald, Lauren Bernard and Lora Clarke, excel on the ice, often against boys.

Despite the time and energy commitment hockey demands, both Chayla and Laila have excelled academically, and both also play the violin. Chayla, a ninth-grade honors student at Shadyside Academy, a boarding school in Pittsburgh, won the Outstanding Math Student of the Year Award last year at Roxboro Middle School. She now attends Shadyside in order to continue playing with the Pittsburgh Penguins Elite team, which she has been a member of for six years.

Laila, also an honors student, is a sixth-grader at Roxboro Middle School. As a fifth-grader, she won the Roxboro Elementary School spelling bee.

"I'm so proud of the girls' tireless efforts to work hard and be better at the game . . . getting up at 5 a.m. to get extra skills on a school day and then going back for more practice; possibly missing social events that a pre-teen and teenager normally would have," said their mother, Charone Edwards, an Oxford Elementary School employee. "I admire their drive and will to be the best!"

"I have had the pleasure of competing with and against two very



Chayla and Laila Edwards.

special young women in the sport of hockey," said Taylor Clark, assistant coach with the Pittsburgh Penguins Elite 14U and Cleveland Lumberjacks teams. Clark, a former Michigan State hockey player, is currently Chayla's coach, and coached both girls when they played with the Ohio Flames. "I think the world of both Chayla and Laila Edwards. What both have already accomplished and what they

are about to accomplish in the game of life cannot be underestimated. When their names are brought up in conversation, I always use the word 'polished.' Both are an inspiration to young girls."

Both girls have been invited to play internationally this spring and summer, as members of West Coast Selects teams—part of the Selects Organization, which brings together elite female hockey players from across North America to compete with some of the best international players. Laila has been invited to play with the U14 West Coast Selects in Sweden and Finland in April; in Chicago and Toronto in May; and in Rochester in June. Chayla has been invited to Minnesota in March for nationals; to Chicago and Toronto in May; to Rochester in June; and to Minnesota and Prague in July.

The Edwards family has devoted much time and resources to supporting their children's hockey pursuits, and the financial commitment has been both

worthwhile and immense. To help offset the costs, three fundraisers are in the works to help Chayla and Laila pursue their hockey-playing goals.

A 50/50 raffle began Feb. 7 and continues through March 16. Tickets can be purchased for as little as \$1.

In February, the Edwards family hosted a #TeamEdwards Write a Check Campaign at their home, where attendees are asked to make a donation toward the goal of raising \$30,000 to cover expenses for the trips. Both girls will attend the event, and speak about their experiences.

On April 9, supporters are invited to the Team Edwards Gala at Bodega Restaurant and Lounge, 1854 Coventry Road, 3-6 p.m.

To purchase raffle tickets or tickets for the gala, e-mail jgggroup216@gmail.com.

Jennifer Holland and Gennifer Hurtt are partners of the JG Consulting Group, a concierge firm that includes event planning among its services. They are the event planners for the Edwards sisters' fundraisers.



"I want to have a plan in place so my family doesn't have to scramble."

—Dr. Louise Keating, Judson at Home member since 2013

Connecting with people is important to Dr. Louise Keating. The daughter of Italian immigrants, she lives with her daughter's family in Cleveland Heights, where she savors whipping up authentic Italian meals for her grandchildren.

"Living at home is important to me, but I want to have a plan in place so my family doesn't have to scramble," says Louise. "That's why I decided to sign up for Judson at Home. When the time comes, Judson will take care of everything with one phone call. In the meantime, I can access services whenever I need them."

Indeed. When she's not in the kitchen, Louise is working out at Judson. As a Judson at Home member, she takes advantage of Judson's health and wellness classes which offer both physical and social benefits.

"Exercise keeps me nimble. I'm at Judson three times a week for yoga, strength training and water aerobics," says Louise, who has had both hips replaced. "Plus, I've made many close friends."

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Library seeks student art to celebrate centennial

Julia Murphy

The year 2016 marks the centennial of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System. While celebratory programming will begin this spring, the library's Centennial Poster Art Competition and Exhibition asks children and teens to start thinking now about what the library has meant over the past 100 years, how patrons use it today, and how it may evolve in the future.

Young artists are invited to submit two-dimensional, rigid-mounted artwork inspired by books and libraries to the Lee Road Library, April 1-7. A committee of library staff, as well as representatives from the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District Art Department and Blick Art Materials, will choose a winner for grades K-4, 5-8 and 9-12 categories. Those winners will receive gift certificates to Blick Art Materials for \$50, \$150 and \$250, respectively.

All entries will be exhibited in the Lee Road Library's art gallery in May. Winners will be announced at the Centennial Celebration at the Coventry Village Library on Sunday, May 1, where images of the winning artwork will be included in the library's time capsule, to be unearthed in the year 2066. Prints will also be made for display in library branches.

"We are happy to provide support for our city's library system and very excited to see what the students create for the competition," said Justin Wills, manager of Blick Art Materials on Mayfield Road, which donated the gift certificate prizes.

"We think this will be a great way for us to see how the young people in our community view the library and share their perspectives with everyone else in our art gallery," said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. "Our strategic plan for the next year includes getting involved in community

conversation, and this is just one more way for us to hear, or rather see, what our community thinks is important."

In 2015, Heights Libraries transformed its art gallery, located on the first floor of the Lee Road Library, into a place where people can explore their imaginations and interact with one another in a unique format. The library created interactive exhibits inspired by the library's programming themes: super heroes to tie in with summer reading themes, *Alice in Wonderland* in October, and *Peter and the Starcatcher* in Novem-

ber, in a collaboration with Dobama Theatre. This year the theme is art, with the Centennial Poster Art Exhibition and other ideas in the works, including a library staff art exhibition.

For more information about the Centennial Poster Art Competition and Exhibition, visit www.heightslibrary.org/poster or call 216-932-3600, ext. 1250.

Julia Murphy is the marketing and volunteer coordinator for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

What's going on at your library?

For a complete list of library programs, and to register, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

Coventry Village Library

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400

Thursday, March 3, 7 p.m.

