Coventry P.E.A.C.E. reaches agreement with Heights Libraries

Frank Lewis

Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus (CPC) has reached an agreement with Heights Libraries on a 15-month lease of the former Coventry school building, which has been home to arts and community-service nonprofits for more than a decade. This agreement includes a path toward a 99-year lease, and allows CPC to sublet spaces to nonprofits and build on its mission—to create a robust arts and culture center by supporting tenants through affordable rent and special programming.

An independent organization, CPC represents the building’s current tenants Ensemble Theatre, ART-FUL, Lake Erie Ink, FutureHeights, Reaching Heights, Cleveland Heights Teachers Union and Cleveland Arts Prize-winning artist Robin V. Lear. Community residents founded Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Inc. in the 1990s, to build and maintain the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Playground. In 2017, the organization expanded its mission to pursue the vision of an integrated campus where everyone can “create, show, learn and grow.” Led by anchor tenants Ensemble Theatre and ART-FUL, the organization aims to create the capacity to build a unique arts, education, recreation and community service hub that is greater than the sum of its parts.

In 2018, when the library purchased the six-acre property, including the ease of Amazon; instead through this difficult time by resisting the surge of support now could translate to a once-again thriving local economy post-pandemic,” said Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. Along with retail stores, most restaurants have updated their business models to better support carry-out and delivery. “Gift cards would be a fine way to support them, too,” said Bremer Fisher.

This year, the Observer added two categories in order to cast a wider net of potential gift ideas: the Non-Traditional Gift and the Socially Distanced Gift. “Colorful face masks make great stocking stuffers,” said Bremer Fisher.

Many Heights businesses have submitted gift ideas to the guide, which starts on page 17.

FutureHeights awards small grants to five CH groups

Tabitha Givens

FutureHeights, the community development corporation for Cleveland Heights, awarded a total of $5,836 to 47 groups in small grants to five groups through its semi-annual Neighborhood Mini-Grants program this fall. “We are excited to help fund these projects that will have a positive impact on several Cleveland Heights neighborhoods,” said FutureHeights Executive Director Deanna Bremer Fisher.

Since the program’s inception in 2015, FutureHeights has awarded $50,386 to 47 groups based in neighborhoods throughout the city.

In the fall 2020 round, FutureHeights awarded Delmore Community Orchard $500. Founded in March 2020, and located at 3822 Delmore Road in Cleveland Heights’ Noble neighborhood, it is the first community orchard in the city. The funds will be used to enhance the plantings, which already include several varieties of apples, blueberries, raspberries, grapes and pawpaws.

“The grant-making committee was impressed by their civic-engagement approach,” said Sruti Basu, director of community-building programs at FutureHeights. FutureHeights awarded EYEJ Youth Council $600 for its Empowering Youth Exploring Justice project. The organization, which has served more than 1,500 underserved youths, continued on page 17.
This month, more than ever, let’s shop local for the holidays

OPENING THE OBSERVER

Bob Rosenbaum

At the height of the pandemic, Walmart doubled its online sales for the second quarter (April through June) compared to last year. Its stores, which do far more business than the online operation, were having a banner year, too, with companywide sales up 10 percent in the second quarter. Those extra sales add up to new profits of $1 billion a month.

Here’s some perspective: The city of Cleveland Heights, with an annual budget of $45 million, could operate for a year; and then some on the extra pandemic profit Walmart made this Monday and half of Tuesday. And that’s just Walmart. At Target, second-quarter sales were up nearly 11 percent, and online sales tripled the total from the same time in 2019.

Sales at Home Depot were up more than 23 percent; at Lowes, just over 34 percent. Amazon’s sales jumped 40 percent, for a three-month profit of $2.2 billion—doubling last year’s second-quarter profits. And we haven’t even gotten to Black Friday, Cyber Monday and the whole month of December.

Not everybody is having the same recession. It’s easy to justify shopping online during a pandemic. But Amazon and the big boxes don’t need your money. You know who does? The people who have set up shop in our own community.

The people who own these shops have invested their life savings to create businesses designed to serve us—the people of Cleveland Heights, University Heights and nearby communities. They’ve chosen to locate their businesses here, pay local taxes, support local causes, and participate in local events and traditions. They’ve assembled products and services to meet our local tastes and interests.

Many of them sell stuff you can’t get just anywhere, and when they ring up your purchase, they look you in the eye and say “Thank you”—and you know they mean it.

So for the holidays this year, please shop locally. Buy your gifts from people who care at least as much about this community as you do. Instead of tossing an extra $50 onto an Amazon gift card, spend it at a local store, where it could mean the difference between an average week and a good one.

If you do your holiday shopping with local merchants, they’ll notice. When people talk about the good life in the Heights, one of the selling points is our collection of business districts populated by interesting shops, restaurants and services.

The big boxes are here to stay, but you can’t say the same for small businesses. Even in good times, independent businesses have an uphill battle to survive among the multi-national retailers. If you like the character these businesses add to the community, make it a point to keep them by putting on your mask, walking in the front door, and making a purchase. Now. When it matters most.

Here’s wishing all of us a happy, healthy holiday season, filled with the spirit of community and fellowship.

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

Letters Policy

The Heights Observer welcomes letters to the editor on all local issues. Letters should be typed, along with the writer’s name, phone number and e-mail address, to: www.heightsobserver.org/member.
EdChoice math leaves district short on funding

Eric Silverman

In a recent conversation with a Cleveland Heights friend, he told me that, in his attempts to set the record straight on the website Nextdoor, in regard to the impact that EdChoice vouchers are having on the CH-UH City School District budget, he was being accused of being "anti-Jewish." I find this odd, owing to what I know of him and what he told me he had been saying.

Nonetheless, I figured that, as a former CH-UH school board member (2014–2017) as well as someone who is Jewish, I would take a look at the numbers myself and see why his concerns about the impact of EdChoice might be misconstrued.

I went to the Ohio Department of Education’s website for the numbers for FY2020 dated 8/31/2020. This report shows the CH-UH school district losing to EdChoice vouchers, $5,704,713 in aid it would normally receive from the state. There are 1,410 students attending 33 different private schools. It would appear that all but two (schools) have a religious affiliation, and those two have only 19 of the 1,410 students attending.

74.7% of the dollars that the CH-UH district is losing to EdChoice. This report shows the CH-UH school district losing, to EdChoice.

The remaining 25.3% of the students attend (one of) 1 Jewish religious schools, but 4 of these schools only account for 34 students, meaning the bulk of not only Jewish school students, but of all students. These 7 schools account for $2,858,669, or 74.7% of the dollars that the CH-UH district is losing to EdChoice.

Pointing out the fact that these schools are the principal beneficiaries of EdChoice vouchers is not "anti-Jewish" bias; it is simple math and a straightforward statement of fact.

While there is ample evidence to undermine the rationale given—that EdChoice is a program to encourage public schools to improve, and is instead a Trojan Horse to undermine public education and send money to religious schools and for-profit charter schools—what we see in this district is that the primary beneficiaries of EdChoice are schools that the students were likely to attend without the vouchers.

