Ohio historical marker unveiled at Curtis-Preyer house

John Wheeler

Cleveland Heights’ Curtis-Preyer Stone House, at 14299 Superior Road, received the city’s first historical marker from the Ohio History Connection.

Conceived of Berea sandstone found on the property, the house was built sometime between 1820 and 1835, making it the earliest existing structure so far identified in Cleveland Heights, and a valuable link to the city’s early history.

The house takes its name from the Curtis and Preyer families who were early residents in the area.

The Curtis family bought property in “Turkey Knob” and harnessed power from Dugway Creek for a cider and grist mill. They sold quarried stone and felled timber. The house was built of 18-inch stone walls, with a roof of axehewn tree timbers.

Applications open for spring Neighborhood Leadership series

Sarah Wolf

On the heels of the fall 2021 round of the FutureHeights Neighborhood Leadership Workshop Series, the program returns to its regularly scheduled spot on the spring calendar.

This program is ideal for any Cleveland Heights resident who is looking for a way to get more involved in the community, or who has an idea for a neighborhood-based project and is seeking to build skills to help bring an idea to life.

Workshop participants explore topics that include individual leadership, strengths-based approaches to community-based work, and how to gather information about a neighborhood to better understand its history.

Similarly, they also learn how to access data and craft narratives to enable them to find funding, to help make their dream neighborhood projects come to life.

Guest speakers with expertise in such topics, as well as community leaders, share their knowledge, wisdom, and experience with the group.

The five-session series will take place on Sundays, 3–6 p.m., on March 6, March 20, April 10, April 24, and May 15. The sessions are held at the FutureHeights offices at Coventry PEACE Campus, 2843 Washington Blvd.

Thanks to the support of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the city, this program is free to any Cleveland Heights resident.

Noble Neighbors reflects on eight years of advocacy

Susan Sanders and Brenda H May

Noble Neighbors (www.nobleneigh-bors.com) is celebrating its eighth year of advocacy for the neighborhoods along Noble Road. In 2021, another year marked by adaptation and creativity, Noble Neighbors found ways to gather and serve the community, while maintaining COVID protocols.

The new mini-park at Noble and Roanoke roads—developed as a gift to the community by Barb Sosnowski, Laura Marks and oth-

Free parking at all Cleveland Heights meters

Friends of Heights Parks plans Jan. 22 walk

Recycle broken or unused string lights through Jan. 31

Heights Arts show explores Rust Belt legacy

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A debrief of CH council candidates identifies city’s top issues

Tony Cuda

There were 13 candidates running for Cleveland Heights City Council in 2021. Because most went door to door, and attended block parties and other civic events, I thought it might be instructive for us to get together and share our experiences in talking with residents. Maybe we could identify common issues/solutions, and share that information with our new mayor and city council.

Seven of the 13 candidates filled out a questionnaire, and five of us spoke via Zoom to expand on what we learned. What follows is a summary of the written and discussion responses from city council candidates Lee Barber, Craig Cobb, Tony Cuda, Garry Kanter, Robert Koonce, Josie Moore and James Williams.

The top four issues that emerged in the candidates’ responses are: housing, taxes (tied for second), crime/traffic violations (tied for second), lack of responsiveness from council and the city.

Housing: There are myriad issues we must address in this neglected sector of our government. First, council must make housing a priority by separating it from the Public Safety and Health Committee. Council should utilize the expertise of our community by empaneling a citizen advisory committee.

Crime: Crime is both a perceived and real problem. Crime is up the past two years, but it is up all over the county and country. Before COVID, crime was down. The city needs to better communicate its successes when crime is down, and/or when crimes are solved. The city must also address speeding and the running of stop signs. This was a common complaint from all over Cleveland Heights.

High taxes are a common complaint. We need to expand our population by both building new housing and filling vacant and abandoned properties with new residents. This will stimulate other economic development and ease the tax burden on the rest of us. We also need to educate our taxpayers on how our tax system works; there were many misconceptions. Many residents said they would not mind paying the taxes if city services were better.

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Tony Cuda is a longtime Cleveland Heights resident who was elected to CH City Council on Nov. 2, 2021.
Resolutions for 2022 and beyond

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

Late in 2021 the Cleveland Heights Green Team mounted an enthusiastic and effective post-election campaign to keep political yard signs out of landfills. Residents deposited almost 1,500 placards at designated collection points around the city. (Thanks to Dave’s, Zagara’s, Save-A-Lot and the Coventry Library!)

The Green Team then collected the signs, sorted them, and offered them to candidates for re-use in future campaigns—brilliant! The four who chose to retrieve their signs were Mario Clopton-Zymler, Tony Cuda, Josie Moore and Kahlil Seren. Members of the Green Team delivered the unclaimed signs to the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District for recycling.

But here’s the rub: while the metal frames are fully recyclable, only a tiny amount of plastic collected for recycling ever actually is recycled. With only a miniscule market for recycled plastics, most of it winds up in landfills anyway. Reusing plastic items, including yard signs, is far healthier for the planet than discarding them.