Poetry with The Poet Laureate. Meredith Holmes, Cleveland Heights poet laureate, will read selected works, including her most recent collection of poems, *Familiar at First, Then Strange* (Pond Road Press, 2015).

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Thursday, March 10, 6-8:30 p.m.

17th Annual Poetry Slam. Are you a young poet? Show off your skills and compete to win prizes at this annual event. Free pizza will be served and workshops will be offered prior to the event itself. Contact the library for details. This program is offered in conjunction with Lake Erie Ink and Cleveland Heights High School. Only those who wish to perform

must register in advance. Registration opened on Feb. 25.

Noble Neighborhood Library

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

Monday, March 14, 7 p.m.

What Can a Woman Do? Watch the public premiere of "Womyn Space," a short film by three Cleveland artists about women in the field of space. Afterward, there will be a presentation using Martha Louise Rayne's book *What Can a Woman Do?* to illustrate the not-so-traditional careers American women throughout history have pursued.

University Heights Library

13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Tuesday, March 22, 6:30 p.m.

NEO-RLS Tech Lab. Families, try out the latest technical gadgets and gizmos, including wearable tech, Snap Circuits, a 3-D pen and a drone. This program is presented by the Northeast Ohio Regional Library System. Registration begins March 8.

Community Forum Discussion

The Cleveland Consent Decree Sunday, March 20, 2016, 9:30-10:45 am



Is there cooperation between Cleveland and suburban police departments regarding basic elements of the U.S. Department of Justice consent decree? Many of the decisions affect community safety policies throughout the county. What can citizens do to help ensure safety in their own communities?



James Hardiman, Esq., Chair, Citizens for Safe and Fair Communities and Vice-President, NAACP in conversation with Dr. Yvonne Conner, member of the Cleveland Community Police Commission.



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Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

JANUARY 25, 2016

All board members were present.



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Board officers for 2016

Board officers for 2016 are: Rick Ortmeyer, president; Ron Holland, vice president; and Abby Botnick, secretary.

New adult services librarian

John Piche, formerly employed by Heights Libraries from 1997 to 2010, has returned from California to accept the position of adult services librarian.

2015 summary report (hours, staff turnover, benefits programs)

Laurie Marotta, human resources manager, presented a summary report for 2015. The library's hours of operation reached a record high with all four branches open on Sunday. Staff turnover increased to 20 percent from 16 percent. Forty-one vacancies were filled, with 16 filled internally by promotion or transfer. Benefit costs reported were: medical, up 5.05 percent; dental, no increase; and long-term disability insurance, no increase. Participation in the library's wellness program saved \$9,000 on medical insurance. The library targeted a 3 percent renewal credit, but did not reach the necessary 75 percent participation in the wellness program. Non-participants receive a financial penalty.

University Heights Library seeks temporary quarters

During the time that the University Heights Library is closed for renovations, a mini-branch is planned to serve the community. Space is currently being sought.

Balanced Scorecard review

Kim DeNero-Ackroyd, deputy director, presented highlights, including a partnership with ASIA (Asian Services in Action), which will aid the Noble Neighborhood Library in its services to the Nepalese population; negotiation of a reduced speaker fee for the "On the Same Page" community read; and completion of both interior and exterior lighting installation at the Coventry Village Library.

Website/Social Media report

Sheryl Banks, marketing manager, reported that, as with circulation and in-person visitor numbers, there was a 10 percent drop in website users. The number of visitors to the research database website fell by 24 percent. A hypothesis is that, with a better economy, fewer people need these services. However, Facebook "likes" and Twitter followers increased.

December public service report

The new reference desk on the second floor of the Lee Road Library was in-

stalled on Dec. 1 and has been popular with both customers and staff.

- The training department at Lee Road Library reported 3,384 computer sessions at Heights Knowledge and Information Center (HKIC).
- University Heights Library held a community forum on Dec. 3 for residents to hear information and examine exhibits created for the renovation of that library. Director Nancy Levin, the board of trustees, and architect John Rach were available to answer questions from the 31 residents in attendance.
- On Dec. 21, the Lee Road Library children's room was dedicated to the memory of Grace M. Brody, with the director and board of trustees in attendance. Community members present learned about the early literacy space that is being created there.
- The library is partnering with Gearing Elementary School to form the Gearing Maker Space Lab. Youth services staff are working to set up a stop-start animation club for students and will plan an event at the University Heights Library in April.
- Tanya Markowitz, youth services associate at Noble Neighborhood Library, led 11 students in a basic yoga class at the Lee Road Library. This was the first class in a series spearheaded by Sarah Biscuso, youth services librarian.
- US Together held a meeting at the Lee Road Library on Dec. 28 with approximately 65 people in attendance. The group is establishing a middle school and high school mentoring program and is looking for volunteers to help refugee children in these grades with homework or cultural adjustment.
- Friends of Heights Libraries provided \$3,000 to the Welcome Hub at the Noble Neighborhood Library for an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. This teacher will work with immigrants from Nepal and Bhutan.
- Coventry Village Library partnered with Mac's Back's-Books on Coventry for a New Year's Eve presentation and meditation with eight Tibetan monks who were touring the United States.

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.

Tigers athletes ink letters of intent



COURTESY CHUH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Facing the camera, five of the 15 student athletes at the Feb. 3 signing ceremony (from left): Malik Smith, Gabe Pewu, LeAndrew Woody, Kaduri Lockhart and Alphonzo Terry.

Joy Henderson

On Feb. 3, National Signing Day, 15 Heights High senior student-athletes officially announced the names of the colleges they will attend after graduation. National Signing Day is the first day that Class of 2016 high school athletes can sign binding letters of intent committing to college athletic programs.

Family, friends and team members attended the ceremony in support of the athletes, as did Talisa Dixon, superintendent, and Felisha Gould, assistant superintendent.

Mac Stephens, head football coach, Pat Gleba, assistant boys soccer coach, and Jeremy Holmes, head boys basketball coach, spoke proudly about the athletes.

