

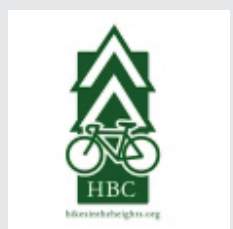
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FutureHeights  
2843 Washington Blvd. #105  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

## CH celebrates 16th annual preservation month

Kara Hamley O'Donnell

The Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, Cleveland Heights Historical Society and Heights Libraries are collaborating again this May to present a series of programs to celebrate National Preservation Month here in the Heights.

Spanning the month of May, a series of tours and lectures will explore the ways in which preservation is important to this community, and will delve into its history. Programs will explore parks, a secret stream, Cleveland Heights' connection to the Shakers and Shaker Heights, and will celebrate Cain Park's 80th birthday with a behind-the-scenes tour.

A description of programs is listed below. [Note that reservations are required for the May 12 and June 2 tours.]

**Tuesday, May 1, 7 p.m., Cleveland Heights' Emerald Necklace: Parks, Property, and Politics**

Speaker: Marian Morton

For more than a century, our



The site of the long-gone Glen Allen Estate, owned by Elisabeth Severance Allen, is a feature of the May 12 walking tour (reservations required).

parks have been important players in the city's economic and political life. Initially intended to enhance the property values of an ambitious young suburb, our parks also sometimes enhanced the political reputations of its elected officials.

Most often places that promoted political unity and harmony, our parks have sometimes done the opposite. [Heights Libraries Lee Road Branch, 2345 Lee Road.]

**Wednesday, May 9, 7 p.m., From**

*continued on page 11*

## Backyard chickens are now legal in the city of University Heights

Robert Brown

Like their neighbors in Cleveland Heights, residents of University Heights can now keep chickens in their backyards, legally.

After considering the arguments of many proponents and opponents of backyard chicken keeping, University Heights City Council voted 5-2 on April 2 to approve regulations allowing up to 25 residents to keep up to four chickens in a backyard. Councilmen Steven Sims and Phillip Ertel voted against the ordinance.

The ordinance, which was amended 13 times in response to issues raised in the discussions, requires any resident seeking to keep chickens to apply for a special use permit from the city's building department. The permit must be renewed each

year, following an inspection by the city's building department.

"Chickens are coming to University Heights, and the sky is not falling," said UH Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan. "Chicken keeping will be highly regulated, and anyone willing and interested in keeping chickens must do so in a mindful and lawful way."

Resident Paul Miller spoke out against the ordinance, citing concerns over sanitation, odors, disease and noise, particularly given the relatively small lot sizes in University Heights. "It's now chic to keep chickens in the city," he said, "but chickens belong on farms, where there is more land."

Resident April Urban said that she has no interest in keeping chickens herself but spoke in favor of the ordinance

*continued on page 11*

## CH residents share views on charter review at public forum

Robert Brown

On April 19, approximately 80 Cleveland Heights residents participated in the first community forum held by the city's 15-member Charter Review Commission (CRC).

The meeting began with a presentation that described the current council-manager form of government in which seven part-time city council members are elected at-large and are assisted by a full-time city manager, whom they appoint.

The presentation also described other forms of municipal governance, including the one most common in Cuyahoga County, in which there is a popularly elected mayor, and a city council to which some or all members are elected by ward.

Reference was also made to "hybrid" forms of local governance, such as that of Shaker Heights, in which a popularly elected full-time mayor works with an appointed professional manager who holds the title of chief administrative officer.

After the presentation, participants gathered in small groups to discuss and answer the following two questions:

- What type of government do you prefer for Cleveland Heights and why?  
☐ Council-Manager (current form)  
☐ Strong Mayor ☐ Hybrid ☐ Other
- What other elements should be added to or changed in the city charter to improve our local government?

*continued on page 2*

## Annual 'We Are Noble' weekend to showcase Heights musicians

Brenda H. May

We Are Noble, the annual celebration of the neighborhoods along Noble Road, will take place Friday through Sunday, May 18-20.

Preparations are underway for Noble Elementary School's NobleFest, a family fun night hosted by the Noble PTA on Friday evening, and nearby Noble Road Presbyterian Church will host a movie night on the same evening. Oxford Elementary School will participate with attractions that include a new art installation by its fifth-graders near the



Face painting at Noble Elementary School's NobleFest.

school's main driveway entrance on Quilliams Road.

There will be numerous activities and sites to visit on Saturday, May 19, beginning with a pancake breakfast at

Bethel Church. An Oxford Elementary School student art show, a baby clothes giveaway at Peace Lutheran Church, and a lunch cookout will

*continued on page 11*



## 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](http://www.heightsobserver.org/members).

## HEIGHTS OBSERVER

The *Heights Observer* is a citizen-based news source published monthly by FutureHeights, a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to civic engagement and quality of life.  
2843 Washington Blvd. #105,  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
216-320-1423  
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The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the *Heights Observer*, its publisher and staff, or of FutureHeights, its staff and board of directors.

Seed funding for the *Heights Observer* generously provided by the Cyrus Eaton Foundation, the Dominion Foundation, and the Katherine and Lee Chilcote Foundation. Powered by the 9th Estate.

## 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](http://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](mailto:info@futureheights.org).

Articles to be considered for the June issue must be submitted by May 9. 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.

## Talks of merger, change inspire appreciation for the past



OPENING  
THE OBSERVER

Deanna Bremer Fisher

With a declining population in the region generally, and in our inner-ring suburbs specifically, it should be no surprise that consolidation was a common theme in the 2008–17 May issues of the *Heights Observer*. "Four parishes may be one. Merger plan means Saint Louis in Cleveland Heights will most likely close," was the headline for the May 2008 issue's top story. Two Cleveland Heights churches, Saint Ann (at Cedar and Coventry roads) and Saint Louis (on North Taylor Road), merged with two East Cleveland churches, Christ the King and Saint Philomena, to become Communion of Saints Parish in 2010.

The new parish holds services at two locations: St. Ann and St. Philomena, which means that St. Louis did close. But, the building didn't stay empty for long. In 2011, it was reborn as Imani Temple Ministries. Change doesn't always mean loss, but it is not an easy process.

In May 2009, during the height of the recession, even municipal governments were talking merger. In a piece entitled "A Dickensian take

on municipal merger," CH Council Member Mark Tumeo argued that city leaders should consider a merger of Cleveland Heights and University Heights. The two cities had much in common, he said, and serving a combined larger population would be more efficient and cost effective. In the same issue, UH Mayor Beryl Rothschild sharply rejected the idea. "We have nothing to gain," she declared. University Heights was managing itself just fine during the recession. Anyway, she said, UH had more in common with the cities of Shaker Heights and South Euclid—which have a strong mayor system of government—than it did with Cleveland Heights.

While a merger seemed like a nonstarter, UH Councilman Kevin Murphy found out that even talking about collaboration can be difficult. He proposed that certain East Side cities meet to discuss making a bid for an EfficientGovNow grant, but only officials from CH and UH showed up in significant numbers. Shaker Heights sent one person, South Euclid and Lyndhurst didn't attend, and Beachwood even stated publicly that it wasn't interested in collaborating.

Now that the immediate crisis has passed and municipalities are healthier again, they have had some success in collaborating on services,

such as a joint police-fire dispatch center. Some progress has been made, but it's not been easy, and no one is saying the word "merger."

All of this change, and talk of change, may have inspired a new appreciation for our community's past. In a May 2008 article, "These old houses," CH Historic

*continued on page 14*

## Ungar's remark muddies the waters

To the Editor:

At its April 2 meeting, Cleveland Heights City Council unanimously approved the creation of an Immigration Task Force. The measure was proposed by Mayor Carol Roe, in response to issues raised by the "civil immigration enforcement" legislation introduced last fall by Council Member Kahlil Seren. Seren's ordinance would lay out what police and other city officials can and cannot do regarding undocumented immigrants. Those violating its strictures could be charged with a misdemeanor.

City Manager Tanisha Briley and Police Chief Annette Mecklenburg objected to that part of the legislation, and also preferred that the guidelines take the form of a departmental policy, rather than carry the force of law. Seren offered to remove the section criminalizing certain police actions.

As council prepared to vote, Council Member Michael Ungar spoke up. He would vote for the legislation creating the task force, he said, because Cleveland Heights is a Welcoming City, and he values all that immigrants bring to it; however, he noted, the issue at hand "was born of the notion that our police department was doing something wrong." He reiterated this remark in an interview with Thomas Jewell of Cleveland.com.

I have read Seren's proposed legislation and attended the two committee meetings where it was discussed. No one—neither Seren nor community members speaking for the ordinance—ever said or implied that members of the Cleveland Heights Police Department had done anything legally or morally wrong.

The legislation does address the fact that local law enforcement agencies face increasing pressure to cooperate with the inhumane and unconstitutional activities of the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Border Patrol. Its aim is to forestall potential problems. I hope the Immigration Task Force will keep this concern in mind during its deliberations.

Finally, I am perplexed as to why Ungar would say something so patently false and potentially divisive. His comments serve only to muddy the waters and divert attention from a critical issue facing us as a nation and a city.

Deborah Van Kleef  
Cleveland Heights

CHARTER REVIEW *continued from page 1*

The 13 groups spent about an hour discussing the two questions, then each reported to the full audience the outcome of its discussion.

Their reports revealed that 52 participants favored a popularly elected mayor, and 25 supported the current council-manager form of government. (One table spokesperson did not provide a breakdown by individual).

Each participant was also given the opportunity to write his or her individual comments, anonymously, and submit them to the commission for the commission's staff to analyze and tally. (The results were not available at the time this article was written.)

Many of those supporting a popularly elected mayor also supported pairing the mayor with a professional chief administrative officer who would focus on day-to-day operations and services while the mayor focused on setting and implementing policies and a vision for the city's future.

Among the reasons given by residents proposing this change were that a mayor would provide the bolder, more decisive leadership needed by the city and would be more accountable to the public, allowing residents to know that the "buck stops here," with the mayor.

Residents who expressed support for the current council-manager form of government cited a preference for the professional, non-political management that can be provided by an appointed city manager. Some also cited the danger of concentrating too much power in an elected mayor who may lack good management skills.

Issues regarding the composition

of Cleveland Heights City Council were discussed in answering the second question.

Residents who supported a change from the current all-at-large city council to one that includes some members elected by ward said that certain neighborhoods have been under-represented on city council and may, as a result, have received inadequate attention in addressing their challenges. Others said that ward-based council members would provide a more direct connection to the city government for residents, particularly with respect to advocacy on local issues.

Residents who supported the current all-at-large city council cited the benefits of all council members focusing on the needs of the city as a whole, as well as the danger of ward-based members taking too parochial a view of the city's needs.

The CRC expects to continue its deliberations until November, at which time it will submit its recommendations for any charter amendments to city council. Council can then choose to put all, some, or none of the commission's recommendations on the ballot in 2019.

The next meeting of the commission is scheduled for Thursday, May 3, 7 p.m., at Cleveland Heights City Hall.

The CRC has posted an online survey at [www.clevelandheights.com/1046/charter-review-commission-community-survey](http://www.clevelandheights.com/1046/charter-review-commission-community-survey).

*Robert Brown is a city planner with more than 40 years of experience, including nine years as Cleveland's city planning director. A resident of Cleveland Heights for 40-plus years, Brown serves on the board of FutureHeights.*



## Support 'one of our own' in county race

To the Editor:

I write this letter to ask my fellow Cuyahoga County District 10 residents to support Cheryl Stephens in her bid to be our Cuyahoga County Council representative. I believe Cheryl is the most qualified candidate for the job. Her record of accomplishments is unmatched and her dedication to our community is beyond reproach.

I have known Cheryl for over 30 years. When I first met her, we were members of the mayoral administration of George Voinovich. She was a dynamic and impassioned economic development officer. She was very knowledgeable about the city and what it would take to create lasting, sustainable businesses to grow our community. I could hardly believe she had only been in Cleveland a few years. Her love for our city was something I thought could only be found in a "home-towner."

In the ensuing decades I have watched in admiration as Cheryl became director of planning and development for the city of Cleveland Heights; director of development for Cuyahoga County; executive director of Leadership Cleveland; a director for the National Development Council; director of acquisition disposition and development at the Cuyahoga Land Bank; and an elected member of Cleveland Heights City Council, eventually becoming mayor.

Cheryl has developed her expertise in the area of economic development financing and is one of only few people in the state of Ohio to hold specialized financing certification.

