FutureHeights awards mini-grants to 10 community projects

Sarah Wolf

The spring 2022 round of funding for the FutureHeights Neighborhood Mini-Grant program received a record 21 applications, and has awarded a total of $6,950 to 10 community projects. The mini-grants are 100 percent funded by private donations.

This community-building initiative awards up to $1,000 for neighborhood-level projects in Cleveland Heights and University Heights. (The 21 applicants for spring 2022 all were from Cleveland Heights.)

Lantern Festival, coordinated by artists at Coventry PEACE Campus, received $1,000 to host the second in what is planned as an annual family event. It offers lantern making and other crafts, culminating in a parade through the Coventry Village neighborhood that brings participants back to Coventry PEACE for snacks and a singalong. Look for this program as the 2022 holidays approach.

GardenWalk Cleveland Heights received $1,000 to support this popular annual event that is free to all. This self-guided walking tour typically features around 60 residents’ gardens.

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We Are Noble, an annual celebration of the people and places in the Noble Road neighborhoods of Cleveland Heights, will kick off on Friday, May 20, and run through May 22. To see the full schedule of events, and learn how to participate, visit www.noble-neighbors.com.

All residents of the area are welcome to host a yard sale at their residence. Businesses and institutions are also invited to participate, to showcase their products, services and missions to the Noble community by offering special sales, giveaways, food or performances. Real estate agents will hold open houses for residents and visitors to tour.

Heights residents from elsewhere are invited to join in the celebration, to discover the Noble neighborhoods’ new features; explore its parks, business districts and eclectic houses; and meet new people.

This year, as part of We Are Noble, the Noble Gardeners’ Market will host a seedling plant sale on Saturday, May 21, 10 a.m. to noon, at the corner of Noble and Roanoke roads (one block north of Monticello Boulevard). Neighbors will sell seeds they harvested last fall, seedling vegetable plants they are growing at home, and other crafts, culminating in a parade through the Coventry Village neighborhood that brings participants back to Coventry PEACE for snacks and a singalong. Look for this program as the 2022 holidays approach.

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Free parking continues at all Cleveland Heights meters.

INSIDE

9 Primary election is May 3 LWV Issue 9 forum video is online

10 Ukraine art benefit planned for May 15 at Coventry PEACE Campus

18 Heights High student interns curate Heights Arts show

Plant sale debuts as part of We Are Noble

Brenda H. May

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Letters Policy

The Heights Observer welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, along with the writer's name, phone number and e-mail address, to: www.heightsobserver.org

The Heights Observer is a nonprofit community publication of FutureHeights, a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the pursuit of public space and functional, walkable characteristics of our commercial districts. Updates in 2012 that improved traditional, walkable characteristics of our commercial districts.

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Ensure better design in developments like Lee and Meadowbrook

To the Editor:

Lost at the center of the debate about whether a 1.07-acre parcel of land at Lee Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard should be developed or retained as a public park is how the city can ensure a bit of both happens as a matter of due course.

The city can add to its arsenal on development with design standards. Design standards can ensure the provision of public space and functional green space.

In my research on best practices on sustainability for Cuyahoga County, Lakewood stood out as a city that has design standards for development that does just this: The city requires the provision of “green infrastructure” such as trees and rain gardens. It recognizes that the private sector can be partners in achieving its sustainability goal of reducing its impact on Lake Erie by retaining morestormwater onsite.

Green building and sustainable design standards for development—in tandem with tax incentives—have ensured the inclusion of public space and green infrastructure in cities from Cleveland to Portland, Ore. In fact, Cleveland Heights adopted zoning updates in 2012 that improved traditional, walkable characteristics of our commercial districts.

It can finish the job by writing design guidelines that clearly indicate how it expects developers to be partners in the pursuit of public space and green space that meets the needs of all.

Marc LeKotwitz
Cleveland Heights

Bremer Fisher resigns as FutureHeights executive director; interim director named

Julie Sabroff

On April 19, the FutureHeights board of directors announced that Deanna Bremer Fisher had resigned from her role as executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the Heights Observer, effective April 19.

She served as the FutureHeights executive director for more than 14 years. Michal Kirman, who has served as a board member and officer of FutureHeights, has been appointed to fill her position on an interim basis while the organization conducts a formal search for a new executive director.

FutureHeights and the Heights Observer team wish Bremer Fisher well in her future endeavors, and thank her.

Julie Sabroff is president of the Board of Directors of FutureHeights.

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The Heights Observer has no writing staff; it is written by you—the readers. In the rush 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 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 June issue must be submitted by May 9. We publish some articles online only.

We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.

FutureHeights continued from page 1

The Noble Cigar Box Guitars project received $50 to hold its second annual Cigar Box Guitar Making Workshop for middle school students. A second round of 2022 mini-grants will be awarded this fall. The full application deadline is Sept. 15.

Funding for the FH mini-grants program is made possible by the generous support of the Cedars Legacy Fund and McGinty Family Foundation 1989.

Community members are invited to support the expansion of this ever-growing program. To donate, visit www.futureheights.org (click on the “Programming” tab under “Donate”), or visit donation@networkforgood.org/futureheights and designate your donation for the Mini-Grants Program.

Every dollar donated is a direct investment in these inspiring, resident-led, community-building projects. For more information, send an e-mail to swolf@futureheights.org, or call 216-320-1423.

Sarah Wolf is the community-building programs manager at FutureHeights.

Shane Kearns and Parker Bosley of Marchant Manor Cheese, winner of Best Opened-Our-Doors-During-a-Pandemic Business, and Best Welcoming storefront or Window Display finalist.

Library

Marc LeKotwitz, Cleveland Heights, has been appointed to fill the position of FutureHeights executive director as of April 19.

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CH Housing Team ends its formal work

Diana Woodbridge

The Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC) Cleveland Heights Housing Team grew from a listening event held in January 2016, in which 100 GCC members identified blighted properties as a major issue. Subsequently, a core group formed and decided to focus the team’s efforts on seriously blighted investor- or bank-owned properties in the Noble neighborhood. Now, six years later, the team is ready to conclude its work.

The team began by confronting U.S. Bank regarding the condition and number of its foreclosed properties in Noble, which resulted in the bank donating $25,000 to two neighborhood projects. We took city officials on a trolley tour of blighted properties, which resulted in Cleveland Heights City Council voting to house its number-one priority.

In 2019, 50 volunteers from 12 GCC congregations walked every street in the Noble neighborhood. Our team researched the ownership/tax status of 144 problem properties it identified, and provided this data to the city. The team’s work also led the city to adopt legislation requiring a $25,000 bond to ensure foreclosed-banked-owned properties would be maintained.

In our six years, we have consistently called for sufficient staffing for housing inspections, proactive inspection programs, law department involvement, and the formation of a Problem Property Team. During that time, there has been some progress: for example, the Novak Report, and the renovation of blighted properties by the city’s three CDCs. But there is more work to be done.

In 2023, the campaign for Cleveland Heights’ first elected mayor provided an opportunity to focus on the candidates’ and the community’s attention on housing—and the need to do more to address blighted properties. Our team created a website, asked the candidates four questions, posted their responses, and promoted the website to the community.

Our team believes that the strategies that now-Mayor Seren proposed during the campaign, if implemented, will significantly address the concerns we have raised over the past six years. This, coupled with the fact that CH City Council has established a separate Housing Committee—a move we strongly support—gives our team the confidence that our city is ready to move forward. Thus, we have decided the time is right for us to wrap up our work.

As a first step, our team pulled together Mayor Seren’s responses to housing questions made during the three election forums and in response to our team’s questions. We believe his commitment is substantive, and will address the concerns we have raised consistently during the past six years. For example, here are excerpts from four of his responses that speak to immediate priorities—all of which we strongly endorse:

• “We must provide adequate resources to appropriately staff our current Housing Program Inspection Services function. . . .”