Even better would be a widespread change to sturdy, recyclable cardboard signs. Melody Joy Hart, Craig Cobb and Josie Moore all chose that material for their 2021 campaigns. We displayed some of these signs on our lawns, and can vouch for their durability; they held up well through the election season, and can easily be reused at least once more before being recycled.

Yard signs represent a sizable expense for local campaigns. Belated kudos to Mary Dunbar, former Cleveland Heights council member, who collected and reused her signs through four campaigns! Of course, this requires planning, which is why we bring it up now.

Cleveland Heights City Council members will appoint a replacement for Kahlil Seren after he is sworn in as mayor. Per the charter amendment voters passed in November, however, that seat will be up for election later this year, and again in 2023. We hope all aspiring candidates will plan for reusable and, ultimately, recyclable yard signs.

As far as we know, the slogan, “reduce, reuse, recycle,” was coined for the first Earth Day events in 1970, and promoted by the Environmental Protection Agency, established that year. In 2013, Bea Johnson expanded it to “reduce, reuse, recycle, no” in Zero Waste Home: The Ultimate Guide to Simplifying Your Life by Reducing Your Waste.

With the start of 2022, we suggest placing the word “resolve” at the head of that string.

Future candidates are not the only ones who can refuse to add to the plastic choking our landfills, streams and oceans. If you are still bringing groceries home in flimsy plastic bags, please stop, and switch to sturdy reusable ones.

That, plus refusing plastic straws and bottled water, represents truly low-hanging fruit.

The fact is, we must not only resolve to fight new plastics manufacturing capacity but learn to do so effectively. Plastics plants emit climate-warming CO2; endocrine-disrupting phthalates in plastics cause obesity and reduce human lifespans; plastics kill wildlife and pollute agricultural soils—just a few of many toxic effects. If you doubt these assertions, a quick Internet search on any of the foregoing phrases will confirm them.

Timely updates:
This first month under our city’s new government will also be the first January since 2014 without an annual Democracy Day celebration. Don’t worry—it has merely been moved, at the suggestion of Cleveland Heights Move to Amend, and with the agreement of city council, to the month of June. Details to follow.

Finally, Cleveland Heights residents have been paying a hefty monthly transition fee since we joined Cleveland Water in 2017. Here’s cause to celebrate: this is the last month for those payments! Starting in February, our water bills will be noticeably lower.

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are writers, editors and longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Local leaders can bolster trust in government

Susie Kaeser

The election is over. As 2022 begins, the victors will be sworn in and take up the work of the people.

I am grateful to all of the candidates for wanting to serve, and to those who will take on the important responsibility of using the tools of government to contribute to the health and well-being of the communities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

This feels like a really important moment for local government. According to the Pew Research Center, public trust in government is eroding nationwide, and has been since 2007.

Local government, however, is seen as the most trustworthy.

Because local government officials are the closest to those they serve, our city councils and school board are in a very good position to address the global problem of diminishing trust in government. As the old saying goes, “Think globally, act locally.”

We must trust our lawmakers if government is to have a chance to serve the common good. It seems to me that we will need our newly seated city councils, Mayors Seren and Brennan, and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education to envision their roles in an expansive way. They need to see themselves as a resource for the larger challenge of renewing trust in government and nurturing a healthy democracy.

They have to tackle the pressing issues that, during these challenging times, will help our communities thrive and our schools meet student needs, and they have to do so in a way that inspires trust in them and in government itself.

Experts on trust indicate that it exists when citizens are confident that government actions are right and fair. Trust is the outcome when citizens perceive government to be competent and driven by good intent. Those things exist when programs are strong and reliable, and when decision-makers are transparent and humane.

The executive director of the League of California Cities, Carolyn Coleman, recently wrote that transparency, accountability, civil discourse and strong communications around the use of new federal resources can go a long way toward using policymaking to inspire confidence and trust. These are the nuts and bolts of good government. They must be exhibited in ways big and small, through processes and behavior.

Much of what our residents want is open and responsive government. Return those calls. Make plans in public with clear explanations for decisions. Consider public input. Share your decisions widely. Remember, we all own our community and its success, and we need to feel included and able to contribute.

Those of us who don’t have the nerve or the wherewithal to run for office also need to do our part. We can be well-informed, share our ideas through the processes that exist, and show respect for each other and those who are attempting to represent us. Disagreement and debate are healthy.

We are living in a time when there is a well-financed effort to reject the common good in favor of individual rights and privatization. Sowing distrust of public servants and public agencies, and weakening democratic governance itself are means to that end.

We can help resist this pressure by making our local governing process an antidote to chaos. Our local elected officials are our neighbors and, like us, are the benefactors of their decisions. They are accessible. They are human. They are grappling with complex problems and difficult decisions.

This is a critical moment for all of us to contribute to making our local government work and, in so doing, build trust in the public sector.

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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Additional entry forms can be found at www.vehbrothers.com/helping-hann/.
CH council should endorse democracy in filling vacancy

Samuel Marcum

Congratulations to our newly elected Cleveland Heights mayor, Kahlil Seren, and to our newly elected CH City Council members. As our city transitions to a new form of government, with an elected mayor for the first time in its 100-year history, it will be for council and our first mayor to determine how that new form of government serves. It might be helpful if, as part of this transition, council could operate at full strength.

