Volume 14 Number 3 March 1, 2021

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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Published by Future Heights

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INSIDE



Work by CH artist adorns Top of the Hill



13 Heights High juniors break long-standing school record



Artist wears many hats at Lake Erie Ink

Washington Blvd. #105 and Heights, OH 44118 Heights

South Taylor development project moves forward in UH

Kim Sergio Inglis

On Feb. 16, University Heights City Council approved the site plan for South Taylor Place Condominiums, a new development on Taylor Road in University Heights, just south and southeast of Deslisle Options Center.

The developer, Knez Homes, has proposed a 30-unit townhome development on the site, which it will market and sell to third-party buyers.

The site comprises seven parcels of land, of which three belonged to the city of University Heights, and four to the CH-UH City School District. At its April 7, 2020, meeting, the board of education (BOE) approved Resolution No. 20-04-033, transferring its four parcels to University Heights' community investment corporation (CIC) at a price of \$10.

The CIC, in turn, agreed to sell the seven parcels to the developer at a price of \$1,000 per lot, for an ag-



Artist depiction of the proposed South Taylor Place townhomes in University Heights, .

gregate purchase price of \$7,000.

At the Feb. 4 meeting of the UH Planning Commission, its members voted, 6-1, to recommend that city council approve the developer's site plan. Council Member John Rach voted "nay." Rach also cast the lone dissenting vote at the Feb. 16 council meeting.

The project next proceeds to the city's architectural review board, then returns to the planning commission for the lot consolidation and subdivision plat.

At the Feb. 16 council meeting, architect Hanna Chohan Plessner, vice president of development at Knez

Coventry library's

Pat Gray will retire as the Coventry Village

After 15 years at the helm of Heights

Libraries' Coventry Village Branch, Patricia Gray will retire on March 1.

ness and creativity. She nurtured the

library's staff, programs and collections,

and helped it grow into a neighborhood gathering place that reflects the eclectic

needs and interests of the community it

"Pat became synonymous with

As branch manager, Gray was known for her compassion, perceptive-

Library manager, effective March 1.

Sheryl Banks

Pat Gray retires

continued on page 10

Environmental series aims to educate and inspire



John Barber (March 10 speaker) and Lara Roketenetz (March 30 speaker) both have a lot to say about creating a healthy habitat. (Seriously!)

Peggy Spaeth

Beginning March 2, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes and The Doan Brook Watershed Partnership will present a series of six free, live Zoom presentations designed to inspire the community to enrich habitat with native plant species. Register online at http:// bit.ly/3cMa5gZ.

Both nonprofit organizations work in the Doan Brook watershed that drains into the Great Lakes—the largest freshwater system in the world-via

Lake Erie. As caretakers of this ribbon of water that runs through the Heights communities, they work against the invasion of plant species introduced from other continents that escape garden cultivation.

In the first two talks, Friends of Lower Lake co-chairs will detail how to begin planting native species in residential yards, and how to identify and remove harmful invasive plants.

The third talk, by retired certified landscape designer Robin Scha-

continued on page 6

the Coventry branch and its warm, intelligent programs and services," said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. "Her retirement is bittersweet for all of us—we are thrilled for her to be taking

miss her so much."

Gray's many accomplishments as manager included her development of a local author collection and related author programs, oversight of a remodel that included a new children's earlyliteracy play area, nurturing the growth

this next step in her journey, but we will

ing, and the establishment of the branch as a place to explore wellness through programs such as meditation and tai chi. The local author programs thrived in part due to Gray's ability to connect with others and build partnerships,

of services for the deaf and hard of hear-

like the one she shared with Suzanne continued on page 9

New Heights businesses open during pandemic

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Each year, FutureHeights sponsors the Best of the Heights Awards in which residents vote for their favorite businesses in several categories, including Best New Business. This year, the pandemic changed the smallbusiness landscape in many ways, and shuttered businesses, some permanently. Nonetheless, a few new businesses have opened in the Heights in the last 12 months.

"I'm happy to say that we had more businesses open on Coventry



Marchant Manor Cheese owner Kandice Marchant.

this past year than we had close," said Mallory Phillips, executive director of the Coventry Village Special Improvement District.

To follow is a list of new businesses the Heights Observer is aware of. If you know of a new business that is not on the list, send information about it to info@ futureheights.org.

Voting for the 2021 Best of the Heights Awards concluded on Feb. 16. Winners will be announced in the April Heights Observer.

continued on page 2

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.

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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About the Observer

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

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

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

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

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

- To make a submission of any kind, go to www.heightsobserver.org and click on "Member Center" at the left.
- For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on "Become an Observer" at the left. For questions that aren't answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the April issue must be submitted by March 15. 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.

We're partnering on a new podcast



OPENING THE OBSERVER

Bob Rosenbaum

By mid-February, there were four declared candidates for Cleveland Heights' first-ever mayoral election.

It's going to be an interesting campaign, and the Heights Observer plans to cover it as we've covered previous elections. We won't endorse candidates, and we'll focus on giving air to the many reasonable and civil perspectives our readers are sure to

But not all election issues are matters of opinion; they can't be resolved by candidates' statements and the back-and-forth of the opinion page. Some questions require context and subject-matter expertise. This is the kind of work the Heights Observer struggles with, given that we operate without any staff reporters.

So we're doing something new:

We're supporting the launch of a local podcast by Adam Dew that will focus on the candidates and issues leading up to the election.

A Cleveland Heights native, Dew has a background in journalism and runs his own video production business. He's also an energetic community booster. If you've seen Cleveland Heights' "All are Welcome" promotional video, you've seen his work. (If not, you can find it at www.clevelandheights.com, under Community>All Are welcome.)

To be clear, the podcast is Dew's idea and it will be his effort that drives it. The Heights Observer's main role is to support it with pro-

I often describe the Heights Observer as plumbing, and the content our readers provide as the water it carries. Plumbing is important; you can't have running water without it. But without the need for water, who'd bother with it?

So the idea of using the Heights Observer as a platform for launching this kind of project is consistent with our role as a delivery system for information that engages and activates people in the community.

At the same time, we don't enter into it lightly. Dew's proposal had to hit the right buttons: It's community-focused and hyper-local; it creates its own space rather than trying to occupy space that we already fill; and it comes from someone we have reason to believe will deliver consistent and meaningful content.

The first edition of the podcast will air sometime this month. Once it's ready, we'll make sure you can find the link to it in each issue of the paper, in our weekly e-mail newsletter, and on our social media stream. And you can always find it by clicking the "Podcasts" menu button at www.heightsobserver.org.

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

NEW BUSINESSES continued from page 1

Amba

http://ambacle.com/

A ghost restaurant by Chef Douglas Katz in Cleveland Heights that offers cuisine inspired from India for delivery and curbside pickup. 1975 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights 216-650-9620

Barber and Beauty Supply Outlet

A barber and beauty supply store that specializes in tools and equipment, natural hair products, wigs, hair and black-owned brands.

13216 Cedar Road, Cleveland Heights

Editor's Note: Thanks to a sharp-eyed

reader, who pointed out that there will

be four, not three, CH City Council

seats on the November ballot, I have

corrected online one article in the

February issue: "A roadmap to electing

a new CH mayor", and one column:

"Opening the Observer: Heights Ob-

server's election policy: more—and

council member Melissa Yasinow,

who resigned one year ago-on

March 2, 2020. (As a CH resident

who is keenly aware that the six cur-

rent council members have not been

able, or willing, to appoint a seventh

member, I can't explain how I, and

multiple other proofreaders, over-

looked this long-vacant seat in the

original article and column. It may

be worth noting that the CH City

Council page on the city's website,

where one can find expiration dates

for council members' current terms.

lists only six council members, along

with their photos. There is no men-

tion there of a council vacancy, nor

that the current term of the vacant

seat will expire on Dec. 31, 2021.)

The fourth seat is that of former

Two corrections —

and an aside

less—of the same".

https://barber-and-beauty-supply-outlet. business.site/

Chicken Ranch

216-279-0404

Chef Demetrios Atheneos and his brother, Niko, opened Chicken Ranch in December in the space that had been The Rice Shop and, before that, Lox, Stock and Brisket. The restaurant's main feature is Amish fried chicken, sold as tenders, wings and boneless thighs, with jalapeño corn fritters, pickles and a choice of about a dozen dipping sauces. 13892 Cedar Rd, University Heights

216-938-7645 www.theoriginalchickenranch.com

Chimi

Another ghost-kitchen concept by chef Douglas Katz; this one offers South American-inspired cuisine for curbside pickup or delivery in Cleveland Heights.

1975 Lee Road 216-932-3333 https://chimicle.com

Designer Graphics

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design, flyers and other branding materials.

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216-632-8110

www.designergraphicsonline.com

Hair Melodies Salon and Suite

A hair salon specializing in color, sewins and healthy hair.

2128 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights 216-417-3574

www.fresha.com/a/hairmelodies-salonand-suite-cleveland-heights-2128-leeroad-vtt1jc5m

Happy Bee's Ice Cream

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www.scoopsofhappy.com

Marchant Manor Cheese

An artisanal cheesemaker specializing in soft, triple-cream cheeses. Opened on Feb. 4, it's run by a doctor-turned-cheesemaker, using rich, Guernsey cow milk from an Amish dairy. Varieties include

continued on page 8

Heights Observer Election Policy

"The Heights Observer will review election-related submissions with a goal of providing fair and equitable access for those seeking office.

'Candidates for office are expected to identify themselves as such when submitting anything for publication.

"Candidates' supporters and campaign representatives, and anyone writing about any candidate or election issue, are expected to disclose any personal or professional relationship they may have with any candidate, or with the subject of their submission. These disclosures are intended to inform Heights Observer review, and will be disclosed to readers when relevant.

"The Heights Observer will determine whether and when submissions will run in print, online, or both.

"Contributions by and about candidates, and any election issue, are limited to a maximum of 400 words.

"The Heights Observer does not endorse candidates, nor does Future-Heights, the nonprofit communitydevelopment corporation that publishes the *Heights Observer*."