Cheryl is an inclusive person who truly believes in diversity. She counts people from many different cultures and backgrounds among her friends. She has been in their homes and they in hers. Cheryl has spent her career as a builder. Not just of physical structures but of relationships, networks and resources.

I have no doubt that as the Cuyahoga County Council representative for District 10, Cheryl would continue her distinguished record of service.

Paula B. Brazil  
Cleveland Heights

## Slay the gerrymander: Vote Yes on Issue 1

Maryann Barnes

Chances are you've been asked to sign a petition to stop the gerrymandering—drawing district lines to favor a candidate or party—of Ohio's congressional districts. Spearheaded by the Fair Districts = Fair Elections coalition, this constitutional referendum effort culminated in successful negotiations with state legislators to put Ohio Issue 1—an alternative, but solid, solution—on the May 8 ballot.

Issue 1 has the full endorsement of the Fair Districts coalition (which includes the League of Women Voters of Ohio and Common Cause), the Democratic and Republican parties, and a growing list of organizations statewide.

The Ohio legislature's refusal to address gerrymandered congressional districts made the Fair Districts citizens' referendum necessary. Since last June, volunteers across Ohio gathered more than 200,000 good signatures, nearly two-thirds the number required to put the proposal on the November 2018 ballot.

More than 40 volunteers from Cleveland Heights and University Heights collected close to one-third—about 12,000—of the signatures collected locally through efforts organized by the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Greater Cleveland.

Thanks to this citizen groundswell, state legislators began working on their own proposal last fall. Their initial ideas were unsatisfactory and Fair Districts prepared to pull out of negotiations several times. Remarkably, the legislators kept coming back and a proposal emerged that all could support.

While the Fair Districts proposal called for a seven-member redistricting commission, the legislators felt strongly that the legislature draw the maps. Fair Districts agreed to this, as long as important safeguards were in place:

- Any 10-year map must have significant minority party support.
- Districts are compact, with limits on splitting communities.
- The process is transparent, re-

quiring public hearings on any map before adoption and allowing members of the public to submit proposed maps.

If minority party support is unattainable, a map thus created requires additional standards:

- Specific prohibitions against gerrymandering.
- A requirement for written justification for the boundaries drawn.

Significantly, the Issue 1 solution, if passed, would come from Ohio's voters and legislators, not a contentious court case. Buy-in

from all sides would augur well for fighting gerrymandering in our state. LWV urges all to vote YES on Issue 1.

To learn more about Issue 1 and how the compromise developed, view the March 20 LWV forum at <http://bit.ly/OH-issue1-lwv-forum>. To learn more about Fair Districts, go to [www.fairdistrictsohio.org](http://www.fairdistrictsohio.org).

Maryann Barnes, a longtime resident, chairs the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.

**Congratulations!** Ms. Ardyce Daugherty, of Cleve Hts, the deserving WINNER of our 2nd Annual Helping-Hann Free Furnace Contest!  
To read more visit [VEHbrothers.com/helping-hann/](http://VEHbrothers.com/helping-hann/)

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# Forest Hill can be the next Tremont

Mike Reilly

For Greater Clevelanders, it has been the best and the worst of times depending on the neighborhood you live in. Destination neighborhoods like Cedar Fairmount and Tremont are thriving with increased property values and the buzz of restaurants and retail.

Forest Hill as a neighborhood once enjoyed this status. No more. Now it is lumped into a collection of neighborhoods many call “north of Mayfield.” Instead of buzz, there is the ghost town called Severance Town Center and the only restaurants are fast food. Retail consists of Walgreen’s and The Dollar Store.

Forest Hill is at a crossroads. We can look west and connect to the vibrancy of Little Italy and University Circle. Or continue to plod along and stagnate.

This choice is at the center of a furious debate within the Forest Hill community that erupted five years ago. After the housing crash of 2008, Forest Hill, like other neighborhoods north of Mayfield, saw an alarming rise of vacant homes and foreclosures. This impacted property values and retail development. Cleveland Heights cut back on housing inspections. East Cleveland faced a financial crisis. Suddenly Forest Hill was no longer a “destination” neighborhood.

But Forest Hill had one thing

that other struggling neighborhoods did not. It had an actual Home Owners Association (HOA) in the form of Forest Hill Home Owners Inc. (FHHO). It could take action independently to combat housing blight. But would it?

And so the debate began. Would FHHO shift gears and move from a volunteer-based social club to a modern HOA to stem the decline?

This debate has played out in *Cleveland Magazine*, the *Heights Observer* and NextDoor.com. It has now finally reached its climax with the upcoming vote for new by-laws by its members (the home owners). Reformers want FHHO to be that agent for change by aligning itself with the Ohio Planned Community Act passed in 2010, which allows FHHO to become a modern HOA. Opponents want the status quo.

Forest Hill faces an existential question: Change and grow or stagnate and decline? This is a decision for the owners, not a dictate by a few. I believe that with a reformed FHHO, Forest Hill can become the “bell cow” for neighborhoods “north of Mayfield.” We can jump-start the restoration.

We have all the ingredients to achieve this:

- Proximity to the energy of University Circle;
- An amazing array of custom homes;
- The Forest Hill Park that could

someday be part of the Metroparks System;

- The “Monticello Triangles” and a street grid with no visible cable or power lines;
- The Forest Hill Swim Club;
- The East Cleveland/Forest Hill Neighborhood Group, working with East Cleveland and its own 501 foundation for community improvements;
- An incredible collection of residents, from Cleveland Orchestra members and college educators, to judges and city officials.

And we have our own icon to define our “destination neighborhood.” It’s the Medusa Building at Monticello and Lee boulevards. In its heyday, Medusa was the gateway to Forest Hill with its beautiful fountain glowing at night.

Close your eyes and imagine what Forest Hill can be. A restored Medusa Building of shops, galleries and restaurants. Signage and lighting at the “Monticello Triangles.” Forest Hill Park with bike paths to University Circle. And the restoration of vacant homes.

Forest Hill can be that destination neighborhood again. It’s there. All we have to do is move toward it.

*A 35-year resident of Forest Hill, Michael Reilly is the founder and owner of Reilly Painting and Contracting in Cleveland Heights.*

## HCC decries proposed HUD mission statement change

Pam Wetherill

Recently, Dr. Ben Carson, secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), issued a statement that alarms Heights Community Congress (HCC) members, who feel it should alarm their neighbors as well. Carson said that HUD will amend its mission statement to remove, among other things, references to creating “inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination.”

One of HUD’s most important responsibilities is the enforcement and promotion of the Fair Housing Act. This governmental responsibility is so important because, for generations, the federal government denied equal housing opportunities to people of color, which helped to create and perpetuate residential segregation. The Fair Housing Act, passed 50 years ago this year, was designed to undo the prior years of discrimination. It was to eliminate all forms of housing discrimination and to create integrated, healthy and inclusive communities.

HUD has a responsibility to use its mission statement to express its commitment and priorities: that it will fulfill the federal law’s requirement to provide for fair housing throughout the United States. To remove anti-discrimination language from the HUD mission statement and to reduce spending on fair housing programs sends a negative message that victims of housing discrimination are not priorities.

HCC continues to use all of its resources to eradicate housing discrimination and to promote healthy, safe and inclusive neighborhoods. HCC deplores the idea that HUD will eliminate anti-discrimination language from its mission statement, since this is not just a local issue but one that touches every community in the country. We and all Americans need HUD to speak strongly and be at the forefront of national efforts to ensure that our community and others are free from discrimination and policies that create red lines meant to separate those who might be considered “other.”


Here’s a look at HUD’s current and proposed mission statements (from *The Washington Post*):

Current mission statement: HUD’s mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD is working to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination, and transform the way HUD does business.









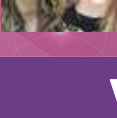
Revised mission statement: HUD’s mission is to ensure Americans have access to fair, affordable housing and opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency, thereby strengthening our communities and nation.

*Pam Wetherill is a volunteer with Heights Community Congress. She serves on its Fair Housing Committee, and is a resident of University Heights.*

## CAIN PARK'S 80<sup>th</sup> SEASON



RESIDENTS DAY AT THE CAIN PARK TICKET OFFICE JUNE 2

	<b>MEMPHIS THE MUSICAL</b>	6/14-7/1
	The Monkees present The Mike and Micky Show	6/16
	For Good: The New Generation of Musicals, Vol. 3	6/20
	Big Bad Voodoo Daddy	6/21
	Janis Ian / Susan Werner	6/22
	Black Violin	6/30
	Cain Park Arts Festival	7/13-15
	GroundWorks Dancetheater	7/20-22
	Dave Koz And Friends Summer Horns Tour Featuring Gerald Albright, Rick Braun, Richard Elliot And Introducing Aubrey Logan	7/21
	An Evening With Arlo Guthrie	7/22
	The O'Jays	7/27
	Morris Day and the Time with special guest The Ohio Players	7/28
	Caleb Teicher & Co.	8/4
	Livingston Taylor	8/5
	Punch Brothers with special guest Madison Cunningham	8/9
	Joan Osborne / Lisa Loeb	8/10
	AND SO MUCH MORE	

Visit [www.cainpark.com](http://www.cainpark.com) for a complete schedule



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Edgill Community Church

\*\*\*

Church Services Every Sunday  
**12:00pm with youth church**  
Pastor David Botha  
Assistant Pastor Tamar Gray



# Community Reinvestment Areas: Buyer beware?



HEIGHTS OF DEMOCRACY

Carla Rautenberg and Deborah Van Kleef

Property tax abatements are a controversial subject, and rightfully so. When Cleveland Heights residents dutifully pay our—notoriously high—property taxes, only to learn that neighbors purchasing units in some new developments will pay a mere fraction of their high-end home’s assessed value for up to a decade, we understandably bristle. It doesn’t feel like “equal treatment under the law”—a cornerstone of our democracy. It seems more like a subsidy to already wealthy people.

According to the city, however, developers will only build in an aging inner-ring suburb with the incentive of tax abatements. New housing attracts new residents, meaning increased revenues in the form of income taxes that support city services, from which all residents benefit.

It is hard to argue with this theory when municipalities all around us (notably Cleveland, in University Circle) abate taxes on new developments. However, since abatements mean reduced dollars for public schools, cities should at the very least give careful consideration to their number and duration.

One way a municipality may offer tax abatements is to delineate certain parts of town as Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs), subject to approval by the state of Ohio. Cleveland Heights has used CRAs to attract residential developers for decades. The largest example is the Severance CRA, which encompasses the Courtyards at Severance, the Bluestone complex of lofts and townhomes, and Severance Place, a condo conversion of the former Kaiser Permanente building. The city currently has a total of seven CRAs, some of which have been more successful than others.

In a major shift, Cleveland Heights is now applying to the state of Ohio to designate the entire city as a CRA. As currently envisioned, tax abatements would be available for newly constructed homes and commercial properties, and renovations of existing ones. Cleveland, South Euclid and Fairview Park are some other Cuyahoga County municipalities with citywide CRAs.

Seeking to understand the city’s plans, we spoke with Tim Boland, director of economic development, and Richard Wong, planning director, and listened to discussions in CH City Council Committee of the Whole meetings.

Because CRAs are complex and our space is limited, we will

address just one aspect of the proposed citywide CRA: Abatements on the taxable value added to existing homes by substantial remodeling or “transformative” renovation projects. Here’s how it would work: Suppose your taxes are currently \$8,000 per year. You build an addition onto your house, which raises your taxes to \$9,000. All or part of that additional \$1,000 could be abated for a specified number of years.

Before trying something new, it is generally worthwhile to consult someone who has already done it. Talking with Sally Martin, South Euclid housing director, we learned that incentives for renovation of existing homes rarely work. Why? Because property reassessments by Cuyahoga County seldom reflect the value added by a renovation, unless it involves a very substantial addition. Otherwise, taxes increase little, if at all, so there is nothing to abate. In Martin’s words, “In terms of being a useful tool for existing homeowners, our citywide CRA has not been utilized much.”

Offering incentives to current homeowners may be a laudable idea, but if it does not work in practice, it amounts to an empty offer.

Martin noted, “We had discussed the idea of modifying the CRA to allow ‘significant rehab’ to qualify for tax abatement. However, we have had no difficulty in getting properties fully renovated—mostly thanks to our vacant building ordinance, passed in 2010. Over 1,000 homes—more than 10 percent of our housing stock—[have] been fully renovated and brought into complete code compliance since then, without the incentive of the CRA. Now, inventory of vacant and distressed homes is very low. Those homes are quickly sold and renovated with no need for tax incentives.”