With his election as mayor, Seren’s seat on council will be vacated when he takes office in January. By ordinance it is now the task of council to appoint his replacement.

When this last happened (2020), the process that unfolded was nothing short of an embarrassment for our city. (After council took several weeks to determine a list of four finalists, infighting and conflict forced an unnecessarily protracted period to name a winner. Eventually, Craig Cobb got the nod.) To remedy this past embarrassment, on Nov. 2 the voters passed Issue 31, a charter amendment that prescribes the time limit (45 days) by which council is to limit (45 days) by which council is to appoint that runner-up candidate and future elections, council should select its appointee from the slate of candidates already voted upon (Koonce), or that candidate with either the highest percentage of votes (Snodgrass), whichever candidate council appointed, (1) would hope that precedent [would] guide future appointments.

At the very least, council should select its appointee from the slate of candidates already voted upon by the citizens. The immediate-past council has already earned a more legitimate seat on council, in my mind, than any mere applicant for the position ever could. If council would seek to enforce that democracy is alive and worth fighting for, then council should let democracy decide.

Throughout their efforts, they have demonstrated both their desire to lead and their capacity to serve on council. Most importantly, they both have earned the endorsement of a compelling plurality of voters. There are laws governing the process to unfold: Council must appoint a replacement. But why would council now appoint anyone else? To avoid any conflict on this and future elections, council should appoint that runner-up candidate.

Both now-former candidates are known assets to their community and qualified candidates for the seat. They have the courage, conviction and capacity to run in a non-partisan local election. Through their efforts, they have demonstrated both their desire to lead and their capacity to serve on council. Most importantly, they both have earned the endorsement of a compelling plurality of voters.

There are laws governing the process to unfold: Council must appoint a replacement. But why would council now appoint anyone else? To avoid any conflict on this and future elections, council should appoint that runner-up candidate with either the highest percentage of votes (Koonce), or that candidate with the highest net votes (Snodgrass). Whichever candidate council appointed, (1) would expect that precedent would guide future appointments.

At the very least, council should select its appointee from the slate of candidates already voted upon by the citizens. The immediate-past council has already earned a more legitimate seat on council, in my mind, than any mere applicant for the position ever could. If council would seek to enforce that democracy is alive and worth fighting for, then council should let democracy decide.

Samuel Marcum has been a happy Heights resident since 2012. Besides spending time with his family, he enjoys walking and working outdoors, and performing DIY home-renovation projects. He is an architect and personal finance coach.
**OPINION**

**Taxpayers should not fund the library’s 1619 Project programs**

Alan Rapoport

I am concerned about the Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library System’s sponsorship of seminars on the history of race relations based on “The 1619 Project.”

Many qualified scholars believe The 1619 Project presents a highly questionable reading of history. They argue that it creates a false narrative of racial grievance, and as a student of history, I agree with them. For this reason, I object to [Heights Libraries’] public seminar about The 1619 Project [presented] at taxpayer expense. Such a seminar risks being a one-sided, biased, and ideological approach to an important social issue in a type of setting that makes that approach appear to many as more authoritative than it really is.

A library program on this subject cannot help but classify people based on the color of their skin rather than on the content of their character. To Black children, official library sponsorship risks suggesting they will have a permanent reduced status in life no matter how much they try to achieve. To their white classmates, it risks suggesting they will always be viewed as oppressors because of skin color they cannot control, and past actions in which they played no part. Rather than leading to an honest discussion about race, The 1619 Project makes such discussion much less likely. That is because it encourages the worst type of racial division.

I certainly do not advocate censor ship. A public library should offer books for readers interested in reading about The 1619 Project. It also should offer books written by critics. But sponsoring a public program taught by advocates can lead to indoctrination in the guise of scholarship. Our library should not become a party to that.

Some may argue that controversial topics such as The 1619 Project deserve to be discussed in a library forum. I hope they would recognize there are reasonable limits to what subjects a library should offer at taxpayer expense and in a public setting. For instance, should the library offer a forum to proponents of pedophilia just because there may be some people who advocate in favor of it? I would hope not.

Library trustees should examine carefully what their own limits are, and I hope they will conclude after considering that a publicly supported forum to teach about The 1619 Project exceeds those limits.

Alan Rapoport served on CH City Council (1980–87) and as mayor (1982–87).
Cleveland Heights was not always the inclusive community it is today. From the 1920s through the early 1960s, it was unwelcoming and even hostile to non-whites. Through a variety of tactics, the city was kept almost exclusively white.

On Tuesday, Jan. 25, to commemorate the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Black Caucus and the Racial Inequality Repair Committee—both of Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian—will host a Zoom conversation, 7–8:30 p.m., with Susan Kaeser, author of Resisting Segregation.

Her book, available at Mac’s Backs-Books on Coventry, documents the struggle to end segregation and integrate the city of Cleveland Heights. It chronicles the history of ordinary citizens who demonstrated that creativity and like-mindedness can bring about dramatic and substantial change.

All are invited to join the program. For the Zoom link, send an e-mail to blackcaucus@fhcpresb.org.