Usage of non-public schools in CH-UH goes back 100 years, and the district is located in what might be the epicenter of private schools in the region, in particular a number of schools that are unique to the state. In 1982 the Wolpert Study examined non-public school usage as well as overall enrollment trends in the CH-UH district, and found that private schools tended to attract students naturally and, as such, were not in competition with the public schools; this continues to be the case 40 years later.

The fatal flaw in the EdChoice program is that the voucher far exceeds the amount the CH-UH district receives per pupil from the state; so, public school students are, in effect, subsidizing the tuition for students who have never attended, nor were going to attend, the public schools, so they can go to private religious schools. This would be like someone receiving not only an income tax refund, but those earmarked for two or three of their neighbors, as well.

While opponents of the current school levy (ballot issue) say the district should “tighten its belt,” math shows us it has already done this, as the levy doesn’t even cover the cost of monies lost to EdChoice, with the net result being that even with passage of the levy, the district will be “tightening its belt,” with the new revenues only partially reducing part of the losses.

Cleveland Heights resident Eric J. Silverman was a member of the CH-UH Board of Education, 1994–2001 and 2014–17, and a member of Heights Libraries Board of Directors, 2003–09.

The $7,074,113 EdChoice deduction was real money lost to the CH-UH district

Jim Peach

Both Eric Silverman and James McMahon, in their Heights Observer opinions, correctly state the EdChoice voucher deduction cost to the CH-UH school district was $5,704,713 for the last school year [2019–20]. As an elected member of the school board I can tell you this amount in the prior year was $3,878,249 [2018–19] and the amount for this school year will be $9,037,250 [2020–21] (based on current data).

What is not correct: McMahon further states the district receives additional EdChoice funding from the state to offset these costs.

I want to clarify: the district’s state “Foundation Funding” (the amount the state deduces the EdChoice voucher amounts from) was:


Note how the amounts remain the same (except for last two years because of state budget cuts related to COVID). Our district is on a “cap” (frozen); this means our state Foundation Funding is fixed and is not impacted by student counts nor by how many students are receiving vouchers. Currently, if 700 new students showed up on our doorstep to either go to our schools, or qualify for a voucher, our state Foundation Funding remains the same.

Because of changes in the state law, we’ve seen the number of students receiving vouchers increase as follows: 869 [2018–19], 1,421 [2019–20] and 1,792 [2020–21]. The amount of the students using a voucher, 95% never attended

continued on page 9
Organized advocacy is good for our community

I moved to Cleveland Heights in 1979, drawn by its racial integration and lively civic culture—good reasons to move to an aging first-ring suburb. Here, being an engaged citizen is not only essential; it is also rewarding. Our community is no place to be passive. Our challenges are plenty: We must end state disinvestment in municipal government and public education, overcome the lasting fallout from the housing crisis, build a truly inclusive community, maintain a viable tax base, confront climate change and economic inequality, and end the glorification of exurban living. The list goes on.

We are up against a lot. Unfiltered Internet complaints notwithstanding, we have plenty of people who look out for one another, engage in debate and problem-solving, seek to understand complex issues and participate in the political process. People want our community to be a good place to live. I do not always agree with my fellow citizen, but there is a tradition here of people airing their concerns, and, for the most part, this has healthy results.

It is a privilege to join with other Heights residents to advocate for good policies and to challenge barriers to opportunity. It has enriched my life, and I hope it has helped push forward changes that allow more people to have the comforts I enjoy.

During this election season, I was thrilled by the chance to work with supporters of the school levy (Issue 69 on the November ballot) to advocate for state-policy changes that would bring relief from the levy cycle. We advocated for an end to “deduction funding,” the harmful state policy that diverts funds appropriated by the legislature for public schools to private schools. More than half of the state aid to our public schools is used to pay for private education. Deduction funding reduces the state’s contribution to public schools and forces districts that lose state funding to rely more on locally raised funds. State funds pay for less, even though the DeRolph v. Ohio decision of 1997 required the state to invest more and carry a larger share of the cost. Long-awaited school-funding-reform legislation has been proposed through House Bill 305. If passed, it would address the constitutional issues of DeRolph and end deduction funding.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio is a longtime advocate for adequate and equitable funding of public schools. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights chapter of the league, led by Maryann Barnes, connects the local levy to the need to end deduction funding, as HB 305 would. Similarly, the school-levy committee has cited the uncontrolled increase in private-education costs as the driver of the district’s financial problems. In a short amount of time, these two networks mobilized 300 postcard-writers to lobby state senators and House Speaker Robert Cupp to end deduction funding. We ran out of postcards long before we ran out of advocates willing to send them.

I don’t know if this advocacy will change a state legislature that has shown its preference for private education, but legislative leaders now know that people in Cleveland Heights and University Heights will not roll over and accept a policy that undermines our quality of life. Without the chance to mount resistance, I would have felt helpless to defend my community from this threat. I am so grateful to my fellow Heights advocates who helped with this project, who consistently take the time to get involved, and who are ready to step up and do what they can. They are reliable, energetic and sincere.

This is just the latest episode to make me grateful for putting down roots in Cleveland Heights.

Susie Kaeser

Tutor.com

Tutor.com is a FREE one-to-one online tutoring service connecting students to qualified tutors from any internet-enabled device seven days a week, from 2-9 p.m. Students (and parents, too!) can get help with any kind of academic question in math, science, English, social studies and writing. Tutor.com also supports students through online drop-off writing review, practice quizzes, video lesson libraries, and The Princeton Review® SAT®/ACT® Essentials test prep.

Visit heightslibrary.org to create and account and start learning!
Thought of running for mayor of Cleveland Heights? The 2021 general election is still a year off, but if that seems like a long time, consider this: petitioning starts in a little over four months. You will have from March 18 to June 16, 2021, to gather the 222 valid signatures required to get on the ballot. If there are three or more candidates, you will run in a non-partisan primary election on Sept. 14. If you survive the first round of voting, you will face a single opponent on Nov. 2.

Last month, three people who successfully ran for mayor of other cities participated in a forum sponsored by Citizens for an Elected Mayor (CEM) and CH City Council Member Melody Hart. The online audience of about 100 heard from mayors Annette Blackwell of Maple Heights, Michael Dylan Brennan of University Heights, and Georgine Welo of South Euclid about what it takes to lead an inner-ring suburb during difficult times. [The forum can be viewed on YouTube, via a link at www.citizensforanelectedmayor.com.]

Listening to them got us thinking. What knowledge, skills and qualities are essential in the person who will lead our city into its second century? We need a mayor with a vision for the city, who will inspire council members, staff and especially residents—from Fairmount Boulevard to Noble Road—to work together to realize that vision. We need a mayor who is honest, accountable and practical, whose idealism is tempered by an understanding of financial constraints and human limitations. This is no job for an introvert. We need a mayor who truly enjoys ribbon-cuttings, block parties, forums, festivals, sports events and other occasions that bring together residential and business communities within and across neighborhoods.

We need a mayor who listens. While most staff members go home at 5 p.m., the mayor must be more accessible, willing to give up private time to be available to residents and community leaders. We need a mayor with the self-confidence to make tough decisions, and the humility to ask for help. Welo, Blackwell and Brennan stressed the importance of talking to other mayors, of seeking their advice and collaboration. Welo also noted that her transition team interviewed every single South Euclid employee, eliciting their opinions and concerns.