The seniors then took turns speaking, expressing gratitude to their families, coaches, teachers and teammates. The event culminated in the ceremonial signing, followed by a standing ovation from the audience.

The following students signed letters of intent to play a sport at the college level:

- Zachary Ford, football, University of Toledo (Ohio)
- Raymond Hudson, football, Baldwin Wallace University (Ohio)

- Isaiah Jackson, football, Ashland University (Ohio)
- Kaduri Lockhart, football, Notre Dame College (Ohio)
- Demonte Meeks, football, Air Force Academy (Colo.)
- Devonte McGregor, football, Central State University (Ohio)
- John Miller, football, Hocking College (Ohio)
- Brandon Parks-Hayes, football, Hocking College (Ohio)
- Lee Price, football, Hocking College (Ohio)
- Jahquan Primm, football, Baldwin Wallace University (Ohio)
- Alphonzo Terry, football, Malone University (Ohio)
- Artemus Watts, football, Wittenberg University (Ohio)
- LeAndrew Woody, football, Malone University (Ohio)
- Gabriel Pewu, soccer, Cleveland State University (Ohio)
- Malik Smith, basketball, University of North Carolina, Asheville

The video of the ceremony can be viewed at www.chuh.org/high-schoolvideos.aspx.

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

Heights Barbershoppers win excellent rating in international competition



COURTESY CHUH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Heights Barbershoppers at the January convention: Director Jesse Lange, Ted Byers, Grant Heine-man, Garret Vandall, Michael Garrett, Andrew Pecoraro, William Aiken, Gerald Shazor, Orion Brock, Graham Ball, Akash Bartlett, Malcom White, Cody Radivoyevitch and Assistant Director Kim Sudduth.

Joy Henderson

The Men's Barbershoppers, a Heights High vocal music group, sings old-time barbershop music with a bit of a modern flair. The a cappella music is in four-part harmony, and the performers use theatrical movements to accentuate the lyrics. In late January, the group attended the International Barbershop Harmony Society's Mid-Winter Convention in Reno, Nev.

The convention drew top-notch barbershop groups—adults, college singers and other high school groups—from all over the globe. For high school attendees, the event offers exposure to seasoned and award-winning singers who can offer valuable feedback and both formal and informal instruction.

The Heights students attended master classes with experienced barbershoppers from Westminster Chorus, an international champion ensemble, and received feedback from judges during the competition. The Heights Barbershoppers earned a rating of Excellent for their performance of three songs.

Director Jesse Lange was very pleased with the students' performance on- and off-stage. "The boys really shined during the competitions," he said, "[They] appreciated and learned from the master classes, and are respectful and passionate about the music."

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

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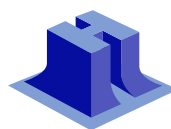


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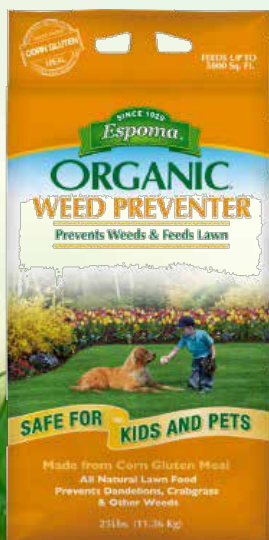
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Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

JANUARY 19, 2016

All board members were present.



Facilities: middle school renovations

The board was given an overview of the middle school phase of the district facilities project. The time frame for this phase is for Monticello and Roxboro middle schools to be completely renovated and ready for student occupancy by August 2019.

Contractors: Representatives of the companies working on the project introduced themselves and their companies. Anne Hartman, executive project manager from the design firm Moody Nolan, said that Moody Nolan has worked in 105 school districts, has nine staff members in its Cleveland office, and believes in sustainability and community input. Doug Lancashire of the Osborn Engineering Company said his Cleveland-based company specializes in mechanical, electrical, plumbing and technical work, with a focus on sustainable design. The Coniglio Company, represented by Gwenay Reaze-Coniglio, and Ozanne Construction Company, represented by Fred Rodgers, are EDGE firms (Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity) which will help the district reach its goals of minority participation in the facilities project.

Assessment process: Project teams are assessing current conditions in the two buildings. They are familiarizing themselves with the community and the curriculum in the belief that program drives design. They will seek input from district administrators; hold visioning sessions with Monticello and Roxboro staff and students; and confer with current third-graders, who will comprise the first class to occupy the renovated schools. Two design charrettes for the public will occur in late February or March.

LEED: The project leaders stressed their goals of staying within the budget as well as being energy efficient and using durable materials. The design team is experienced in LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). The high school project is currently on track for LEED silver certification, the level that most school projects aim to achieve. Reduction of energy use is one of the highest goals in LEED certification, but energy-saving options can be expensive. Decisions affecting cost will be decided by the board.

During discussion, board members emphasized the importance to the CH-UH community of sustainability, minority participation and communication.

Board committee assignments

The following board committee assignments were made:

- District calendar: Eric Silverman
- Cleveland Heights Recreation Board: Jim Posch and Beverly Wright
- Lay Finance Committee: Ron Register and Jim Posch
- Minority Student Achievement Network: Kal Zucker and Ron Register

- Safety and Security: Eric Silverman
- Reaching Heights: Kal Zucker and Jim Posch or Beverly Wright
- PTA: Kal Zucker and Jim Posch or Beverly Wright
- Treasurer Pro-Tem: Jim Posch
- Career Tech: Kal Zucker and Ron Register

LWV Observer: Nancy Dietrich.

FEBRUARY 2, 2016

All board members were present.

Awards and recognitions

Superintendent Talisa Dixon recognized students who won awards in the Cleveland Heights Martin Luther King Jr. essay contest; Heights High's student of the month for January; the career tech student of the month; and the career tech program of the month.