For decades, restrictive covenants and practices kept Blacks, Jews, and other non-whites out of Cleveland Heights, as well as other neighborhoods throughout the country. Kaeser’s book chronicles the history of that segregation, and the grassroots struggles waged by citizens, Black and white, to transform Cleveland Heights from a segregated city into an inclusive one.

In a 1946 publication of Seattle’s Civic Unity Committee, racially restrictive covenants were defined as “agreements entered into by a group of property owners, subdivision developers, or real estate operators in a given neighborhood, binding them not to sell, lease, rent or otherwise convey their property to specified groups because of race, creed or color for a definite period unless all agree to the transaction.”

On April 26, 1947, the Cleveland Call & Post published a story exposing racial covenants in Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland. The Fair Housing Act was introduced in 1966, thanks to pressure from Martin Luther King Jr., and other civil rights leaders. But, for two years, the bill went nowhere.

One day after King’s funeral, in his honor, Congress finally passed the Civil Rights Act, also known as the Fair Housing Act, in 1968. King believed in ending poverty, war, militarism, and racism in all its forms. Kaeser’s book reminds us of the principles King held dear, and encourages us to carry on his work and values. She reminds us of a time when people of goodwill, regardless of nationality, race, creed, or color, banded together to extinguish de jure segregation (practices that are legally recognized regardless of whether the practice exists in real-ity) and de facto segregation (situations that exist in reality, even if not legally recognized).

A transplanted New Yorker, Quentin Smith is a former prosecutor, community organizer and high school teacher. He is co-chair of Black Caucus of Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian, one of the two sponsors for the Jan. 25 event.

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Best “Opened-Our-Doors-During-A-Pandemic” Business
Best Cleveland Heights Business
Best University Heights Business

Bonus Questions:
What do you miss most about shopping/dining in the Heights since the onset of Covid-19? Share with us your favorite past experiences and what you are looking forward to doing again once the pandemic is over.

What new business would you like to see in the Heights? Why? (Let us know if you have a specific neighborhood or building in mind.)

Deadline for ballot submission: February 15, 2022

Valid Ballots:
All valid ballots will receive a chance to win a prize package of gift certificates to Heights businesses ($250 min. value)

• One ballot per person; must supply complete contact information below
• Vote only for businesses located in the cities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.
• Must fill out at least half (6 categories) of the ballot; Partially completed ballots will be considered invalid.

Complete the ballot online at: www.futureheights.org/boh2022

Mail your ballot to: FutureHeights
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Questions? Call 216-320-1423

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If you are a business owner or operator, name of business: ____________________________
Researchers at University Hospitals are seeking participants for a research project designed to help African-American men learn about stroke risk factors and how to best take care of their health after a stroke.

If you are an African-American man 18 years of age or older, and you’ve suffered a stroke or mini-stroke within the last five years, you may be eligible for this study.

Participants will be compensated, and virtual intervention sessions will be available.

Call 440-656-2267 to learn more.
Noble Gardeners’ Market took place in the park on Saturday mornings in August and September. More sellers and buyers participated than in any previous year, as the community embraced the concept of neighbors selling to other neighbors the vegetables and flowers they grew in their backyards and community gardens. Elsewhere in the Noble neighborhood, the annual We Are Noble celebration focused on Noble’s five community orchards.

Delmore Community Orchard stewards hosted community workdays at the orchard, planting more pollinator-friendly flowers, trimming the trees, and devising more ways to deter the deer. They harvested the orchard’s first fruits—pears, peaches and apples—and sold some at the Saturday market.

In October, a meet-the-candidates gathering offered one-on-one conversations with those seeking elected office, and 19 of the 21 candidates in local races participated.

The Noble Corridor brainstorming group continues its work to identify and advocate for revitalization projects. Benches from the Noble Road Corridor Planning Project steering committee’s “Noble-Ity” project were installed along Noble Road, and a successful IOBY fundraising campaign was launched by Future-Heights to fund the next phase of the project.

Late August saw neighbors on their hands and knees chalking words of welcome and encouragement on the sidewalks outside Caledonia, Oxford and Noble elementary schools and Monticello Middle School. Students, parents, faculty and school board members joined in the fun.

Green Noble, a committee of Noble Neighbors with the purpose of building a diverse community through gardening, was active throughout the year. Highlights included viewing David Attenborough’s “A Life on Our Planet,” and visiting Vela’s Purple Oasis (www.velcost.com/purpleoasis), along with hearing from several guest speakers and carrying out educational activities.

Noble Neighbors also offered support to other organizations that are contributing to the Noble neighborhood, including the Cleveland Heights Green Team, MetroHealth Friends of Mothers and Infants Program, Cleveland Heights Garden Walk, Noble School Community Learning Center and the Cigar Box Guitar Project.

Noble Neighbors is proud to be part of the Cleveland Heights community and grateful to Future-Heights and the city of Cleveland Heights for their support.

Susan Sanders and Brenda H. May are Noble Neighbor leaders. Check out their story at NobleNeighbors.com
CH City Council receives 22 applications for Seren’s seat

Kim Sergio Inglis

With Kahlil Seren, a Cleveland Heights City Council member, set to become the city’s mayor in January, his council seat will become vacant upon his resignation, which was expected to be tendered on Dec. 31.