• “My initial efforts will be . . . to identify and prioritize those invest- ment- and bank-owned properties that are doing the most damage to housing values. . . .”

• “As Mayor, I plan to work with Thriving Communities to perform a citywide residential property inventory, to get a clear understanding of the nature, status, and condition of every property. . . .”

• “Using the [survey] data, . . . geographically target the neighborhoods that are most affected by blighted properties in a strategic way.”

Our next step was to meet with each member of city council to share our concerns, describe the work we have done, and encourage each council member to work in partnership with the mayor to advance housing priorities as soon as possible. We believe council, individually and collectively, is committed to doing just that.

Our final step is this report to citizens of our Cleveland Heights community. We invite you to join us, become involved with your local government, and move our city forward!

Diana Woodbridge is chair of the GCC Cleveland Heights Housing Team. She was a founding trustee and executive director of Home Repair Resource Center and has been a member of the Greater Cleveland Housing Team (GCC) since 2010. Diana has been a GCC activist for over 40 years.

Looking Beyond Lee and Meadowbrook

To the Editor:

Lee-Meadowbrook is not the only possible site for public space in the Cedar Lee district. It just happens to be vacant. Walk, drive, or roll through the district and take a good look at what is there. There are foreclosed properties, and they are obviously blighted.

Every decade or so, a new streetscaping plan is implemented and the facades get a face-lift. Inevitably, some buildings will be removed or replaced as they become too costly to maintain. Keep in mind: most of these buildings replaced original green space when they were built 70-100 years ago, and are likely better for trees than the Lee-Meadowbrook lot—an excavated former gas station site, leveled with fill and surface topsoil.

A focus on Lee-Meadowbrook as the only possible site for a park is shortsighted and limiting. A beautiful and sustainable park designed by professionals, with input from the public and in harmony with larger plans is possible.

We can think more holistically about the entire district and realize a future park is not dependent on stopping the Flaherty & Collins project. An alternative park site, or multiple sites connecting Cedar-Lee destinations is more likely to happen if the Lee-Meadowbrook development provides the density and a direction, for future planning.

I hope to see this happen. Just imagine the possibilities.

Alice Jeresko
Cleveland Heights
CH needs a climate action plan

Gerald Sgro

In the April Heights Observer, Alan Rapoport expressed the opinion that the city needs to focus on quality ority city services and not waste time and resources on something that is, in his view, unrelated to these services.

He pointed out that one of the first actions of the new city council was passage of an ordinance to adopt a climate action plan. He stated, “That plan will sound good to some who want to save the planet, but it will not improve life on the local level.” Such plans will only consume time that could be spent on other projects.

Unfortunately, such an ordinance was never passed by the council. Further, its dismissive comment betrays an elementary understanding of climate issues, what is at stake, and who the stakeholders are. These issues demand more thoughtful attention.

We already see climate change effects in our area and in our city. March broke the record for the most tornadoes in a single month in U.S. history. Some of these struck close to home. More severe storms and torrential rains caused by climate change have resulted in flooding in our city. Horseshoe Lake may be among the casualties. Our drinking water source, Lake Erie, has evidenced disturbing changes due to climate change, including formation of toxic algae blooms, species shifts, and dead zones. Rising temperatures recorded in Greater Cleveland and the heat-island effect are especially hard on those who cannot afford air conditioning or insulation for their homes. Holden Arboretum researchers have observed changes in flora and fauna. Furthermore, projections of catastrophic conditions globally are beginning to unfold as we watch melting ice sheets, wildfire destruction, and flooding of coastal areas.

Despite what those in denial say, we already see climate change. We need a climate action plan. He stated, “Many communities throughout the nation, including the city of Cleveland, have developed climate action plans. These plans direct action to reduce carbon emissions and protect valuable resources like drinking water. Ultimately, they will save taxpayer money by switching to sustainable energy and improving energy efficiency, as well as taking advantage of available grants and programs. Cleveland Heights has already signed on to the Power a Clean Future Ohio coalition and is now in a position to take advantage of the resources it provides. We are now committed as signatories to reducing our carbon emissions by 30% by 2030. Our community needs a well-thought-out climate-action plan to achieve this goal.”

How to save Severance Center

Alan Rapoport

Severance Center is a mess. The owner of the mall portion of that mess is a company called Namdar Namdar bought this property at a distress sale. It may think the old mall is profitable enough in its current condition. It does not seem inclined to invest enough to make needed improvements.

The company commissioned a plan for improvements. To date, it has had no success getting Namdar to cooperate with this plan. And so, Severance Center remains a mess.

In 1985, Severance Town Center was one of the first shopping malls built anywhere in the entire country. To make it possible, the city defined an area inside and outside a private ring road as an “S-2” zoning district. The goal was to encourage comprehensive planning. This would mean rational development of the central mall area and also of climate change is happening; it is real. Somebody must do something about it, but who?

Internationally we have had hopes for the Paris Climate Accord, but every year the representatives seem to convene and argue and go home without much accomplished. At the federal level, the Democrats have an agenda, but are hamstrung by Sen. Joe Manchin, who has ties to the coal industry, and the Republicans who dominate it are of the same mind as those in the federal legislature.

So, by default, the responsibility for action on climate-change mitigation has fallen to the local communities. Perhaps this is as it should be, because most of what happens will happen at the local and individual level. For example, communities switching to sustainable energy, implementing government programs; or individuals insulating their homes, or pressuring corporations to act more sustainably (in making) purchasing decisions.

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Issue 9, the Constitution, precedent, and all that legal mumbo jumbo

Jeanne Gordon

In the Height’s Observer’s April issue, Fran Mentch, in her (opinion, “FAQs: In support of public park Issue 9”), stated that the Ohio Supreme Court held that the Retroactivity Clause of Article II, Section 28 of the Ohio Constitution does not extend to political subdivisions. The case she referenced is Toledo City Sch. Dist. Bd. of Educ. v. State Bd. of Educ. of Ohio, 146 Ohio St. 3d 356 (Ohio 2016) (“Toledo Case”). And while that was the holding of the court, it does not apply to Issue 9 and the ordinance to “create a public activity park on the 1.07 acres of city owned land at the corner of Lee Road, Tullamore Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard.”

Simply put, the Retroactivity Clause in the Ohio Constitution prevents an “impairment of contract.” An impairment of contract occurs when contravening legislation is enacted to prevent the parties from meeting the obligations of a contract. The leading case on this issue in Ohio is Middletown v. Ferguson, 25 Ohio St. 3d 71 (Ohio 1986) (“Middletown”), which has not been overturned by the Toledo Case.

In Middletown, the state Supreme Court noted “the right of the electorate to enact or repeal legislation by way of initiative petition is a precious and fundamental one.” We only hold today that the initiative power must be exercised in a manner which does not interfere with the important protections embodied in Section 28, Article I of the United States Constitution prohibiting the impairment of the obligation of contracts. The words of this court, in a case decided ninety years ago, eloquently provide the foundation of our holding: ‘But, in the case of Issue 9, the legislation, if passed on May 3, will impair the contract rights of a private corporation, Flaherty & Collins, and as such the electorate will have “no constitutional right to enact unconstitutionall legislation.” The right of the city, the political subdivision, is not the issue here. It is the right of the private corporation that has contracted with the city whose obligation is impaired by the passage of Issue 9. And such impairment is likely to be found unconstitutional by the courts despite Ms. Mentch’s assertions to the contrary.