It is also worth noting the short duration of South Euclid’s CRA (five years) and the rationale for it. Keith Benjamin, community services director, told us, “We do short-term abatements to balance attracting development with protecting our school district, which receives the majority of property taxes.” Contrast this with Cleveland Heights’ current proposal for abatements of 7–15 years.

Martin observed, “For new construction, the CRA has been a tremendous help in getting projects moving. We have had 15 new in-fill homes constructed throughout the city since 2010.”

We hope Cleveland Heights will explore further before finalizing the citywide CRA. In our view, there’s still more to discover.

*Carla Rautenberg is an activist and a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident. Deborah Van Kleef is a musician and writer, who has lived in Cleveland Heights for most of her life. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.*

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## Protecting public education through local collective bargaining



A TEACHER'S VOICE

Ari Klein

As I write this article, teachers in Oklahoma and Kentucky are starting their second week of striking. [Teachers in Oklahoma ended their walkout on April 12.] Due to decades of neglect, conditions for students, faculty and staff in those states (and West Virginia, which recently settled its strike) are appalling. From out-of-date textbooks and unsafe buildings, to low wages for teachers, the tipping point for accepting those conditions was finally reached.

Most teachers I know try to work with what they have. A few of my colleagues may be disgruntled, but seldom is our entire membership enraged at the same time. One of the big differences, in my opinion, between teachers in these states and in CH-UH is that they do not negotiate contracts locally. In this district, we negotiate contracts directly with a locally elected board. School board members represent the communities' interests and values, and we have succeeded in reaching agreements for a long time. Teachers in states that have a single contract for the whole state have little say about what goes into their contract.

Another difference between CH-UH and those states is that they are so-called "right to work" states. This means that unions must represent everyone in the bargaining unit regardless of whether they are union members. In Ohio, no one is required to join the union, but must still pay a fair share for representation.

Contracts in right-to-work states are weak because there is little in the way of a unified voice at the bargaining table. Management knows that there is no collective will, so there is little effort toward fairness or compromise.

Concerns are more readily heard

and acted upon when teachers are in discussion with administration on a constant basis. In CH-UH we discuss hard issues—such as textbook adoption policies, class sizes, services for special needs students, student behavior and expectations—more often than wages and benefits. The teachers union does not always agree with management on these issues, but at least we talk about them and seek solutions. These discussions help shape the priorities for contract negotiations.

Some of the serious issues that are commonplace in Oklahoma simply don't happen here. They have 50-year-old textbooks, broken chairs, little or old technology, class sizes of 40–60 students, and many more signs of complacency and neglect. We have none of those problems here. Our differences with management usually have more to do with philosophy and priorities, not neglect.

My hope is that when this article is published the strikes will have been settled in a way that ensures a renewed commitment to public education. I fear, however, that it is going to take a large infusion of money to make those schools habitable and safe, to buy and maintain updated curricular materials, to invest in current technology, and to pay teachers and support staff fair wages.

We know from our own experience in CH-UH that keeping current with the needs of our students, maintaining and updating our buildings, and providing competitive wages to attract and keep highly qualified teachers is an expensive undertaking. Our community's support of our schools proves that our citizens value public education. My pride in our community grows even deeper as I read about places that allow their public institutions to languish and fall into disrepair.

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

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# Lobbyists for the common good needed



THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kaeser

As a true believer in democracy, I take my rights as a citizen seriously.

These rights are a lot like muscles: Use them or lose them. Our democracy was set up to give citizens the power to make government accountable and useful. Because government appears to me to be veering off course, I am propelled to exercise a broader range of what is available to me as a member of a democratic society.

It is an almost religious experience to cast my vote. We will have that chance again on May 8. Big issues are on the ballot, including a vote on the system that defines how state legislative districts are drawn. Be sure to exercise your vote.

The right to assemble is newly important to me. Until recently, the last time I had demonstrated was as a college student protesting the Vietnam War, but in the last 15 months, I have put up with a lot of cold weather to show my opposition to Betsy DeVos's appointment by demonstrating in front of Sen. Rob Portman's Cleveland office, march with women in Washington and Cleveland, and demand an end to gun violence with thousands of young people in Washington, D.C. The signs, energy and shared resolve of hundreds of thousands of citizens together are motivating and critical to energized and determined engagement. It has strengthened my resolve.

In March, following a Heights Coalition for Public Education forum about ways to influence state policy, I took a big leap. I decided to speak directly to state legislators who I consider to be barriers to what I think is good for public education.

In mid-March I took the 150-minute drive to Columbus for my five minutes in front of the House Government and Accountability Oversight Committee. I registered opposition to H.B. No. 512, because it would further politicize public education policy and curtail citizen input by severely limiting the role of the elected state school board and transferring some of its powers to the governor. It proposes to merge K-12 education with workforce development. It's a damaging proposal for education and governance.

While public speaking always makes me anxious, I stepped to the podium and looked the author of the bill, Rep. Bill Reineke (R-Tiffin), in the eye and criticized the legislation that he had drafted. I was thankful to see some committee members nodding their heads in agreement as I registered my support for public education and democratic governance. I kept going.

I was among the last to speak, and when it was my turn only a handful of committee members were still

there to hear my testimony. Several home-school parents gave testimony in opposition to the bill, as did our state school board member, Meryl Johnson. A lobbyist for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce spoke in favor. A small-business owner from Lorain and an education activist from Cincinnati registered their concerns. The mix of voices was interesting.

The trip was worth it. I was reminded that all kinds of people care, and for different reasons, but they show up. Second, it isn't hard to do. The public is supposed to have a turn, and this is how you participate.

I realized I am guilty of demonizing the opposition and this cripples my engagement. By speaking to the author of this bill, I had to acknowledge him as a valid player too. The legislative process expects stakeholders to share their perspective, concerns and evidence. If you dismiss legislators as bad guys, you forfeit the chance to inform their decisions with your perspective. You denigrate the process.

News coverage of the hearings was informative. Reporters listed categories of witnesses, but none of them described me. Their reporting portrayed the stakeholders as organized groups, usually of people who are employed in schools. That didn't describe me. I spoke as a beneficiary of public education. Like the residents of every community, I pay for public education and I benefit from it because we all depend on an educated citizenry. All residents of Ohio, whether they use a school or not, have a vested interest in a strong public education system. It's about the common good.

The common-good constituency is not easy to capture in news reporting, but our collective voices are needed to demand policies that support a strong public education system. If I return to the legislature, I think I will identify myself as a lobbyist for the common good.

Maybe by naming it I can call greater attention to what is really at stake.

*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.*

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## University Heights City Council Meeting highlights



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MARCH 19, 2018

Present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan and council members Pamela Cameron, Phillip Ertel, John Rach, Steven Sims, Michele Weiss and Mark Wiseman. Vice Mayor Susan Pardee was absent. The meeting was held from 7 to 9:58 p.m.

### Public comments

Chicken coops: More than 15 residents spoke for and against an ordinance that would allow 25 residents to apply for a one-year permit to keep chickens.

### Coop ordinances tabled

Council tabled two chicken coop ordinances until the April 2 meeting: one allowing residents to apply for a one-year permit to keep chickens, and a second establishing safety regulations.

Despite the planning commission's recommendation that council not approve the ordinances, Mayor Brennan and council members Cameron, Rach, Weiss and Wiseman stated their support for it. Wiseman said that Vice Mayor Pardee, who was excused from the meeting, had also voiced her support. Councilmen Ertel and Sims spoke against the ordinances, citing concerns about safety and the close proximity of homes.

### Mayor's spending limit

Council presented an ordinance increasing the mayor's spending limit from \$5,000 to \$15,000, on first reading.

### 2018 city budget

Council presented the 2018 city budget, on first reading. Mayor Brennan said the city had a \$3 million surplus last year, and that even with additional staff hires—which will include a police officer and firefighter—there will be a \$1 million balance at year-end. Finance Director Sheehan said the budget may need to be amended to include a \$19,000 boot allowance for the fire department. The city budget will be presented on second reading at a special meeting on March 26.

LWV Observer: Siobhan Leftwich.

MARCH 26, 2018

Present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan and council members Susan Pardee (vice mayor), Pamela Cameron, Phillip Ertel, John Rach, Steven Sims, Michele Weiss and Mark Wiseman. The meeting was held from 7 to 7:15 p.m.

### 2018 budget

Council had approved a temporary budget in December for the first three months of 2018, and needed to finalize a budget for the remainder of the year by March 31. The budget was approved as presented, but on emergency in order to go into effect immediately.

### Mayor's spending limit increased

Council voted to increase the mayor's spending limit from \$5,000 to \$15,000 per purchase. Vice Mayor Pardee noted that the \$15,000 limit was chosen because purchases above \$15,000 are required [by state law] to be sent out for bid.

LWV Observer: Wendy S. Deuring.

APRIL 2, 2018

Present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan and council members Sue Pardee (vice mayor), Pamela Cameron, Phillip Ertel, John Rach, Steven Sims, Michele Weiss and Mark Wiseman. The meeting was held from 7 to 10:32 p.m.

### Public comments

Chicken coops: Twelve residents spoke against ordinances that would allow up to 25 residents to apply for a one-year permit to keep four chickens. A spokesman for a newly formed group opposing chicken coops said that if the ordinance is passed, it will submit a petition requesting its repeal. Five residents spoke in favor of the ordinances, with one saying it would allow parents to show children where their food comes from, and another stating that government should stay out of his yard and allow him to raise chickens.

### Planning commission

April Urban, an urban researcher at Case Western Reserve University's Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development, has been appointed to the planning commission.

### Rain barrel workshop

The city will hold a rain barrel workshop on Wednesday, May 23, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., in the city service garage. Registration is required.

### Backyard composting

The city will host a backyard composting seminar at city hall on Tuesday, June 5, at 7 p.m. Registration is required.

### Coop ordinances pass

Council passed legislation for chicken coops, on emergency. One ordinance will allow up to 25 residents to apply for a special-use, one-year permit to keep chicken coops. The second ordinance limits the number of chickens residents can keep to four, and requires that chicken coops be 20 feet from adjoining properties. Councilman Wiseman, who sponsored the legislation, said council's goal was to pass the ordinances and see how they work. Vice Mayor Sue Pardee added that council will review them in February.

### School board resolutions

Council passed two resolutions, on emergency. The first is to support the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school board's rejection of House Bill 512. If passed, the bill would transfer most of the state school board's power to a government-appointed agency. The second resolution urges the state of Ohio and the Ohio Department of Education to revise the existing system of ranking schools. Councilwoman Weiss voted no on both resolutions, saying that school ranking is a contentious issue and she didn't think council should vote on it.

LWV Observer: Siobhan Leftwich.

Look for earlier, and often expanded, postings of meeting summaries online at [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org).

To receive regular e-mail postings of full reports, send an e-mail to [mbarnes9515@gmail.com](mailto:mbarnes9515@gmail.com) or join through Google groups using "lwv-chuh observer reports" as a search phrase.

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# FutureHeights awards mini-grants to five Cleveland Heights projects

Sruti Basu

FutureHeights completed the spring 2018 round of its Neighborhood Mini-Grants Program, approving \$3,577 in grants to support five neighborhood projects in Cleveland Heights.

To date, the community development corporation has awarded 23 grants—a total of \$14,961. The grants are intended to spur small, grassroots projects to improve quality of life and build community.

The mini-grants recipients are:

**CUE** was awarded \$1,000 for its Lower Shaker Lake Public Space Reclamation project, which seeks to restore and enhance the public space at the southwest intersection of Coventry Road and North Park Boulevard in Cleveland Heights. The site is sunken below street level and, as such, has become somewhat forgotten. The project will enable neighbors to reclaim the space in a way that honors and enhances its historical and ecological significance while adding social and recreational vibrancy.

**Friends of the Delisle Center** was granted \$1,000 for its Beautifying the Delisle Center's Outdoor Spaces project, which will create a Learning Circle Garden that will provide educational opportunities for students, and green space for the community. Project partners include Cleveland Heights High School students and faculty, Northern Ohio Perennials Society, Greener Heights, and Green Paradigm Partners. The CH-UH City School District, which owns the Delisle Center site, in the Cedar Taylor Business District, shares the vision that a healthy habitat engenders a healthy community, and these habitats can be used for education. Friends of the Delisle Center believes that public green spaces should be environmentally healthy and used productively by the community. The group hopes the project will become a model for other public spaces in the community.