On Nov. 29, a special meeting of the Cleveland Heights Council Committee of the Whole brought together some current council members, as well as those who will begin serving on council in January, to discuss “vacancy-filling procedures in anticipation of vacancy resulting from Kahlil Seren’s election as mayor.”

Subsequent to the meeting, the city announced that council would accept applications from residents interested in being considered for the council vacancy.

The deadline to apply was Dec. 17, and there were 22 applicants. [As of Dec. 28, the applications had not yet been posted on the city’s website, but the Heights Observer understands that the city plans to do so.]

At the Nov. 29 meeting, the city’s law director, Bill Hanna, explained, and answered questions related to, the new charter amendment which, for the first time, establishes a timetable to fill a council vacancy.

According to the charter amendment (Issue 31), which voters approved in the November election, city council members will have 45 days in which to fill a council vacancy, from the date the vacancy occurs. That date will be the date of Seren’s resignation.

If council fails to fill the vacancy within 45 days, by a majority vote, the mayor will then have 10 days in which to fill the vacancy.

The amendment also stipulates that, “for any vacancy in Council not occurring in the year that the regular election for that office is scheduled, an election for the unexpired term shall be held at the next general election occurring more than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the date of the vacancy.”

Seren’s unexpired term, to which a new council member will be appointed, ends on Dec. 31, 2023. The seat will be on the ballot in the November 2022 general election, whomever wins the seat in that election, whether it is the appointee or someone else, will then serve out the remainder of the unexpired term. The seat will be on the ballot again in November 2023.

In the Nov. 29 meeting, the current and future council members discussed a basic timetable and process for appointing the new council member, and strategized on how to get through the 45 days efficiently.

On Jan. 3, the new CH City Council members will be sworn in. The next day, Jan. 4, council plans to meet in executive session, to narrow down the applicants, and discuss next steps in the process of filling the council vacancy.

According to Tony Cuda, who will take his seat on council on Jan. 3, those applicants who move forward will then be interviewed by the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland. Council members will then review those videos, further narrow down the applicants, and schedule interviews with those they choose.

On Nov. 29, those current and future council members who attended the meeting also discussed qualities they would like to see in an applicant for the seat. These include: someone with a history of collaboration, capable of working with others, and active in the community; someone with a sense of public service, with maturity and good judgment; someone who can bring a unique perspective to council.

Video of the Nov. 29 meeting can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvcXrLwsi7g.

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer, and is a Cuyahoga County master gardener volunteer.
COMMUNITY NEWS

Friends of Heights Parks plans Lower Lake walk

The newly formed Friends of Heights Parks (FHP) invites all to discover more about our parks by joining a Walk in the Park at Shaker Lakes’ Lower Lake, on Jan. 22.

Walkers will hit the trail at 11 a.m., meeting at the parking lot on South Park Boulevard near Leighton Road in Shaker Heights. The walk is a little more than a mile around the lake, with options for rugged or level terrain.

FHP is hosting walks to showcase each unique park in Cleveland Heights, and inspire fellow park lovers to join together to support programs, improve habitat, and shepherd this historic park system into a healthy, sustainable future for the whole community.

A small but growing group—currently representing Forest Hill Park, Cain Park, and Lower Lake Park—FHP aims to ensure representation for all Heights parks. All are invited to share ideas for park activities and improvements via friendsofheightsparks@gmail.com, or on FHP’s Facebook group, www.facebook.com/groups/887257175518500.

Since 2017, Friends of Lower Lake, comprising about 20 self-selected volunteers, ages 13 to 81, has been removing invasive species; planting native trees, shrubs, and a herbaceous layer; and improving trails around the lake. The group is sponsored by the nonprofit Doan Brook Watershed Partnership. The park—the focus of the Jan. 22 walk—straddles Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights, and volunteers live in four adjacent cities. A video history of the park can be found at https://bit.ly/historyoflowerlake.

RSVP for the Jan. 22 walk at https://bit.ly/3KFl8n so that you can be notified if the walk is rescheduled due to weather. E-mail questions to friendsofheightsparks@gmail.com.

Peggy Spaeth is a member of the Cleveland Heights Parks & Recreation board, co-chair of Friends of Lower Lake, and one of the instigators of Friends of Heights Parks.

Bustling with activity. That’s how Pat Mallik and her husband Singh describe the newest chapter in their lives. After the Malliks relocated from Seattle in 2018, their son and daughter-in-law quickly pointed them to nearby Judson Park. And for Pat and Singh, there’s been no looking back.

Gardening, reading, staying fit, and freely sharing her beauty expertise with neighbors are everyday occurrences for Pat. “We’re so busy! Just because we are retired doesn’t mean we’re going to sit in a chair and sleep. The exercise options are great, people are so friendly, and help is here if you need it,” says Pat.

Read the full story at judsonsmartliving.org/blog

“...there are so, so many reasons we’re happy at Judson.”

There are so, so many reasons we’re happy at Judson.”