2

New podcast focuses on Cleveland Heights' first mayoral race

Adam Dew

If you'd asked fourth-grade me in 1983 what I wanted to be when I grew up, I'd have told you I wanted Phil Donahue's job. I would have also considered taking over for Nev Chandler as voice of the Browns, or Peter Tomarken, the host of "Press Your Luck."

Nearly 40 years later, I'm finally ready to chase the dream. I've determined that my most logical path to becoming "Press Your Luck" host begins with a twice-monthly podcast devoted to the place that made me, Cleveland Heights, and to the brave souls who hope to earn your vote and become our first-ever elected mayor.

Sign up for the *Heights Observer's* weekly e-mail newsletter (*bit.ly/HO-enews*) to make sure you receive the link to episode one, which is scheduled to debut on March 1.

The working title of the podcast is "Dew Diligence." If you don't like it, "All are Welcome" to start your own podcast. Former school board member and current local grump Eric Silverman will be a regular in some as-yet-undetermined fashion. Very few people know more about Cleveland Heights and its history than Eric. If he turns out to be unbearable, we'll swap him out. "Dew Diligence" will be, at a minimum, nimble.

Supporting the *Heights Observer*, and local journalism in general, has

never been more essential. I snuck into Northwestern University, thanks in no small part to Judy Wolf, one of my teachers at Fairfax Elementary School, who happened to know the woman who did the local Northwestern alumni interviews with prospective students. Our teachers and this school district always looked out for me. I look forward to trying to give a little bit back

As face-to-face interactions will continue to be limited up through election day in November, I hope this podcast will give everyone a chance to get to know the candidates on a personal level. From Forest Hill to Noble to Taylor to Cedar Hill, I'll attempt to include a diverse and comprehensive collection of perspectives.

In Cleveland Heights' rooth year, we voted overwhelmingly to move to an elected mayor, attempting to unstuck ourselves from the municipal mud. We also have four city council seats and three school board seats on the ballot in November. We have a lot on the line. Which of our neighbors will end up with the honor and the burden of leading us into our second century? I guess its time to figure it out.

Adam Dew graduated from Heights High School, Class of '94. He owns Dew Media Inc., a video production company.

Cleveland Heights is (still) Home to the Arts

Peggy Spaeth

In the last month I've heard people express the opinion that "Cleveland Heights used to be Home to the Arts" and "Cleveland Orchestra members used to live in Cleveland Heights." I don't know where this misperception comes from. We are still, and have been for decades, Home to the Arts! Cleveland Heights was a home to the arts before we claimed the title!

This past summer, there were socially distanced pop-up "porchestra" concerts presented by several resident orchestra members and their colleagues. There is the annual Donut Day put on by bassist Tom Sperl and his family. We have robust orchestra representation in our city, as well as musicians of every genre.

Some people seem to think that "the city" needs to be the agent of arts support. Wait a minute—Cain Park is one of the oldest municipally owned arts parks in the country! And the public art projects, such as the Coventry Arch and murals at Cedar Lee and Cedar Fairmount? Funds were

raised by the community, but city staff and elected officials enthusiastically paved the way. The city makes it possible to be creative here.

Rarely does an artist of any media support herself or a family, or earn a living wage. The problem is embedded in our values and priorities, not in city government. Whose responsibility is it to support the arts? Ours.

Even under the current health and economic emergency, you can support the arts in our community. Send a check of any size to a nonprofit arts organization, as frequently as you can. There are many, and they are struggling, as are small businesses. Purchase local art at Heights Arts. How lucky we are to have a retail venue selling and displaying local art!

Do not think that the arts are fading from our city. You can't even go to the grocery store without bumping into an artist of some kind. This community has always been a magnet for creative people, and always will be, especially if we support them.

Peggy Spaeth is the retired founding director of Heights Arts.





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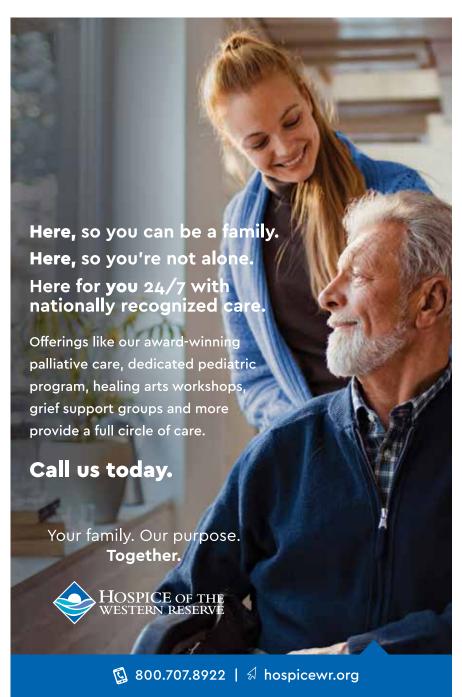
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New CH mayor should have say in new police contract

To the Editor:

The union representing Cleveland Heights police officers is currently negotiating their contract, which expires on March 31. The negotiations are handled by the city manager and outside counsel the manager hires to represent the city. Though the current contract term is three years, members of Safer Heights urge the city to negotiate a one-year agreement.

The new mayor [to be elected on Nov. 2], as the new director of public safety, will have direct responsibility over police operations, but this may be limited if contract provisions are locked in for another three years. With the results of both the council-commissioned study on racial disparities in 2019 traffic stops and the report of the Racial Justice Task Force still pending, we believe there may be more desire for citizen oversight in officer discipline, which is currently governed by the union contract.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic's effects, and its revenue implications for the city, are far from certain. Tying the city to a three-year contract could divert city resources from future recovery efforts and small-business-assistance programs. After the long-term implications of COVID-19 are better understood, renegotiating the contract in 2022 under the direction of a new mayor makes the most sense for our city. Safer Heights urges residents to contact CH City Council members and our city manager if they agree.

Rosa Kovacevich, Safer Heights member Cleveland Heights

CH's Issue 32 is a waste of time

To the Editor:

Since Cleveland Heights voters passed the Issue 32 ballot referendum [in 2013], every year the Cleveland Heights City Council must set aside [time] to consider citizens' views on a federal constitutional issue far outside the interests or purview of our local government.

Various pro-government and anti-business radicals harangue our

part-time, busy council with irrelevant complaints. Then, council is required to submit an Issue 32 report on the meeting to our elected representatives. At best, this is a waste of time, but it also sends a radical anti-business message to prospective commercial employers and taxpayers. We, the people, should repeal it. Council already provides opportunity at public meetings for citizens to air their views on local matters.

The Move to Amend group is the force behind Issue 32. This group wants to eliminate the constitutional rights of corporations. The source of their outrage is the 2010 Citizens United Supreme Court decision and 125 years of precedents. Astute readers of the *Heights Observer* will note that Cleveland Heights City Council does not have a vote on the Supreme Court.

The American Civil Liberties Union opposes the Move to Amend as an assault on free speech. It is also an assault on every investor and 401(k) participant who owns stock. Who would invest in a corporation that cannot protect its business from a bureaucrat's decree or government takeover? For that matter, what corporate relocation manager would consider Cleveland Heights, with this hostility to business?

Robert Shwab Cleveland Heights

Resident files new complaint against CH City Council

To the Editor:

For years, Cleveland Heights City Council has been abusing Ohio's laws regarding executive session—holding meetings in private.

A couple of weeks ago, the Council Committee of the Whole went into executive session to discuss who will be appointed to the 25-member Racial Justice Task Force.

[According to Ohio law,] they can only do that when they're discussing appointing "a public employee or official."

So, I filed a complaint with the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas.

Openness, transparancy and accountability from our elected representatives shouldn't be this hard.

Garry Kanter Cleveland Heights



The lights are on. Is anyone home?



HEIGHTS OF DEMOCRACY

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

After conscientiously correcting all violations cited in her home's point-of-sale (POS) report, a new homeowner repeatedly calls the Cleveland Heights housing department to schedule a reinspection.

A building inspector approves new driveway construction with barely a glance.

While rehabbing formerly neglected houses, contractors routinely fail to post building permits—with no consequences.

A resident sees the vacant house next door being shown to prospective renters. She wonders, "Were permits completed for plumbing, electrical and garage work? Is there an occupancy certificate on file? Bottom line, is it safe to live in?"

Each of us happens to be the owner-occupier of a duplex. For decades, every December without fail the housing department has invoiced us for new occupancy permits. Until 2020. No invoice. No explanation.

At one time, housing preservation in Cleveland Heights was a model for neighboring suburbs. What happened?

The inspector mentioned above, who did not bother to actually check out a driveway job, is not a city employee. He works for SAFEbuilt, the private equity-owned corporation to which former city manager Tanisha Briley outsourced our building department in 2016. Evidently the city pays SAFEbuilt whether their inspectors do the job or not.

Meanwhile, the city's housing department has remained only partly in-house. After a conflict-of-interest scandal led to two inspector vacancies in 2019, POS inspections were farmed out to SAFEbuilt staff, one of whom did not bother to schedule a reinspection for the new homeowner cited above.

If the city's shortcomings in code enforcement could all be attributed to outsourcing, the solution would be relatively simple. Large numbers of us would have to demand that the administration terminate its contracts with SAFEbuilt at the first opportunity, and reconstitute our building department and POS program. And we should do that.

Unfortunately, it will take considerably more effort to make our housing and building departments fully functional. In 2019, an internal review of housing department operations called them "chaotic." Next, a lengthy assessment by Novak Consulting Group resulted in a June 2020 report containing 18 recommendations, including:

• Develop a formal housing strat-

egy with clear program goals and objectives.

- Provide inspectors with computers and telephones. [Our italics.]
- Engage in regular performance reviews/check-ins with staff.
- Conduct regular department meetings.
- Require appropriate training and certifications for all housing inspectors.

Novak urged the city to activate CitizenServe code enforcement software (obtained through the First Suburbs Consortium in 2018) for more-efficient operations. In January 2021 the city manager reported to council that this upgrade is at last in progress.