**Montford Community Garden** received a grant of \$327 for its Gardening Set-Up Grants project. The garden was established to provide a focal point in the Noble neighborhood, where residents rent garden beds to grow vegetables and flowers. Garden members hope to draw people from

the neighborhood together, to connect with one another and share gardening knowledge. With the grant, the group will provide scholarships for two new members/families. The scholarships will cover the yearly plot fee, plants, plant support and a fence. This project aims to make gardening affordable for residents, create a healthier community, and create opportunities to build community, as gardeners often serve as neighborhood ambassadors.

**Noble Neighbors** was awarded \$500 for its Talent of the Heights project. The organization is hosting a communitywide event, We Are Noble, May 18–20, to celebrate and showcase the neighborhood. Talent of the Heights will take place on Saturday, May 19, on the vacant site that was once home to a McDonald's restaurant in the Noble Nela Business District. The event will feature live music from local acts, and entertainment for families.

**Saint Alban's Episcopal Church** was awarded \$750 for its Beautify the Hill project. St Alban's, located in the Coventry Village neighborhood, plans to update one of its most visible assets: the landscaping on the front hill, facing Euclid Heights Boulevard. The finished project will result in a space that is attractive, contains a healthy garden, and can be shared with the neighborhood.

If you have an idea to improve your neighborhood, FutureHeights invites you to apply for a grant. The next application deadline is Sept. 15 at 5 p.m. All new applicants should attend one of two information sessions, scheduled for Aug. 1 and 8, 6 p.m., at the FutureHeights office, 2843 Washington Blvd.

The FutureHeights Neighborhood Mini-Grants Program awards small grants of up to \$1,000 to fund citizen-led neighborhood projects, events and activities that benefit Cleveland Heights. The program is guided by a grant-making committee comprising seven Cleveland Heights residents with a history of community involvement.

Learn more at [www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-programs](http://www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-programs) or contact FutureHeights at [sbasu@futureheights.org](mailto:sbasu@futureheights.org) or 216-320-1423.

*Sruti is the director of community-building programs at FutureHeights.*



COURTESY FUTUREHEIGHTS

While the Cedar Lee Mini-Park sports some benches and flowers that make it pleasant to pass through, it has the potential to become a unique place that can help draw more visitors to the neighborhood.

## FutureHeights to host Cedar Lee Mini-Park visioning workshop on Saturday, June 2

Sruti Basu

FutureHeights invites Heights residents to share their ideas about how to make the Cedar Lee Mini-Park—which many people walk through on their way from the parking lot just east of Lee Road—into a special place. FutureHeights will host a visioning workshop on Saturday, June 2, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at CIE Urban Winery, 2908 and 2180 Lee Road.

Situated near Cleveland Heights' newly renovated high school, the exceptional restaurants, bars and shops in the Cedar Lee Business District, and the Cedar Lee Theatre, the mini-park gets significant foot traffic.

The community-development group FutureHeights and other stakeholders believe that the site has the potential to be much more than just a pass through. It could become a place where residents and visitors gather,

converse and spend time. Through careful design, it could become as unique a place as the district itself, and positively impact its surrounding businesses and neighborhood.

Through its Cedar Lee Mini-Park Placemaking project, FutureHeights hopes to gather resident input as it works to create a dynamic space to reinforce the Cedar Lee Business District as a hub of social and commercial activity.

In addition to hosting the visioning session, FutureHeights will conduct an online survey to enable additional residents to share their ideas.

RSVP for the June 2 session at <https://cedarleeminipark.eventbrite.com>. For more information and access the survey, visit [www.futureheights.org](http://www.futureheights.org).

*Sruti Basu is the director of community-building programs at FutureHeights.*



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# Cleveland Heights City Council

## Meeting highlights

MARCH 19, 2018  
Council members present were Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow, Mary Dunbar, Kahlil Seren, Jason Stein and Cheryl L. Stephens. Michael N. Ungar was absent. The meeting lasted from 7:50 to 8:25 p.m.

**Top of the Hill property tax agreement**  
[For the Top of the Hill development], council and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education agreed to a property tax exemption, collection of service payments in lieu of taxes, and an urban redevelopment tax increment equivalent fund for depositing these service payments.

**New standing committee names**  
The new names of standing committees, which were approved by council on Feb.

20, were inserted into the city code. They are: Administrative Services, Finance, Housing and Transportation, Planning and Development, Recreation, Community and External Relations, and Safety and Municipal Services.

**Beyond essential operations of city government**

Council outlined priorities beyond the essential operations of city government in order to not limit the ability of the city in any way to respond to and/or address other matters of concern to the community.

**Executive sessions**

Presented on first reading, this ordinance, drafted by Kahlil Seren, amends the city code by repealing Section 107.01(c)(9), to remove the ability of the council, or a city board or commission, to enter into executive session more than four times per year to discuss general plans for the future or general issues before the city. In response to community feedback, this should clarify confusion about differences with state law. Although home rule allows such deviations, it may not always be necessary to discuss these matters in executive session.

**Mayor's report**

Mayor Roe thanked city staff for the newly launched [redesigned] Cleveland Heights website, and for the many positive stories in the media lately. The next joint meeting of city council and the school board will be on June



25. As mayor, Roe attends the Ohio Mayors Alliance; this body will meet with gubernatorial candidates this summer to help them form agendas relating to city concerns.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

APRIL 2, 2018  
Council members present were Mayor Carol Roe, Vice Mayor Melissa Yasinow, Mary Dunbar, Kahlil Seren, Cheryl L. Stephens and Michael N. Ungar. Jason Stein was absent. The meeting lasted from 7:36 to 8:26 p.m.

**FutureHeights CDC partnership**

Based on the recommendations of a working group formed in 2017, council voted to authorize the city manager to negotiate the terms of the city's involvement in the evolution of FutureHeights into a community development corporation (CDC) for the city. The resulting agreement will require separate authorization from council.

**System for ranking schools**

Council heard the first reading of a resolution urging the governor, legislature and Ohio Department of Education to revise the way schools and school districts are ranked to more accurately reflect public school performance. The current version of the resolution requests that this be done through a process that meaningfully involves parents, school board members, civic leaders, school administrators and other school patrons. The city manager is working with the school district to further customize the language of the resolution to the Cleveland Heights-University district, so changes will likely be made before the next council meeting.

**Rejection of House Bill 512**


Council approved support of the March 20 resolution passed by the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education that rejects House Bill 512, which would transfer most of the powers of the elected state board of education and department of education to a governor-appointed cabinet agency. Council agrees with the school board that passage of H.B.512 would go against the CH-UH school district's interests by significantly decreasing accountability and transparency concerning public education in the state of Ohio.

**Immigration Task Force**

Council established an Immigration Task Force to identify and examine immigration issues, including those related to civil immigration enforcement that affects the city, its residents and its employees. The task force will also examine any possible future actions to be taken by the city in response to the issues identified. The task force will give council a written summary of its findings and recommendations, if any, by July 31. The task force will have nine members, including the police chief, city manager (or designee), and mayor. Members will also include the following, all appointed by the mayor: a member of council; a member of the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (OPBA) who is a classified service captain, lieutenant, or sergeant in Cleveland Heights; a member of the OPBA who is a classified police officer or unclassified service basic patrol officer in Cleveland Heights; and three city residents: 1) a member of an immigration advocacy group, or other similar group; 2) a resident concerned about immigration issues; and 3) a resident familiar with immigration and/or constitutional law. Members will be appointed to serve until July 31, 2018, with no compensation. Vacancies will be filled by mayoral appointment.

LWV Observer: Katherine Solender.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org). See disclaimer on page 8.



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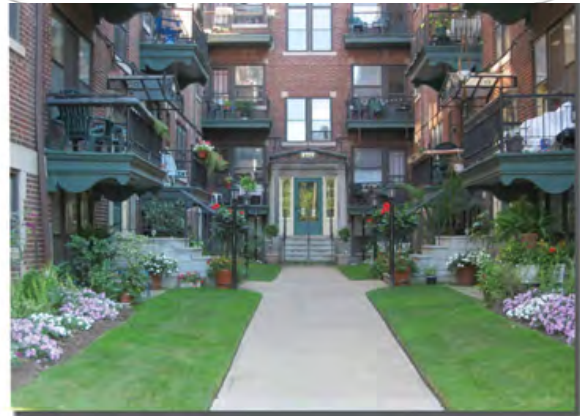
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# Boss Dog hosts Officer Jason West scholarship fundraiser on May 20

Lita Gonzalez

Boss Dog Brewery on Lee Road in Cleveland Heights will host the 2018 Officer Jason West Memorial Scholarship Mega Raffle event on Sunday, May 20, from 5 to 8 p.m. The annual event raises money for the Officer Jason West Memorial Scholarship. Raffle tickets are \$2 and can be purchased from any committee member or at the event on May 20.

Officer Jason West, a Cleveland Heights police officer, was shot and killed on May 26, 2007, as he exited his patrol car when responding to a disturbance call. “When Jason was killed, this city lost not only a dedicated police officer, but also a very dear friend and neighbor,” said Liz Radivoyevitch, co-chair of the Scholarship Selection Committee. “Officer Jason West was a hero, not because of the way he died, but because of the way he chose to live his life—as a devoted son and brother, and loyal friend; as a mentor and role model to young adults in the community; and as a dedicated police officer. Protecting and serving the city of Cleveland Heights was something that Jason did willingly each and every day he put his uniform on.”

After West was killed, Cleveland Heights residents and businesses, along with family, friends and fellow officers, established the Officer Jason D. West Memorial Scholarship as a way of honoring West’s memory and his dedicated service as a police officer. It is a two-year scholarship that is awarded each year to a graduating senior from the Criminal Justice Program at Heights High, who plans on pursuing a career in law enforcement or criminal justice, and who exemplifies West’s dedication as a police officer. Recipients receive the second part of their scholarship after they



Jason D. West

complete their first year in college.

“Through the scholarship, Officer West continues to serve as a role model to young adults by providing financial assistance to a Heights High student pursuing a profession in criminal justice or a law enforcement career,” said Radivoyevitch.

Contributions can also be mailed to: The Officer Jason D. West Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o the Treasurer’s Office, Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District, 2155 Miramar Boulevard, University Heights, OH, 44118. Checks should be made payable to “Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District,” and include “Jason D. West Scholarship” on the memo line.

For more information, contact Scholarship Selection Committee member Lita Gonzalez at 216-410-4577, or visit the scholarship’s Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/jasonwestscholarship/](http://www.facebook.com/jasonwestscholarship/).

*Lita Gonzalez, who has lived in Cleveland Heights since 1995, has written a book about researching her family history.*

CHICKENS continued from page 1

to show support for a neighbor who lives two doors away and wants to keep chickens in her backyard. “I think that the ordinance does a good job of addressing the concerns that were raised,” she said.

The ordinance states that the chicken-keeping area must be kept in “good repair, maintained in a clean and in a sanitary condition, and free of vermin, obnoxious smells and substances.”

The ordinance also states that the facility “must not create a nuisance or disturb neighboring residents due to noise, odor, damage or threats to public health.” No sale of eggs or slaughtering of chickens is permitted. Similar regulations regarding sanitation and nuisances are in place in Cleveland Heights.

A key issue in the debates was the minimum setback of chicken coops from other properties. The final ordinance requires that chicken coops and chicken runs be set back at least 20 feet from any house, 10 feet from any side yard line, and 3 feet from an adjacent rear lot. The ordinance requires that chickens be kept in coops each day from dusk to

dawn, and that the chicken-keeping area be enclosed by fencing.

The University Heights ordinance requires that any resident requesting a permit to keep chickens take a course in chicken keeping from either The Ohio State University Extension or Cleveland MetroParks, or some other source approved by the public safety director.

The ordinance sets a limit of 25 chicken-keeping permits that can be issued and in effect at any one time.

Meadowbrook Boulevard resident Laura Francis tried unsuccessfully last year to obtain a variance to keep chickens in her backyard. Now that the new law is in place, Francis said that she will submit an application for a special use permit.

The city will review the ordinance and its implementation in February 2019 to determine whether it should be retained, amended or repealed.