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From Dec. 26 through Jan. 31, a group to plan a post-Christmas yard-sign collection prompted the Green Team’s (CHGT) post-election meeting, on Dec. 9. It is bestowed annually to recognize significant impact in this year’s numbers,” said Sitarki. The balance was returned to four candidates who asked for them back. “These are 1,500 signs that did not end up in the landfill,” she added.

CHGT organized that recycling drive in partnership with Heights Libraries, Dave’s, Zagara’s Market-place, and Save-A-Lot.

To learn more about the holiday string-light collection drive and the Lights for Lions program, visit the Cleveland Heights Green Team’s website, at www.chgreenteam.org.

Catalina Wagers is a resident of the Fairfax neighborhood. She is involved with several local organizations, supporting causes and programs focused on the advancement of NEO through better access to education, policy advocacy, and environmental protection. She is co-founder of the Cleveland Heights Green Team.

Legal Aid award honors CH resident Ashley Bailes

Ashley Bailes, of Cleveland Heights, received the 2021 Access to Justice Award from The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

Tonya Sams

The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland awarded Ashley Bailes, a Cleveland Heights resident, its 2021 Access to Justice Award.

The award was presented at the society’s livestreamed annual meeting, on Dec. 9. It is bestowed annually to recognize significant contributions to advancing the mission of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland through pro bono commitment. Bailes is an associate in the litigation group at Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, where she focuses on complex civil litigation in state and federal courts. She felt compelled to begin volunteering with The Legal Aid Society during the pandemic, when she recognized that people with low incomes were losing their homes and struggling disproportionately.

Bailes began volunteering with Legal Aid on a complicated eviction case. She logged more than 100 volunteer hours in 2021, and made an enormous impact for her client.

Additional information about Bailes and other award recipients is available on Legal Aid’s website: https://lasclev.org/2021volunteerawards.

Tonya Sams is the development and communications assistant at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.

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Library’s Matchmakers offer new online service

Adult Services Librarian Andrea Lynn helps customers find great books.

Sheryl Banks

The Heights Libraries Matchmakers, a group of librarians who specialize in helping customers find materials, will mark its 10th anniversary in 2022, and is celebrating by launching Match Me Up, a new service for customers.

Match Me Up is an online form that elicits pertinent information from customers that can help staff find materials to their liking, and put them on the holds shelf at the library branch of the customer’s choosing.

Previously, customers could e-mail or talk to the Matchmakers, but the new form streamlines and simplifies the process.

“The CLEVNET system makes it easier. It also gives the Matchmakers time to fully research the request, and get input from other staff who might specialize in particular genres or areas of interest.

“A written request allows us the time to reach out to other staff who really know a subject area to get the best recommendation we can,” said Lynn. “I know a lot about Jane Austen, for instance, but someone in the Youth Services Department would know more than I do about graphic novels for young adults.”

The Matchmakers formed in 2012 to focus more formally on helping customers find books, movies and music that they would probably love but just couldn’t always locate on their own.

They also provide recommendations through their blogs, which can be found at http://heightslibrary.org/rec /荐/M Match-Me-Up, or through a link on the library’s home page, http://heightslibrary.org.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
NOVEMBER 16, 2021 — Special Meeting

Board members present were President James Posch, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, Jodi Sourini, and Beverly Wright. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

Financial reports
Scott Gainer stated the need for board approval so that the CH-UH Five-Year Financial Forecast could be presented to the state. The forecast was developed using a simulation provided by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the state of Ohio. He cautioned that the forecast could change substantially because there is ambiguity in the state budget, and distribution of some funds is still being discussed by the legislature. Gainer specifically mentioned Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid (DPIA), along with lost foundation aid that had previously covered vouchers.

Dan Heniz stated that many in the Heights community are aware of the present funding issues. He said the need to pressure legislators regarding funding was important so that what was promised would be delivered.

The board approved the financial reports as part of a consent agenda. The appropriations adjustments and the financial reports can be found online.

Substitute teachers
The Ohio legislature passed Senate Bill 1 (SB1), which allows one-year flexibility to lift the state requirement for a substitute teacher to hold a post-secondary degree. Superintendent Kirby presented a resolution to the board as an emergency measure due to a teacher shortage. Newly hired substitute teachers will still receive special training, including equity training. The board approved the resolution.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

NOVEMBER 30, 2021 — Special Work Session

Board President James Posch was absent. All other board members were present, as were the superintendent and treasurer.

Calendar changes
Superintendent Kirby, along with Paul Lombardo, assistant superintendent, presented requests for two changes to the 2021-22 School Calendar: an additional professional development day on Jan. 31, and a holiday on June 19 (Juneteenth). The proposed changes will be posted on the district’s website, and the community can provide feedback.

The Jan. 31 professional day will coincide with the end of MAP testing, and will allow that to be included in the in-service agenda. The June 19 holiday will impact the summer session schedule.

No action was needed on this first reading.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

Documents for all board meetings can be accessed at www.chuh.org/BoardofEducation.aspx. Board meetings are livestreamed on the district’s YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/CHUHSchools) and recorded for later viewing.
What am I, chopped liver?