Field trips

The following field trips were approved:

- Monticello and Roxboro middle school students to the Model UN Conference, Columbus, Ohio, March 13-16
- Heights High Jazz Ensembles to Ohio University and Holmes County, Ohio, April 15-17
- Heights High French Club students to Niagara Falls, Ontario, April 16
- Heights High Robotics Club to California University of Pennsylvania in California, Pa., May 20-21

Safe school strategies

The district's safe school strategy includes collaborations with the communities and the police; incident management teams; six part-time Cuyahoga County Sheriff's deputies at Heights High; and emergency procedures in place in all schools. Specific strategies for special-needs students include the availability of case managers with whom to discuss and report any problem, incident or harassment. Communication with special-needs students and their families will be a focus. Along with the effort to promote positive student behavior and understand underlying factors in behavior problems, every building has a student-assistance team that includes the counselor and social worker.

Student harassment

On behalf of the board, administration, staff, parents and community members, Board President Kal Zucker expressed disgust over a recent incident of student-on-student harassment, and stated that the district must not be defined by one noncompassionate act. He advised that students need encouragement to make positive choices.

FAC openings

The board has received a number of applications for two openings for community members on the Facilities Accountability Committee (FAC), and will make the appointments at the next meeting. The board will also assess how the FAC is working and discuss the possibility of a second such committee to monitor and report on the upcoming middle school projects.

Joint meeting with library board

A joint meeting with the library board will be arranged for March.

LWV Observer: Nancy Dietrich.

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WJCU Radio offers wide-ranging and local programs



Mark Krieger, general manager of WJCU, and Zach Chapman, a JCU freshman and deejay.

James Henke

WJCU-FM, John Carroll University's (JCU) radio station, is unlike just about any other radio station in Northeast Ohio. WJCU plays a wide mix of music, ranging from classic rock from the 1950s and '60s, to soul music, rhythm & blues, heavy metal, blues and alternative rock, as well as music from other countries.

"We play all kinds of different stuff," said Mark Krieger, the station's general manager. Krieger, who's 60 years old, has been at WJCU since August 2004. He began working in radio back in 1975 and has worked at numerous stations in the area. He was director of engineering at WGAR for 13 years.

In 2001, he decided to go back to school, and got his master's degree in communication research from Cleveland State University (CSU). After receiving his degree, he started teaching at CSU. Then one day he got a call informing him that JCU was looking for a new general manager and asking if he would be interested. He decided to take the job. In addition to overseeing the radio station, he also teaches classes in electronic media, audio production and journalism.

WJCU started as WABU in 1969. The station's name changed a few times over the years, until it became WJCU in 1997. The station can be found at 88.7 FM.

Numerous famous television and radio personalities got their start at WJCU. Most notable among them is Tim Russert, who spent 16 years as the moderator of "Meet the Press" on NBC. He died in 2008, and the university's communications department, which oversees the radio station, is now called the Tim Russert Depart-

ment of Communication & Theatre Arts. The university has a fellowship with "Meet the Press" in which one of its communications graduates can work on the show for nine months after graduation.

Chris Tye, a WKYC-TV news anchor, and Hollie Giangreco, a WKYC meteorologist, both graduated from JCU and worked at its radio station as students. Laura DeMarco, an arts and entertainment reporter for the *Plain Dealer*, is another JCU graduate who worked at WJCU.

The radio station feels a strong connection with Cleveland Heights and University Heights, and its Monday through Friday programming, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., is called "The Heights." Most of the music played during that time period is alternative rock, and news shows air three times a day. A program called "Heights Now" features news from the *Heights Observer*. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System also has a weekly show, "Biblio Radio," which airs daily, Monday through Friday.

Each evening, WJCU features diverse programming. On Monday nights, 8-10 p.m. the station presents "NEO Rocks," a show that features local artists. On Tuesday nights, 8-10 p.m., "Madcat Blues" features blues music from many different artists. A long-running heavy-metal show, "Metal on Metal," airs on Friday nights, 6:30-9:30 p.m. The station has been broadcasting that show for 34 years. On Thursday nights, from 10 p.m. to midnight, the station presents "Midnight Reel," a program featuring music from movie soundtracks.

On weekends, WJCU presents numerous ethnic, foreign-language shows that focus on international music from Lithuania, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Armenia and other countries.

"We have a large international audience," Krieger said. "In places like Germany and the U.K., a lot of people listen to our shows on the Internet."

All of the WJCU's programming is overseen by the students, who also handle all of the day-to-day station management.

"We try to keep three things in mind with regard to the station," Krieger said. "One thing is that this is where we live—in the Heights—

so we direct a lot of the programming to the people who live here. We also embrace the philosophy that radio works best when there's a healthy relationship between the content provider and the audience. And finally, we focus on our educational mission. We are training students so they can go on the air and be very comfortable. They may

be amateurs, but they are learning."

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. He is on the board of FutureHeights, and is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee.

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Heights Arts celebrates food and art with *At Table* exhibition

Hailey Bickett

At Table: Cleveland Culinaria, a collaborative exhibition combining elements of food and art, opens on March 4 at the Heights Arts gallery on Lee Road.

The exhibition features 27 visual artists, culinary experts, and local poets gathered into five teams, each working with a culinary theme. In addition to food, art installations feature tablescapes, custom furniture, ceramics, glass, metal, fiber, photography, drawings, paintings and prints.

"This exhibition speaks to the art of food and community through the materials we use to eat and drink," explained Mary Ryan, marketing coordinator for Heights Arts. "What we use everyday can be thoughtfully designed. The food you eat is so influenced by the tools you use to eat."

During the exhibition's run, attendees can purchase tickets to any of five food and drink events in which they will partake of hearty small plates and craft cocktails designed by local chefs while listening to poetry by local

poets in the intimate gallery setting.

The first food and drink event, on Sunday, March 19, features a Scandinavian brunch theme designed by Bridget Thibeault of Luna Bakery and Café and Noelle Celeste of *Edible Cleveland*, as well as poetry by Gail Bellamy.

On Sunday, March 20, Melissa McClelland, a local food and photo stylist, will provide spring family comfort food alongside guest poet Paul Ryland.

Help welcome spring on Thursday, March 24, with tapas crafted by Bob Sferro of Culinary Occasions and poetry by John Donoghue.