We need a mayor who can put aside desire for power, attention, or approval to serve the needs of the city. In her case, as Welo pointed out, a public servant in the truest sense of the term.

While our city administrator will oversee daily operations, we need a mayor with management experience. A background in government, nonprofit organization, business or education can provide transferable skills. All three panelists cited financial acumen, with the assistance of, as Brennan put it, “a great finance department,” as indispensable to running a city. The best leaders surround themselves with people whose strengths compliment their own and compensate for their weaknesses. Nobody is good at everything.

Above all, we need a mayor who will not only tackle major problems, but do so with passion, vision and commitment. Blackwell recalled that, when Maple Heights seemed to be declining, she considered moving. What stopped her was the thought, “But what about the other 23,000 people who live here? They deserve better.” She decided to stay and run for mayor. Take a long look inside. Do you have what this job requires? Or consider your circle of neighbors, friends, family members, and people you know through organizations or congregations. If you see these traits and abilities in someone, tell them so; encourage them to step up.

Time is short. Cleveland Heights is dependent on you.

Deborah Van Klee and Carla Rautenberg are long-time residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Local news that speaks to you
Catch the HeightsNow podcast from WJCU
Live:
Mon-Fri
at 9 am and 4 pm
Stream on demand:
wjcu.org/media/heights-now

Frank Lewis is a writer and editor, and a
neighbor of Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus.
FutureHeights, one of the CPC tenants, publishes the Heights Observer.

Renewing our core values

Karen Rago

The Cleveland Heights Teachers Union was established 75 years ago. I am only the fourth president of our union since 1970. Our primary role is to represent 505 teachers, counselors, social workers, nurses, ancillaries, security monitors, and other staff; but, we also are a presence in the CH-UH community, participating in community events, fundraisers, school functions and political events. Since the beginning, our vision and core values have remained the same: We are professionals whose focus is always on the students we teach.

Our vision statement says "Cleveland Heights Teachers Union will create, enhance, and sustain optimal teaching and learning conditions through collaboration, political action, community engagement." This means that we become involved in political races and issues that are important to public education. We support candidates who share our core values through voluntary contributions from our members and through political action.

Our students are suffering every year due to the financial losses caused by private school vouchers. In addition, our district receives less in state aid than its private school counterparts. Our community has always had choices available to it when it comes to educating its children. However, we strongly oppose the use of public dollars to support private and religious schools.

Our policymakers must find a funding solution for all the students who live in our community. It is important to us that candidates who support fair funding for public schools are elected. We actively urge our members to support these candidates through their contributions and their votes.

We are not just political, however. We want to ensure that the students we teach receive a quality public education. We do this through continuing education, collaboration, and a high-quality learning environment. Our union has provided courses through its Educational Research and Dissemination Program. It is union-sponsored, research-based professional development, designed to help our members receive high-quality professional development from our own trained teachers. Through this program, our teachers not only earn credit toward license renewal but also receive strategies for their classrooms. We believe that we all need to continue to grow and learn best practices.

Through our core values, we recognize and advocate for public education, we demand respect for teaching professionals and support staff; and, most importantly, we value every child. Each student is unique, and many have special challenges. For some children, their schools and their teachers are the only stable part of their lives—a responsibility that our members take very seriously. Our students have always been the reason we continue to adjust our teaching regardless of the ever-changing trends in education.

We became virtual teachers overnight; we adjusted to new programs with little guidance. Some of our teachers were asked to return to in-person teaching with just one week’s notice. All of our teachers will most likely be back to in-person learning with their students soon, and they will be asked to adjust again.

Teachers always adjust to make things work best for their students. What we do best is being there for whatever a student needs on any particular day. We did not choose our profession for money or recognition, but rather for our desire to make a difference in the lives of the children in our charge.

Karen Rago has taught grades K-8 in the CH-UH district, and currently presides over math and language support at Monticello Middle School. She is president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.
Weeds meet their match at ‘The Walt’

Walter Stinson Community Park is a popular destination in University Heights. The playground attracts young children. The large open space draws dog walkers. Coffee seekers flock to the park every weekend. And, when we’re not in the middle of a pandemic, “The Walt” attracts large crowds for Fall Fest, concerts and movies.

The beautiful organic gardens at The Walt also attract all sorts of birds and butterflies. Unfortunately, the gardens also attract a wide variety of weeds.

The weeds have met their match in The Friends of The Walt, a newly created group of neighbors who have volunteered to help beautify the park. (They’re kind of like the Avengers, but without all the high-tech gadgets and elaborate costumes.)

The Friends of The Walt volunteer group formed organically (no pun intended), through the efforts of Eran Shiloh and Emma Shook, after the city organized volunteers to clean the park back in August.

“We started by focusing on the rain gardens at the entrance to the park, and the flower beds adjacent to the road,” Shiloh said. “Since then we have been meeting every Saturday morning at 8 a.m. by the Fenwick Road entrance to the park.”

A regular group has assembled every subsequent Saturday, and includes Donald Vicarel, Joanna Homann, Darlene and Brian Flood, Rosalia Rozsahegyi, as well as Shook and Shiloh.

Walter Stinson Community Park was planned so as to incorporate plantings beneficial not only to people, but to nature. A rain garden and native plants provide beautification as well as stormwater management, and food and shelter for birds and insects.

“Public green spaces like the park are vitally important to residents, yet often a city does not have the means or expertise to maintain them beyond mowing and caring for trees,” Shiloh explained. “This is where citizen activism and community involvement can make a difference.”

The Friends of the Walt are focused on removing plants on Ohio’s noxious weed list, including bull thistle, bindweed and buckthorn. They replace them with beneficial native plants. Thanks to donations from residents and contributions from the city, the group is also replacing shrubs that have died.

Future plans include installing educational signage to promote ecological gardening.

Shiloh said more volunteers are welcome to help, regardless of residency. To volunteer, contact UH City Hall by e-mailing info@universityheights.com; your request to volunteer will be shared with the group.

This is part of a greater environmental effort in University Heights. Many residents have already joined the Heights Pollinator Pathways project by planting front-yard gardens composed of native plants for an ecologically healthy city environment.

Mike Cook is the communications and civic engagement coordinator for University Heights.
FutureHeights moves leadership series to fall in 2021

Sydney Chickos

FutureHeights will convene the seventh cohort of its Neighborhood Leadership Workshop Series in Fall 2021. The series is a multidisciplinary leadership development program that helps participants develop leadership skills, gain knowledge, and acquire tools they can use to help make their Cleveland Heights neighborhoods strong, safe and vibrant.

“We appreciate the value of personal connections made during these sessions,” said Sruti Basu, director of community-building programs. “We knew it would not be possible to meet in-person, due to the pandemic, if we kept to our normal, early-in-the-year schedule.”

Each year since 2015, FutureHeights has helped residents learn more about the city in which they live and connect with other civically minded people. To date, 77 residents have participated in sessions that explore such topics as individual leadership styles; asset-based community development; planning neighborhood projects; the history of the city; diversity; equity and inclusion; policy and advocacy; leveraging community resources and community-building.