Jeanne Gordon has been a practicing attorney in Cleveland for the past 23 years. She was a member of the Citizens for an Elected Mayor campaign committee and was instrumental in drafting the Charter Amendment that changed the city’s form of government to an elected mayor. She is currently treasurer for Friends of BallCLM PAC. She has been a resident of “Scarehouse” for 20 years and goes all out with lights, music and talking pumpkins.

Oppinion

Leah Lerman won the 2021 preschool summer reading grand prize, a Lakeshore Learning gift card.

services manager at Heights Libraries. “It hopefully goes without saying that we offer free and open access to reading materials for every age and ability, but lately the need to encourage kids to read feels more urgent, which is why we are really eager to get kids signed up for our annual summer reading program this year.”

This year’s summer reading theme reflects that focus, with an emphasis on learning and growth, both intellectually and in the garden. Preschoolers through fifth graders will be “Growing to New Heights,” and teens will be encouraged to “Grow Your Own Way.” In addition to reading, programs throughout the summer will focus on hands-on learning activities and topics, such as environmentally friendly crafts, gardening, and even bugs and worms.

Heights Libraries summer reading programs run June 6 through Aug. 31. Kids and teens can sign up at any of the four Heights Libraries branches: Coventry Village, Lee Road, Noble Neighborhood, or University Heights. Everyone gets a prize book when they sign up, and another book after reading for 30 days.

“It’s really important for kids to have their own books at home, in addition to checking out books at the library,” said Lapidus. “Kids can win other fun prizes, but the prize books are a crucial part of our program. Having books in the home sends a strong message that reading is an integral, life-long skill that plays a part in every aspect of our lives, including giving us joy.”

They’ll have their own summer reading program, also called “Growing to New Heights,” with garden-focused prizes like a two-person yearlong membership to the Cleveland Botanical Garden and Holden Arboretum, a gardening prize package including a $25 Bremec Garden Center gift card and gardening books, and an indoor herb garden grow kit.

Full details about summer reading are available at heightslibrary.org. Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.

OPINION

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Heights High alum asks district to ‘stop counting us out’

Susie Kaeser

“College is not the only way to become independent, employed and engaged,” said Malia Lewis, president of the Cleveland Heights–University Heights City School District Board of Education (BOE), and a long-time advocate for a strong Career Technical Education (CTE) program.

Since the early 1980s, when high-paying manufacturing jobs started to disappear, there has been a national movement to replace vocational education—the old “manual-training” option for high school students who were not seen as “college material”—with something more relevant to success in a high-tech workplace.

The advantages of the new approaches to CTE instruction are still not widely understood. Much like the Advanced Placement courses discussed in this column recently, the CTE alternative suffers from too few students, whether college- or workplace-bound, seeing it as an appropriate option for themselves. And yet, these courses can motivate students, help them develop clear and informed career goals, and prepare them for college and well-paying careers. Some students even support themselves in college using certifications earned in high school.

I want Heights students to be better counseled about their options so they can maximize their potential and follow their interests,” Lewis continued. These options include 22 programs that offer challenging content and industry certification in fields including audio engineering, firefighting, clinical health, engineering and robotics. This specialized instruction is offered through a consortium of school districts. Each district offers distinct courses that are available to students from all participating districts, which include CH-UH, Shaker Heights, Warrensville Heights, and, more recently, Maple Heights and Bedford. CH-UH provides administrative oversight to the consortium.

Two significant challenges for a multi-district approach are transportation and getting all five districts on the same school calendar, keeping offerings and resources up to date requires a lot of attention, too. Unfortunately, the consortium lost its director three years ago and has not hired a replacement, putting some progress on hold, and burdening the coordinator.

CTE courses also face other hurdles. They don’t fit neatly into traditional classroom spaces, or adhere to standard schedules. Many offerings are two or three periods long, and must require specially designed spaces and specialized equipment. All require instructors who are experienced professionals. The popular criminal justice program was discontinued this year when its founding teacher retired and was not replaced.

It takes time and leadership to remove barriers. In 2015, as part of the redesign of the high school, a small cadre of community volunteers, teachers Don Frederick and Malia Lewis (prior to her being elected to the BOE), the group pushed for other improvements. These well-informed squeaky wheels kept pushing for the district to focus on strengthening CTE. Their advocacy paid off. Lewis noted that when the district hired Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby, one of its goals for her was to bring career education into the foreground. This year, the district hired CTE expert Celena Roesbeck to lead a process that will result in a five-year plan. I participated in one of more than a dozen focus groups convened as part of that process.

Our district is more effective and more successful because students have varied opportunities that build on their interests and strengths, and equip them for life after graduation. CTE provides a source of community pride and high-quality education.

Susie Kaeser moved to Cleveland Heights in 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. A community booster, she is the author of the recently published Reaching Segregation: Cleveland Heights Activists Shape their Community, 1964-1976.
Oh, Susanna!

Throughout Cleveland Heights’ 101 years of existence, perhaps only Frank C. Cain has had as great an impact on our city as the woman who will retire as city manager later this month: Susanna Niermann O’Neil.

Cain, first elected mayor of the village of Cleveland Heights in 1914, spearheaded the adoption of the manager/council form of government when the city was incorporated in 1921. Until his retirement in 1946, and even afterward, Cain was known as Mr. Cleveland Heights.

Niermann O’Neil has served the city in various staff positions even longer [than Cain], though with a somewhat lower profile.

As a young married couple, Susanna and Dennis Niermann moved to Coventry Village and joined Coventry Neighbors Inc. (CNI). Dennis served as president of CNI for many years. By 1972, Susanna was working for Heights Community Congress (HCC), the fair housing organization, where she coordinated a rental program.

Inspired by the desegregation ideals of Heights Citizens for Human Rights, and charismatic HCC director Harry Fagan, Susanna was put in the spotlight on her staff and colleagues, but she didn’t want to work for city hall—I want to fight city hall,” Fagan urged, “Try it for a year. Maybe you can do some good there.” And so she has, in many roles and capacities, for 46 years.

Who is Ms. O’Neil? Susanna laughed when asked about her two last names. When her father was dying, she wanted him to know that the family name would live on after him. She legally changed her last name back to O’Neil in his honor and memory. Some assumed that she and Dennis had divorced, but they remain married today, still living in what used to be the Coventry school district.

Early in her tenure with the city, Susanna helped to develop and implement the Nine-Point Plan, a road map to maintaining a diverse, racially integrated community. It has been her constant guide. As community services director for several decades, she created programs to advance racial, cultural, and religious diversity in the city. She recounted the city’s long-term efforts to train real estate professionals in providing bias-free service: “I said, you sell the house, we’ll sell the community.” It was a winning slogan.

Judith Miles, a resident since 1995, recalled, “When I wanted to purchase my first home, I called Cleveland Heights City Hall to get some information and was referred to Susanna. She gave me a mini-history and arranged a tour of the city for me. I was impressed that the city had empowered someone as knowledgeable, patient, welcoming and warm as Susanna. It made me want to live here!”

In 2020, after serving as vice city manager under City Manager Tanisha Briley for several years, Niermann O’Neil was appointed city manager following Briley’s resignation. She led the city through the transition to the mayor/council form of government.

More than any job title, responsibility or honor could possibly convey, Susanna is the institutional memory of Cleveland Heights.

In an oral history archived at Cleveland State University, she recalled decades of attending block parties: “I’ve always been respectful of the opinions of the residents. Don’t ever say to a resident ‘Yeah, but . . . ’ Listen to them; and when you’re done, you can piece it together and figure out what’s the culture there. What does that street need?”

Despite consistently shining the spotlight on her staff and colleagues, deflecting credit from herself, Susanna Niermann O’Neil really is Ms. Cleveland Heights. We are honored to acknowledge her as such, and wish her the best in her well-earned retirement.

Deborah Von Klee and Carla Rautenberg are writers, editors and longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.