David Budin

I mentioned here, once, long ago, a part of a conversation I had with my father when I was in 10th grade at Heights High. I was eating dinner with him at Irv’s deli on Coventry Road. That was unusual on at least a couple of levels: First, by that age, I rarely did anything with my father, especially including talking. Also, it was shortly before the era when Irv’s changed from a bona fide restaurant, a family place, to a hangout for hippies, a clubhouse for misfits. I spent a lot of time there then, too—often in deep discussion, but not with my father.

The conversation with my father began with him opening the menu and exclaiming, “A dollar-thirty-five for a corned beef sandwich? I remember when they cost fifteen cents.” I said, “Fifteen cents? Why did they even bother to charge anything, at that rate?” But then, about 10 years later, I was looking at the menu at the Carnegie Deli in Midtown Manhattan, and I found myself saying, “Seven-fifty for a corned beef sandwich? I remember when they cost a dollar-thirty-five.”

And a decade after that, I was sitting with some people in the Stage Deli, also in Manhattan, and I noticed that a corned beef sandwich I remember when they cost a dollar-thirty-five.

And speaking of Benky’s and Budin’s, at the time Benky’s was open, Budin’s was selling corned beef on Coventry, too. Budin’s became better known when my great-aunt (the one who lived downstairs) and her husband, my grandfather’s brother, moved it from Coventry to Shaker Heights, and it evolved into a sit-down restaurant, where Paul Newman worked as a busboy.

My father tried to work there for a while, too, when I was a kid and he was working his way through school, on his way to becoming a college English and speech teacher. He had gone to college briefly, but when World War II broke out, he enlisted in the Navy—to avoid getting drafted into the Army, because he didn’t like to walk. That’s one of the few things we agreed on.

And that’s another thing that made our conversation at Irv’s unusual—that we agreed on a major point I was making. I proposed that it would make more sense for me to quit school right then, than to waste my time in school, which I was obviously doing, when I could, instead, be working on what I knew was going to be my career, music. To my shock, he agreed. But he pointed out that it was not feasible, legally.

I remember the corned beef and chopped liver sandwich I had that night. I remember the way Irv’s looked that night, and also the way it looked a couple of years later.

And I remember everything about that conversation with my father.

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.

This was the restaurant everyone called Benky’s, in 1938, about 20 years before it became Irv’s. The building, constructed in 1922, still stands, though the delis are long gone.
Heights Arts gets the ‘Rust’ out to start 2022

Tom Masaveg

Heights Arts starts off 2022 a little bit rusty . . .

Many current residents never saw the city of steel and industry that once drew people from all over the world to live and work in Greater Cleveland. The industrial era is unfamiliar to many, generations later. Instead, abandoned warehouses seem only lost ruins, housing mysterious corroded parts that may as well be artifacts from crashed UFOs. There’s a fascination with urban decay that lives in people from the industrial Midwest. It’s commonly characterized by an affinity for coarse textures and tarnished hues that hold decades of depth.

Heights Arts’ first gallery exhibition of 2022 presents this legacy of struggle, perseverance, and resilience as parts of a whole, expressed as only Cleveland artists can. Running Jan. 14 though March 13, Rust features the work of eight artists: Matthew Albright, William Brouillard, Michael Costello, Adrian DesJardins, Linda Mayer, Doug Meyer, Pamela Pastoric, and Steven Yusko.

Heights Arts exhibitions are conceived and curated by a team of volunteers. Exhibitions Community Team member Sharon Grossman took the lead on this one. She wrote, “This exhibition embodies an aesthetic of reuse and reclamation that celebrates the Rust Belt’s layers of character—the muscularity, the refinement, the resilience, the patina of age, and the energy of reinvention.”

The public opening will take place on Friday, Jan. 14, 5–8 p.m. On Thursday, Feb. 17, guests can experience the accompanying “Ekphrasty: Artists Talk + Poets Respond” event, which brings together exhibition artists and invited community poets to discuss inspiration and interpretation of the works on view.

On view concurrently, in the adjacent Spotlight Gallery, will be works by artist Jesse Rhinehart. A Cleveland Heights resident, Rhinehart has created public commissions for the Club Lounge at Progressive Field, as well as the former Special Exhibition Dining Room and Education Classroom at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Two murals by Rhinehart were commissioned by Heights Arts, in 2004 and 2008 respectively, and can be seen today at both ends of the landmark Cedar Fairmount Center building in Cleveland Heights. The murals were adapted from historical photos of the area.

Rhinehart said of his work, “On one hand, my work is a simple homage to the elements of design and the deep-rooted beauty therein, but this is more of a tool to reach a deeper psychological content in my paintings. What that content is I have never been able to completely express to my satisfaction. I do know it is not just a sentimental ode to things old and decrepit (for that I have a mirror). Not all of my paintings have age or decay as subject matter but they still possess the same subliminal draw. I find kinship in the words of David Byrne, who once said that the purpose of art is to elevate the mundane to the sublime. I don’t know if my paintings accomplish such lofty goals. Only you the viewer can be the judge.”

For more information on upcoming programs and events at Heights Arts, visit the gallery/store at 2175 Lee Road, or go to www.heightsarts.org.