“I found the workshops to be extremely helpful in giving me a space to work out ideas I had, and shape them with the help of other people with similar interest in working for Cleveland Heights,” said Michael Hagesfeld, a 2018 participant. “The speakers were interesting and helped give different perspectives I could apply to my particular situation. Working with other people who also had a drive and love for Cleveland Heights inspired me, in addition to giving me ideas I could apply to my concept, and be able to help them with theirs.”

Donna Johnson, a 2019 participant, said that participating in the program “was the perfect impetus to help me rally and engage my neighbors!”

The program is funded by the city of Cleveland Heights through a Community Development Block Grant and by individual contributions to FutureHeights.

The 2021 five-session series will occur on Sept. 19, Oct. 3, Oct. 17, Oct. 31, and Nov. 14 at the FutureHeights office at Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus, 2843 Washington Blvd. Applications will open July 15 and close Aug. 31 so that members of the 2022 cohort can be selected.

All Cleveland Heights residents are encouraged to apply to participate. Childcare will be provided. “If there are other potential barriers to your attendance, please let us know so we can work with you to find a solution,” said Basu.

FutureHeights plans to return to its spring schedule in 2022.

For more information, visit www.futureheights.org/programs/community-building-programs/, call 216-520-1453 or e-mail slasu@futureheights.org.

Sydney Chickos is a student at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University and an intern at FutureHeights.

Cleveland Heights Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

It’s time for seniors to review their Medicare coverage. This year’s Medicare open-enrollment period, which began Oct. 15, runs through Dec. 7.

Medicare’s health and drug plans change every year. On Tuesday, Nov. 10, counselors from the Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) will be at the Cleveland Heights Senior Activity Center (SAC), to help seniors review their insurance, and answer questions about their Medicare coverage.

Access is by appointment only, call 216-691-7377, to reserve a time to meet with a trained OSHIIP volunteer. Bring your Medicare card and a list of your prescriptions to the appointment.

Find out if your current health or drug plan is the most cost effective for you, and learn about the various coverage options.

OSHIIP is a free service, does not sell insurance, and is provided at no cost through the Ohio Department of Insurance. Take advantage of this opportunity to get free, unbiased information on Medicare coverage.

If you are unable to meet on Nov. 10, you can make an appointment to speak with an OSHIIP representative over the phone instead, on another date.


If you are a Cleveland Heights resident, age 60 and above, in need of services or have questions of any kind, contact the city’s Office on Aging (216-691-7377 or at jenkinsa@clvhts.com).

Amy Jenkins is the supervisor of the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging and the CH Senior Activity Center.

Going shopping?

Here are 4 reasons to buy from local small businesses:

1. They’re part of the community’s character
2. They recirculate more of your money locally
3. They support local causes and institutions
4. If you don’t support them now, they may not be around later
Cleveland Heights launches ‘All Are Welcome’

SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

Board members present were Mayor Mary Stein, Vice Mayor Kahlil Seren, Mary Dunbar, Melody Joy Hurt, Dorothy Goodrich, and Michael Zinger. Also present were Susanna Niemann, city manager, Amy Himmelman, clerk of council, and William Dobbs, law director.

City manager’s report

The report can be found on pages 2-7 of the meeting packet. [At clevelandheights.org, click on Government tab, 2020 Agenda, and Minutes.]

• City personal with increased job roles or reassignments due to COVID-19 will be identified so that salaries and benefits can be properly allocated to the Coronavirus Relief Fund.

• The ‘All Are Welcome’ program has been launched. Mary Trupu and staff were commended for this.

• The Parks and Recreation Department is working on “slow openings of facilities,” being mindful of COVID-19 precautions.

Police chief’s report

Annette Mecklenburg, chief of the Cleveland Heights Police Department (CHPD), updated council on three fatal shootings that occurred in the previous two weeks. [The full text of a conference given earlier is on the city website, click on “Police” in upper left corner] Maize Moore was killed on Sept. 12, walking on Oaklawn Drive. The detectives are working on leads. Travon Powell was killed on Sept. 16, in his apartment building on Noble Road, after an altercation with two known males, both of whom have been arrested. Reginald Thomas Jr. was shot while riding a car on South Taylor Road; the shooter apparently confided the car with another.

Mecklenburg said the crimes seemed random. She solicited tips, large and small, which can be anonymous, through the CHPD or Crime Stoppers. [Contact the Cleveland Heights Police Department at 216-231-0124, or call the tip line: 216-291-5010, for Crime Stoppers of Cuyahoga County, email stopattpo@cuyahogacounty.us, or call the tip line: 216-252-7463.]

Reward money is offered. She will release plans soon on the city website. Meanwhile, patrols are more frequent, planning is constant, and there is cooperation with other enforcement agencies.

Mayor and administrator compensation

Presented on first reading was an ordinance providing annual compensation of $115,000 for the [directly elected] mayor, for the term commencing January 1, 2022. Council Member Hanna regarding whether she should vote on the resolution on second reading.

On second reading, council approved ordinance approving annual compensation of $115,000 for the [directly elected] mayor, for the term commencing January 1, 2022. Council Member Hanna, in considering running for mayor in the 2021 primary, requested clarification from Law Director Hanna regarding whether she should vote on the resolution. Mayor Stein could vote, as this is a possible future plan.

Council member appointment process

At the beginning of the meeting, Mayor Stein announced that council had no announce ment after its two-hour executive session, in which it considered an appointment to the vacant Rotary Club seat, but said council members were “getting closer.”

DW Observers: Gail Larson and Blanche Valancy.

OCTOBER 5, 2020

All council members were present, as were the acting city manager, clerk of council, and law director.

Police chief’s report

Police Chief Mecklenburg updated council on the recent murders. The Oaklade Road brandon and the district (schools). Silverman outlines this trend and the district’s challenges caused by EdChoice.

The $7,074,113 we lost in 2019–20 also included the $7,061,362 that year was and is real money lost. It’s a LOT of money and we don’t have any “Choice” over this. All of these facts and figures are audited by the state.

I want to remind our community there’s an organized campaign to discredit the schools and its leaders because of the school levy. It’s their free speech right to make claim after claim of misinformatin (or not). But there’s something in the face because of EdChoice and the unsustainable funding path our state has chosen to fund our schools.

Jim Pich is vice president of the CH-UH City School District Board of Education.

Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Cleveland Heights City Council

CLeveLAnd HeigHT s neWs

Mary Trupu

In September, Cleveland Heights launched ‘All Are Welcome’ window displays, bus wraps and videos, as well as discussions on social media on the theme. It is intended to be a celebration of the city’s diversity and a display of how much residents value its strong sense of community.

“The city of Cleveland Heights has always been a place that strives to be a city well evaluated, and openness, inclusivity and respect are cherished traits,” said Mayor Jason Stein.

“The All Are Welcome’ initiative reconnects to the ongoing tradition of our community, that we believe in the value and the importance of diversity in our neighborhoods and in our commercial areas,” said Acting City Manager Susanna Niemann O’Neill. “All are welcome to live, to work, to visit, and to be a part of this special and vibrant city.”

The initiative is anchored by a video that shows some “favorite things” about Cleveland Heights. It is meant to be uplifting and uniting, providing a sense of pride to residents while positioning Cleveland Heights as a destination of choice to live in or visit.