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Heights Observer May 1, 2022 7 www.heightsobserver.org
University Heights resident Sharona Hoffman, professor of law and bioethics at Case Western Reserve University, has published the second edition of Aging with a Plan: How a Little Thought Today Can Vastly Improve Your Tomorrow (First Hill Books, 2022). Describing it as a comprehensive resource for people who are middle-aged and beyond, to help prepare for the challenges of aging, and caring for elderly relatives, Hoffman said, “The book grew out of a very difficult period in my life. During 18 months in 2013 and 2014, both my parents died, my mother-in-law died, and my husband was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease at the age of 55. As I endured these experiences, I learned a lot about growing older, getting sick, and facing the end of life. I wanted to share all that I had learned and put it to good use helping others. Writing this book seemed like a natural next step.” The book’s second edition revises and updates the first edition, published in 2015.

The parade was wiped out in 2020 due to the pandemic. When the pandemic lingered into spring 2021, the parade was postponed until Independence Day.

With the return to normal, the annual University Heights parade will return to its proper place on the calendar, Memorial Day, and take place this year on Monday, May 30.

Beginning at 11 a.m., the parade will travel east on Silsby Road, then head south on South Belvoir Boulevard, before ending at John Carroll University.

This year’s parade will feature crowd favorites, including stilt walkers from Pickup Stix, the rocket car and Batmobile from Euclid Beach Rocket Car, musical entertainment from the Heights High Marching Band, and more.

For the first time, this year’s parade also will feature the Mighty Shaw Cardinal Marching Band. At the conclusion of the parade, a memorial ceremony will be held at John Carroll University. Afterward, there will be fun activities for kids, including inflatables and pony rides.

“On Memorial Day, we remember those who died in service to our country,” said Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan. “But we also say ‘thank you,’ and we celebrate the freedoms they left behind for us to enjoy.”

If your group or organization is interested in participating in the parade, send an e-mail to Ben Schaefer at UH City Hall (bschaefer@universityheights.com).

Mike Cook is the communications and civic engagement coordinator for University Heights.

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Cleveland Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
MARCH 21, 2022

Present were Mayor Khalil Seren, and council members Melody Joy Hart (president), Craig Cobb (vice president), Tony Cuda, Gail Lar- son, Anthony Mattox Jr., and Josee Moore; Davida Russell was absent. Also attending were Susan Immenni O’Neill, city man- ager, Amy Henemuller, clerk of council; and William Hanna, law director.

Public comments
Laura Marks, representing Heights Tree People, reported the group has planted 871 trees in the past three years, and invited members of the public to an Arbor Day celebration at the CH Community Center on April 29 at 10 a.m. She also reported on a project on Nela View Road, between Noble and Winsford roads, in cooperation with Start Right Community Development Corpora- tion and the city’s Forestry Department, to prune trees, remove stumps, and plant new trees. She invited residents to sign up by emailing heightslovelifepeople@gmail.com, to have Tree People plant frontyard trees for free.

Fran Marthich described the benefits of having a public park as part of the proposed Meadowbrook-Lee-Tullmore development, and requested donations to support Issue 9, which will be on the May 3 ballot. The campaign website is clevelandheightspublicsquare.com.

RunOffcontinued from page 1

Cleveland Heights May 1, 2022

and flowering plants divided from their bountiful backyards. Buyers are encouraged to stop the sale and then install their own backyard vegetable plants, to enjoy summer flavors grown close to their own backdoors.

The Noble Gardeners’ Market’s fall selling season will resume in September, and September, when all of the these backyard and community garden crops are ripening.

Anyone is welcome to be a seller on May 21, and during the August and September market season. Sellers just need to bring their own table or ground cloth, and be prepared to make more plant sales for customers during the May 21 seedling plant sale event, or during the August and September vegetable, fruit and plant sale season. To learn more about the market, visit www.clevelandheights.org/noble-gardeners-market.

Brenda H. May is one of the Noble Neighbor leaders. Check out their story at Noble-Neighbors.com.

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Cleveland Heights May 1, 2022

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Vide of LWV’s Issue 9 public forum is online

Kim Sergis Inglis

On April 6, The League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland Heights Chapter (LWV), held a public forum on Issue 9, one of two ballot issues that Cleveland Heights voters will see on the city’s May 3 primary election ballots. The forum was presented in cooperation with Heights Librar- ies, and took place at the Lee Road branch.

Ballot Issue 9 asks voters: “Shall the proposed ordinance requiring the City to create a public activity park on the 1.07 acres of City owned land at the corner of Lee Road, Tullmore Road and Meadowbrook Boulevard be adopted?”

The 1.07 acre site is part of a development agreement that the city of Cleveland Heights signed with developer Flaherty & Collins.

Appearing at the forum in sup- port of Issue 9 were panelists Gavin Andersen, Fran Meacht and Ralph Solonitz. Panelists Catherine Ov- erson, Destiny Burns and Jeanne Gor- don spoke against Issue 9. The forum was moderated by LWV member Susan Taft.

Video of the April 6 panel discus- sion can be viewed at https://youtu.be/ M6sBHejyvs0.

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

specific event is expanding into something that is districtwide and has the potential to bring our even more members of our community! I espe- cially love that the fundraising will be distributed equally across all our district’s elementary schools—this is what Tiger Nation is all about: uniting. I am looking forward to participating with my family and seeing our district’s students, families, and com- munity supporters come out for a day of exercise, fun, and Tiger spirit.”

Participants are invited to walk or run the event’s 5k course; it will loop down Washington Boulevard, then proceed up Lincoln Boulevard, along Cain Park, and back to Heights High. The race will be a chip-timed 5k, open to all.

CH-UH school district Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby noted, “As a for- mer track athlete I am huge proponent of running. It is great for the body and soul, and I am excited that our students have the opportunity to participate!”

All registered runners will receive an official Tiger 5k T-shirt, and Heights alumni Peter and Mike Mitchell, of Mitchell’s Homemade Ice Cream, will provide free sweet treats for all participants.

To register, go to RunSignUp.com and type in “Heights Tiger 5k.” Any questions, and sponsorship inquiries, should be e-mailed to CHUHTigersR@gmail.com.

Alicia Zeigler Castillo is a 1997 Heights High graduate who lives in Cleveland Heights with her family. Her two children attend CH-UH schools.

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Coventry PEACE plans benefit for Ukraine

Robin VanLear

On Sunday, May 15, 2 to 5 p.m., Coventry PEACE Campus (CPC) will host an afternoon of art, music and food, all to benefit the artists of Ukraine.

The concept for the benefit grew from the 30-plus-year friendship between Susie Porter, of Euclid, and Serhiy Savchenko, a well-known Ukrainian artist in Lviv, Ukraine.

As the war ramped up, Serhiy's daughter, Ulianka, also an artist, began making digital artwork depicting the various aspects of the war, rendering the unbelievable events in her vibrant, and politically pointed, poster art.

After a conversation between Porter, Lynn Ischay, a former Plain Dealer photographer; [and the writer of this article], it was agreed that Ulianka would send copies of her poster art to be sold here, to raise money for victims of the war in Ukraine.

In 2017, Serhiy Savchenko opened a gallery and studio in Gdansk, a city just over the border in Poland. Gdansk has now become a refuge center for Ukrainians fleeing the war. During the pandemic, Serhiy created a nonprofit foundation to help artists endure during trying times. Now, the foundation is helping the war effort as well, by collecting items for citizen soldiers and volunteer organizations (https://savchenkogallery.com/en/save-ukraine-win-together-2/).