On Monday, April 4, Marc-Aurele Buholzer of Vero Pizza Napoletana will serve seasonal small plates, accompanied by guest poet Kathleen Cerveney.

The final food and drink event, on Sunday, April 10, will feature world cuisine by Douglas Katz of fire food & drink, Provenance, and Fire Spice Company, with poetry by Meredith Holmes.

Tickets for each food and drink



Oval Bowls by Judith Salomon, part of a creative ensemble comprising chef Bob Sferro, photographer Heather Rose Hileman, metals artist and furniture-maker Stephen Yusko, fiber artist Heather Bryson, and ceramicist Sharon Grossman.

COURTESY HEIGHTS ARTS

"Through this project, we have combined many disciplines within the art world with something we can all connect to—food. I'm excited to experience the results, both personally and within our community," said Rachel Bernstein, Heights Arts Executive Director.

The exhibition will run from March 4 through April 16 in the Heights Arts Gallery, open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 1:30–9:30 p.m.

Heights Arts welcomes the public to the exhibit's opening reception on March 4, 6–9 p.m. To see the full event schedule, menus, ticket information and list of participating establishments, visit www.heightsarts.org or stop by Heights Arts.

Hailey Bickett spent her formative years in Cleveland Heights and now attends the University of Dayton where she is studying communications and photography. She will graduate in May 2016 and plans to pursue a career in visual communications and event planning.

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'The Revisionist' opens at Dobama Theatre on March 4

Julie Friedman

Dobama Theatre presents the regional premiere of "The Revisionist," a new play by actor, playwright, and *The New Yorker* humorist Jesse Eisenberg, which opens March 4.

The play tells the story of a young writer, David, who arrives in Poland with a crippling case of writer's block and a desire to be left alone. His 75-year-old second cousin Maria (played by the renowned Dorothy Silver) welcomes him with a fervent need to connect with her distant American family. As their relationship develops, she reveals details about her postwar past that test their ideas of what it means to be a family.

"The Revisionist" is Dobama Theatre's fifth mainstage production of its 2015–16 season. The play is directed by Leighann Delorenzo, an actor and director who most recently directed Dobama's production of "Slowgirl" last season. Delorenzo is the Upper School Theater Director at Laurel School in Shaker Heights.

In addition to Silver, the play



COURTESY DOBAMA

Dorothy Silver stars in "The Revisionist."

features Andrew Gombas and John Busser. The scenic design is by Aaron Benson, with lighting design by Marcus Dana, sound design by Jeremy Dobbins, costume design by Zachary Hickie and props design by Yesenia Real-Rivera.

"The Revisionist" runs March 4 through April 3. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.dobama.org or call the box office (216-932-3396). Dobama Theatre is located at 2340 Lee Road, at the Lee Road Library.

Julie Friedman is the managing director of Dobama Theatre.

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St. Paul's spring art show opens March 4



Star Vase (clay), by Andrea LeBlond.

Mary Cushing

Shaping Color: Paper and Clay, the spring show at the Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Blvd., opens with an artists' reception on Friday, March 4, 5-7 p.m., where participating artists will describe their creative processes and meet with guests. The show runs through June 5.

Featured artists are Cathy Bryan (watercolor on paper), Hilton P. Murray (paper-on-paper construction), Christine Weigand (hand-cut paper) and Andrea LeBlond (ceramics).

Bryan directs the Creative Art Therapy program at Judson's three retirement communities. She loves to show others how to experience joy

in their own creative process. Bryan's artwork reflects her love of nature and keen sense of color. Her favorite medium and ongoing challenge is watercolor. She has taken, as well as taught, community art classes for many years.

Murray's art reflects monuments of the human spirit, such as those found in architectural structures throughout history. In an effort to reflect the city, sky, earth and water, Murray employs elements of line, shape, value, space, form and texture, and principles of balance, movement, patterns, rhythm and variety. He enjoys working in paper because of the medium's naturalistic look and feel, and the ways light plays on the surfaces.

Weigand's images are made of layered and inset card stock, meticulously cut by hand using an X-Acto knife. After cutting, the card stock resembles a delicate piece of lace. She then has one shot to glue it down or else dozens of hours of work could be down the drain. Her favorite subjects include architecture, flowers and animals—especially cats.

According to LeBlond, "natural order is startlingly beautiful and complex. Microscopic particles, cellular structures, geological formations and

the relentless force of entropy are all things that continually fascinate me. I engage these principles by manipulating clay to make these abstract concepts tangible, employing containment, mass, form and color." Her current works focus on the bowl form, as she is attracted to its mass and interior space. LeBlond feels the bowl itself is ripe with metaphor; it simultaneously conceals and reveals.

All are welcome at the opening reception. The gallery is open weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and on weekends, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The artists receive all proceeds from the sale of their work.

Mary Cushing is a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

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Western Reserve Chorale performs Mozart and Haydn



Western Reserve Chorale in a December concert at Disciples Christian Church.

Joanne Poderis

Western Reserve Chorale (WRC) continues its 24th season with music by two of the most recognized composers of the Classical Period, Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In its ongoing spirit of serving the Greater Cleveland community audience, the chorale returns to Church of the Gesu (2470 Miramar Blvd., University Heights) as part of the Gesu Chapel Recital Series. The concert, which is free and open to the public, takes place on March 13 at 3:30 p.m.

The concert program, titled *Classical MASStery*, under the baton of David Gilson, includes Haydn's *Theresienmesse/Theresa Mass* and Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore* (K339). Soloists are: soprano Marian Vogel, alto Sandra Ross, tenor Timothy Culver and bass Brian Keith Johnson.

Western Reserve Chorale is a nonprofit group of amateur and professional singers, many of whom are Cleveland Heights residents, dedicated to bringing high-quality performances of choral music to Greater Cleveland. Generously supported by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, WRC welcomes new singers to join the group.

Rehearsals are held September to June, on Tuesday evenings, 7:15 to 9:30 p.m., at Disciples Christian Church, 3663 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights. David W. Gilson, artistic director, leads the vocal ensemble.