The initiative is the result of the city’s collaboration with two Cleveland Heights residents—Adam Dew, of Dew Media Inc., and Roger Frank, of Little Jacket.

The city also intends for the initiative to produce positive economic returns to Cleveland Heights, buy a house, rent an apartment, spend money in its shops and restaurants, open a business and create jobs.

“The city is committed to making sure the community that lives here and visits Cleveland Heights knows that they are welcome,” said Stein.

The video can be viewed at www.clevelandheights.com/allarewelcome.

Mary Trupu is director of communications and public engagement at the city of Cleveland Heights.

Stephanie Tibbs-Jones

The mural also gives a nod to the community with the inclusion of the words “Tiger Nation,” and the logos of the city of Cleveland Heights and of the community group Safer Heights.

Crenshaw said the mural’s creation aimed to be racist.

“The most recent killings of Black people, both by law enforcement and civilians who deemed it their duty to police Black people, is what inspired me to take on this project,” she said. “The phrase ‘Black Lives Matter’ had become politicized, and inspired me to take on this project.”

Crenshaw also gave a nod to the community as an alumnus of Cleveland Heights Public Library System.

She already knew of Jimmy Hayden, an alumnus of Cleveland Heights Public Library System.

“Crenshaw said. “And the location is ideal because, as Black children play throughout the community, in the schoolyard, downtown, and in the neighborhoods there is a chance for the community to really see this art on our streets.”

The Friends board approved the request and paid for the project, which cost $2,557.

“I’m glad we chose Black Excellence because it evokes feelings of joy and pride—it’s a statement of affirmation for the Black community,” Crenshaw said. “And the location is ideal because, as Black children play at the [Crenshaw] playground, they will be reminded of its excellence, which is not celebrated enough.”

Crenshaw used her local contacts to find the artists. Wayne Pollard was recommended to her by a friend, and she already knew of Jimmy Hayden, an alumnus of Cleveland Heights schools, and a Heights resident, business owner, and artist who uses graffiti style.

“I hope that the mural’s lasting impact will be to inspire individuals, particularly the Black youth, to explore more deeply Black history and the contributions Black Americans have made to society,” stated Crenshaw.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
Growing up Black in 1970s’ Coventry Village

Robert Brown

When Denise Watson was in sixth grade, in 1974, the youngest of eight children, her family moved from Cleveland to a house on Hampshire Road in Coventry Village. At the time, hers was one of the only Black families in this Cleveland Heights neighborhood.

“Coventry Village was a great family place,” Watson said. “I have an image of kids doing cartwheels through front-yard sprinklers. Kids walked to the parks and playgrounds, and families actually talked to each other. We didn’t have our heads buried in computers or cell phones.”

She remembers the neighborhood as very welcoming. “All of my friends were white,” she said. “The only racial problem I remember was that fact that some Black kids at school thought I hung out too much with white kids.”

Denise’s mother, Jessie Watson, quickly became a neighborhood icon, as she ran a popular mail-order business selling a variety of household items. She was known as a person who would always give a helping hand to neighbors in need. Watson remembers her mother promoting her business on a local TV movie program hosted by a local radio personality, John Langan.

“Watson said she recalls thinking that some of their white neighbors seemed to wonder how this single Black mother could afford such a nice house. ‘They didn’t realize what a successful and resourceful entrepreneur she had become,’” Watson explained.

Before moving to Cleveland Heights, Watson’s mother and father had operated a popular delicatessen on East 93rd Street in Cleveland. Watson’s father was a military officer who died in 1970, before the family moved to Cleveland Heights. Her mother died two years ago, at nearly 100 years of age.

Growing up in Coventry Village, Watson said she was always in demand as a babysitter for neighborhood children. Watson got married in 1982, and moved just a couple blocks away, to another house on Hampshire Road, where she had two sons. Today, she lives in an apartment at Middleburgh and Mayfield roads, just a few blocks from her childhood home. Other than one year spent with a sister in Tacoma, Wash., Watson has lived her entire life in Cleveland Heights.

“When I think back on the neighborhood,” she said, “it seems that the sun was always shining.”

Robert Brown, a city planner with 45 years of experience, including nine years as Cleveland’s City Planning Director, has been a resident of Cleveland Heights for more than 40 years and is currently the board chair of FutureHeights.

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Tabitha Green is a student at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University and a FutureHeights intern.
Noble’s community projects thrive despite pandemic

The pandemic may be altering the usual social patterns, but several projects in Noble are proving to be creative ways to foster community connections.

The Roanoke-Noble Mini-Park continues to transform into a garden of delights. In the spring and summer, a new, curved landscape wall enclosed new, raised beds for perennials and pollinators. The crushed brick diagonal walk was reworked to include river stone. This fall, a Little Free Library, built by a neighbor, was installed in an area dedicated for kids. Seating there, made of natural materials, is perfectly sized for shorter legs. Children can easily grab a new book from the library’s stock (targeted for them) and sit comfortably to read it. Nearby, two new adult-size picnic tables provide relaxation for adults accompanying young ones. In the spring and summer, the orchard continues to transform into a garden of delights. In the spring and summer, the orchard continues to grow the fruit-bearing and pollinator-friendly plants, as well as the flourishing of relationships between neighbors. At the orchard’s open house event in September, neighbors helped plant hundreds of daffodil bulbs. People came from the neighborhood and beyond to donate perennials—including a special effort from the Northeast Ohio Perennial Society—to fill the beds of the “Welcoming Gardens.”

Remarkably, and without fanfare, this mini-park is changing the way people feel about their neighborhood. The way they engage with this outdoor space. Once merely a cut-through between residential areas and the business district, people are stopping to enjoy the vista and one another. It has become a place to pause, relax, and revel in the gift of this beautiful space.

The Delmore Community Orchard has become another neighborhood center. Its open design invites neighbors to sit and enjoy the new growth on the fruit-bearing and pollinator-friendly plants, as well as the flourishing of relationships between neighbors. At the orchard’s open house event in September, neighbors helped plant hundreds of daffodil bulbs. People came from the neighborhood and beyond to donate perennials—including a special effort from the Northeast Ohio Perennial Society—to fill the beds of the “Welcoming Gardens.”

Folks from outside the area came to see what so many are talking about—how a city lot-sized orchard could become a community asset. Expectations are high for both a stunning display of color on Delmore Road in the spring, and for growing neighborhood pride.

Annual author event will be free and online

Don McBride, Bob Rink, Rhonda Mitchell and Marlene Rink installed a Little Free Library at Central Bible Baptist Church.

Eliese Colette Goldbach

The Cleveland Heights Chapter Q of P.E.O. International hosted its first annual “Afternoon with an Author” fundraiser nine years ago. Traditionally, the event has been held at a lovely venue in the community, such as Notre Dame College or Forest Hill Presbyterian Church; but, due to COVID-19 restrictions, Chapter Q found it necessary to shift to a virtual setting. On Saturday, Nov. 14, at 1 p.m., it will present a free virtual event with local author Eliese Colette Goldbach.

Goldbach’s book, Rust: A Memoir of Steel and Grit, was published in March 2020 and has received notable reviews. In it, she recounts her tenure as a steelworker at ArcelorMittal Cleveland, and shares her personal coming-of-age journey.