*Robert Brown is a city planner with more than 40 years of experience, including nine years as Cleveland’s city planning director. A resident of Cleveland Heights for 40-plus years, Brown serves on the board of FutureHeights.*

PRESERVATION continued from page 1

**the Shakers to Shaker Heights Park: The Curious History of Why A Part of Cleveland Heights Once Called Itself ‘The Real Shaker Heights’**

Speaker: Virginia Dawson

Learn about the history of North Union, the sale of the Shaker property, and the role of the Van Sweringen brothers in developing the old Shaker property located along both sides of Doan Brook. [Heights Libraries Lee Road Branch, 2345 Lee Road.]

**Saturday, May 12, 10 a.m. to noon, Cleveland Heights Rocks and Waters Tour 2018: Shaw Brook Gulch**

Tour guides: Roy Larick, Korbi Roberts and Kara Hamley O’Donnell

Do you know Shaw Brook, the city’s secret stream? Explore its sandstone gulch—once the Glen Allen estate’s landscape centerpiece—and learn about the long-gone home of Elisabeth Severance Allen, John L. Severance’s sister. It’s beauty where least expected.

Reservations are required for this tour, which will take place rain or shine. Space is limited, and this tour always fills up. To register, call 216-291-4878 after May 1. [Registered participants will meet at Lutheran High East parking lot, 1400 Yellowstone Road.]

**Monday, May 21, 7 p.m., Why Preservation?**

Speaker: Margaret Lann, Cleveland Restoration Society

NOBLE continued from page 1

also take place on Saturday, as will plant and bake sales, and a “junk in the trunk” opportunity for rummage sellers to sell items from their automobiles at Noble Road Presbyterian Church’s parking lot. Home Repair Resource Center will host a tool sale, facility tours and demonstrations. Noble Neighborhood Library will be the site of several activities, including events hosted by resident Nepali refugee families. The Book Bike will circulate in the neighborhood, and participants can find neighborhood features, such as parks and community gardens, using Munzee, a global scavenger-hunt game.

The Cleveland Heights Police Department will open the doors of the Martin G. Lentz Police Academy. Visitors will see the bomb squad, robots and other safety gear. The historic building, a former fire station, also includes police equipment and a history museum. Citizens Police Academy graduates will be on hand to talk about their role in the city, and Precinct 3, the newly renovated home for the police K-9 unit and community response team in the Noble Nela business district, will welcome visitors.

A new event this year will be Talent of the Heights, a showcase of local musicians. The music festival will take place on the large vacant lot in the Noble Nela Business District and will spotlight a variety of musical genres from folk to gospel to rhythm and blues. Businesses

What are the important architectural features on an older house? What should be repaired rather than replaced? This program looks at the importance of taking a preservation approach in our homes and neighborhoods. It also highlights some common preservation blunders. [Heights Libraries Lee Road Branch, 2345 Lee Road.]

**Saturday, June 2, 10 a.m. to noon, Cain Park Behind the Scenes tour**

Tour guides: Kara Hamley O’Donnell and Ksenia Roshchakovsky, city of Cleveland Heights staff

As we celebrate Cain Park’s 80th anniversary, learn about Cain Park’s rich history, its evolution and its importance as the heart of Cleveland Heights’ arts community. You’ll get to see areas of the park usually inaccessible to the public, including the scene and costume shops, Evans Amphitheater backstage and dressing rooms, and work on the set and lights for the 2018 musical in the Alma Theater.

Reservations are required for this tour, which will take place rain or shine. To register, call 216-291-4878 after May 1. [Registered participants will meet at the top of the Cain Park sledding hill, on Taylor Road near Superior Road.]

*Kara Hamley O’Donnell works at the Cleveland Heights Department of Planning & Development as the city’s historic preservation planner.*

in the district will participate in the festival with food specials and invitations to their shops. Local entrepreneurs will have tables on-site, there will be activities for children, and Central Bible Baptist Church will offer free car washes.

Many residents will host yard sales. All residents are welcome to host a yard sale at their home or participate in the sale at Noble Road Presbyterian. Those interested in being included on the event map should send a message to [noble-neighbors@gmail.com](mailto:noble-neighbors@gmail.com), with their address, by May 11. Instructions on how to list your high-demand items on free websites will be provided.

Real estate professionals will host open houses for Noble-area homes on Sunday, May 20. Potential buyers can walk through a variety of houses, including colonials, bungalows, ranches, and grand homes developed by the Van Sweringens. Housing in Noble fits every need, from growing families to one- or two-person households and those seeking homes where they can “age in place.” Now is the time to buy in Noble. Home values have risen significantly since the first real estate fair in 2014.

To find details about the 2018 We Are Noble events and interactive and printable maps, visit [www.nobleneighbors.com](http://www.nobleneighbors.com).

*Brenda H. May is one of the leaders of Noble Neighbors.*



# Heights teen helps other bereaved families

Shari Nacson

Asked to describe Rebecca's Gift, Heights eighth-grader Carolyn Meyer said, "It's an organization that sends families on their first vacation after the death of a child." Meyer and two classmates are currently doing an In-

ternational Baccalaureate (IB) project to raise funds for Rebecca's Gift. The project will culminate with an ice cream social fundraiser on Sunday, May 27, 5-8 p.m., at Ben & Jerry's at Fairmount Circle, in University Heights.

This is not the first time that Meyer has raised funds for the nonprofit. In 2017, she raised \$4,700 through her Bat Mitzvah project—enough money to pay for two bereaved families to reconnect through travel.

Rebecca's Gift was inspired by the way Meyer and her brother, Josh, reconnected with their parents during a trip eight months after their sister Rebecca died.

Traveling as a family of four, not five, was hard. Meyer's mother, Kat, explained that—due to the grief process—she was not yet able to plan an itinerary, so the kids mapped out destinations, including six Ripley's Believe It Or Not museums, snow tubing, and The Titanic Museum.

The trip was an opportunity for the family to reconnect, and for the



This image of her brother Josh (age 7), with souvenirs, reminds Carolyn Meyer (age 13) how a getaway helped her own family connect amidst bereavement.

COURTESY MEYER FAMILY

kids to get one-on-one attention that they really needed. This became the spark that led to Rebecca's Gift—helping other grieving families by lifting the burden of itinerary planning, helping them get over the hurdle of the first trip after the death of a child, and focusing on joy and connection for the surviving siblings.

In talking about the nonprofit's mission, Meyer explained why the focus is on bereaved siblings. Amidst the grief, "siblings feel invisible," she said. "The vacation helps you feel more part of the family."

Families who have received vacations from Rebecca's Gift have echoed Meyer's observation: Siblings of terminally ill children struggle with lack of attention when parents are focused on medical crises.

"Whoever I spent time with, someone didn't get attention," said Jennifer Jones, whose son Isaac died in 2015. Intentionally spending vacation time together after such a profound loss was pivotal. "Staying busy is how we coped when he was sick," said Jones. "There are parts of the grieving process that require more focus. The trip took away distractors and allowed us to focus on it in a good way."

As part of giving the vacation, Rebecca's Gift arranges all of the trip details and, when possible, meets with the recipient family. The presentation of the gift is a special moment. Jones recalled that when it came time to meet with the Meyer family for the trip to be announced, her twin boys and daughter were "too excited to eat."

Connecting with another bereaved family is also a comfort—one that seems reciprocal. Meyer noticed that she has grown from being part of these moments, and said, "It was eye-opening. I realized that our situation isn't the only one around us."

Working together to give this opportunity to other families has been meaningful for each Meyer family member. "No matter how alone you feel, your parents are there for you and are thinking about you," said Meyer.

Founded in 2015, Rebecca's Gift provides bereaved families with their first vacation after the death of a child. To date, five families have received trips via Rebecca's Gift. Visit [www.rebeccasgift.org](http://www.rebeccasgift.org) to learn more.

*Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson, LISW-S, is a freelance editor, child development specialist, and nonprofit consultant who makes her home in Cleveland Heights. More than anything, Nacson is inspired by kids and adults who build connection through kindness.*



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# Jill Barr remembered for her kindness and compassion

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

Jill Barr's smile was legendary. Spreading from her mouth to her eyes, that smile was quick to be offered to anyone who needed it. Her gentle kindness, her bottomless well of generosity, marked a life that was much too short.

The University Heights mother of three died from complications of pneumonia in early March, at the age of 47. But Barr's legacy lives on in the community that she touched with her grace, selflessness and authenticity.

"I think Jill had a genuine connection with every person she met," said friend Kristen Sears. "She did things quietly, but she impacted so many people in so many different ways."

From her work as special projects coordinator at Cleveland Heights' Church of the Saviour (CoTS), to her fierce advocacy of CH-UH public schools, to her role as honorary mother (and chauffeur) to countless people's children, Barr "did the work of five people, at least," said Sears.

"If she could have volunteered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, she would have," said the Rev. Andy Call of CoTS. "She was a force in her community."

The gaping hole caused by Barr's death has reverberated from her hometown in central Michigan to her friends from Albion College, where she studied English, and across this wide community. But nowhere has that loss been felt more profoundly



Jill Barr

than in the Edgerton Road home she shared with Rob, her husband of 20 years, and their three children.

Barr's older daughter, Helen, described her as "the most caring person I've ever known." And 12-year-old Tom said, "My mom taught me niceness."

That sentiment was echoed over and over again by friends, colleagues and even mere acquaintances. Rob was overwhelmed to discover just how many people's lives Jill had touched. The countless visitors during the three weeks she spent in intensive care "really impacted her care," said Rob. "I feel like the doctors and nurses saw what an integral part of her community she was."

Barr coordinated volunteer tutors at Canterbury Elementary School, which all three of her children attended, and ran the Upward basketball program at CoTS. "She didn't give a hoot about sports," said Call. "But



Emily, Helen and Tom Barr on the first day of school, August 2017.

she saw this as another way of bringing people together."

Bringing people together was perhaps what Barr did best. Her willingness to help—to watch other people's kids, to offer a word of encouragement, to gather in celebration—"this was just the kind of woman she was," said longtime friend Carole Dooner. "Just knowing Jill made you a better person."

Rob and his children are drawing on their memories of Barr's boundless energy and kindness to help them carry on. Helen and Tom both attended the middle school Model United Nations competition in Columbus mere days after their mother's funeral, eager for normalcy and not wanting to let their teammates down. Their 10-year-old sister, Emily, performed in Heights Youth Theater's "The Wizard of Oz" that very weekend. "I felt nervous at first," said Emily. "But

singing and dancing helped me feel joyful."

Joyful is the perfect word to describe Barr's approach to life, and she was surrounded by friends, family, music, faith and laughter, up to the very end. "There was always a playful side to Jill," said Rob. She gave so much to so many, but she too was enriched by that engagement. The love she gave so freely came back to her in spades.

Her family will continue to make music together and will return to some of their favorite spots, including the shores of northern Lake Michigan. But Rob knows he has a tough road ahead of him. "I want them to be well-balanced, good people," he said of his children. "I just hope this won't negatively affect their ability to love."

Those who knew Barr are committed to carrying on her legacy: engaging more with their neighbors, making time to connect with friends, stepping up whenever they see a need. But some holes—and some roles—won't be so easily filled.

"I wanted to give her grandchildren," said Helen. "She would have loved that."

*Krissy Dietrich Gallagher is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, a graduate of the Heights schools and a former Coventry School teacher. She is a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District, and is proud to raise her two sons in this community.*



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## Peace Lutheran hosts 'We Are Noble' events

Don King

Peace Lutheran Church, 3740 Mayfield Road, will host several activities in support of Noble Neighbors' We Are Noble weekend in mid-May.

On Saturday, May 19, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., guests will be welcome at a cookout lunch in the church's front yard. The light lunch will be free and open to anyone participating in the weekend events throughout the community.

At the same time, the congregation will open its "baby shop" to young families. They will be invited to choose free clothing items for their children, up to size 6X. The baby shop is also open every Tuesday morning from 10 a.m. to noon, but more clothing will be made available on this special Saturday.

On Sunday, May 20, following its 10 a.m. worship service, the congregation will host the annual Oxford Elementary Art Show in its upper lounge. Families and young artists are welcome to view all the art submitted at a social hour of ice cream bars and lemonade. The show will get underway at approximately 11:40 a.m.

Peace Lutheran Church, [www.peacelutheran-clehts.org](http://www.peacelutheran-clehts.org), is located just east of Severance Town Center on Mayfield Road.