For information, visit www.westernreservechorale.org, or call 216-791-0061.

Joanne Poderis, a 45-year Cleveland Heights resident, is executive director of, and accompanist for, the Western Reserve Chorale, a Cleveland Heights-based adult community choir.

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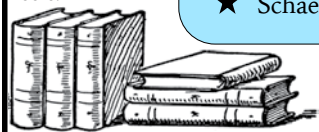
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SONGS AND
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David Budin

I recently found a coloring book among lots of papers in old file folders I was sorting through, trying hard to get rid of stuff I no longer needed. And, no, it wasn't one of those fancy adult coloring books that are all the rage now. It was one that I bought for 25 cents, one March, about 16 years ago. My kids were in their early teens 16 years ago, so it wasn't theirs. It was mine.

When I was a teen, March was always one of the hardest months for me to actually make it to high school

classes. Every month was bad—I really hated school—but March was probably the worst. But even on many of the days I skipped school, I often snuck into Heights High for 4th-period choir (which you could do back then, but can't now). Especially in March, because that was the month we usually had spring break (or, as we used to call it, "Easter vacation"); and that was when the Heights Choir went on tour for a week, to different cities, to perform and see the sights.

Choir—and band and orchestra—tours were, and are, educational and a lot of fun. I went on two of them with the Heights Choir. The first was to New York City. Two years later, I was living in New York City, and working in the music business and touring with rock bands (rather than choirs).

Thirty-five years later, my son was a member of Heights High's orchestra. Early in that school year, the Band and Orchestra Parents Organization asked—begged, actually—for a parent volunteer to head up the tour committee. I immediately volunteered, because I knew how to do that, having been a high school kid on tours and having done it in my professional life as well.

That year we took the orchestra to New York City. I served as one of the chaperones on the trip, too. Being a chaperone is nowhere near as much fun as being one of the kids. It's kind of a 24-hour-a-day thing, with real responsibilities and work. It was a little educational, too. The main thing I learned is how easy it is to spot kids who are breaking the rules—as I did when I was one of those kids—while the kids really believe you can't see them doing whatever it is they're not supposed to be doing. Another thing I learned is how many food items most kids have never eaten or heard of—like, for just one example, mushrooms (really?), which were in one of the dishes we were served in a Chinatown restaurant.

The next year, I volunteered, again, to head the committee and chaperone

the trip, this time to Philadelphia. The planning went smoothly, until—just a few weeks before our scheduled departure—I got a call from the school's principal, Mr. Cipolletti, (who sadly died just last month). He called to tell me the Board of Education had announced that we couldn't go on tour, because the first night of Passover fell during that week. I told him that there were only about six Jewish kids out of the 100 or so going on tour, and that of those, maybe only three were practicing Jews. He said he knew that, but the board was afraid to let it happen.

I said, "What if the Jewish kids' parents sign a waiver saying it's OK with them if their kids go?" He said that wouldn't satisfy the board. I thought about it for a day and called him back. I said, "OK—what if I provide a Seder that night for the Jewish kids who want to participate?" He asked the board and they agreed to that, if the parents would sign a waiver.

I'm not a practicing Jew, but I was raised in that culture. I asked a rabbi friend what I would need to do to make it an official Seder. He said all you really had to do was to tell the Passover story. And have a few food items that are rituals in the service. And don't eat any bread.

So I booked dinner for the group for that night in a kosher Chinese restaurant. And I went to Frank's Hebrew Book Store to buy 10 Hagadot (the plural of Hagada, the book that is used at a Seder to tell the story). All of the Hagadot were too expensive for my budget. I wasn't sure what to do. Until, on my way out, I spotted a stack of coloring books. Of the Passover story. For 25 cents each.

We were, apparently, ahead of our time.

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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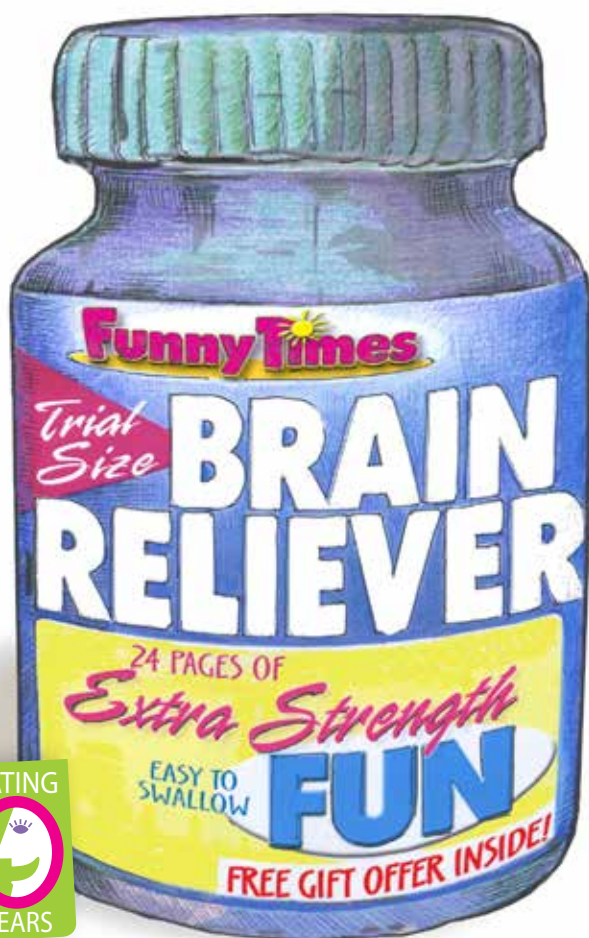
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Heights Arts puts spotlight on work by Valdivieso Troya



Detail of a piece by Valdivieso Troya.

Mary Ryan

Heights Arts launched a new series of spotlight exhibitions on Jan. 29, with a show featuring works by Heights artist Rafael Valdivieso Troya.

Born in Ecuador and now a Cleveland Heights resident, Valdivieso Troya creates intricate compositions using pen and ink, wash, acrylic, and collage techniques.