Finally, Novak stated, the department should stop awarding bonuses to staff based on how many inspections they conduct over the course of a year, which prioritizes quantity over quality.

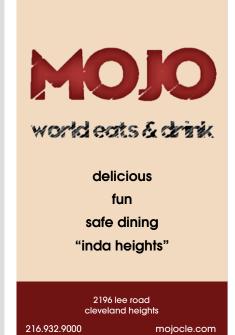
These are common-sense observations and suggestions. Why would our city have to hire an outside consultant to make them? And what has come of it?

Other than CitizenServe, we have yet to see evidence that the department has implemented Novak's recommendations. We also have yet to see, after eight months, any council member ask for a progress report.

In Cleveland Heights, past, present, and future, beautiful homes really are our economy. While strengthening the tax base with thoughtful commercial development is a worthwhile pursuit, housing an eclectic mix of families, young working people, emptynesters and retirees will always be this city's stock in trade.

We advocate bringing the building department back in-house at the earliest opportunity, to work cooperatively with a re-vamped and revived housing department. With the right leadership, that combination could once again make Cleveland Heights a model for other communities.

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.



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I'm Josie Moore, and I'm running for CH mayor

Josie Moore

I'm throwing my hat in.

It's audacious, I know. We moved here four years ago to be near family. After moving around a lot—for my master's degree work and my husband's job—we needed to put down roots. We chose Cleveland Heights because we wanted community. From the moment we arrived, this has felt like home. For our family it is true that, here, all are welcome.

My professional work is in communications. But the work that fuels me is political activism. Back in Schenectady, N.Y., I helped build an organization to advocate for progressive issues, like universal healthcare, climate action,



Josie Moore

and a living wage. I led outreach: connecting with marginalized communities and increasing engagement.

I was a delegate at the 2016 Democratic National Convention, and there I joined other delegates to create a statewide organization, the New York Progressive Action Network. Building this coalition wasn't easy. I moderated many hard conversations to balance different power dynamics and anticipate obstacles. But we did it, and it is now a political voice for people who might otherwise be ignored.

But the work that keeps me grounded is when I can connect with people. This last fall I took my 9-year-old daughter with me to distribute door hangers because I want her to understand that politics is, at its

heart, about everyday people like us.

I first began considering running for Cleveland Heights mayor as I thought about what I want to see in a candidate. I knew I wanted someone with progressive values and a vision for our city that is forward-thinking while also doable. But the more I thought about the challenges we are grappling with, the more I saw poor communication and coordination at the root of many of our issues. Our mayor needs to also be a community organizer and a strong communicator.

So I decided to run.

I know that every candidate who steps into this race is committed to making Cleveland Heights better, and each one will offer their vision for the future of our city. This is our chance to explore what we want to build together. I hope this will be a time of dialogue, not division.

You can find out more about me and where I stand on different issues on my website, *josiemoore4ch. com*, or follow me on Facebook @ JosieMoore4CH. Let's connect. Let's talk. Let's come together and make a plan for a better Cleveland Heights.

Josie Moore is a proud Cleveland Heights resident, mother, wife, and small-business

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April 1st Maundy Thursday Worship (Virtual)

April 2nd - Good Friday Stations of the Cross

April 3rd

Children's Easter Service (Virtual)

April 4

Easter Sunday Worship (Virtual)

ENVIRONMENTAL SERIES continued from page 1

chat, will describe those native shrubs that provide structure in the garden, as well as essential habitat and food for insects and birds.

Next up is landscape architect Chris Cheraso, whose talk about planting with a purpose was inspired by reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to his twins.

Building on his talk, the next will provide information about planting for pollinators. It is presented by Lara Roketenetz, Project Wingspan state coordinator of the Pollinator Partnership and University of Akron field station manager.

The series ends on April 7 with the Nature Center's own Natural Resources Specialist Nick Mikash, who will talk about his favorite natives for the garden with "Nick's Picks."

Mikash's talk will feature plants included in the annual Nature Center plant sale, to be held online on March 22, at www.shakerlakes.org. The sale will offer vegetables, annuals, trees, shrubs,

ornamental baskets, and a robust assortment of locally grown native perennials.

For the third year, the plant sale will offer "pollinator plug packs"—selections of plants for those who want to start small. Even small, tree lawn gardens that comprise native plant species contribute to habitat corridors that support pollinators.

Doug Tallamy, author of *Nature's Best Hope*, advises that "nature" isn't something set aside in preserves and parks. He stresses that "we can no longer leave conservation to the conservationists," and advocates for growing our own "Homegrown National Park" to enrich habitat for wildlife, including humans.

To connect with local efforts working to improve healthier native ecosystems, visit www.ecologicalheights.com.

Peggy Spaeth works to improve habitat with the Heights Pollinator Path; Friends of the Bradford Cinder Path; the Nature Center plant sale committee; and as co-chair, with John Barber, of Friends of Lower Lake.





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Danforth announces candidacy for CH mayor

Barbara Danforth

After much thought and 40 years of preparation, I am running to be mayor of Cleveland Heights. Between now and Election Day, I will share my vision and experience on a campaign platform I'm calling "Competence – Not Politics."

I'm running because I love the Heights and I want to make a difference, which is the same philosophy that's guided me over my entire career.

First, a little about me: Along with my husband, Obie Shelton, children, Hallie and Owen, and our dog, Onyx, I've lived on Bolton Road in Forest Hill for 16 years.

For 15 years, I served as CEO of the YWCA of Greater Cleveland. During that time, I created the Women's Leadership Academy, and facilitated the creation of 22 single-occupancy apartments and a program providing life skills for teens aging out of foster care.

You may find it helpful to know I'm a non-practicing attorney, with a legal career that includes service as assistant attorney general for the state of Iowa, chief legal counsel for the Cuyahoga Department of Children's Services, and chief prosecutor for the city of Cleveland.

My volunteer activities encompass the Forest Hill Home Owners association, the Cleveland Heights Racial Justice Task Force, United Way and the City Club of Cleveland.

Now to the vision: There's always been a synergy between University Circle and Cleveland Heights. We must work harder to join us at that hip. Working hand-in-glove with city council, the planning director and director of economic development, I will bring a new, focused energy to economic development, the rehabilitation of our housing, and the



Barbara Danforth

attraction of new businesses.

Other areas of major concern to me: redeveloping Severance Town Center; creating homes with firstfloor master bedrooms, to keep our seniors and empty-nesters in town; and issues of equity and inclusion.

This first term of a new mayor will set the foundation for residents, council members and city staff to interact and cooperate. Bottom line, the streets must be paved, the garbage must be picked up, the fire and police departments must be sensitive and responsive, and the budget needs to balance.

Running the city is very much like running a multi-million-dollar business, and I ask the voters of Cleveland Heights to elect a mayor who has demonstrable experience running big operations, making payrolls, and working by consensus—and I'll do my darndest to make CH logo-branded clothing available 24/7 online!

Barbara Danforth is a 16-year resident of Cleveland Heights' Forest Hill Historical District. She is the former chief prosecutor, city of Cleveland; and former CEO of YWCA Greater Cleveland. Currently, Danforth is an executive coach with focus on career coaching for emerging leaders.

CH resident shares design concept online for Cedar Lee Park

Robert Berger

The city of Cleveland Heights is in the process reviewing proposals to build a mixed-use development at the corner of Meadowbrook and Lee roads.

Some previous developments had merit, and also have been a source of revenue for the city. However, the only consideration for the use of our city's vacant land in the past decades has been residential development. Other uses of the land, such as improving the quality of life for residents, have not always been considered.

The one-acre parcel at Meadowbrook and Lee, in the middle of the Cedar Lee Business District, may be the last parcel of land to be developed.

There has been conversation by the residents of Cedar Lee, on Nextdoor, about converting this piece of land into a park. I share their view.

Interested to see what a park



The writer envisions a park on this Cedar Lee corner, rather than a new development.

would look like there, I commissioned a landscape architect to make a concept design. You can view his design, which includes a video walk-through, at https://cedarleepark.weebly.com.

I am not saying a condo shouldn't be built, but I am saying that a park proposal should be given consideration. [I don't think there should be] a rush to build, as we have yet to see the impact of the Top of the Hill project on our city.

Council is moving quickly to-

continued on page 12

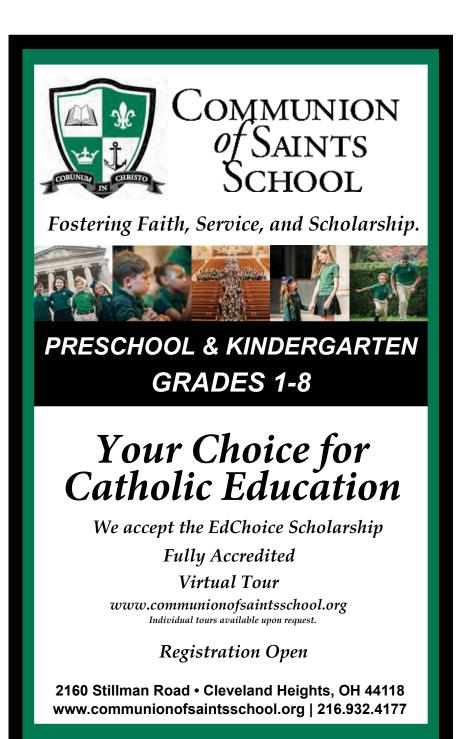
Thank you!

The Wine Spot team appreciates the generosity and support of our neighbors while we all work together to stay safe and healthy. Your kindness and patience is appreciated and valued. We hope to see you on the patio this spring!



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A banner featuring artwork by a Cleveland Heights artist was installed at the Top of the Hill construction site in late January.

CH artist enhances TOH construction site

Deanna Bremer Fisher

As construction continues on Top of the Hill (TOH), the \$80-million mixed-use development at Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, developer Flaherty & Collins and Cedar Fairmount Arts have installed a banner featuring artwork by a Cleveland Heights artist, to enhance the construction site and provide information about the new development.