*The Rev. Don King is pastor of Peace Lutheran Church on Mayfield Road and an active participant in the Heights interfaith community. He has served in local congregations since 1999 and has lived in Cleveland Heights since 1985.*

OBSERVER continued from page 2

Preservation Planner Kara Hamley O'Donnell estimated that 90 percent of CH homes and 50 percent of CH commercial buildings were over 50 years old and might be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. At that time, CH had eight National Register historic districts, and the article listed four more potential districts in CH and one in UH. Today, three of those four CH districts have now been listed, as has one additional district, Grant Deming's Forest Hill. What's amazing is that most of the districts were nominated by residents who initiated the research for their neighborhood, wrote the nomination and shepherded it through the arduous state process.

Heights residents have great pride in their neighborhoods. Celebrating the rich history isn't so much about mourning what has been lost, but rather recognizing that great change has taken place. The Heights is constantly renewing and reinvent-

ing itself—welcoming new people as we appreciate the contributions of those who have come before.

*Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer. To commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the Heights Observer, we are taking a look back at stories that appeared in these pages from 2008 through 2017.*

### Heights Observer needs volunteers

FutureHeights publishes the *Heights Observer* and delivers it throughout Cleveland Heights and University Heights on or around the first of every month. Volunteers are needed to assist with deliveries to local businesses and institutions. Most routes take about an hour to complete. For more information, contact FutureHeights at 216-320-1423 or [info@futureheights.org](mailto:info@futureheights.org).



Volunteers from Hirobel, Two One Fix Bicycle and Heights Bicycle Coalition provide the mechanical services for the Coventry Bike Tune-Up Day, coming on June 2.

## May is Bike Month in the Heights



LIFE CYCLE

Heights Bicycle Coalition

Since 2010, Cleveland Heights has joined with cities nationwide to celebrate May as National Bike Month.

Activities take place in and around Cleveland Heights and University Heights throughout the month, including Bike to Work Week from May 15 to 18, and the Ride of Silence—a memorial that honors those injured or killed while riding their bicycles—on May 16.

"Biking has been on the rise in the past few years in our community and across Northeast Ohio," said Steve Reinhardt, Cleveland Heights resident and head of Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC), which plays a major role in organizing Bike Month in Cleveland Heights. "Bike Month is one way we can spread the word about the safety of cycling, the health benefits of riding and the fun that biking can provide."

On May 9, all Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools and some private and parochial schools will take part in Walk or Bike to School Day. Walking or biking to school is a good way to get exercise, and children and adolescents should get 60 or more minutes of exercise each day, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Research also shows that children who walk or bike to school arrive more ready to sit down and learn than children who get a ride to school.

Bike to Work Week concludes with Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 18. That morning, from 7 to 9 a.m., HBC provides free coffee, courtesy of Phoenix Coffee, and

home-baked oatmeal cookies at the corner of Edgehill and Overlook roads—Northeast Ohio's most traveled commuter bike route.

The May 16 Ride of Silence—a worldwide coordinated event—takes place each year on the third Wednesday in May. Heights-area bicyclists depart from John Carroll University's (JCU) southeast parking lot at 7 p.m. and finish in front of University Hospitals on Adelbert Road in University Circle, where they are joined for a memorial observation at about 7:30 p.m. by riders coming from the Free Stamp sculpture in downtown Cleveland. Along the route from JCU, the eastside ride progresses west along Fairmount Boulevard to North Park Boulevard, then down Grandview Avenue to drop off flowers where Cleveland Orchestra bassist Charles Barr died in a bicycle accident in 2006.

Bike Month in the Heights wraps up on June 2 with Bike Tune-Up Day at the Coventry Courtyard on the northwest corner of Coventry Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard. This free event runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Experts from Hirobel, Two One Fix Bicycle, and HBC will be on hand to assess bicycles and make minor repairs. This event, presented with support from Coventry Village Special Improvement District, is first-come, first-served, so attendees are advised to arrive early—and no later than 12:30 p.m.

For more information on Bike Month, or to get involved in bicycle advocacy, visit [www.bikesintheheights.org](http://www.bikesintheheights.org).

*Heights Bicycle Coalition is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to educating and encouraging Heights community members to use bicycles as a sustainable and healthy form of transportation and recreation. This article was written by Jamison Babb and members of the coalition's communications committee.*

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# HRCC BUSINESS EXPO



Heights seniors earn peace officer certification



Ten Heights High seniors are OPOTA certified. Back row (from left): Darryl Collins, Jumal Fisher, Kyle Mattox, Jetayzia Lee and Rashawn Creer. Front row: Tajah Simmons, Marie Carstarphen, Maya Sparks, Maya Stevenson and Armonni Whittiker.

Joy Henderson

Ten seniors in the Heights High Criminal Justice program have received Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy (OPOTA) certification. Students also earned college credits from Tri-C Community College and Bryant & Stratton College.

OPOTA is part of Heights High's Career and Technical Education program, and is taught by Commander Johnnie Lemons, a retired Ohio State Patrol trooper.

The certification qualifies students for employment in private security. Additional certifications earned by the students are in CPR, first aid, automated external defibrillator, and 12 sections of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

A partnership with the two colleges grants students up to 23 Tri-C credits and up to 19 Bryant & Stratton credits.

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

Alum Taylor Pickens is new soccer coach

Scott Wortman



Taylor Pickens

Taylor Pickens, a Cleveland Heights High School alumna and two-time Lake Erie League (LEL) Player of the Year, is returning to her alma mater as head girls soccer coach.

"We are excited to announce the hiring of Taylor as our new girls soccer coach," said Athletic Director Joe D'Amato. "Taylor brings a wealth of knowledge and experience across many levels in the sport. Her commitment to building a program within our community and the success she's had previously bodes well for the future of our girls soccer program. We are excited to welcome another Tiger alum back home!"

Pickens is a 2007 graduate of Heights High, where she starred on the soccer team 2003-06. A

four-year starter, she earned LEL Player of the Year honors as a junior and as a senior. Pickens was a two-time state club champion with the Cleveland Cobras Soccer Club, and participated in the Olympic Development Program. Pickens went on to play collegiately at Youngstown State University, 2007-11.

Pickens has spent the past two seasons as the head girls soccer coach at Euclid High School. She has also coached with the Eastside Kickers Soccer Club and is currently coaching with the Ohio Premier Futbol Club. In 2015, Pickens was Heights High junior varsity coach under veteran coach Paul Eyre.

Pickens holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Youngstown State and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Education from Ursuline College.

*Scott Wortman is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.*

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# Project Lead the Way comes to CH-UH middle schools

Krissy Dietrich Gallagher

According to its website, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is a national K-12 program designed to “engage students in hands-on activities, projects, and problems; empower them to solve real-world challenges; and inspire them to reimagine how they see themselves.”

Recently adopted as a course for CH-UH middle school students, it is offered as an elective for seventh- and eighth-graders at Roxboro and Monticello middle schools. Because the two schools are currently operating under one roof, the PLTW classroom has combined as well, with Amy Statler and Dianna Neal team-teaching the classes.

According to Statler, PLTW takes a human-centered approach, and the projects are challenging. One recent assignment asked students to design an orthopedic shoe for a patient with cerebral palsy who has specific medical and lifestyle needs.

To kick off the orthopedic shoe lesson, a specialist from the Veterans Affairs Hospital visited the students to talk about patients with cerebral palsy and how shoes and orthopedic devices can improve a person’s ability to lead a full life. “The students really had to think about what a patient might need or want to do, and then design the shoe specifically for [the patient]. They were particularly inspired by the stories about children,”

said Statler.

In addition to mastering the steps of the design process, students learned how hard it is to bring their ideas to fruition. “I had a great idea for the shoe project,” said Jervon Cole, a seventh-grader, “But I was focused too much on comfort and it didn’t help the person the way I wanted it to.”

Eighth-grader Graham Anderson-Reitz had a similar experience, when he designed a wallet for a classmate as a get-to-know-you project at the beginning of the year. “It turned out better in my head than it did in real life,” he said.

Despite some real-world disappointments, students are enthusiastic about the class. Olivia Gettis said she enrolled because she’s “more of a visual and hands-on learner than paper and pencil.” Cole said he chose it because he “hopes to be an architect or engineer or something of that nature” when he grows up.

The course has changed how the students look at the world around them. Devyn Etling, a seventh-grader, said, “You might look at an object and think it was easy to build, but when you actually break it down and think about every little step, you realize how much time and effort it took.”

Both teachers hope their students will continue PLTW course-



Students evaluate each other’s wallet designs.

COURTESY CH-UH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

tained. Then we’ll receive their Pringles and have the chance to evaluate the effectiveness of their packaging designs,” explained Neal.

Because the course is project-based, students often work in groups and use their hands to manipulate materials that have been donated or purchased with grant dollars.

Jack Keller appreciates the fact that the teachers “trust us to use real tools, like Exacto-knives” and that students have the opportunity to take apart and explore everything from old telephones to computer towers.

The door to the classroom is often open to the hallway, and Statler reports that many students walk by and poke their heads in to ask, “What’re you guys doing in there?” This brief glimpse at their friends and classmates engaged in designing, building, and exploring is the best possible recruitment tool for Project Lead the Way.

*Krissy Dietrich Gallagher, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, is a former district teacher and a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District. A longer version of this article appeared at [www.chub.org](http://www.chub.org).*

## Cleveland Heights University Heights Board of Education

### Meeting highlights



MARCH 20, 2018

Board President Jim Posch, Vice President Jodi Sourini, and board members Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendent Talisa Dixon and Treasurer Scott Gainer. Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) students and administrative staff from the middle school also attended. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. and was adjourned at 9 p.m.

#### MSAN report

MSAN students reported on the MSAN National Student Conference, which they hosted Oct. 18–21, 2017. The national group of more than 33,000 students, established in 1999 with Heights as one of the 15 founders, works to close the achievement gap among diverse groups across the United States. The network’s goals are to encourage more minority students to seek out and take advanced and AP courses, and enroll in early college courses. Heights students meet after school every two weeks to discuss issues pertaining to African Americans, such as kneeling during the national anthem. They have the support and encouragement of staff, and attend a summer boot camp.

The conference was held at the Beachwood DoubleTree hotel, with 260 students from 21 school districts attending. The various chapters discussed their action plans,

and visited Kent State, Cleveland State and Case Western Reserve universities, as well as the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

The students presented strategies to develop positive attitudes toward studies, including service opportunities, mentoring, and connecting with middle schools. They told the board that minority student enrollment has increased in upper-level classes.

#### Middle school discipline and security

Principals Jeff Johnson and Patrick McNichols, and administrative staff presented strategies to alleviate many discipline problems, including a recent bomb threat, that have arisen in the middle school. The security plan was discussed. Parent and PTA involvement, additional staffing, staff professional development, and working with disruptive students were all mentioned as aspects of potential strategies. Alternative educational sites for some students are being studied. The district wants the public to know it is listening, but much work must be done.

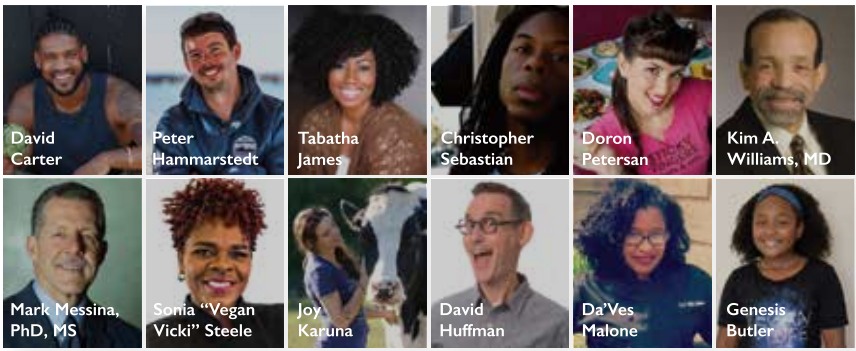
LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.

Look for earlier and often expanded postings of meeting summaries online at [www.heightsobserver.org](http://www.heightsobserver.org). See disclaimer on page 8.