A single work might contain hun-

dreds of figures or faces layered into imaginary spaces that evoke a sense of teeming wildness, and intertwine themes of human joy and struggle. Works in this exhibition range from small pen-and-ink drawings to a large muralistic painting.

The exhibition will be on view in the Heights Arts spotlight gallery through March 12.

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

Cleveland Running Company moves to a new location on Lee Road



Jeff Fisher, owner of Cleveland Running Company.

James Henke

Cleveland Running Company, formerly located on Van Aken Boulevard in Shaker Heights, has relocated to 2246 Lee Road, between Meadowbrook Boulevard and Kensington Road. The store opened in mid-February.

"They're re-doing the building we were in," explained owner Jeff Fisher. "Our space was being downsized, and it was priced more than we could afford."

Fisher said he decided to move the store to Cleveland Heights, where he once lived, because he has always liked the city. "I really like that it has all of these walkable neighborhoods," he said. "And it's got a great mix of people. I'm looking forward to running in Cain Park next summer."

Fisher, 50, originally opened Cleveland Running Company in July 2011. The store sells running shoes, accessories and apparel. It carries Adidas, Brooks and Saucony shoes, as well as some lesser-known brands, such as Altra, Newton and Vibram FiveFingers. It also sells socks, water bottles, hydration packs and reflective safety gear.

Fisher grew up in the Youngstown area and attended Poland High School, then Bowling Green State University, where he majored in history. He was on the track and cross-country teams in both high school and college, and still runs about five days a week and takes part in 5K and 10K races in the summer.

After graduating from college, Fisher took a job at Second Sole, an

athletic-footwear store on Mayfield Road in Lyndhurst. He eventually became the manager of the store, and worked there until 2008.

After he left Second Sole, he frequently encountered former customers who told him they missed him. Eventually, he decided to open his own store. "Your customers become your friends," he explained, "and I missed the interaction with them."

Fisher said he loves to connect with the community. Every Saturday, the store will host running groups. "It's a chance to meet people, and we give them tips on running. We also talk about nutrition and footwear," Fisher said. Anyone can show up for the Saturday events, which begin at 8:30 a.m. "It doesn't matter how fast or how slow you run," Fisher said. "We break up into groups, and we run five to 10 miles, depending on what group you are in."

This fall, the store plans to sponsor running groups for fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders. The kids will train on Monday and Wednesday nights, in preparation for the two-mile Ohio Athletic Committee Cross-Country Championship race—an annual statewide event that usually takes place in the fall. Cleveland Running's boys' team won its division in 2013 and 2015, and the girls' team won in 2014. "I'm really focused on trying to get kids interested in running and cross-country," Fisher said.

Fisher hopes to establish relationships with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District and the Cleveland Heights Recreation Department. "We will continue to seek opportunities to interact with our partners to promote running and exercise and to contribute meaningfully to our community," said Fisher.

Fisher and his wife, Kathy, currently live in Lyndhurst. They have two children, Rebecca, 22, and Sam, 17.

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. He is on the board of FutureHeights, and is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee.

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Forest Hill Kitchen hosts pop-up events in former Rockefeller's

Hailey Bickett

Chef John Bausone and partner Meghan Guthrie had a vision for creating a unique events-based dining experience in a distinctive setting. That vision became a reality in fall 2015 when the co-owners opened Forest Hill Kitchen & Ballroom, in the space formerly occupied by Rockefeller's restaurant, and before that Cleveland Trust, then Key Bank, in the historic Heights Rockefeller Building on Mayfield Road.

The duo admired the former banking hall's character, which provides an open and historic venue for both private and public events.

Bausone, a Cleveland native, has worked in the culinary industry since he was a teenager. He attended culinary school in Portland, Ore., and



Chef John Bausone, his partner, Meghan Guthrie, and their daughter, Patsy, in front of the ballroom's magnificent fireplace.

later worked at the famous Biltmore Estate in North Carolina before returning to Cleveland to serve as executive chef at Grovewood Tavern. *Cleveland Scene* magazine bestowed the honor of Best Brunch on Bausone

in 2012 and 2013.

Forest Hill Kitchen & Ballroom can be reserved for special events, with menus that can be specially designed to suit the clients, drawing from a wide variety of food and drinks the chef can prepare.

"We focus on foods that are seasonal, local and fresh," said Bausone.

In February 2016, Forest Hill began hosting pop-up events, each of which features a menu that is specially crafted around a unique theme.

These pop-ups range from din-

ners and brunches, to cocktail parties featuring hearty appetizers and specialty drinks. The owners intend the pop-up events to be occasions where community members can come together and try new foods and styles of dining.

On March 10, Forest Hill's Glenmorangie Scotch Pairing Dinner will showcase how different varieties of scotch complement specific foods.

On April 14, Forest Hill will host Ramp It Up!, a gala presented by We Are Cleveland Heights. Local chefs, including Bausone, Doug Katz and Bridget Thibeault, will come together to create small plates and craft cocktails for guests to enjoy throughout the night.

Learn more about Forest Hill's pop-ups, including a full schedule of events, and menus at www.foresthillkitchen.com.

Hailey Bickett spent her formative years in Cleveland Heights and now attends the University of Dayton where she is studying communications and photography. She will graduate in May 2016 and plans to pursue a career in visual communications and event planning.

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Marking territory in the Heights



HEIGHT OF COMPETITION

Jinida Doba

While I'm not as fanatical as some, I admit I'm a fan of "Harry Potter" movies. It seems I can always find some way to relate a situation from one of Harry's adventures to a contemporary circumstance.

What does "Harry Potter" have to do with life in the Heights? Not much, really . . . except I'm reminded of the four houses that the students at Hogwarts are assigned to upon their arrival. Take the Gryffindor and Slytherin houses, for example. Members were easily identified by the maroon and gold, or green and white, neck scarves they wore.

The students may have belonged to different houses—even may have competed mightily in an occasional high-stakes Quidditch match. Still, they all belonged to Hogwarts and they knew it.