“I’m so honored to talk about Rust with the members of Chapter Q and their guests,” Goldbach said. “The education and advancement of women is a topic that’s very close to my heart, and I can’t wait to spend an afternoon celebrating the opportunities that P.E.O. helps to foster.”

This year’s event will also feature poetry by Damien McClendon, a former poet laureate of Cleveland Heights, and a musical performance by Cleveland Heights resident and violinist Stephen Taverni, assistant concertmaster for The Cleveland Orchestra.

While the event is free, donations to support P.E.O. International’s Projects for [Women’s] Continuing Education are welcome. Register online at www.eventbrite.com/d/online/eliese-goldbach. Questions can be e-mailed to chapterqohio@gmail.com.

A resident of Cleveland Heights for 25 years, Donna Johnson is a member of Cleveland Heights Chapter Q of P.E.O International.
Meeting highlights

SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
Board members present were President (Julie) Sosnick, Dan Hantz, Malia Lewis, James Posch and Beverly Wright Also attending were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

School reopening update
Staff provided data for the first three weeks of school relating to enrollment, learning platform choice, attendance, technology and internet access, satisfaction surveys of staff, students and parents and information and action protocols for in-person services for students with disabilities. They also described COVID-19 reporting and sanitizing, and inspection protocols. The district has received all necessary PPE.

Discussion followed concerning board members' feedback on the district's initial planning for fall reopening. The reopening planning committee will begin meeting again in early August. Reopening is scheduled to be on the agenda for the board's Oct 13 meeting, with notice to parents about any changes due Oct 19. Kirby described the continuing involvement of the state and CHSSA in approving and enforcing COVID-19 protocols and safety checks.

Treasurer's report
Treasurer Gainer reviewed changes in forecasted revenues and expenses compared with the August forecast. The permanent appropriations for the 2021 school year are: base salaries will not be increased; employees will pay 15 percent of health insurance premiums along with copays and other plan details. The team is reviewing an update schedule, eligible employees will continue to advance in the step scale.

Superintendent's report
Superintendent Kirby reviewed the history of the district's educational administration. She expressed respect for the district’s teachers. All members of the board spoke at length about the district’s financial constraints due to factors such as EEdChoice vouchers and expenses due to the COVID-19 virus. Many expressed their respect for the district’s teachers.

The board unanimously approved a resolution that the district implement the board’s last, best and final offer on open union contract provisions. All members of the board spoke at length about the district’s financial constraints due to factors such as EEdChoice vouchers and expenses due to the COVID-19 virus. Many expressed their respect for the district’s teachers.

As people start voting, it is important for everyone to have a clear picture of our school district's finances. It is easy to get lost in the weeds when anti-tax agitators try to stir up confusion.

There will always be people who want to cut public services, whether it's schools, libraries, or the post office. They will advocate for funding cuts, then blame the local government for the financial crisis on wasteful spending and call for further cuts. That looks a lot like what is going on with our public schools.

First of all, our school district's spending is not "out of control." The Ohio Department of Education calculates each district's effective cost per pupil, allowing for apples-to-apples comparisons between districts. Compared to the other districts in the county, Cleveland Heights-University Heights is in the middle of the pack (in spending), and is significantly lower than Shaker Heights and Beachwood. What is unusually high, though, is the proportion of students with special needs or economic disadvantage that our district serves. It should be a point of pride for our community that we have strived to provide quality education for all.

But quality education for all in the CH-UH district is under threat. The district’s five year forecast shows, where the problem lies. Adjusted for inflation, salaries and benefits have been flat for years, and are even projected to decline slightly, with all other expenses declining significantly in today's dollars. The problem is not "wasteful spending" by the school board; the problem is ballooning pay-outs for EdChoice vouchers and state budget shortfalls, forcing the district to fund freezes for education.

Last spring, we, as a community, voted to stop supporting our schools. Now we need to throw our schools a lifeline, and pass Issue 69 so we can keep giving all the kids of our community a chance at a great education.

Jesse Bercovsky is a professor of physics at Case Western Reserve University, and the parent of a Boulevard Elementary School student.

District treasurer is grossly overcompensated
Maureen Lynn

For 25 years, Scott Gainer has been treasurer of the CH-UH City School District. Since 2000, he has successfully championed six (operating) levies, for a total of more than $45 million, plus the $135-million school facilities bond. Mr. Gainer, who doesn’t live in Cleveland Heights or University Heights, has himself doesn’t have a vested interest in the passing of those comparisons between districts. Regarding the salary schedule, eligible employees will continue to advance in the step scale.

Opinion

We must not allow anti-tax agitators to harm our public schools
Jesse Bercovsky

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Heights Libraries seeks new board member

Sheryl Banks

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library is seeking a new board member. Applications, which are due on Tuesday, Nov. 10, by 5 p.m., can be requested by sending an e-mail to switchboard@heightslibrary.org.

Completed applications can be returned to the same e-mail address, or, applicants can drop them in a designated box outside of the Lee Road branch's administrative area.

“Our library is such an integral part of our community,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “Serving on the library board is one of the best ways a citizen can serve the Heights community, by helping guide the vision of the public library.”

The new board member will replace Jim Roosa, who is "rolling off" the board after serving one full term and one partial term.

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights school board will interview candidates on Tuesday, Dec. 1, beginning at 7 p.m. Interviews last roughly 15 minutes.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend an online informational meeting, via Zoom, about library board service, on Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 7 p.m. To participate, RSVP to Levin by calling 216-932-3600 ext. 1249.

For additional information, contact Heights Libraries at 216-932-3600 ext. 1200, or visit www.heightslibrary.org.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.

Cleveland Heights - University Heights Public Library Board Meeting highlights

SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

Board members present were President James Rosso, Vice President Dana Flavell, Patti Carlyle, Gabe Crenshaw, Max Garbozzi, Annette Ivanovski and Vikas Tandon.

Public comments

Joanne Federman and Chrysn Ziolkarski spoke to the board about the SPARK program ([Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids]) which provides home-based educational services to preschool-age children and their parents.

Current services are being provided virtually and through socially distanced outdoor events. Twenty families are served; the goal is to serve 40 families.

Financial report

The board reviewed and accepted the July and August 2020 financial statements. Total cash balance across the operating accounts, Brewer Fund accounts, and investment accounts was $16,373,460.95. The financial director said the portfolio review shows that interest rates from investments are lower. Non-property tax revenue has decreased from 2019 to 2020. Accordingly, the library previously had reduced expenditures.

Change in public service hours Nov. 3

The University Heights branch and the Lee Road branch will be closed to the public on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3. The Coventry Village and Noble Neighborhood branches, as well as the Heights Knowledge and Innovation Center (HKIC) will remain open that day.

CARES Act

The board approved the creation of a special revenue fund, 280 CARES Act, for the receipt of CARES Act funds, and authorized an appropriation of $100,000 for the expenditure. Each library building is eligible for $35,000, and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System has been approved to receive $100,000. Funds are to be utilized for the unanticipated costs of safely operating the library during the pandemic, such as the purchase of personal protective equipment, distance learning support, Wi-Fi hotspots, signage and barriers.