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# Coventry library hosts children's author Terri Libenson

Jay Rosen

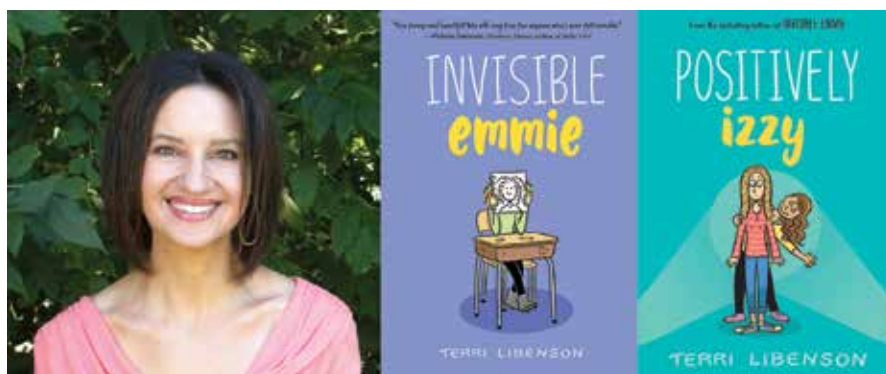
Local author and illustrator Terri Libenson will read from and discuss her new book, *Positively Izzy*, at the Coventry Village branch of Heights Libraries on Wednesday, May 9, at 7 p.m. The event is part of Heights Libraries' Cedar-Coventry Author Series, in partnership with Mac's Backs - Books on Coventry.

In the following Q-and-A, Libenson speaks about her writing process, favorite authors, and her upcoming book:

**Q:** How would you describe your new book, *Positively Izzy*? **A:** It's a spin-off of *Invisible Emmie*. Both books are set in the same school and town, but this one stars two new characters: Brianna, Emmie's best friend, and Izzy, a new character I've introduced. These girls have different personalities, kind of like Emmie and Katie. Bri is smart and bookish, while Izzy is a dreamer who loves playacting. Like *Invisible Emmie*, *Positively Izzy* also takes place over the course of a day, but this time it focuses on the school talent show.

**Q:** What inspires you to write for middle-grade readers? **A:** It really seems to come naturally. I think there's just a big part of me that is kidlike. Plus, I can remember how I felt at that age, which helps.

**Q:** Were you initially drawn more to writing or illustrating? Do you ever find it challenging to work with multiple mediums? **A:** I grew up thinking I would become an artist. I loved drawing. But over time, I grew to love writing just as much, if



Terri Libenson and her books, *Invisible Emmie* and *Positively Izzy*.

not more so. Cartooning and writing graphic novels combines my love for both. It's always challenging, but it's my favorite way to express myself.

**Q:** Tell us a bit about "The Pajama Diaries." What inspired you to start the [comic strip] series, and how did you go about creating such relatable characters? **A:** I tend to write what I know, so I came up with the concept when I was a young, multitasking working mom (now I'm an old multitasking working mom). I wanted to create a character that modern parents who were juggling these crazy lives could really relate to. That's how the comic strip was born. I absolutely love doing it, and letting the characters age in real time keeps the material fresh.

**Q:** Do you have any advice for aspiring illustrators and storytellers? **A:** Be patient and persistent. It took me 10 years on and off to get syndicated. Also, practice. (Check out all these "p" words!) Take art lessons, writing lessons, and learn how to self-edit. I worked as a humorous greeting card writer for a long time, and that helped me develop all those skills. It has helped me so much as both an

author and cartoonist. And most of all, read! It helps to stay informed and spark inspiration.

**Q:** Do you have a favorite time or place to write? What helps you tap into your creative side? **A:** I tend to work best around mid-morning

to mid-afternoon. I definitely need coffee to fuel me first thing. I like writing in my office—maybe I'm just so used to it. It's usually quiet . . . and close to the fridge.

**Q:** Who are some of your favorite authors and illustrators? **A:** I'm all over the place. No particular favorite author or illustrator (too many), but I can tell you what book genres I love: graphic novels (for kids and adults), nonfiction, and historical fiction.

**Q:** What are you reading right now? **A:** I'm reading a great book my editor sent me, called *Why Comics?* by Hillary Chute.

*Jay Rosen is communications coordinator at Heights Libraries.*

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## What's going on at your library?

### Coventry Village Branch

1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400

Wednesday, May 9, 7-8:30 p.m.

**Cedar-Coventry Author Series:** Terri Libenson. Terri Libenson, cartoonist, author and troublemaker, will read from her new graphic novel, *Positively Izzy*. Libenson is also the author of *Invisibly Emmie* and cartoonist of the internationally syndicated comic strip "The Pajama Diaries." A book signing will follow the reading.

### Lee Road Branch

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Monday, May 21, 7-8:30 p.m.

**Tech Talk: Cutting the Cord.** Lots of people are "cutting the cord"—getting rid of cable in favor of Internet-based ways to watch their favorite shows. Learn about streaming services (such as Netflix and Hulu), ways of connecting these services to your TV (such as Roku, Apple TV and Fire Stick), and more. Registration opens on May 7.

### Noble Neighborhood Branch

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

Tuesday, May 22, 4-5 p.m.

**Upcycle Inspiration.** Be earth friendly with style this spring. Par-

ticipants will create and challenge themselves, using materials from Upcycle Parts Shop, and will learn about how to "reuse" better.

### University Heights Branch

13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Tuesday, May 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

**H.G. Wells Film Series:** "The Time Machine." This program is part of a monthly series showing film versions of some classic H.G. Wells tales. (Part of Heights Libraries' Silver Screen series.)

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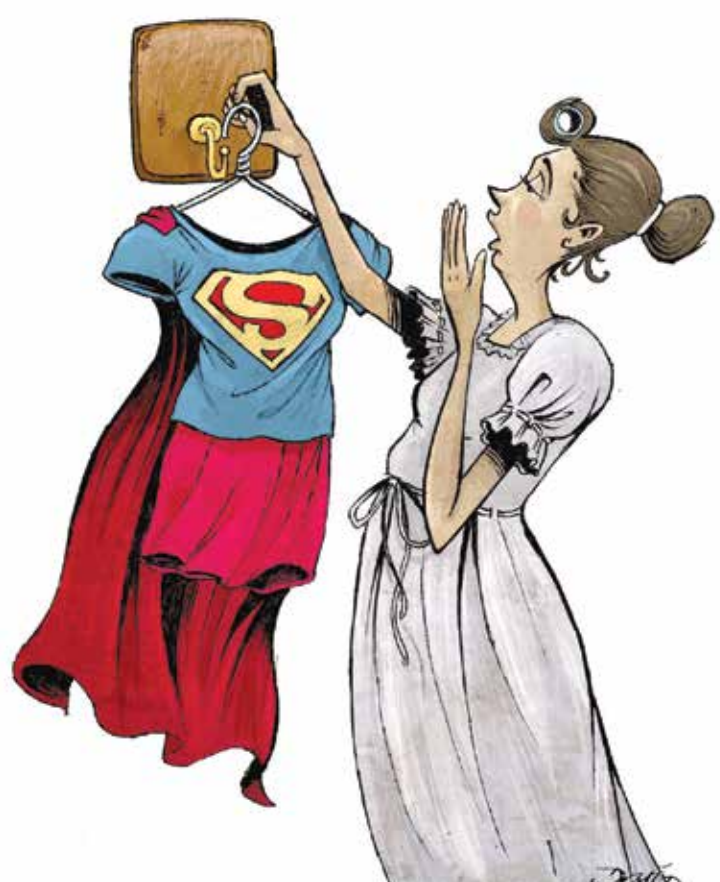
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# CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

May is Older Americans Month, a time for older adults to join together with others in the community to learn, socialize and celebrate. Each year, the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC) celebrates this designation on the last Thursday in May with an Older Americans Month Forum.

The forum will take place on Thursday, May 31, 1-3 p.m. Reservations are not necessary.

This year's topic is Senior Safety, and the event will feature presentations by Annette Mecklenburg, Cleveland Heights police chief, and Janet Montoya, MetroHealth's community health and fall prevention specialist. The program will begin with a reading by the Cleveland Heights poet laureate, and will conclude with light refreshments.

The forum is arranged by the Cleveland Heights Commission on Aging—an advisory group comprising senior residents whose mission is to advise city council on matters of importance to seniors.

Past forum topics have included Arts in the Heights, Women who Lead and Inspire, and Housing Matters.

Other special events planned for May include a presentation by Eric Kish on the Genius of Leonard Bernstein, on Wednesday, May 9, at 2 p.m.; a lunch and learn sponsored

by Judson Retirement Community on Aging in Place, on Tuesday, May 15, at noon; a bus trip to Great Lakes Theater to see a production of "Beehive," on Wednesday, May 16; and much more. If you have never visited SAC, plan to visit in May.

The senior center is closed on May 8 for voting. Please remember to vote!

SAC, located in the Cleveland Heights Community Center at 1 Monticello Blvd., offers a variety of programming for those 60 and older, and 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, and available online at [www.clevelandheights.com](http://www.clevelandheights.com).

SAC membership is \$5 for Cleveland Heights residents. To sign up, bring a recent piece of mail (such as a bill) and a photo ID.

University Heights residents who would like to join SAC must first register with Patrick Grogan-Myers, University Heights community development coordinator, at 216-932-7800, ext. 203, or [pgrogan@universityheights.com](mailto:pgrogan@universityheights.com). Membership is \$10 for University Heights seniors.

*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](mailto:ajenkins@clvhts.com).*

# UH Senior Happenings

Senior 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](mailto:info@universityheights.com).

**May 3:** Jacki Bon, marketing and communications coordinator at the Morgan Art of Papermaking Conservatory and Educational Foundation, will highlight the conservatory's unique workshops, including calligraphy, pulp painting, the piano-hinge book, folding origami corrugations, and introduction to letterpress.

**May 10:** Teresa Muti, manager of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's Department of Power and Way, will discuss what is required to fix and maintain tracks, switches, overhead power lines, and

anything else necessary to keep the trains running.

**May 17:** Richard Jones, administrator of Cuyahoga County Senior and Adult Services, will describe services and programs that enable senior citizens to age successfully, and preserve their dignity and independence. He'll explain why "one call does it all" to the Senior Intake Hotline (216-420-6700).

**May 24:** Kristin Warzocha, president and CEO of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, will describe the work of this vital lifeline for the more than 327,000 Northeast Ohioans who struggle with hunger.

**May 31:** Jesse Lange, director of the Vocal Music Department at Cleveland Heights High School, will attend this week's program, accompanied by Heights High's 13-member Boys Barbershoppers, winner of international chorus competitions.

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# Blush Boutique hosts Sip & Shop fundraisers



Blush Boutique owner Laurie Klopfer has helped raise more than \$1,000 for local nonprofits.

Shari Nacson

Looking for a meaningful way to give back to the community, Blush Boutique owner Laurie Klopfer recently launched a series of fundraisers that are a win-win for the

nonprofit and for the merchant. For each Sip & Shop event, Blush Boutique donates 20 percent of the evening's proceeds to the designated nonprofit. The result is a financial benefit for the nonprofit organization that also introduces its supporters to a popular local merchant that has been part of the Coventry Village neighborhood for almost nine years. Blush Boutique offers a pleasant venue that—during Sip & Shop events—features wine and cheese, along with a carefully curated selection of products that include clothing, jewelry and accessories.

Participants have heralded the events as a fun way to give back. Carlita Skok, board secretary of Heights Youth Theatre (HYT), said, "It was the easiest fundraiser we've ever done." It was so successful that the board of HYT hopes to host another Sip & Shop in the autumn.

To date, Blush has raised more than \$1,000 for local nonprofits that have included The Leukemia Lymphoma Society, the Heights High Hockey Team, Heights Youth Theatre, and Cleveland State Law Review. Contact Laurie Klopfer at 216-721-5319 if you would like to host a Sip & Shop event for your nonprofit.

*Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson, LISW-S, is a freelance editor, child development specialist, and nonprofit consultant who makes her home in Cleveland Heights. More than anything, Nacson is inspired by kids and adults who build connection through kindness.*

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# YWCA honors CH's McMaster

Dawn Hanson



Mallory McMaster

The YWCA of Greater Cleveland has named Cleveland Heights resident Mallory McMaster a winner in its 2018 Distinguished Young Woman Awards, recognizing her as one of 50 women between the ages of 25 and 40 who are making a difference in Northeast Ohio.

McMaster and the other recipients will be profiled in the YWCA's annual *Achieve* magazine and honored at an upcoming private reception.

An accomplished nonprofit leader and community organizer, McMaster has experience in communications, marketing, engagement, storytelling and advocacy. She is a sought-after writer with an impressive portfolio of pieces published in national outlets such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Teen Vogue*, *The New York Times* and *Vice*.

In 2017, McMaster joined the Cleveland Heights-based marketing communications firm The Fairmount Group. As a strategy consultant, she helps nonprofit clients develop and execute strategic social marketing plans and create and refine communications campaign content.