Here in Cleveland Heights, we all "belong" to one city, but we live in our distinctive "houses" or, bringing the metaphor to the real world, our respective neighborhoods or commercial districts.

The city has 11 commercial districts at last count: Cain Park Village, Cedar Lee, Cedar Fairmount, Cedar Taylor, Center Mayfield, Coventry Village, Fairmount Taylor, Heights Rockefeller, Noble Monticello, Noble Nela and Severance. Each has unique characteristics and qualities. I suggest the city could be made that much stronger if each district claimed what makes it unique—whether it's an at-

titude, history, landmark or reputation.

Why not identify those qualities and values that make a district or neighborhood unique, own them, and communicate those qualities and values to locals and potential visitors? As a district is telling it, it can show it—by delivering the district's unique "brand" experience. Each business is its neighborhood's unique selling point, the first thing that visitors see or feel when in a district.

Speaking of what the eye sees, there's nothing wrong with "marking your territory" with physical identifiers: colors, flags or banners, a symbol or logo, etc. And while the district is showing, it can appoint a neighborhood spokesperson or ambassador to tell others—internal and external—what the district is, what it stands for, and what makes it a great place in which to live or visit.

As I think more on this idea, it could actually be kind of fun for the various Cleveland Heights districts or neighborhoods to engage in a friendly contest to see which one can come up with the most compelling brand identity. Of course, we'll never see anything close to the members of the Cedar Lee "house" and the Coventry Village "house" soaring and flipping through the air on flying broomsticks, trying to capture the elusive winged Golden Snitch in a Quidditch match.

Still, the idea of claiming and communicating a neighborhood's unique brand identity and values has merit. While each is unique, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. After all, we may dwell in different houses, but we are all Cleveland Heights..

Jinida Doba is an associate with Cleveland Heights-based Dorsey & Company Strategic Consultants to Management. Doba has called Cleveland Heights home since 2010.

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Three new businesses bring new life to Cedar Lee corner

James Henke

The Douglas Fine Arts Building, on the northwest corner of Cedar and Lee roads in Cleveland Heights, is seeing an influx of new businesses. Lucky Sparrow Tattoo opened on Feb. 4, and two takeout restaurants are coming soon. Tarita's Wet Burritas is slated to open by the beginning of March, and the owner of Fresh & Meaty Burgers hopes to open his restaurant no later than early April.

Lucky Sparrow Tattoo has opened at 2128 Lee Road (216-505-5885), in the space previously occupied by Heights Guitars. The shop is open Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 8 p.m., and accepts walk-ins as well as advance appointments. Owner Tony DeRigo also owns Chronic Tattoo in Elyria, which he opened in 1994. "I had always been artistic," he said, "then a friend told me I should try tattooing, and within a month I decided that this was what I wanted to do."

In 2001, DeRigo played a major role in getting tattooing legalized in Cuyahoga County. "It was legal just about everywhere else in the state of Ohio," he said, "and then the ACLU approached me about seeing what we could do to make it legal here. We wound up filing a lawsuit, and it was legalized."

DeRigo believes that his shop will bring a unique type of tattooing to Cleveland's East Side. At the end



Shawn Nutting (left) and Tony DeRigo in the new Lucky Sparrow Tattoo shop.

of January, DeRigo and his team won four awards at the Cleveland Tattoo Arts Convention, taking first and second place in the best overall tattoo category, first place for best Japanese tattoo, and second place for best back piece.

DeRigo will be at Lucky Sparrow one day a week; the Cleveland Heights shop will be run by Shawn Nutting, who worked at Chronic Tattoo for four years. Nutting, who lives in Ohio City, got into tattooing in 2001, while living in Alabama. "I've tattooed all over the world, and I think I bring a lot of experience and a lot of professionalism to the table," he said. "There's nothing on this side of Cleveland that can mimic what we do, in terms of scale, size and quality."

"I've wanted to be in Cleveland forever," DeRigo said. "And I'm excited to see how Cleveland Heights works out." He plans to host musicians and guest artists at the shop, and to raise money for various charities.



Tarita Oates, owner of Tarita's Wet Burritas.

Tarita's Wet Burritas will focus on Mexican food, including burritos, tacos, tostados and nachos. According to owner Tarita Oates, it will be "a little different than what most people are used to," noting that the food will have more of a West Coast style, and "a little more flair to it."

Oates, 43, lives in South Euclid. She first discovered the West Coast style of Mexican food in Colorado, where she was born and raised. She moved to Cleveland about 30 years ago, and always wondered why the Mexican food was different here.

Oates, who has never been in the restaurant business before, said she and her husband, Eddie, came up with the idea of opening a restaurant that would focus on this unique style of Mexican food.

Gerald Hood, owner of Fresh & Meaty Burgers, opened a Los Angeles Fresh & Meaty in January 1990, at the age of 22. The original restaurant is still open, and Hood is currently expanding the company, opening additional restaurants in California and

Atlanta, as well as Cleveland Heights.

"I really wanted to focus on traditional American hamburgers, with no gimmicks," he said. "A lot of places are trying to re-create the hamburger, but I keep it in the traditional style."

Hood's wife is from Cleveland, which Hood described as "my second home." He lived in Cleveland Heights in the late 1980s, and when he came back to visit recently, he saw that the space on the corner of Cedar and Lee roads, previously occupied by Heights Soul Food and Grill, was vacant. "It took me about six months to secure a lease," said Hood, "but now we're ready to go!"

Fresh & Meaty sells beef, turkey and veggie burgers. "We have the best turkey burger in Southern California," said Hood. "And, at our restaurant there, we sell more turkey burgers than beef burgers. All of the ingredients we use are of the highest grade, and we get all of our meat and produce delivered daily." The French fries are fresh-cut, never frozen, and the menu also includes tacos and chicken breast and catfish specials.

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. He is on the board of FutureHeights, and is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee.



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We have fully embraced the "green" movement started by the city of Cleveland Heights, and our improvements both to our facilities and our processes will leave a lasting impact and serve as a guide for other area establishments to do the same.

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-The Gile Family, Motorcars Honda & Toyota



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