The May 15 afternoon event will showcase 13 of Ulianka's poster multiples, all for sale. Ulianka (in Gdansk) and her father, Serhiy (in Lviv), both talented musicians, will Zoom in to CPC and perform a song or two that Ulianka recently wrote about the war. Supportive artists from near and far will also offer their art for sale, to raise funds for Ukraine. Lisa Kenyon (Studio Foundry) is contributing a bronze piece, David Childers of North Carolina has promised a painting, and Maria Dabrowski of the Netherlands is donating a series of her photography books.

Community members are invited to support the fundraising effort while enjoying an afternoon of music by local musicians, snacks, and the chance to go home with a print by an up-and-coming Ukrainian artist.

Admission to this special event is $5 per person; those 17 and younger will be admitted for free.

For more information, or to donate something to the cause, call Susie Porter at 216-780-2119, or send her an e-mail to smp328@cornell.edu.

Robin VanLear is a member of Artful at Coventry PEACE Campus. She is the former creator and director of Community Arts at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and Parade the Circle.
CH Bee Inspector Explains Swarms—and Why Not to Panic

Catalina Wagers

To some, a nearby swarm of honeybees can set off alarms, and send them running back indoors. Understanding why honeybees swarm can lower anxiety levels and provide the tools to protect these essential, beneficial, and critically threatened insects.

The Green Team reached out to Cleveland Heights resident Patrick McGuigan, who is the Geauga and Monroe County Apiary Inspector for Ohio’s Department of Agriculture, to ask what one should do when a swarm of bees settles on a front porch eave, or outside a kitchen window, to rest and recharge.

According to McGuigan, who holds degrees in horticulture from both The Ohio State and North Carolina State universities, “The queen bee in Northeast Ohio typically starts laying eggs in January and February, and as the days get longer and warmer, a queen can lay up to 2,000 eggs in a single day. This results in a hive that has become uncomfortably overcrowded by the Summer Solstice, when egg production reaches its peak.

“During this time of growth, usually May and June, the colony raises a second queen, and the old queen bee flies off, usually taking a third to a half of the colony with her, in search of a new home.” In other words, when 10,000-plus bees take the form of a living, buzzing, basketball-sized clump of insects, they are in search of the perfect location to build their new hive.

While bee “scouts” are looking for a suitable new home, swarms sometimes make brief stopovers on tree branches, walls, eaves—anywhere they can hang on. They can appear menacing; they are not. McGuigan explained, “Since they are not defending a colony, they are typically not aggressive. Waiting in swarms while moving is the only way they feel protected. In fact, since they do not have a nest or stores of honey to defend, they tend to be at their most docile.”

Too often, frightened homeowners reach for a can of insecticide, or call the exterminator, thus contributing to the decline of the bee population. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that honeybee populations are less than half what they were in the 1940s, mostly driven by a mysterious phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder, which causes bees to suddenly abandon their hives. Unfortunately for the bees, there are no federal laws to prohibit people from killing them.

“Swarms rarely stay in one place for more than a day or so,” McGuigan noted, “so chances are the bees will take off on their own if left alone.” His advice—be patient and don’t panic.

A cluster of bees does not mean that they are building a nest; it’s just a temporary assemblage. However, it is understandable why businesses or homeowners might get nervous about having a huge blob of bees hanging around, particularly if there are children in the area. In some cases bees can become a nuisance if they take up residence where they should not—in the walls of a home, garden shed, or water meter, for example.

In such cases, McGuigan encourages people to call a local beekeeper, the Cuyahoga County Bee Inspector, or someone else who has experience managing honeybee hives, to safely remove the bees to a more suitable home. “The last thing we want people to do is to attempt to spray [them] with insecticide or other chemicals, or hire an exterminator,” said McGuigan. “If you leave the bees alone, they will leave you alone.

Bees are among the many beneficial insects that are struggling to survive. “Our tendency to develop land and our extensive use of harmful chemicals are wiping out their natural habitat. We can truly make a difference by ceasing to use pesticides and by planting an array of native pollinator plants,” explained McGuigan.

If you need to have a swarm or a hive removed, contact Philip Bartosh, Cuyahoga County Apiary Inspector, at 216-470-0934, or visit www.agri.ohio.gov for more information about Ohio’s Apiary program.

Remember, if you see a swarm of honeybees, do not freak out; instead, be glad. The best way to protect bees and other pollinators is by creating safe and nurturing spaces in yards and gardens, with native plants that support them.

Catalina Wagers is a resident of Cleveland Heights’ Fairfax neighborhood. She is co-founder of Cleveland Heights Green Team.

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Judson Park Cleveland Heights | Judson Manor University Circle | South Franklin Circle Chagrin Falls
Communion of Saints students meet with CH author

Eileen Ryan Ewen

Communion of Saints School (COS) has established a new Author & Illustrator Speaker Series.

Seeking to bring an awareness of books and their creators to students, the program strives to develop lifelong readers, creative thinkers, and perhaps future authors and illustrators.

COS launched the series on April 5, welcoming author Tricia Springstubb.

Spending most of her day at the school, Springstubb, who lives in the neighborhood, shared her deep love of reading and knowledge of writing with the students.

The author of numerous books for children, ranging from picture books to chapter books to middle-grade novels, Springstubb was a natural fit for presenting to the K–8 students.

Whether reading a book to the youngest attendees, or working with older children to entice a sentence, Springstubb was engaged with her audience.

Following each presentation, to three different grade-groupings of students, she answered questions about writing, her process and inspirations, and even her cat, Billy.

Second-graders participated in a writing workshop with the author in which they explored story mapping and organizing story ideas into a beginning, middle, and end.

“The Power of the Pen team, comprising seventh- and eighth-graders, had lunch with Springstubb. The team asked in-depth questions about writing, revisions, and publishing.

“Mac’s Backs - Books on Coventry was in attendance, giving students the opportunity to purchase Springstubb’s books, and have them signed by her.

“We know just having books is an important tool for encouraging kids to read,” said Loretta Pilla, the school’s principal.

“owning a book signed by an author a child has personally met is even more powerful.”

Planning is underway for next year's Communion of Saints School's Author & Illustrator Speaker Series, to begin during the fall semester.

The Speaker Series is a new component in the school’s goal to foster a love of reading, critical thinking, communication and creative expression.

This past school year has seen the development of a student newspaper, The Sabre Soup, as well as workshops with Lake Erie Ink.

For next year, a schoolwide Young Author Workshop is being planned, in which students will write and create their own books.

Eileen Ryan Ewen is an artist and children's book illustrator who lives in Cleveland Heights. She is a volunteer librarian at Communion of Saints School, which her children attend.

Cleveland Heights – University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

MARCH 15, 2022 – work session

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

Communication audit analysis

Tim Carroll, working with the National School Public Relations Association, presented findings of the association’s communication audit along with suggested improvements in the district's internal and external communication.

He stressed that the suggestions can and should be implemented over multiple years. He also emphasized that the district's website should focus more on kids learning and teachers teaching.

Currently, the website emphasizes special events, sports, and arts activities.

Teachers' contract MOU

The board voted to approve a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the teachers union that will extend the union contract through June 30, 2023. Board members were pleased that a two-year contract was achieved, and that this period aligns contract negotiations with a five-year levy cycle.

Retention of OSBA membership

The board voted to retain its membership in the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). However, the board expressed reservations disapproving of some political stances that OSBA has taken, in particular OSBA’s withdrawal from the National School Boards Association.

Update on pandemic masking

The district will become mask-optional on March 17. The board discussed a thoughtful return to a more normal educational experience urged by the pandemic.

CVW Observer: Robin Kozien

APRIL 5, 2022 – regular meeting

Beverly Wright was absent. All other board members were present, as were the superintendent and treasurer.