McMaster's current nonprofit leadership roles include serving as a board member for NARAL Pro-Choice America, the board chair of NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio, an abortion storyteller with We Testify, and the event director of Pride in the CLE, an annual Pride festival hosted by the LGBT Community

Center of Greater Cleveland. Prior to The Fairmount Group, McMaster served as the outreach and advocacy coordinator at Preterm, a nationwide leader in compassionate women's and reproductive healthcare, where she led a nationally recognized campaign to destigmatize abortion care through multi-level advertising, coalition building, grassroots and volunteer engagement and political advocacy.

Earlier, she led employee engagement programs, monitored quality initiatives and supported nursing education and onboarding as the assistant to the director of nursing at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

*Dawn Hanson is the founder and president of The Fairmount Group. She lives in Cleveland Heights with her husband and dog. She serves on the board of NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio and is president of the Textile Art Alliance of the Cleveland Museum of Art.*

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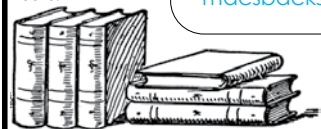
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## Shop Local.

# Studio How-To moves to Coventry

Shari Nacson

“We wanted a storefront so people can see all the fun that’s going on here!” said Sarah Nemecek. After a pilot year in a 3,000-square-foot space in the Douglas Fine Arts Building on Lee Road, Nemecek was excited to move into the Coventry Village neighborhood, adding a retail space where customers can access designer fabrics, yarns and crafting gear that correspond with studio classes.

A shop and studio for “the modern maker,” Studio How-To supports crafters of all abilities—from novice to seasoned. “Anything you can make with your hands, we are here to teach you,” said Nemecek.

Studio How-To hosted an open house and ribbon-cutting on April 7. Guests filled the studio, chatting about the arts and Cleveland, while they made pom-poms and other art together.

“The community-building is part of what I really love about



A class inside Studio How-To’s new Coventry Village storefront space.

running this business,” reflected Nemecek. “Crafting brings people together. It lets down our natural barriers so we can find ways to connect without even trying.”

“Dream-doers” by nature, Nemecek and her husband, Jon, moved

here after several years as accountants-turned-farmers in Virginia. “We chose Cleveland Heights because it felt great,” said Nemecek, citing the walkability, architecture, family-friendly venues and diversity. “There are so many interesting people doing amazing things—all packed into the area. I’ve lived in a lot of places—Alaska, Hawaii, California—and this is my favorite.”

Studio How-To has worked well with the family’s homeschooling lifestyle. Sam, age 6, has been able to use the studio for self-directed learning. In preparation for the grand opening, he designed his own business cards and helped assemble handmade furniture. During the pom-pom class, he helped guests use supplies.

Studio How-To’s spring offerings, mostly adult classes, can be found on its website. Classes for kids will be added this summer. A welcoming place for families, the studio is also available for parties and team-building activities. For class schedules and store hours, visit [www.studiohow-to.com](http://www.studiohow-to.com).

*Mostly a mom, Shari Nacson, LISW-S, is a freelance editor, child development specialist, and nonprofit consultant who makes her home in Cleveland Heights. More than anything, Nacson is inspired by kids and adults who build connection through kindness.*



## “Judson is the perfect place for us!”

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Stalwarts of the Cleveland arts-and-culture scene, Nina and Jim Gibans had accumulated a lifetime’s worth of memories in their Shaker Heights home. But when health demands challenged their independent lifestyle, the couple agreed it was time to move to Ambler Court - a beautifully renovated assisted living neighborhood that offers signature programming and care in an ideal environment for those in need of increased assistance.

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# Friends of Cain Park raffle offers free season tickets

Lisa Manzari



What's better than going to a show at the Evans Amphitheatre at Cain Park? Going to every show—for free.

Friends of Cain Park is raffling two free season tickets in a fundraiser for its activities to support Cain Park. Each raffle ticket costs \$50, and sales are limited to just 100 tickets.

Tickets are available through May 31 at [www.cainpark.eventbrite.com](http://www.cainpark.eventbrite.com). Tickets will also be available on Saturday, June 2, at Residents Day at Cain Park, when the ticket booth opens for sales to Cleveland Heights residents only.

Friends of Cain Park is a non-profit founded in 1995 to support artist prizes for the July Arts Festival, music and dance performances, actor stipends and college scholarships for Cleveland Heights High School. Each year, the organization provides thousands of dollars to support activities at the unique civic-owned

summer arts and theater facility.

Membership to Friends of Cain Park is \$40 for individuals and \$50 for families. Benefits include ticket discounts and preferred seating. Other ways to support Friends of Cain Park are through a tax-deductible donation, or the purchase of an engraved brick on the Cain Park grounds for \$50.

"We hope that our neighbors throughout the Heights and Northeast Ohio will support us so we can keep supporting Cain Park," said Molly McGuigan, president of the Cain Park Board of Directors.

Membership forms are available in the spring/summer issue of the city's *Focus* magazine and online at [www.cainpark.com](http://www.cainpark.com). Contributions can be sent to Friends of Cain Park, 40 Severance Circle, Cleveland Heights, OH, 44118. For more information, contact Lisa Manzari at [cainpark@clvhts.com](mailto:cainpark@clvhts.com) or 216-906-7496.

*Lisa Manzari has been a resident of Cleveland Heights since June 2006, and has been on the Friends of Cain Park board since shortly after visiting its booth at the Cain Park Arts Festival.*

## Communion of Saints students bring 'Shrek' to the stage



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In the mood for some ogre-sized family fun? The Communion of Saints School Drama Program, now in its ninth year, will present "Shrek Jr. The Musical" on May 4 and 5, at 7 p.m., in Powers Hall at Communion of Saints School. More than 70 students are involved in this year's production, on the stage and behind the scenes. Under the guidance of Lydia Chanenka, director and scenery painter, and Maria Botti-Lodovico, choreographer and musical director, the magic of the swamp is brought to life through music and magical scenery. Adult tickets are just \$3. For more information, visit [www.communionofsaintsschool.org](http://www.communionofsaintsschool.org).

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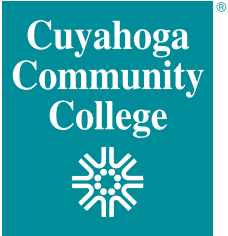


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## Homeschool art show to benefit ARTFUL youth programs

Shannon Morris

On Wednesday, May 23, six homeschool artists will showcase their masterpieces at The Mary Proctor Project art show, hosted by ARTFUL Cleveland in its studios on the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus, 2843 Washington Blvd., in Cleveland Heights. The event takes place from 1 to 7 p.m., and light refreshments will be provided.

The artists are Kaitlynn Bamer, Elise Bolton, Lennice Bolton, Chiara Koonce, Mary Proctor and Juliana Walther.

Proctor, a 12-year-old homeschooled Cleveland Heights artist, founded The Mary Proctor Project in 2014 to showcase young artists and their work within the Cleveland community, and to raise awareness and funds to directly benefit local nonprofits. Proctor wants to share her passion for art with others, inspire other young artists, and give back to the com-

munity. To date, the project has raised more than \$900 for Open Doors Academy and Lakewood's Harding Middle School.

The event is free and open to the public. Donations collected at the event will benefit The Mary Proctor Project Scholarship Fund at ARTFUL, which will help young people participate in classes there, regardless of their ability to pay. To donate, e-mail [shannon@artfulcleveland.org](mailto:shannon@artfulcleveland.org) or visit [www.artfulcleveland.org](http://www.artfulcleveland.org).

ARTFUL provides affordable community classes and quality studio space that supports and educates artists in their mission to create, sell, and display their art while making creativity and inspiration more accessible to the community at large.

Learn more about The Mary Proctor Project on Facebook or by calling 216-956-2123.

*Shannon Morris is the executive director of ARTFUL Cleveland.*

## Dobama's 'Appropriate' runs through May 20

Anne Bakan

From the writer of Dobama Theatre's 2016 hit, "An Octoroon," comes a play that asks a question for which there is no easy answer: how does the past affect what we think and who we become?

"Appropriate," winner of the 2014 Obie Award for Best New American Play, is running now through May 20 at Dobama Theatre. Written by 2016 MacArthur Genius Grant recipient Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, and directed by Dobama Artistic Director Nathan Motta, this play appropriates the white family drama to make whiteness racially visible at all times.

In "Appropriate," the patriarch of the Lafayette clan has just passed away and the family is forced to descend upon its crumbling Arkansas homestead to settle accounts. As the three adult children rummage through a mountain of hoarded relics, they spar over a lifetime of junk, past relationship issues and inherited debts. But when they make

a disturbing discovery among their father's possessions, the reunion takes a turn for the volatile, forcing every member to confront their family history and each other.

In its review of the play, *The Washington Post* praised, "... the playwright's gift for drawing his characters into an escalating conflict and sustaining, with humor and craft, our curiosity ..."

The cast of Dobama's regional premiere of "Appropriate" features Abraham McNeil Adams, Tracee Patterson, Tom Woodward, Ursula Cataan, Kelly McCready, Ireland Derry, Jacob Eeg and Miles Pierce.

"Appropriate" runs Thursdays through Sundays. Ticket prices range from \$29 to \$32, with senior, student and military discounts available. Call the box office at 216-932-3396 for information or to purchase tickets. Tickets are also available at [www.dobama.org](http://www.dobama.org).

*Anne Bakan is the assistant managing director of Dobama Theatre.*



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# Standing my ground



## SONGS AND STORIES

I learned the Pledge of Allegiance early in elementary school. I learned it, but I never felt comfortable saying it, even as a little kid. I probably couldn't have articulated this back then, but it seemed like something that shouldn't have to be forced. That's the way I felt about prayers in religious services, too: Either they should be natural and sincere, or you shouldn't say them, because, I mean, what's the point?

But during an assembly near the beginning of second grade at Coventry School, when we were supposed to be reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, an older kid standing next to me said, "All you have to do is say 'watermelon, watermelon,' and no one will know the difference." So that's what I did, for years, for the Pledge and for prayers.

Then when I got to Heights High, in the mid-'60s, when protesting was the norm, I decided that I no longer needed to say "watermelon"—or anything—and when the rest of the school was saying the Pledge, I just kept my mouth shut. Then it occurred to me that I didn't have to stand up for the Pledge, either. Standing for the Pledge was not a law, and it was within

my rights not to participate.

No one ever said anything about it—though I got a lot of dirty looks from teachers and fellow students—until one day in May of my 11th-grade year. I guess I was more noticeable that day, sitting in the first row of the second section of the Heights High auditorium seats.

I and my friend Harry were sitting together there, and when everyone else stood up for the Pledge and started reciting it, we sat silently in our seats. Until a teacher, Alva Kilgore, a huge guy who had played professional football, spotted us, walked over and stood in front of us, grabbed each of us by the fronts of our shirts and calmly lifted us out of our seats.

I quickly started explaining to him all of the reasons we didn't feel the need to say the Pledge, but he interrupted, saying, "That's fine. You don't have to say it. But stand up, out of respect—not for your country, if that's the way you feel, but for the other students, who are standing."

I said, "Okay. That sounds fair."

Then Mr. Kilgore added, "Plus, it will probably keep you from getting beaten up by some of these guys."

Harry and I nodded and thanked him for the advice.

Some of those guys did rough me up, however, for other forms of protest. It was the mid-'60s and the height of the Vietnam War, and the burgeoning,



1960s student anti-war protest.

and growing, anti-war movement. I marched, carrying signs, in protests all over the area. Many Heights students did. People called us names, and FBI agents tried to intimidate us by taking our pictures at close range. But no one touched us. Until we protested inside Heights High.

One day in May, we—the protester types—wore black armbands as a way to honor the soldiers who had died in the Vietnam War. That seemed to make us targets to a bunch of big guys who didn't understand the nature of our actions that day. I was on my way to the choir room, between third and fourth periods, when a much larger guy named Tom (I can tell you his last name if you want to know), grabbed me by my hair and slammed my forehead into a locker. I tried to explain the purpose of the armband, but he yelled bad words at me and called me all kinds of names.

There were other times, too,

when those guys manhandled me and others. We all shared our stories and compared notes.

For the final assembly of that school year, I was looking for a seat when I spotted an empty one just one seat away from that guy Tom. I took it. And when it was time for the Pledge of Allegiance, I decided to ignore Mr. Kilgore's advice, and I remained seated and silent, just to bait Tom. He glared at me the entire time and practically screamed the Pledge.

It was not quite as brave of me as it might appear, though, since the seat I took was on the aisle. And I was totally ready to run.

*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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