"Cedar Fairmount Arts, a new nonprofit, designed the banner as its initial project," said Myra Orenstein, executive director of the Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District. "It was installed in late January."

The banner features artwork by Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson. Born in Reykjavik, Iceland, Jónsson has lived in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood for more than 30 years. She is internationally known for her abstract landscapes.

"[She] draws upon the aweinspiring landscape of her homeland, creating startlingly beautiful weavings that hover precariously between realism and abstraction," wrote Dan Tranberg for *Art in America*.

The banner also contains information about the new development, which is slated for completion in 2022, and the project's partners. TOH will comprise 260 market-rate apartments, 11,000 square feet of commercial space, green space, and a 525-space garage that will also serve neighboring shops.

Learn more about Jónsson at www.hildurjonsson.com.

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

Melody Joy Hart announces mayoral run

Gary Benjamin

Cleveland Heights City Council Member Melody Joy Hart is running for mayor of Cleveland Heights. Hart was the top vote-getter in the November 2019 council election. She has served one year, and attended council meetings for more than four years prior to her election.

"I bring a strong financial background and management skills to city government, together with progressive values," stated Hart. "I will run an effective, transparent and responsive city government."

Hart has extensive experience as an executive. She is a CPA (certified public accountant), a CTP (certified treasury professional), and is certified in financial planning and analysis. Relationship management was a key component of her work with banks, rating agencies, vendors, and investors, developing win-win solutions for all parties. She has broken glass ceilings in Fortune 1000 companies, including being vice president and treasurer of a multi-national corporation.

Prior to her election to council, Hart was a member of the Greater Cleveland Congregations Cleveland Heights Housing Committee, which advocated for the foreclosure bond ordinance and worked in the Noble area to ensure banks and landlords kept their properties up to code.

On council, Hart has:

- co-authored with two other council members the ordinance establishing a racial justice committee to analyze practices in the city for racial injustice or disparity;
- arranged for a unanimous vote for financing of Top of the Hill, negotiating with the developer by increasing the number of jobs paid by "prevailing wage" and getting commitments to hire locally;



Melody Joy Hart

- spearheaded changes to the foreclosure bond and to the "out of county" ownership ordinance;
- held public and transparent finance committee meetings as chair of the committee;
- established a system to refer citizen complaints to the appropriate department and asking that department to report to council about progress made;
- sponsored two forums with a committee of concerned citizens about the transition to a mayor form of government, with three mayors from nearby cities, and another featuring Mayor DaSilva of East Providence, R.I., and that city's attorney regarding the challenges of transition to an elected mayor government;
- and responded to citizens' complaints in several ways to solve their problems.

[As mayor] Hart will work on housing stock preservation, racial equity, police reform, economic development, more transparency. She will implement a single number for citizens to contact for all complaints, and a software system to track complaints, requiring a prompt response from CH City Hall.

Gary Benjamin, a civil rights attorney, is married to Melody Joy Hart and is her campaign manager.

NEW BUSINESSES continued from page 2

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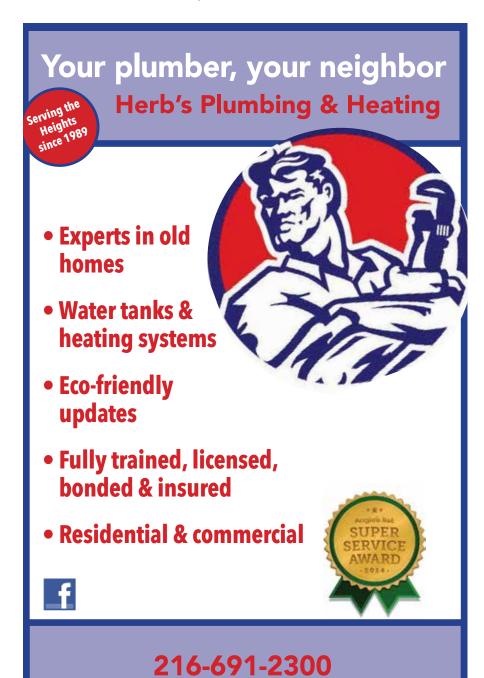
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Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer.



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Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

JANUARY 19, 2021

Council members present were Vice President Kahlil Seren, Mary Dunbar, Melody Joy Hart, Davida Russell and Michael Ungar. Council President Jason Stein was absent. Also present were City Manager Susanna Niermann O'Neil, Clerk of Council Amy Himmelein, and Law Director William Hanna.

Public comments

A resident noted that the property addressed in tonight's legislation had a waiver of 10 years of delinquent taxes totaling \$61,000, half of which would have gone to the school district.

Maryann Barnes, chair of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland, on behalf of the chapter's leadership team, commented on the unfilled council vacancy. The league requested a statement from council on its intent, requested an open discussion of candidates, and recommended exploration of charter amendments to preclude future indecision on council vacancies.

Police chief's report

Chief Annette Mecklenburg detailed progress on recent incidents. (Details are on pages 4-5 of the council meeting packet).

Ronnie Dunn, of The Diversity Institute at Cleveland State University, has received requests from Mecklenburg to review the city's policies on bias-free policing, recruitment and training, use of force, and vehicle pursuits. Once Dunn's recommendations have been received, two town halls will be held to discuss the policies with the public.

The state has certified Cleveland Heights' compliance with former President Trump's Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities. This certification was required before the police department could receive Department of Justice grant money in 2021.

3750 Bainbridge Road

Council approved the transfer of property at 3750 Bainbridge Road from the city's land reutilization program to the Cuyahoga Land Bank. Council Member Seren was recused from the vote because his work at the county could be a conflict of interest.

Council member comments

Melody Joy Hart is researching availability of the COVID vaccine for Cleveland Heights residents, and referred [residents] to the county board of health website for information: www. ccbh.net/covid-19-phase-1 b-provider-list/.

Regarding the difficulty in filling the council vacancy, Kahlil Seren suggested that council consider looking at candidates other than the four finalists, choosing a different way of voting, or reopening the application process to new applicants. The issue will be discussed next week. He announced council's choices for the Racial Justice Task Force: Mario Zimmler, Barbara Danforth, Rhonda Davis Lovejoy, Ashley Denyem, Mia Moore and Calvin Singleton.

Davida Russell reported that residents can apply, online through the city where they live, for rental assistance from the federal government's stimulus program.



LWV Observers: Gail Larson and Blanche Valancy.

FEBRUARY 1, 2021

Melody Joy Hart was absent. All other council members were present, as were the city manager, clerk of council and law director.

Public comments

A resident asked if council knew that Duck Creek Energy, a Brecksville gas and oil drilling exploration company, had purchased two parcels from Hebrew Academy. She is concerned that possible fracking could harm the nearby Nine-Mile Creek Watershed, and noted that local municipalities are constrained from objecting to land sales of this kind. She felt there should be a public discussion about this.

Chief of police report

Chief Annette Mecklenburg reported two recent incidents:

- On Jan. 31, shots were reported fired on Keystone Drive. Officers discovered a party in progress at the location, and told attendees to disperse. As police have been called to this address frequently, a warning letter will be sent to the owners.
- Also, on Jan. 31, shots were heard in the Mayfield/Compton area. Three males were running away from the scene. Officers confiscated a stolen rifle hidden in a back yard.

The city is seeking information about accessing video from Ring video doorbells owned by residents to investigate criminal activity.

Council member comments

Michael Ungar wanted the public to know that he, council, and city staff take the recent shootings seriously. He wants input on using the video doorbells as information sources for the police. He is also researching a concept called "pay to stay," which allows a potentially evicted tenant to bring the past due rent and late fees to the eviction hearing, to compensate the landlord. He wants the law department to research what other cities are doing to protect tenants during the pandemic crisis.

Kahlil Seren announced he is studying pay-to-stay legislation and is glad the law department has been directed to research the concept. Additionally, Seren asked that the law department review the concept of Source of Income Discrimination (i.e., landlord refusal to accept payments such as housing vouchers), with the goal of including it in any pay-to-stay legislation, as housing stability is so important to residents.

Seren announced that he has "office hours" via Zoom every Sunday, 4-5 p.m. Residents should e-mail him to request the link. LWV Observers: Gail Larson and Blanche Valancy.

Expanded reports are available online at www.heightsobserver.org.

LWV asks CH council to act

Maryann Barnes,

The Heights League of Women Voters (LWV), a chapter of the LWV of Greater Cleveland, has added its voice to those expressing frustration over Cleveland Heights City Council's impasse on filling the council seat that has been vacant since March 2, 2020.

In a statement, read at the Jan. 19 CH council meeting during the public comments period, the Heights LWV noted that last spring, at council's request, it conducted videotaped interviews of the many applicants for the council vacancy left by Melissa Yasinow's resignation.

Those interviews were completed April 30, 2020, but now, nearly 10 months later, no appointment has been made.

The statement, prepared by the Heights LWV Leadership Team, asked, "Because there has been no Executive Session on the agenda for this purpose since Oct. 5, 2020, we ask: Does council intend to leave the seat vacant until the next election?"

The statement went on to make three suggestions for council action:

- "Publish a statement addressing council's intent and why you no longer hold Executive Sessions to discuss the appointment.
- Request permission from the four finalists to hold public discussions.
 We understand that it is council's prerogative to discuss such appointments in a nonpublic session, but a public discussion may help Cleveland Heights residents understand the difficulties in agreeing on a replacement.
- Above all, consider appointing a Task Force to review the charter section on vacancies (section III-4) and propose possible amendments to reform the

process so that this lack of action by council never happens again. The Charter Review Commission presented suggestions in its report. In light of the coming change to an elected mayor, there may be further possibilities that would engage the mayor."

The LWV's statement noted how this failure to fill the vacancy has disturbed Cleveland Heights residents, who see this as a symptom of council dysfunction.

The Heights LWV charged council to "please advise the citizens of Cleveland Heights of your next action on this matter and how you plan to address the challenge presented by this task."