Paper format authorized for tests

The board authorized district third-grade English Language Arts and Mathematics paper to be authorized for the following school year. The teachers had overwhelmingly recommended a paper-and-pencil, instead of online, format.

Policy Group C

Assistant Superintendent Paul Lombardo presented the first reading of Policy Group C. This policy group includes guidelines for school dress policy and dress code. Lombardo will refer the proposal to the board in the future.

Kirby reported that the approximately $171 million of ESSER II federal funds, provided to [the district] through the Ohio Department of Education, must be spent by September 2024. Key elements of the ESSER II plan align with the CH-UH strategic plan, and include academic supports, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) supports, and Safe School Curriculum with CDC guidelines for in-person instruction. The district plan for these funds was submitted to the Ohio Board of Education on March 30.

Academic goals

Kirby reported that students and families are now able to view quarter three on the Infinite Campus portal, which provides secure mobile access to student information. The Springboard Afterschool reading program concluded in March. Over seven weeks, 194 students received literacy-skill tutoring. Parents and families participated in five workshops on how to be at-home reading coaches.

Health services

MetroHealth received a $4.5-million grant to support expansion of School-Based Health with Cleveland Heights. This will fund expanded services, a walk-in pilot program, construction of additional exam rooms, and a multipurpose/ wellness space at the high school.

Sex-based harassment

Kirby updated work addressing sex-based harassment concerns. In January, there were a variety of student assemblies to share information. The high school team has asked all students to identify a trusted adult in the school. School social workers are responding to student requests. The Cleveland Rape Crisis Center has held several meetings to review needs and resources. Several high school student groups are meeting to discuss healthy relationships. CVWGC (Cleveland Heights Wellness Advisory Group) addresses student concerns and suggestions around physical, mental, and social-emotional health. A wellness fair for staff and administrators have reviewed Title IX requirements. The current curriculum is being reviewed in light of the sex harassment concerns. Vulnerability assessments have been conducted at the middle schools and high school.

Treasurer’s report

Scott Gainer made the board aware that Ohio House Bill 11 standardized the ability at dealing with property-value complaints, is in committee.

CVW Observer: Rosemarie Farman

Documents for all board meetings are available at www.chhs.org/BoardMeetingAgendas. Board meetings are livestreamed at https://www.youtube.com/UCHHSchools, and recorded for later viewing.

Kelly Parker

Two Cleveland Heights churches, City Christ Community Church and City Church, have partnered to provide meals for the Cleveland Heights High School football team.

Their “day-before-game meals” outreach program began in 2021 to serve young people in the community, and help build nutritional energy and stamina.

Four Heights restaurants joined forces with the churches in the program’s first year, to provide meals for more than 70—coaches and players—throughout the football season.

Chicken Ranch

1392 Cedar Road, University Heights

was required to make a significant financial contribution.

An alternative approach could be used today. It might fund many kinds of improvements. At the very least, it might be used to pave a now badly deteriorated road and maybe even landscape it properly.

Even if proposing a special tax assessment might give the city some leverage in negotiations with Namdar. It could be the start of a real plan, it might fund many kinds of improvements, and include use of theater prop weapons. Lewis asked that the student dress code allow students to dress in accordance with their identity.

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MetroHealth received a $4.5-million grant to support expansion of School-Based Health with Cleveland Heights. This will fund expanded services, a walk-in pilot program, construction of additional exam rooms, and a multipurpose/ wellness space at the high school.

Sex-based harassment

Kirby updated work addressing sex-based harassment concerns. In January, there were a variety of student assemblies to share information. The high school team has asked all students to identify a trusted adult in the school. School social workers are responding to student requests. The Cleveland Rape Crisis Center has held several meetings to review needs and resources. Several high school student groups are meeting to discuss healthy relationships. CVWGC (Cleveland Heights Wellness Advisory Group) addresses student concerns and suggestions around physical, mental, and social-emotional health. A wellness fair for staff and administrators have reviewed Title IX requirements. The current curriculum is being reviewed in light of the sex harassment concerns. Vulnerability assessments have been conducted at the middle schools and high school.

Treasurer’s report

Scott Gainer made the board aware that Ohio House Bill 11 standardized the ability at dealing with property-value complaints, is in committee.

CVW Observer: Rosemarie Farman

Documents for all board meetings are available at www.chhs.org/BoardMeetingAgendas. Board meetings are livestreamed at https://www.youtube.com/UCHHSchools, and recorded for later viewing.
Heights Heritage tour returns as HCC marks 50 years

Les Jones

After three years of disruptions, Heights Community Congress (HCC) will again host its Heights Heritage Home & Garden Tour in 2022, on Sunday, Sept. 18, from noon to 5 p.m. For more than 40 years HCC has featured 154 homes, along with several historic churches and local city landmarks, welcoming thousands of visitors from all over Northeast Ohio and beyond.

The popular weekend tour was abruptly cancelled in 2020 due to the major microburst storm that tore through parts of Cleveland Heights. That storm knocked out power for days, and damaged hundreds of trees and numerous properties, including three homes and two churches on the tour.

That cancellation was followed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which put a hold on the tour—and many other events—for two more years. This three-year hiatus was only the second disruption of HCC’s annual event since it launched in 1977. (The first was due to the 2008 recession.)

This year’s tour will take place on Sunday only; there will be no Saturday evening preview party. Tour volunteers are busy lining up a diverse collection of properties to feature on the tour, and will release more details as plans are finalized. Depending on any remaining COVID protocols still in place by September, masks may be required inside all tour homes. HCC will also institute staggered starting locations for tour-goers, to help facilitate social distancing across the entire route.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of HCC, a nonprofit that serves Cleveland Heights and surrounding communities by monitoring fair-housing practices, promoting and supporting social justice initiatives, and stimulating public conversation on the values of maintaining strong diverse communities.

HCC formed in 1972, to begin tackling many of the issues detailed in the historic St. Ann’s Audit of Real Estate Practices in Eastern Cuyahoga County.

Those efforts continue today, and have expanded to include the monitoring of other emerging areas of discrimination, including gender identity, sexual orientation, and source-of-income cases. HCC continues to provide discrimination-awareness information and training classes for realtors and landlords operating in the Heights area.

For HCC, the Heritage Home & Garden tour not only showcases Cleveland Heights’ historically unique mix of architecture, it also highlights the rich social and racial diversity of the city’s many neighborhoods.

Tour tickets will go on sale in early August. Those interested in volunteering to help guide people through homes and gardens on this year’s tour are asked to contact the HCC office at 216-371-6775, or visit www.heightscgress.org.

Les Jones, a 45-year resident of Cleveland Heights, is president of HCC’s Board of Trustees, and has served on its Heights Heritage Home & Garden Tour planning committee every year since 1990. He is a past president of the boards of both Reaching Heights and the Forest Hill Home Owners’ Association.

Heights volunteers support food pantry and clothing bank

Last year, 250 volunteers donated more than 4,000 service hours, to operate the center every Saturday, rain or shine, from 10 a.m. to noon. Volunteers include retired adults, young professionals, and students; all share a common desire to be a force of good for a cause they care about.

Other community members lend their talents in other ways to support the organization. Knitting groups donate their time to make hats and scarves that they give to those in need.

Church of the Saviour volunteer Pete Evangelista works with incarcerated individuals at Trumbull Correctional Institution, through Kairos Prison Ministry, where they knit hats on looms, then donate the hats to the clothing bank.

“Our goal is to inspire individuals to find purpose through providing a service to someone else,” said Evangelista. “It becomes a full-circle transformation—the power of helping ourselves while helping others.”

Donated items include clothing, food, toiletries, and funds which are used to purchase food from the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. During the past year, FMWOCC distributed 3,000 bags of groceries and more than 10,000 clothing items to 4,200 people.