Lee Road carpet replacement

The board approved purchase orders to Corrigan Money Systems, for $76,00, and to Masuma Floor Covering, LLC, for $42,590, to replace carpet in the HKIC, and $189,850 to replace carpet at the Lee Road branch.

Washington Boulevard appropriations

The board authorized an increase of $163,922.27 to pay for utilities for the remainder of 2020 at the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Campus.

Service and administration policy

The board approved the service and administration policies of the Board of Library Trustees of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library as amended for 2020. Most updates were related to policy changes due to the pandemic. The policy will be posted on the library’s website.

Restoration of staff pay and hours

The board approved the following changes:

• HKIC full- and part-time staff hours are increased from 50 percent to 80 percent of regular scheduled hours, effective Sept. 15.
• Reference and circulation staff hours are increased, for part-time circulation assistants and part-time reference staff, from 50 percent to 60 percent of regular scheduled hours, effective Sept. 15.
• Eight library pages are being called back to work at 20 hours a week, effective Sept. 15.
• The elimination of two positions (maintenance technician and shipping assistant), effective Oct. 30.
• Effective Sept. 19, the restoration of managers’ regular pay rate, as of Dec. 31, 2019.
• Effective Sept. 19, the restoration of the director’s and fiscal officer’s regular pay rate, as of Dec. 31, 2019 (no 2020 raise).

COVID-19 Code of Conduct

In anticipation of the return of computer use and browsing, the library developed the following Code of Conduct:

• To achieve safe social distancing, we are limiting the number of customers in the buildings. If a staff member thinks an area is too crowded, or if we have customers waiting to come in, we may ask you to move along so that others may enter the building.
• Face masks must be worn correctly, and at all times. Your face mask must cover both your nose and mouth, and be in place for the duration of your visit, according to the State Of Ohio’s Statewide Mask Order. Face shields alone do not count as a safe face covering. Please note that if you fail to comply with our face mask rule, you will be asked to leave and you may be subject to penalties under Ohio law.
• Please maintain at least six feet of distance between yourself and others. Please be aware of the location of other people while you are in the building, and maintain at least as feet of distance from people who are not members of your household while you are moving about the building.
• Barb, Library Secretary; Elizabeth M. Tracy.
Heights Arts Holiday Store opens Nov. 1

Amanda Bohn
Heights Arts’ 19th annual Holiday Store will open to the public on Sunday, Nov. 1. Since 2001, the store has delighted shoppers by offering truly unique gift options. This year, the Holiday Store gives more than 80 talented Northeast Ohio artists the opportunity to display and sell their work.

Heights Arts urges the community to make supporting local artists a priority this holiday season, by shopping at local arts organizations and galleries.

“This will be a critical year, not only for artists, but for Heights Arts as well,” said Rachel Bernstein, Heights Arts’ executive director. “The annual Holiday Store accounts for a significant portion of revenue for us. Like many arts organizations, we have suffered significant loss of visitors, contributions and revenue due to the pandemic.”

Holiday shoppers will find a wide variety of gift options at Heights Arts, including glass, metal, ceramics, jewelry, prints, paintings, ornaments, holiday cards, and other rare, hand-made items. Popular local artists whose work is featured in this year’s shop include ceramist Sharon Grossman (a founding Heights Arts member); the glass artists Ambiente, whose fused glass is sold exclusively at Heights Arts; beloved local painter Jeremy Tugeau; and world-renowned jeweler and Cleveland Institute of Art graduate Catherine Butler.

Heights Arts store manager Ann Koslow said, “With no fairs and shows this summer because of the pandemic, the artists in the Heights Arts store are genuinely happy they have a place that they can count on to present and sell their work.”

This year, the store’s window display will highlight the work of six artists per week. The Holiday Store is restocked weekly with new items, so everyone is encouraged to shop early and often. Free gift-bagging is available.

To ensure a safe and enjoyable shopping experience for all guests, masks are required. To assist with social distancing, Heights Arts has re-organized and increased space between product displays. Additionally, hand sanitizer is available in multiple locations within the store, and gloves are also available.

Heights Arts is also providing the option of shopping from home, 24/7, through its online store at www.heightsarts.org. Customers have the option of receiving their online purchases through curbside or contact-free pickup.

Heights Arts also offers private in-store shopping appointments, which can be made in advance, by phone.

Current business hours are Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Beginning Dec. 1, and through Dec. 31, the store will be open seven days a week. Visit www.heightsarts.org for information on the new store hours.

For a list of artists participating in the 19th annual Holiday Store, as well as information on upcoming community programs, call 216-371-3457, or e-mail marketing@heightsarts.org.

Amanda Bohn handles marketing and communications at Heights Arts.
Back on the streets again

David Budin

One of Ellen DeGeneres’s first jokes was: “My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60. She’s 97 now, and we don’t know where the heck she is.” I was older than 60 when I started walking. That was six months ago, and, as I wrote in this column in September, I really hadn’t walked with any regularity, for any more than a couple of blocks (to the store), in about 40 years. But after doing nothing but sitting at my desk for the first two months of the pandemic—plus most of the past two years, since I developed a hearing problem; or, really, for much of the previous 38 or so years—I knew I had to do something.

The first time I walked, I saw some things that I thought looked interesting, so I stopped and took pictures of them. I thought maybe I’d show them to some people. I did. I posted them, all together, on Facebook. I’d show them to some people. I did.

Interesting, so I stopped and took pictures. I posted them, all together, on Facebook. I’d show them to some people. I did.

Walking and taking pictures to post on Facebook. That was great motivation (mainly in that it gave me any motivation). It also made me go in different directions every day, to photograph new things. But there are only so many directions.

After a while, when I’d gotten up to two miles at a time. I started asking my wife to drop me off in different locations, two miles away, so I could walk back. To her disappointment, I kept finding my way back home. I mean, it wasn’t exactly orienteering. I’ve lived in Cleveland Heights all my life (except for when I left town for a few years).

I walk between two and three miles a day now. And throughout all of this, I’ve learned quite a bit. For instance, that many people grow flowers in front of their houses. You probably knew that. But when I used to walk these same streets all the time, 40 and more years ago, there weren’t nearly as many flower gardens. I took many pictures of flowers and posted them once a month for six months, each with that month’s flowers, which, I also remembered, change throughout the growing seasons.

I learned that there are benches all around Cleveland Heights, most placed by the city, some on private property, but still mostly open to the public. In light of that, I developed a new motto: “Leave no bench un-sat-in.” That’s my motto and I’m a firm believer in that practice.

I learned that there are many houses and picture-taking, I also learned a lot of the history of Cleveland Heights, about 35 years ago, we had the front door painted purple. Ours was the only colorful door on the block, or almost anywhere around here. Now there are many, all over the place, though ours has been replaced with a non-colorful one. I posted two batches of about 15 pictures each of colorful Cleveland Heights front doors. I could post a few more batches, but that’s probably enough for people to get the idea.

I learned that there are hidden walks, like the clearly, though subtly, marked trails through the little wooded area immediately to the north of the community center parking lot. A few steps inside that area and you can forget that you’re in the middle of a city.