At city council's subsequent Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting, on Feb. 1, LWV observer Gail Larson noted that council members spent more than 30 minutes discussing a possible charter amendment pertaining to a council vacancy, with several ideas presented, but no conclusion.

In the packet for that meeting, staff had included information on the handling of vacancies in other local municipal charters. Council President Jason Stein finally asked to stop the discussion, saying they were "in the weeds" and getting nowhere.

Council members acknowledged they have a problem, but are undecided on whether to wait until the election of the new mayor, or to propose a charter amendment now, to establish a deadline and a role for the mayor in the event of council indecision. The COW agenda had included an executive session, but one did not take place. There is still no resolution.

Maryann Barnes is chair of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.

LIBRARY continued from page 1

DeGaetano of Mac's Backs - Books on Coventry.

"I have loved working with Pat, talking books and collaborating for the [local author] speaker series, the Pekar Park Comic Book Festival, and other Coventry Village events," said DeGaetano. "Some of the highlights of my work life have been our semi-annual discussions of authors and writers when we scheduled our author events. Pat's warmth, kindness, and deep love of books and reading has enriched our community and my own life."

That feeling was echoed by Mallory Phillips, executive director of the Coventry Village Special Improvement District. "In my early days working in Coventry, she was a guiding light and haven for me; a place to land and find connection, support and encouragement," said Phillips. "She has a deep care for the neighborhood and invests herself completely in the people around her. We've worked together on a variety of community events and she's been a huge supporter of the Coventry Village merchants."

Gray also has a keen sense for what residents and fans of the neighborhood respond to. With businesses that include the alternative-music club the Grog Shop, independent record store Record Revolution, vegan- and vegetarian-friendly Tommy's restaurant, and independent coffee shop Phoenix, Coventry

Village has a reputation as a haven for creativity and alternative ways of thinking. Under Gray's leadership, the Coventry branch developed long-standing programs including the weekly ukulele jam, the Step Out of Time alternative health series, and free concerts with the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Gray's replacement is Maggie Kinney, a longtime Coventry library employee.

Kinney began her Heights Libraries career 15 years ago, when Gray hired her as a page. Since then, Kinney has held several positions, including youth services librarian at the Coventry branch and, most recently, as the library's special projects manager, overseeing programs such as the Mobile Pantry, writing grant applications to support programming, and coordinating the library's participation in countywide projects, such as One Community Reads.

"Pat has been a wonderful mentor and guiding force in my career from the very beginning," said Kinney. "I couldn't be more excited to have the opportunity to build on her achievements."

[To read more about Gray's library career, look for the Q-and-A on Heights Libraries blog, at www.heightslibrary.org.]

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

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UH TAYLOR ROAD continued from page 1

Homes, reviewed the site plan for the seven parcels. The plan, which can be viewed online at www.universityheights.com, is for eight buildings, with the townhomes in groupings of three and four. Most of the units will be approximately 2,000 square feet, with one 2,400-square-foot unit.

Each townhome will have an attached two-car garage, open-concept living area, and two to three bedrooms, with the option to add a fourth.

Noting that the plan complies with current zoning, Plessner said there will be an HOA for the site, and owners will own the land underneath their unit, as well as the unit itself.

Units r-8, which will front on Taylor Road, all will have roof decks. Other units will have a roof-deck option. The Taylor-fronting exteriors will comprise a mix of "thin-brick" and siding; other units won't feature the brick.

The design calls for shared green spaces—one to be located at the northwest corner, where it will tie in with the current walkway, and another to the south/southeast. A



An August 2020 photo of the townhome development site, with the Deslisle Center in the background.

"pedestrian courtyard" is planned, to run through the center of the site.

Plessner said construction would proceed in phases, by building, with probably one to two under construction at a time. She anticipated that construction would start on Taylor Road and move east from there.

The timeline for completing the entire project is "not later than four years" from the date of the CIC's sale agreement with the school district.

While the plan doesn't cite target sale prices, discussion at the Feb. 4 and Feb. 16 meetings referenced a range of \$300,000 to \$400,000.

Because University Heights, with the exception of University Square, is a designated Community Reinvestment Area, the project qualifies for a full 15-year tax abatement on the new construction, to the developer and the initial transferees. The underlying land is not tax abated, and its value will be adjusted once the improvements [i.e., townhomes] are built. The 15-year tax abatement is valid no matter how many times a property transfers during that time frame.

The agreement between the BOE and UH contains a "revenue guaranty" provision, detailed in the

BOE's April 7, 2020, meeting notes, in which the city guarantees \$20,000 annually in real property taxes to the school district, beginning the year in which the tax abatement commences. That is the minimum amount the completed project is expected to generate annually; the city is required to pay the difference, should the actual real taxes be less than that minimum amount.

The sale agreement also contains a "clawback" provision, according to which the BOE will have a limited option to buy back its property, or a portion of it, if the developer fails to meet certain completed-unit milestones.

At the April 7 BOE meeting, Board Member Malia Lewis commented, "The most important part of the proposal is the clawback provision. It protects us if this development falls apart. [I'm] not interested in giving away our real estate without some security."

Much of the discussion at the Feb. 16 meeting centered around vehicular access and, especially, the question of visitor parking. The plan calls for all vehicles to enter the development from Wynn Road. UH Fire Chief Robert Perko confirmed that the site, and its turning radii, will accommodate fire trucks.

Various council members joined the discussion regarding parking for visitors, delivery services, repair persons, etc., with Rach noting that [lack of] parking was the reason he voted no at the planning commission meeting. He also wondered where snow would go in the winter: "You have to push it somewhere. It's a little tight."

Council Member Justin Gould commented that, while he "appreciates Knez, and what they're doing in the city, [I don't] want to turn the neighborhood into the site's parking lot, when the developer made the decision not to build that additional parking."

Plessner stated that the developer thinks there is adequate nearby on-street parking, suggesting that perhaps more parking could be opened up on Wynn Road. "We've spent about a year on the site plan," said Plessner. "We believe in this plan strongly."

Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan commented, reminding council, "We created the residential-attached district ourselves, to attract this kind of development. This development meets the zoning we created and passed. The proposal by Knez doesn't do anything that isn't permitted by the zoning we implemented to attract this project."

Rach made a motion to approve the site plan, with the condition that the developer construct 28 units and eight on-site parking spots. After extensive discussion, his motion failed for want of a second.

After the meeting, the mayor credited teamwork for the project's progress. "This is the culmination of nearly three years of work by city administration, the City Beautiful CIC, and city council," Brennan said. "Special thanks go to our Cleveland

continued on page 19



School district employees start bike donation program



Some of the bikes given away for free—ready to go from the Cleveland Heights Recreation

Mary Dunbar

Between June and October of last year, Stephen Walker and Jerod Johnson gave away more than 100 bicycles to children who needed them; most lived in Cleveland Heights. The experience was so heartwarming, they want to keep it going.

It all started at the end of 2019 when Walker learned from a friend, Bill Pavilonis, that the Brecksville United Methodist Church had about 40 hand-me-down bicycles—largely kid-sized—that the church wanted to donate to children who didn't have bicycles.

Walker has jobs with both the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school district and the city of Cleveland Heights Recreation Department. He sees bicycles as a way to get children away from watching TV and into exercise, through an outdoor activity that sets them on the path to health and wellness. His jobs enabled him to identify children who would benefit from a bicycle giveaway, and to find people and resources to help.

At first, Walker and Johnson, who became friends because both work for CH-UH schools, wanted to host an event to celebrate the bicycle giveaway. But the COVID shutdown last March forced them to scale back. When the Cleveland Heights Recreation Center's North Ice Rink was closed for repairs, Walker was able to use some of that space for repair and storage of the bicycles.

On June 26, children and their families were able to come to the recreation center to pick up bicycles. Thanks to a generous donation from KellerNational, some families also received a \$50 certificate to use at Dave's Market. Each child receiving a bicycle was given instructions on safe cycling, as well as a bicycle helmet for safety, courtesy of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and its "Put a Lid on It!" campaign.

As a result of postings on Facebook, and information the school district provided, some people donated money to buy additional, new bicycles, and others donated bicycles their children had outgrown. Walker started a 501(c)3, The United Youth Entity, to enable supporters to claim a tax deduction for their donations.

Meanwhile, more parents and children requested bicycles. By the end of September, Walker and Johnson had given away 102 bicycles. Walker admits that the generosity of donors, and the joy of the kids,

moved him to tears at times.

Anyone who has a used kid's bike to donate, or would like to contribute money for the purchase of new bicycles, or help in other ways, is asked to contact Walker at stever3176@gmail.com.

Mary Dunbar is a member of Cleveland Heights City Council and vice president of Heights Bicycle Coalition.

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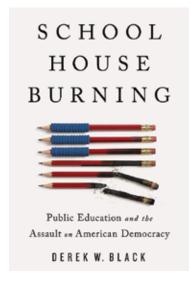
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Series to explore links between public education and democracy



Susie Kaeser

The public is invited to attend a virtual, three-part series about *School House Burning: Public Education and the Assault on American Democracy*, to be held on Zoom on March 10, March 24 and April 7, 7–8:30 p.m. Author Derek Black, professor of constitutional law at the University of South Carolina, will kick off the March 10 meeting.

School House Burning documents how public education at public expense became embedded in every state constitution because an educated citizenry is essential to a successful democracy.

This historic journey that made "education the state's absolute and foremost duty," began with the Northwest Ordinance of 1785 and 1787. The critical role of public education was confirmed during Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement.

The author frames the current attack on public education as nothing less than a threat to democracy. He connects the current push to limit voting rights, and the retreat in state investment in public education and support for privatization, as parts of the same anti-democratic agenda.

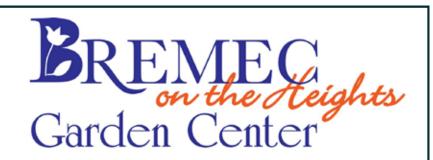
Black notes, "While threats to the ballot are immediately understood as threats to democracy, attacks on public education are not always fully appreciated as such."