To learn more, visit www.fmwozanamcenter@gmail.com.

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Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board
Meeting highlights

MARCH 21, 2022
Board members present were President Gabe Crenshaw, Vice President Max Garber, Pat Carlyle, Dana Flavel, Annette Iwamoto, Tyler McGee, and Vikas Tulsiantha.

Financial and investment report
Total cash balance at the operating account was $23,590,251.33. The recent rise in interest rates has benefitted the library financially. Deborah Hermann, finance manager, received an award at the yearly meeting for her financial reporting achievement from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada.

Board resolutions
The board authorized the library director and finance manager to negotiate a contract with Playhouse Square Management/Creaco Real Estate for property management of the University Heights PEACE Campus building at 2843 Washington Blvd.

The board approved hiring Beno Bokisch as architect for the Noble Neighborhood branch renovations and addition.

Personal report
Laure Mialet presented the year-end personnel report for 2021. Forty-six vacations resulting from the pandemic were filled in 2021. As part of the library’s diversity, equity and inclusion focus, job advertising sources were expanded. Turnover in 2021 was 24.6 percent, compared to 17.69 percent in 2020. In January 2021, staff received a 3 percent wage, or lump sum, increase. Significant raises were made to pay ranges. In response to COVID and the expiration of the mandated federal paid leave policies, the library created temporary policies to support working families when schools and day cares were closed. Joneworth was added as an additional library holiday, and coverage has been extended to part-time staff for all library holidays.

Director’s report
FAQs and answers about the PEACE campus were posted on the library’s website. Laurie Marotta presented the year-end personnel report for 2021. Forty-six vacations resulting from the pandemic were filled in 2021. As part of the library’s diversity, equity and inclusion focus, job advertising sources were expanded. Turnover in 2021 was 24.6 percent, compared to 17.69 percent in 2020. In January 2021, staff received a 3 percent wage, or lump sum, increase. Significant raises were made to pay ranges. In response to COVID and the expiration of the mandated federal paid leave policies, the library created temporary policies to support working families when schools and day cares were closed. Joneworth was added as an additional library holiday, and coverage has been extended to part-time staff for all library holidays.

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Gifts in the Heights
What’s going on at your library?

Coventry Village Branch

1205 Coventry Road, 216-321-5300

Thursday, May 5, 7 p.m.

Maker Workshop: 3D Printing and Modeling Basics. This hands-on, introductory workshop will cover the basics of simple modeling in TinkerCAD and preparing designs to be sent to a 3D printer. No previous 3D-printing experience is required. Projects completed in class will be printed and ready for pickup at a later date. Registration required.

Lee Road Branch

2345 Lee Road, 216-932-3500

Tuesday, May 10, 7 p.m.

MacRae Workshop: 3D Printing and Modeling Basics. This hands-on, introductory workshop will cover the basics of simple modeling in TinkerCAD and preparing designs to be sent to a 3D printer. No previous 3D-printing experience is required. Projects completed in class will be printed and ready for pickup at a later date. Registration required.

Noble Neighborhood Branch

2800 Noble Road, 216-291-5665

Thursday, May 19, and Sunday, May 22, 2:30 p.m.

Helping Your Garden Grow: Noble Plant Swap. Grab some plants for your house or garden at the Noble Plant Swap. This event will be held in the library parking lot. Cuttings of houseplants, herbs, and flowers are all welcome, rooted or not, and we will have supplies on hand to make cuttings at the event. Even if you don’t have a plant to bring, you’re welcome to take one home. In the event of inclement weather, check the library’s website for updates.

University Heights Branch

13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700

Monday, May 2, 7 p.m.

Medicare 101: Understanding Your Medicare Plan. Are you turning 65? Are you retiring? Do you know how to enroll in Medicare? Do you understand your Medicare plan options? To get answers to these questions and more, join Marcy Rosenthal, a licensed Medicare insurance consultant, for an educational talk. Registration required.

On Zoom

Thursday, May 5, 7 p.m.

Berthe Morisot: Grande Dame of Impressionism. The last 40 years have seen a surge of interest in uncovering female artists of the past, putting a spotlight on painters like Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot. What happens if we consider Morisot’s art independent of her gender? Should we? Can we? Tune in to find out. (Meeting ID: 823 648 5149; Passcode: 691353.)

Library launches ‘Unpacking 1619’ podcast

Isabelle Rew


The podcast emerged from the library’s monthly 1619 Project discussion group, in which community members met to discuss issues of race in America, using articles from “The 1619 Project” as a jumping off point. As the discussion group grew in popularity since it began in 2019, the program’s facilitator, Adult Services Librarian John Piche, saw an opportunity to bring more voices to the table. “Back in 2020, participants in the discussion group approached me, asking for more content to include in our monthly meetings—lecturers, professors, writers, historians,” said Piche. “There was a clear demand to integrate perspectives beyond the original text of ‘The 1619 Project.’ ”

Since then, Piche has been interviewing scholars from across the country on subjects ranging from race and the criminal justice system, to the case for and against reparations. The video interviews are recorded on Zoom and shared on Heights Libraries’ website and YouTube page. “The videos have been well-received by members of the discussion group and others in the library’s service area,” said Piche. “But my colleagues and I saw an opportunity to increase access to the interview content by adapting the audio from the interviews into a podcast format. With that, ‘Unpacking 1619’ was born.”

Episodes of the podcast are released every two weeks at heightslibrary.org, and on Apple Podcasts and Google Play. “Libraries are one of the few spaces left where people from all walks of life come together and talk about issues that impact our lives,” said Piche. “Like we do in our monthly discussion groups, I hope that people will listen to this podcast on drives or walks with family and friends, inspiring these important conversations beyond the walls of the library.”

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

Summer Reading

JUNE 6 - AUGUST 31

Celebrate growing, gardening, going green with us by signing up for our Summer Reading Program! Preschoolers through Teens select a prize book at sign up and after reading for 30 days, all the while earning raffle tickets for a chance to win some awesome grand prizes! Parents: don’t forget to sign up your babies and toddlers for our preschool program!

Adults shouldn’t feel left out. They’ll have their own summer reading program, with garden-focused prizes like a two-person yearlong membership to the Cleveland Botanical Garden and Holden Arboretum, a gardening prize package including a $50 Bremec Garden Center gift card and gardening books, and an indoor herb garden grow kit.

Register at any branch starting June 6.

www.heightslibrary.org

Growing to New Heights

Growing to New Heights

Grow Your Own Way

Grow Your Own Way

SUMMER READING
Poems and photos come together at Nature Center

Jewel Moulthrop

Well into her 80s, and showing no signs of slowing down any time soon, Cleveland Heights resident Nina Freedlander Gibans has published her fourth book of poems—*In the Garden of Old Age*.

The poems, and accompanying photographs by Abby Star, will be on exhibit at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes from an opening reception on Wednesday, May 25, through Aug. 15. Gibans describes *In the Garden of Old Age* as a collection of poems about memories, “colliding daily in these summary years that pile up and tumble to the pages like leaves in fall.” The poems are richly illustrated—bright flowers giving way to autumn leaves.

Gibans is well known in Greater Cleveland’s arts community. She has been a teacher, writer, arts advocate, and filmmaker. Her film, “University Circle: Creating a Sense of Place,” about the history, public art, and architecture of University Circle, aired on WVIZ/PBS in 2014.

In 2009, Gibans received the Martha Joseph Citation of the Cleveland Arts Prize for her service to Cleveland’s arts community. She has also been honored by Carleton’s permanent art collection.

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Gusti—’a force of nature’

David Budin

The dean of Cleveland’s folk music community, Gusti Krauss—known by most only as Gusti—wrote in a March 21 Facebook post, “I am not dead! Still singing after all these years,” displaying her always irreverent sense of humor.