And there are seasonal photo-ops, like the Hallowe’en decorations on Scarborough—or as they re-dub it, “Scare-borough,” for the occasion—and the streets around it. I think that kind of thing is especially important this year, when not nearly as many kids were expected to go trick-or-treating. At least families could walk or drive up and down the streets during October and look at those displays, some of which (or should I say “witch”?) were elaborate.

Throughout all of this walking and picture-taking, I also learned a lot of the history of Cleveland Heights, because I would come home and look it up. I’d research something I’d seen that looked like it must have some interesting history. That was usually correct. So, go ahead—ask me something about some part of the city. If I walked there, I probably know at least a little bit about it now.

Unlike Ellen DeGeneres’s grandmother, I started walking when I was older than 60. And I’m nowhere near 97. And I do know where I am—and where I’ve been.

David Budin is a freelance writer for national and local publications, the former editor of Cleveland Magazine and North- ern 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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Locals know that Bialy’s Bagels is the best place to get fresh bagels. Owners and twin sisters Rachel and Sarah Gross offer both walk-up and online ordering. Visit www.bialysbagels.com for details, and be sure to pick up a copy of the Heights Observer while you’re there. The shop is located at 2267 Warrensville Center Road, in University Heights.

Luna Bakery Cafe features Heights Observer along with fresh-baked fare.

If you’re looking for delicious baked goods, visit Luna, a European-style bakery and cafe serving made-from-scratch pastry and other fare. Located in the Cedar Fairmount district, at 2482 Fairmount Blvd., items are made fresh daily, on the premises, using the best-quality ingredients. Chef and owner Bridget Thibeault encourages everyone to support local businesses like Luna, and to pick up a copy of the Heights Observer while there. For details on Luna’s menu and hours, visit www.lunabakerycafe.com, or call 216-231-8585.

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46275-HM-0920

Locals know that Bialy’s Bagels is the best place to get fresh bagels. Owners and twin sisters Rachel and Sarah Gross offer both walk-up and online ordering. Visit www.bialysbagels.com for details, and be sure to pick up a copy of the Heights Observer while you’re there. The shop is located at 2267 Warrensville Center Road, in University Heights.

Luna Bakery Cafe features Heights Observer along with fresh-baked fare.

If you’re looking for delicious baked goods, visit Luna, a European-style bakery and cafe serving made-from-scratch pastry and other fare. Located in the Cedar Fairmount district, at 2482 Fairmount Blvd., items are made fresh daily, on the premises, using the best-quality ingredients. Chef and owner Bridget Thibeault encourages everyone to support local businesses like Luna, and to pick up a copy of the Heights Observer while there. For details on Luna’s menu and hours, visit www.lunabakerycafe.com, or call 216-231-8585.

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2020 Holiday Gift Guide

SOCIALLY DISTANCED GIFTS
Gift certificate for a distance Reiki treatment. Remote energy healing session for physical, mental and emotional deep healing. Also great for stress reduction, relaxation and positive thinking. Remote method is equally as effective as in-person. ($75.00, Loving Hands Yoga, Reiki and Wellness)

USA state flowers 1000-piece puzzle. ($16.99, Mac’s Backs) 1

Charley Harper secret sanctuary puzzle. Features a 1991 poster for the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes. ($17.95, 5’Wonderful Gifts) 2

Cancer cover protective face masks. ($6.95, 5’Wonderful Gifts) 3

Fine Art Face Masks. Featuring van Gogh, Monet and others. Masks come with a replaceable filter. ($12.95, 5’Wonderful Gifts)

Hand sanitizer and colorful candy. Includes a convenient carabiner keyring so you can attach it to things. ($6.95, 5’Wonderful Gifts) 4

Soap by Sam Dominic. ($10.00, Heights Arts) 5

Gift Certificate for a video Reiki class. Learn how to facilitate energy healing for yourself, other people and animals. An invaluable skill for better health that anyone can learn. Remote learning is equally as effective as in-person. ($200.00, Loving Hands Yoga, Reiki and Wellness)

Masks by Leslie Greenhalgh. ($18.00, Heights Arts) 6

STOCKING STUFFERS ($10.00 or less)
Assorted chocolate bars. Available in milk chocolate (33%), dark chocolate (52%), and extra-dark chocolate (80%). ($5.95, Mitchell’s Fine Chocolates) 7

Happy Bee’s gift card. The new ice cream shop in Coventry Village, serves alcohol-infused ice cream. ($5.00 and up, Happy Bee’s Ice Cream & Coffee)

Essential oil lip balm. Handmade lip balms made with essential oils, natural butters, and moisturizing carrier oils. ($3.50, or 2 for $6.00, Cleveland Candle Company)

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GIFTS LESS THAN $50.00

Olive bowl by Amy Halko. ($42.00); Wood box by Thomas Hanger. ($30.00); Hour paper box by Sue Schenman. ($48.00); Earrings by Catherine Butler. ($48.00) (All at Heights Arts) 13

Hoodies. ($40.00, Grog Shop); Jake Kelly mural T-shirt, available in both black and white. ($25.00, Grog Shop) 14 & 15

Themed sugar-cookie boxes. ($23.00 to $25.00, Luna Bakery Cafe) 16

Mitchell’s Advent calendar. Filled with various classic confections and new sweets. ($39.95, Mitchell’s Fine Chocolates) 17

Wine slushie with chocolates gift basket. Includes your choice of one of three white wines, Frappe Vino wine slushie mix, and one of four hand-dipped chocolate treats. ($34.99, CLE Urban Winery) 18

My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies by Reema Menakem. ($17.95); Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent by Isabel Wilkerson. ($32.00, 10% discount to customers); Bread Baker’s Apprentice by Peter Reinhart. ($40.00) (All at Mac’s Backs) 19

A Promised Land by Barack Obama. ($45.00, 15% discount to customers, Mac’s Backs) 20

8 oz. candle. Over 200 scents. Made with long-lasting, clean-burning soy wax, 30 to 50-hour burn time. ($13.50 or monthly deals on multiples); 10 oz. aromatherapy candles. Aromatherapy candles infused with essential oils. ($20.00, or 2 for $35.00) (All at Cleveland Candle Company) 21

Candle-making experience. The recipient will get to explore 200+ scents and blend their favorites together to make their own custom candle. ($16.00 to $36.00 depending on jar selected, Cleveland Candle Company)

Fine-art reversible umbrellas. ($34.95, S’Wonderful Gifts)

Crystal heart pendant necklace. ($48.00, S’Wonderful Gifts) 22

Expanding silicone water bottle. Food-grade silicone bottle can be collapsed for easy storage. Available in either 12- or 20-ounce sizes, and a variety of colors. ($19.95 & $24.95, S’Wonderful Gifts) 23

GIFTS FROM $50.00 TO $150.00

Live-edge serving tray. ($75.00, Eastwood Furniture) 24

Forest green scarf by Susan Skove. ($80.00); White geometric bowl by Lauren Hecak Baum. ($96.00); Glass floral paperweight by Preston Skeeks. ($115.00); Earrings by Candie Quadir. ($115.00); Necklace by Alyson Hollosbaugh. ($155.00) (All at Heights Arts) 24

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Gift certificate for carry-out. (Various prices)

Gifts more than $150.00

Framing gift certificate. ($100.00, Wood Trader)

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