The book discussion is sponsored by the Heights Coalition for Public Education. To register, visit the coalition's website, *chuh.net/coalition/bome*.

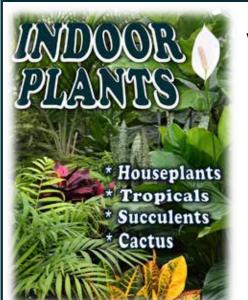
The event's co-sponsors are Reaching Heights, Heights Community Congress, League of Women Voters Greater Cleveland and CH-UH, Cleveland Heights Teachers Union, CH-UH Board of Education, Richmond Heights Board of Education, Northeast Ohio Friends of Public Education, AAUW - Heights-Hillcrest-Lyndhurst, and Public Education Partners.

In Cleveland Heights, the book is available at Mac's Backs (for a 10% discount), and Appletree Books.

Susie Kaeser has been a proud Cleveland Heights resident since 1979. She is the former director of Reaching Heights, and is active with the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the League of Women Voters.



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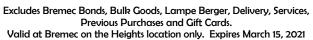
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Resident invests in a 'P.E.A.C.E.' of CH's future

Robert Koonce

I'm a lifer. Save for a few years after college, Cleveland Heights has been home since I was born. We are far from perfect as a community, and we do love to squabble. But this past Christmas morning, I was reminded of why I cannot get enough of living in Cleveland Heights.

The snow was thick on the ground, the wind was harsh in the face, but I thought it a good idea to bundle the children, grab the sleds, and march over to Coventry P.E.A.C.E Park to flatten all that snow on the hill. We were alone at first, but gradually a small, hardy crowd gathered for the simple pleasure of sledding down a hill

For a century, we have been gathering in this space. When the school district needed to let go of the property, we debated its future and made the right decision to save it.

Not only is the park one of the most popular year-round outdoor spots in our city, but the school building has gradually become a thriving arts center.

This did not happen by accident. Many people in our community have invested over the years—from those who built and maintained the playground,

to the creative and agile nonprofit leaders inside the building, to those who have come to see a show or have brought their children for a learning experience. So many contributed to build something special.

Heights Libraries has done a fantastic job of maintaining the park since it took over ownership, and is considering ways to enhance this crucial amenity.

At the same time, the tenants of the school building are forging a vision and working out the details to create a true regional asset—one that will be a regionally unique combination of artistic, educational, and recreational amenities also serving as an economic accelerant.

It's a building that draws people in: people who bank, buy books, eat dinner, shop and then want to live in our beloved Coventry neighborhood.

As a lifer, I want nothing more than to see our community thrive on the other side of this pandemic.

For this reason, I have donated to the campaign which aims to raise \$100,000 to set the foundation for another century of this asset's place in our community.

I also have joined the board of Coventry P.E.A.C.E., hoping to give more than money to our future. The pandemic has upended our lives and put many of our community's businesses, institutions, and nonprofits into a state of tremendous uncertainty.

Fortunately, pandemics end and, at some point (hopefully soon), this one will as well. I feel confident that while the details of our community's future may be uncertain, the overall result is not.

Join us in building this brighter future for Cleveland Heights. Learn more at http://coventrypeacecampus. org. Then, close the laptop, grab your sled, and come on out. I'll see you there.

Robert Koonce, a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident, is currently board chair of Home Repair Resource Center and a board member of Coventry P.E.A.C.E.

Reaching Heights is not an arm of the school district

Krista Hawthorne

The relationship between Reaching Heights and the CH-UH City School District was referenced online recently, in questions and comments by community members.

Does Reaching Heights speak for the district at city council meetings? Is Reaching Heights a policy arm of the school district?

The answer is no to both of those questions. Reaching Heights is an independent nonprofit that facilitates meaningful parent and community engagement in the Heights public schools.

Formed in 1989, Reaching Heights is run by four part-time employees—executive director, program manager, parent mentor, and administrative assistant.

Its volunteer board of directors always includes one member of the district's board of education.

The parent mentor position is funded by an IDEA grant through the school district; all other programs and operating expenses are funded by foundation grants and donations from individuals.

Reaching Heights undergoes a professional audit annually.

Maybe you know of Reaching Heights from its annual Adult Community Spelling Bee, or its Reaching Musical Heights concerts at Severance Hall every four years, which feature more than 500 young musicians.

Reaching Heights raises money to fund private music lesson scholarships and an intensive, one-week summer music camp. It invites community members into the schools to volunteer with its Many Villages Tutoring Program, and its Reaching Heights Role Models speaker series. Reaching Heights' parent mentor supports parents of students with special learning needs.

One of Reaching Heights' most important roles is to connect the community to the public schools by providing information about the value of public education, the teaching and learning happening in each building, the community resources available to support teachers and enrich students, and the district's operations and policies.

Reaching Heights' staff and board members share information at school events, PTA meetings, city council meetings and community gatherings.

Reaching Heights collaborates with other local nonprofits on programs and public forums about public education and anti-racism.

Reaching Heights staff also writes articles for its e-newsletter and website, and the local press.

When there are controversial issues, such as a school levy or contract negotiations, Reaching Heights attempts to present both sides of the issue, or just the facts.

It does not promote individual candidates, nor does it make endorsements or donations to political campaigns.

Reaching Heights' mission is to mobilize community resources to foster highly valued public schools that provide all Cleveland Heights-University Heights students a successful education.

If you want to learn more, or help Reaching Heights as a volunteer or donor, visit *www.reachingheights.* org, or call 216-932-5510.

Krista Hawthorne, executive director of Reaching Height, is a proud and grateful Heights Tiger.

CEDAR LEE continued from page 7

ward signing a contract at a time when a new mayor will be elected within a year; thus, not only depriving the mayor of an opportunity to implement his/her vision for the parcel, but also [discounting] the residents who, in voting to elect a mayor, also voted for fresh ideas.

It would be difficult to tear down a building to build a park, but it wouldn't be difficult to change a park into a building in the future.

Whether [we get] a park or a condo is a concern of all residents. However, a decision should be made considering both the residents of Cedar Lee and its business district.

Voice your opinion as to the best use of the development of this land. You can contact city council members directly, or contact city council's representative for this project, Economic Development Director Tim Boland, at 216-291-4857 or tboland@clvhts.com.

Please take time to view the concept design. Share the vision of Cedar Lee Park. I welcome your opinion and feedback; contact me at cedarleepark@yahoo.com.

Robert S. Berger resides in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood. He is a retired career counselor.



Going shopping?

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- They support local causes and institutions
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HEIGHTS OBSERVER

Swimmers break 55-yearold Heights High record



The Heights High record-breaking relay team: Emmet Fluharty, James Huff, Aidan Peters and Andrew Teets.

Cary Seidman

In March 1965, the Lake Erie League champion Heights High boys swimmers needed a first-place finish in the final event—the 200-yard freestyle relay—of the state championship meet in Columbus to secure a team title. Ron Grant, Jack Daley, Lee Brandfass and Jim Becker sealed the deal with a then-state-record time of 1:31.0.

That time had stood as a Heights school record since then. But no longer.

In a 126-41 dual-meet victory over West Geauga, on Jan. 19, the Heights High Tigers' boys team of Emmet Fluharty, James Huff, Aidan Peters and Andrew Teets won that relay event in 1:30.41.

That time placed them among the elite in the Northeast district,

as teams prepared for post-season competition.

Based on past years' results, the Tiger quartet, all juniors, will need to drop a few more seconds to advance to the state meet, while Peters and Huff will have a chance to advance individually.

On Feb. 5, the Heights High boys swim team ended its regular season undefeated. The girls swim team was 6-2 in the regular season, with one loss determined by just one point.

Cary Seidman was a member of Heights High's 1965 state champion swim team. Currently an adjunct instructor at John Carroll University, he had a 50-year career as a science teacher in the East Cleveland City School District and at Ruffing Montessori.

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Students perform successful egg drops



Students Eli Lewis-Davis, Nd Nwoke and Jace Cash get ready to drop their egg over the railing.

Gerry Whiteley

From Jan. 31 to Feb. 6, Communion of Saints School celebrated Catholic Schools Week with a variety of activities. During Catholic Schools Week, schools celebrate their parish, community, students, vocations, the nation, faculty, staff, and their families.

Each day of the week has a dif-

ferent theme and an activity related to the day's theme. Throughout the week, all classes participated in community-building STEM activities to regain a sense of connection that has been lost through the pandemic's need for social distancing.

Junior high students at the school worked in small groups, which included the school's remote learners, to create a container that would cushion an egg being dropped from the top of a stairwell. All the student groups successfully dropped their eggs, with every egg landing intact.

In other news, three students earned Merit Scholar Awards from Benedictine High School. They are Ethan Fliegel, Caleb Bartlett and Edward Steiner.

For more information about Communion of Saints School, call the main office at 216-932-4177, or visit the school's website, www.communionofsaintsschool.org.

Gerry Whiteley is the principal of Communion of Saints School.







Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education



IANUARY 28, 2021

Board members James Posch (president), Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, Jodi Sourini, and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

Transition to hybrid learning

Superintendent Kirby presented recommendations for transitioning to a hybrid learning model, with students phasing into hybrid instruction the week of Feb. 15. The Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) has advised that it is safe for districts to begin transitioning to in-person or hybrid instruction, moving at a pace that works for each district's ability to comply with CDC and Ohio Department of Health mitigation strategies.

Kirby introduced guest speakers Dr. Michael 1. Smith, professor of pediatrics and infectious diseases, Duke University; Dr. Vanessa F. Maier, family health practitioner at MetroHealth; and Suzanne Hrusch, program manager at CCBH. They elaborated on data and safety protocols for in-person instruction, winter sports and performing arts. They emphasized the protection that masks provide.