Then, in a sadly ironic twist, 10 days later, she died.

The rest of her March 21 message read: “I’ll be singing a concert on May 14th for Folknet at Church of The Good Shepherd, 7–9 p.m. More news to follow!”

Well, more news did follow. Bad news.

On April 1, her husband, Serge Krauss, wrote to her Facebook friends and followers, as part of a much longer post: “Today [Gusti] died at our pantry door of a fractured skull. She apparently fell from the back steps as she returned from a short, mid-day dental appointment, where she was so happy to finally get her new teeth back on track. She had been so happy that split second before eternity.”

When they returned to Cleveland, they split up. (A singer who replaced Gusti in the group for a short time was Elaine McFarlane, nicknamed Spanky, who, with one of the other members, started a new folk-rock group called Spanky and Our Gang, which scored several national hit records in the late 60s.) After leaving the New Wine Singers, Gusti continued performing solo or as part of a duo, playing often at Farragher’s and at Cleveland’s main folk venue, La Cave, near University Circle, where I often heard her sing when I first started attending folk music shows.

Decades later, in 2010 I joined a committee that was putting together an event to commemorate La Cave, which had operated from 1962 to 1969. We met many times over several months, always at Gusti’s Cleveland Heights home.

The resulting “La Cave Reunion,” held over three nights at Wilbert’s in downtown Cleveland, featured nationally known artists who had appeared at La Cave, including Carolyn Hester, Josh White Jr., and Brewer and Shibley. The shows also featured a few local artists who had played there, including Gusti, who was long known for her booming voice. The committee who helped create the event was led by Steve Traina, who, for 20 years, has hosted a weekly radio show in Cleveland, “Steve’s Folk,” delving into the history of folk and rock music. He’s currently writing a book about La Cave.

“Gusti was my first call when I began research for my upcoming book on La Cave. Naturally,” Traina said. “And it turned out to be one of the best calls. No one was more informative and entertaining, not to mention that her memory wasn’t the sieve the rest of our elderly memories are.”

Those of us who knew her and heard her sing and tell her stories have strong memories of her. For me, she was just about the last link to my musical roots here. And she was a mentor to many.

That May concert Gusti wrote about will still take place, but, of course, with a different look and sound and feeling than it would have had with Gusti performing. Charlie Mosbrook, the popular Cleveland Heights-based singer-songwriter, who performs around the country, is the current president of this region’s folk music organization, Folknet. Mosbrook told me, “Folknet was very much looking forward to presenting Gusti. She has been such an important voice in our community through the years. While we regret the loss of that opportunity, our hearts are filled with sadness for the loss of a friend to so many. We will celebrate her legacy in the Cleveland folk community.”

Steve Traina decided to call Gusti again, on March 30, “on a random whim, the day before she passed,” he said, “to follow up a question or two, and we chatted for 40 minutes. Or rather, she chatted for 40 minutes. She was always a storyteller, on or off stage. As hoped for, she had a half-dozen additional pithy quotes for the story, which in large part is her story. She reminded me that because she always made herself available to perform whenever La Cave had a hole in its schedule, [La Cave’s owner] Stan Kain thought of her as La Cave’s house band! She was an appropriately named force of nature.”

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.
Heights Arts interns curate student show

Tom Masaveg

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi once said, “The power of youth is the common wealth of the entire world. . . No segment in society can match the power, idealism, enthusiasm and courage of young people.”

As current events stream digitally throughout the consciousness of our youth, Heights Arts offers an open platform for Cleveland Heights High School students to amplify their voices through art in its annual student show. This year’s exhibition, What a Time to Be Alive, is accompanied by a spotlight exhibition featuring works by senior intern Eryn Lawson and by junior intern Josie Naypaur, organizers of the larger student exhibition.

The annual student show is an aspect of an innovative Heights Arts program that invites interns from Heights High to learn about the art world in general, and gallery work specifically. Each intern serves two years, with the senior intern mentoring the junior intern. The annual student show is a culmination of that year’s work by the interns.

In addition to curating their own exhibition, the interns bring valuable energy and insight to the work of the Heights Arts exhibition community, helping to plan and install shows in the gallery at 2175 Lee Road.

In a statement, Lawson and Naypaur described their thoughts on the exhibition: “In an age where connection is king, the miracles of modern life shape a new generation unlike any other. As the children of extremes, extravagance and excess, a unique culture rises from these conditions to shape our collective experience. From social media’s unrelenting scrutiny, unpredictable global events, and insatiable boredom, the specifics of our lives create our stories. And so we must ask: What defines us? As an era, as a community, as individuals? In collaboration with Cleveland Heights High, we seek to find some answers to this question through our exhibition, What a Time to Be Alive.”

The exhibitions open Friday, May 19, and will be on view through Sunday, June 12.

For more information, visit www.heightsarts.org.

Tom Masaveg is a local public artist specializing in augmented reality installations and graphite works on paper. He’s also the programs manager at Heights Arts. Contact him at programs@heightsarts.org.

Registration open for LEI’s creative expression summer day camps

Eli Millette

Creature Creations, a Lake Erie Ink (LEI) Creative Expression summer day camp for youth throughout Northeast Ohio, begins as it always has—coming together under the big white tent set up right outside the Coventry PEACE campus building. The sun shines down as birds welcome the arrival of the campers right in the heart of the Cleveland Heights Coventry neighborhood. There is a notable rush of activity under the tent as first- and second-graders scramble to prepare their displays.

It is a big day for the kids. All week, they have been perfecting and fleshing out the lives of the creatures they have created. They’ve built environments where their creatures might live, and invented backstories to explain their personalities.

Everything has a purpose and an explanation. Some kids have added caves and rivers to their environments, while others believe their creatures live in mountain settings. On the last day of camp, parents come to see what their children have created. Feelings of pride and interest abound as youngsters guide their families through the intricacies of the characters they’ve created.

Experiences such as these demonstrate the value of creative expression. Even after a decade, LEI’s creative expression camps have remained relatively unchanged in their commitment to helping young people discover new forms of expressing themselves.

LEI believes its the simplicity of creativity that makes it such an important part of a child’s life. “It gives you a moment to sit, focus, and reflect,” said Charisse Bailey, LEI’s director of programs. “All you need is a pencil and a piece of paper.”

Registration is open for LEI’s Creative Expression summer camps for kids and teens. To learn more, and to register, go to lakeerieink.org/summer.

Eli Millette, a resident of Cleveland Heights, is the communications and outreach director at Lake Erie Ink.
Cleveland Repertory Orchestra presents its first concert May 15

Matthew Salvaggio

The Cleveland Repertory Orchestra (CRO) will present its first-ever concert on Sunday, May 15, at 3 p.m., at First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland, 1980 Fairmount Blvd. The performance will be free and open to the public.

The concert will feature a new work by African American composer Kevin Day, the Flute Concerto by Christopher Rouse (featuring flutist Ian Wenz), and Antonin Dvorak’s Symphony No. 5.

The CRO comprises talented musicians from across Greater Cleveland, who are committed to the highest level of musical performance. They seek to explore the breadth of the orchestral repertoire with an emphasis on lesser-known masterworks and contemporary music, and to create a more equitable, inclusive, and accessible space for classical music.

Previously planned concerts were postponed due to the pandemic. Looking ahead, CRO plans to present a full three-concert series during the 2022-23 season.

For more information visit www.clevelandrepertoryorchestra.org, or e-mail: clevelandrepertoryorchestra@gmail.com.

Matthew Salvaggio is the founder and music director of the Cleveland Repertory Orchestra, music director of the Euclid Symphony Orchestra, and the Erie Jr. Philharmonic, and director of orchestras at Mercyhurst University.

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