Tom Masaveg is a local public artist specializing in augmented reality installation and graphite works on paper. He’s also the programs manager at Heights Arts. Feel free to reach out via programs@heightsarts.org.
Dobama continues its season with ‘Hurricane Diane’

Nathaniel Motta

Dobama Theatre’s 2021-22 mainstage season continues with the Cleveland premiere of the 2019 Obie Award-winner “Hurricane Diane.” The play, by Pulitzer-finalist Madeleine George, will run from Jan. 21 through Feb. 13.

The Diane of the title is a permaculture gardener with supernatural abilities. Owing to her true identity—the Greek god Dionysus—she has returned to the modern world to gather mortal followers to restore the earth to its natural state. Where better to begin than by seducing four housewives in a suburban New Jersey cul-de-sac?

In this award-winning comedy with a twist, George pens a hilarious evisceration of the “blind eye” we all turn to climate change, and the impending storm of catharsis that awaits us all, even in our own backyards.

“Hurricane Diane” was written with “The Bacchae” in mind. In “Bacchae,” an ancient Greek tragedy by Euripides, Dionysus (the god of wine, song, revelry, and fertility) returns to Thebes to seek revenge on the city’s leader for forbidding his people to worship Dionysus. The god whips the women of Thebes into a frenzy, and they eventually kill their leader. Through the millennia, “Bacchae” has become symbolic of female empowerment, the fluidity of gender, and the inevitable price of vanity. It is also, surprisingly, played for laughs.

By writing the play in the style of Greek comedy, George finds ways to mine both the humanity and the inevitability of climate change. Her characters grapple with questions that seem both urgent and unanswerable: What can I do to stop this? And what can I do if I fail?

New York critics regarded the play as a hilarious and biting look into the world of suburbia, creature comforts, and the crisis of American individualism that defiantly rejects change. “Hurricane Diane” lays bare the critical mass of buy-in it will take to manage the climate crisis—through a string of humorous sitcom scenes, audiences are able to peer into the housewives’ heads one-by-one, begging the question of whether climate change is truly fated or if the crisis of human nature produced the impending “hurricane.”

Dobama’s production of “Hurricane Diane” is directed by Shannon Sndelar, and features an all-female cast: Amiee Collier, Natalie Green, Colleen Longshaw, Lara Mielcarek, and Lana Sugarman.

Performances are Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, and Sunday afternoons. For a complete schedule, ticket prices, and reservations, call the Dobama Theatre box office at 216-932-1396. Ask about reduced prices for RUSH tickets (available before curtain time), and the “pay-as-you-can” performance on Jan. 23, at 7:30 pm.

Nathaniel Motta is the artistic director at Dobama Theatre.

LEI offers playwriting workshops

Eli Millette

In partnership with Dobama Theatre, Lake Erie Ink (LEI) will kick off the new year with Playwriting, a workshop for writers at all levels, in grades two through 12. Participants will have the opportunity to work on their storytelling skills with support from local professionals.

Julie Fisher, local playwright, director, and actor, will lead the workshops and help participants write their own original plays.

“This experience allows kids’ imaginations to come to life,” Chrissie Bailey, curriculum director at Lake Erie Ink, said of the workshops. “It’s a way for children from different backgrounds and different experiences to come together and share those experiences.”

The Playwriting workshop will take place at Dobama Theatre, 2340 Lee Road, in Cleveland Heights. LEI will conduct two sessions, on Jan. 22 and Feb. 5, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There is a $50 fee for each session, with some scholarships available.

To register, visit https://lakeerieink.org/playwriting, or call 216-320-4757. Playwriting participants will have the option to submit their work to the 43rd Marilyn Bianchi Playwriting Festival, the oldest youth-playwriting festival in the country. As part of the festival, those whose work is selected will be able to see their plays performed on the Dobama stage by adult professionals.

Eli Millette works as the communications and outreach director at Lake Erie Ink. He lives in Cleveland Heights.
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Transforming Health Care: What’s Coming?
Cuyahoga County ranks 75th out of Ohio’s 88 counties in health outcomes. MetroHealth has transformed their entire healthcare system to address the social determinants of health disparities due to social isolation, food, housing and employment insecurity. What are the preliminary results of Metro’s major transformation in health care?

Speaker: Akram Boutros, CEO, MetroHealth System
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CLEVELAND
Sunday, Jan. 23, 9:30-10:45 a.m.
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Coventry PEACE Lantern Festival

Coventry PEACE Campus hosted a community celebration of light during the darkness of winter on Dec. 11. Earlier that day, Artful artists Jacqui Brown (Studio Cat) and Adam Brumma (Living Art), along with Art Acts artist Tony Gonzalez, held a free lantern-making workshop for community members. Lake Erie Ink staff helped them write solstice-themed stories and winter-themed haiku. Then, at 5 p.m., participants joined in a lantern procession through Coventry PEACE Park and the Coventry Village Business District, led by illuminated musicians and dancers, and orchestrated by Robin Van Lear. Participants then headed back to Coventry PEACE Campus for cocoa and cookies, courtesy of FutureHeights and Reaching Heights, and caroling with the Singers Club of Cleveland. Learn more about Coventry PEACE Campus at www.coventrypeacecampus.org.

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