The presenters and board members acknowledged that, with all but one Ohio school district having agreed to return to in-person instruction by March 1, the only course of action was to transition toward reopening and to put all necessary protocols in place. Jim Posch spoke of the need for administration and staff to allow families the flexibility to change options during the period of hybrid instruction. Dan Heintz acknowledged that some members of the teaching staff are uncomfortable with reopening, and expressed his discomfort in requiring them to move forward, but said that he did so with confidence that the district is doing everything possible to keep them safe.

The board approved the superintendent's recommendation for the district to transition to hybrid instruction according to the schedule set forth in her presentation

In-person board meetings

Posch asked to talk about moving to in-person board meetings. Board members were in general agreement, and Posch asked that staff work on the legal issues, logistics and protocols so that the Feb. 16 meeting might be in-person.

LWV Observer: Kathy Petrey.

FEBRUARY 2, 2021

All board members were present, as were the superintendent and treasurer.

Vaccine rollout

The Educational Service Center (ESC) of Northeast Ohio will coordinate vaccine rollout for firstring districts. Through ESC, Giant Eagle will provide registration forms and information to each school. Paul Lombardo, assistant superintendent for human resources and operations, said 640 staff members have signed up, and 175 are receiving vaccinations at other sites.

In-person instruction

In a discussion about the return to in-person instruction, Felisha Gould, assistant superintendent for educational services, answered questions regarding elementary students being assigned to new teachers; synchronous time on Wednesdays for [specialty instruction] such as music and art; cleaning between morning and afternoon [sessions] for those on half-day schedules; and indicators for returning to fully remote learning,

Superintendent Kirby said recommendations for preparing buildings for in-person instruction, as well as returning to remote instruction, if needed, will be aligned with Ohio Board of Health and CDC guidance. Parents should contact the school/grade-level principal or their child's teacher regarding questions or difficulties in selecting student learning models.

Treasurer's five-year forecast

Treasurer Gainer noted the uncertainty of the current financial situation. State funding has changed revenue. Additional federal funding is expected. A districtwide facilities plan may affect future operating costs, once implemented, as could the proposed Fair School Funding plan in the Ohio legislature. The Lay Finance Committee will meet Feb. 11 to review this five-year report.

At the board's request. Gainer reviewed public records requests. Compared to other suburban districts, CH-UH received significantly more requests in 2020. Of the 200 requests received, only four were denied as overly broad. Posch noted the district is required to provide public records, regardless of cost.

Board goals development

Posch presented the need to begin developing the board's goals. He specifically referenced implementing the equity policy, improving collegeenrollment outcomes, and enhancing blended learning. He asked that discussion of goals occur within the next 60 days

In-person board meetings

Posch said a policy was needed for in-person board meetings. The location should be safe, secure, away from space used by students, and amenable to social distancing. Currently, virtual board meetings are watched by about 700 people, a marked increase from pre-pandemic in-person meeting attendance. There should be continued accommodations for public comments. Citing Ohio House Bill 197 [allowing public bodies to meet virtually during the pandemic], he said he wanted procedures to allow board members to participate electronically when they cannot attend in person.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

Meetings are livestreamed on the district's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/CHUH-Schools) and recorded for later viewing.



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#DogsOfCurbside welcome at Heights Libraries pick ups



Rocky, outside of Heights Libraries Lee Road branch.

Isabelle Rew

Heights Libraries has launched a new Facebook and Instagram series, #DogsOfCurbside. The first post featured a dog named Rocky, posing earnestly for the camera from the backseat window of a car. The caption reads, "Rocky loves running and going for car rides, especially when they lead to the library for curbside pickup!"

The brains behind the new series is Circulation Assistant Jessica Adler, who noticed that many people picking up curbside holds brought their dogs along for the ride.

"My idea came from the selfish desire to pet more dogs every day," Adler explained. "Shandra [Jackson, circulation assistant] and I have a friendly competition with each other to see who can pet more dogs, and I wanted to win."

Adler brought the idea to Communications Manager Sheryl Banks, who came up with the name for the series. Each post features a library user's dog, along with some fun facts about their favorite activities.

"The #DogsOfCurbside series ticks all the boxes," said Banks. "We love providing a platform to show off our community's furry friends, and the posts help spread the word about our curbside services, too."

While Heights libraries are open again, curbside pickup is still available at all Heights Libraries locations, by request. For more information, visit heightslibrary.org

Isabelle Rew is the community engagement associate for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library

What's going on at your library?

Online programs

Wednesday, March 3, 7 p.m., on Zoom Cedar-Coventry Author Series on Zoom: Paul Beatty reads from Cuyahoga. Author Beatty reads from his exuberantly creative, widely praised, and widely reviewed novel Cuyahoga, a comic tall-tale of 1830s' Cleveland and Ohio City, and their rivalry.

Thursday, March 4, 7 p.m., online Job Search Essentials: Résumé Workshop. Transform your résumé into a powerful tool that will get you interviews. This workshop will help participants create a powerful and polished résumé and cover letter using Microsoft Word. This class will be held virtually. A valid e-mail address is required. Information about accessing the class will be sent to your e-mail address prior to class. Registration begins Feb. 18.

Thursday, March 18, 7 p.m., on Zoom Storybook Ball. Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Storybook lovers ages 5 to 9 are cordially invited to Heights Libraries' first virtual Storybook Ball, for an enchanting evening of dancing, stories and games. Participants can dress as a favorite storybook character, or don their fanciest attire, and join in via Zoom. Registration begins March 4.

Tuesday, Mar. 30, 6 p.m., on Zoom Zoom Meditation Tuesdays with Christine Valadon. The physical and mental benefits of meditation are significant and well documented. Valadon will present a weekly Zoom Heartfulness meditation, an effective form of meditation focused on opening the heart, practiced in more than 120 countries around the world. Registration begins Feb. 16.

Lee Road Library

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3600

Monday, March 22, 5 p.m. Greater Cleveland Food Bank Drive-Through Mobile Pantry. Families and individuals in need are invited to this free, fresh-produce drive-through pickup at the Lee Road Library. Those served must be 18 years or older, bring a photo ID, and make sure their car trunk is clean. The pantry operates first-come, firstserved, rain or shine.

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Cleveland Heights - University Heights Public Library Board

Meeting highlights

JANUARY 19, 2021

Board members present were Dana Fluellen, Gabe Crenshaw, Patti Carlyle, Max Gerboc, Annette Iwamoto, Tyler McTeague and Vikas Turakhia.

Board changes

New board member Tyler McTeague was sworn community in the next few weeks. The library in. The 2021 Board of Trustees officers are Dana Fluellen, president; Gabe Crenshaw, vice president; and Max Gerboc, secretary.

2021 planning calendar

The board approved the 2021 planning calendar. All regular meetings of the board will be held at 6:30 p.m. on the third Monday of each month, except January. All board meetings will be held at the Lee Road Library, or streamed live on Facebook, with the following exceptions:

- •Sept. 20 at Coventry Village Library Branch •Oct. 18 at Noble Neighborhood Library Branch • Nov. 15 at University Heights Library Branch
- **Public service hours**

The library director reported that pre-COVID public service hours at all branches would resume on Monday, Feb. 15. Curbside delivery will be available until closing, or 6 p.m., whichever comes first, between Feb. 15 and March 15. After March 15, curbside delivery will be available until 8 p.m., or closing, whichever comes first. It has not been determined when Library board meetings are recorded and browsing and computer use will resume, due to the high number of COVID-19 cases. All COVID

safety precautions remain in effect. Noble Neighborhood branch survey

[There are] a number of opportunities to improve the space and services offered through the Noble Neighborhood Library in the coming year. A survey will be circulated to the statt and the board want help in deciding what would be best for the community. Two community meetings will be held via Zoom, on March 8 and 22, both at 7 p.m. Also, there will be a mailed postcard with a link to the survey's website. Paper copies [of the survey] can be picked up at any branch. The library director is also open to e-mails or

Circulation report

Circulation was just shy of 1.2 million items for 2020, below [the previous year's] recordbreaking circulation, but still a large amount circulated during the pandemic. Use of digital items has increased a bit, but the bulk of circulated items remain physical copies. The board commented on the solid use of virtual programs and classes that have been provided by library staff during the pandemic.

LWV Observer: Elizabeth M. Tracy.

available on YouTube on the Cleveland Heights University Heights Public Library Channel.



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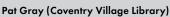
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Heights Libraries reopens to borrowers and resumes distributing the Heights Observer







Kim DeNero-Ackroyd (Lee Road Library)



Constance Dickerson (Noble Neighborhood



Sara Phillips (University Heights Library)

After closing their doors to the public, again, in mid-November, Heights Libraries' branches were set to re-open on Feb. 16, only to be delayed one day by inclement weather. Library staff, including managers Pat Gray (Coventry Village), Kim DeNero-Ackroyd (Lee Road), Constance Dickerson (Noble Neighborhood), and Sara Phillips (University Heights), have been looking forward to welcoming in-person visitors back inside, and resuming many of the libraries' services—including once again serving as a distribution spot for the monthly Heights Observer. For those who prefer it, curbside pickup service for reserved library materials remains available. For more details about hours and services at each of Heights Libraries' four branches, visit www.heightslibrary.org.

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Artist helps to organize annual Kids' Comic Con



Artist Od Perry-Richardson.

Eli Millette

Od Perry-Richardson wears many hats at Lake Erie Ink (LEI), a writing space for youth based in Cleveland Heights. The Cleveland-based artist started as an intern and worked his way up to help organize LEI's ninth annual Kids' Comic Con.

Perry-Richardson was an art student at the Cleveland Institute of Art when he first heard of LEI during an internship fair. LEI's booth was one of the last he visited.

"Od approached the table, and he was very excited about the idea of working with young people," said Jill Levin, LEI's program director. "He wanted to give back."

"I had spent the week after that contacting the internships I was most attracted to," Perry-Richardson remembered. "I was about to e-mail Lake Erie Ink when I got an e-mail from Jill asking if I wanted to come on."

Perry-Richardson started his internship at the seventh Kids' Comic Con, as a guest artist. Despite initial reservations about teaching, he ended up running a workshop which, as he noted, "went off without a hitch."

"One thing that was heartwarming to hear was after the workshops were completed, the students I had in that workshop loved it," recalled Perry-

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Richardson. "That's something I had never experienced before, and it made me realize this is something I wanted to do in the long term."

His talent as an artist and passion as a teacher helped him take on more responsibilities at LEI.

He has since led additional workshops, and helped organize last year's Kids' Comic Con.

It has been two years since LEI took him in; Levin noted, "We haven't been disappointed since".

Lake Erie Ink will hold this year's Kids' Comic Con virtually, March 19 and 20. It will feature many guest artists, including Brian Azzarello and Alison Bechdel, and programs for kids and adults. To learn more, go to http://lakeerieink.org/comic-con.

Eli Millette works as the communications and outreach director at Lake Erie Ink. He currently lives and works in Cleveland Heights.





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Heights Arts presents in-gallery and online programs

Megan Gallagher

March at Heights Arts brings the last weeks of *Posing the Question*, closing March 14, and the opening of its 2021 *Group Show*, a celebration of local artists.

Group Show opens Friday, March 19, with a public reception 5–8 p.m. RSVP for the opening by making an appointment at www. heightsarts.org. The exhibition runs through May 16.

In *Group Show*, five artists present work in painting, sculpture and mixed media.

Julie Friedman's paintings take visual cues from nostalgic media images. Paula Izydorek offers abstract compositions in acrylic on birch panels. Mark Keffer's paintings address themes of uncertainty, with forms reminiscent of circuitry. Alessandro Ravagnan presents sculptural membranes on mylar. And Dante Rodriguez creates human-animal hybrid

figures in his Migrantes pieces.

Heights Arts regularly assembles group shows drawn from submissions made by talented local artists. The submissions are reviewed and exhibitions created by the Heights Arts Exhibition Community Team, made up of volunteers from the visual arts community. They provide expertise and connections within the arts community to ensure Heights Arts is reaching and reflecting the talents of emerging and established artists in Northeast Ohio.

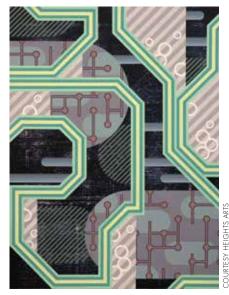
Running concurrently, March 19 through May 16, is a spotlight exhibition featuring Bernadette Glorioso. The works on view are from a series that optimistically reflects life's complexities, relating to Glorioso's interactions with nature in the Cleveland Metroparks.

Said Glorioso, "Since my move back to Cleveland, I have been inspired by the breathtaking Metroparks that surround my

"Watch my back" by Bernadette Glorioso.

neighborhood. I can't deny the impact of nature's lively inhabitants. My bold interactions with deer, squirrels, skunks, owls, and my brush with a groundhog [have] strongly influenced my art."

To share and document some of the ideas around social justice and political issues explored in the



"26" by Mark Keffer.

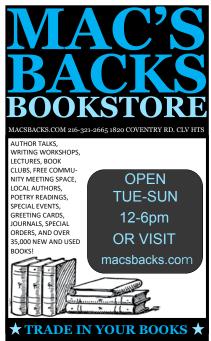
Posing the Question show, Heights Arts presents online recordings of its "Ekphrastacy—Artists talk and Poets Respond" series, in which Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate Ray McNiece, along with poets Kisha Nicole Foster, Michelle Smith Quarles and Josiah Quarles, recite poems inspired by the works in that exhibition. Viewers will also be able to hear Posing the Question artists speak about their inspirations.

"Our traditional Ekphrastacy evenings, which are a favorite among our supporters, usually occur on the fourth Thursday of an exhibition," said executive director Rachel Bernstein. "While our space is open to individual visitors, we are still unable to present audiencestyle programming. Therefore, we are looking forward to presenting them recorded and online until we can all be together again in the same space." Online postings of the recordings are planned for early March.

Heights Arts is located at 2175 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights. To learn more about Heights Arts' Ekphrastacy series, exhibitions, or community teams, visit www. heightsarts.org.

Megan Gallagher's love of the arts fuels her work as Heights Arts' marketing intern. Contact her at marketing@ heightsarts.org.





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BEST OF THE HEIGHTS

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UH TAYLOR ROAD continued from page 10

Heights-University Heights school board [members], who, too, shared the vision of what can be with this development. We look forward to continuing our work with Knez Homes to build the first major multi-unit housing development since the late 1970s here in University Heights."

Brennan noted that construction may begin this year: "We kept this project above water and moving forward in spite of the pandemic. With momentum restored, we may still break ground on these units in 2021."

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor of the Heights Observer, and a Cuyahoga County master gardener volunteer.

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Cleveland Heights-like one big family



SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

A friend from the West Side once told me it seemed to him that growing up in Cleveland Heights must be like being a member of Kiwanis or the Elks, because you meet other Heights natives anywhere you go. And that has been my experience.

In March 1968, I had just joined a band in New York and New Jersey when we went to New London, Conn., to play a gig. I had started to let my hair grow a couple of months before I left Heights High the previous spring. (Up to that point I had gotten a haircut every two weeks, for just about my whole life, at Fana's Barber Shop on Coventry Road. And my last year at Heights High, 1966–67, was the last time the school maintained its strict dress code, which had required boys to keep their hair short.) By March 1968, I still hadn't cut my hair. However, I was still combing my hair in the same way I had always done, even after a year of letting it grow, which was kind of a ridiculous thing to do.

The band I joined, the Story Tellers, was finishing out a gig at a big, old wooden hotel in New Lon-

don. The day of my debut with them, we all went out to get something to eat in town. We walked several blocks to a restaurant and back. New London sits on the Atlantic Ocean, and in March it is windy there. After walking around in the mighty wind, my long hair was no longer combed; it was sticking way out, and way up, looking crazy and wild. When we got back to the hotel, my bandmate Danny Federici (later of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band) looked at me and said, "I dare you to leave your hair like that when we go onstage tonight." And I said, "Sure. Why not? I don't know anyone in New London."

We went up to our rooms and changed clothes, and as soon as I returned and hit the lobby, I immediately ran into a friend from high school, Rhea. She stopped in her tracks, stared at my head, and said, tentatively, "Nice hair." Danny said, "I thought you didn't know anyone in New London." He didn't understand that thing about growing up in Cleveland Heights.

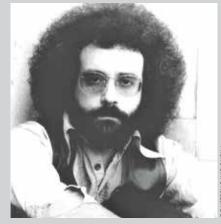
That band didn't last long—a few months. I had been living with each guy in the group for a couple of months at a time. When that ended, I was back to being homeless. I hung out in Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village most of the time, busking and trying to make connections with other musicians, and staying with people I met. One day I started playing guitar duets with a guy from England, making tiny

amounts of money from tourists tossing coins into our open guitar case. We played all day, stopping at street corners every few blocks until we hit Times Square. It was getting dark when we both realized that neither of us had a place to stay, which we had both believed the other did. As we walked forlornly, I heard someone call my name. I turned around to see a guy from a band whose demo record I'd helped produce in a studio in Cleveland Heights shortly before I'd left town. He explained that they'd signed with a major label and were in town recording.

He asked if we wanted to jam, which we definitely did not, until he said, "We're staying at this hotel—right here." We said, "Yeah. Let's jam." We stayed there that night. And for the next 10 weeks. The band's label was paying for the room.

One day, I was walking around Greenwich Village and I ran into a woman I had known from kindergarten at Coventry School all the way through Heights High. This was long before cell phones and the Internet—we just ran into each other. In New York City. She had come to visit her boyfriend, but then they accidentally broke up, so she needed a place to stay. I said, "No problem. I've got a place."

So, Pearl stayed at the hotel, too. Then I ran into my Heights High friend Walt. That made nine people

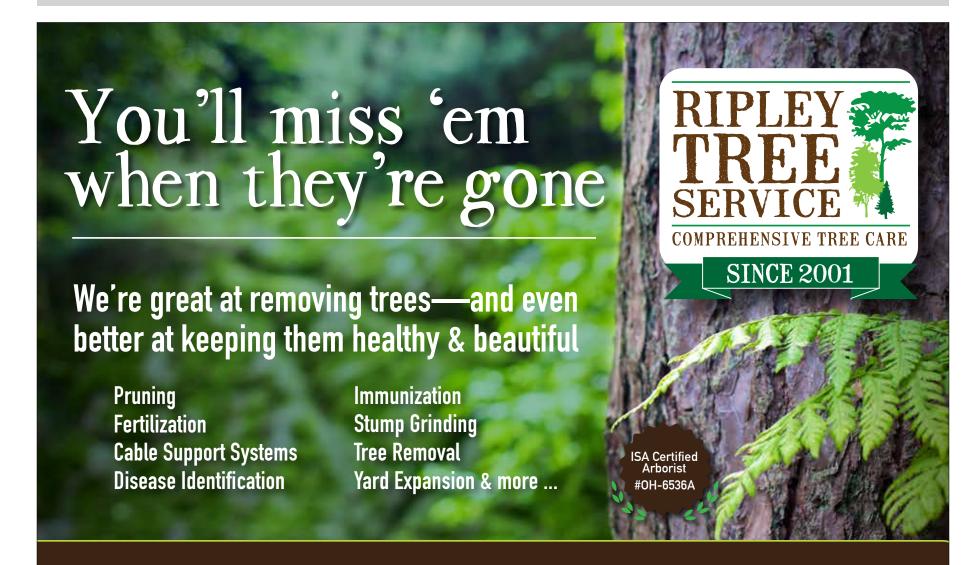


This was a few years later. But that hair thing started in New London, Conn., caused by a mighty wind.

in the room (with two double beds). It was cozy. One by one, people left. Eventually, I did, too—because the guy from England had a Greyhound Bus Ameripass and wanted to see the country. I said, "You know what you've got to see? Cleveland Heights."

That got me a free bus ride home. And while I was here, I signed with a record company, over the phone, so I flew back to New York—and ran into my friend Margo from Cleveland Heights on the plane.

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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