Owners seek landmark status for CH’s first condo

JoAnn London and Cathy Whelan

Completed in 1971, The Victorian was the first building in Cleveland Heights to be constructed as condominiums. In May, owners submitted paperwork to have the building designated a Cleveland Heights landmark, significant to the community. And on July 28—after one-year pandemic delay—its owners will gather to celebrate The Victorian’s 50th anniversary.

Properties Development Company broke ground on the building, located at 3701 Mayfield Road, in 1969. Architect Irving Robinson designed the building under the direction of the company’s principal partners, Will Sukenik and Irving Fine, who were on-site daily. At the time, condominiums were a new concept in home ownership. The Victorian’s developers marketed the building by inviting potential buyers to “Try Before You Buy,” in a program that let potential buyers rent a suite for up to two years before completing the purchase transaction. (Renting is no longer an option.)

The developers advertised the 50 individual homes as “condomaximums,” and declared the large, custom units to be “the best-kept secret in Cleveland Heights.”

A “gracious living” style is integral to the interior of The Victorian, while its contemporary architecture creates a sense of timeless elegance. The two-story lobby features a stunning Strauss inside. Continued on page 9

Behavioral Health Hospital plans October opening

Angela Townsend

On Oct. 8, the MetroHealth Cleveland Heights Behavioral Health Hospital will open its doors to adults and seniors who need in-patient care. The adolescent unit will open on Oct. 25.

The 112-bed hospital, on the campus of the MetroHealth Cleveland Heights Medical Center at 10 Severance Circle, is designed for short-term stays for people with mood disorders, addiction, and other behavioral health needs.

Of the owners who gathered recently for this photo, the longest-tenured has lived at The Victorian for 19 years. The newest owner has lived in the historic condominium for under a year.

A job fair held at MetroHealth Cleveland Heights Behavioral Health Hospital on May 20 attracted more than 50 people interested in job openings for a dozen different opportunities. Social worker, patient care nurse assistant, registered nurse, and mental health counselor positions are among those being filled.

So far, roughly 75% of the available nursing positions and all behavioral health specialist positions have been filled. They will be among the 155 new employees at the Cleveland Heights facility, which will eventually rise to 225 employees and provide an additional $340,000 in income tax revenue to Cleveland Heights.

The hospital was designed to have 36 geriatric beds available for short-term stays for people with behavioral health needs. For short-term stays for people with behavioral health needs.

Inside

FREE TAKE ONE

FREE PARKING continues at all Cleveland Heights meters

Donate your extra reusable bags during the month of July

Local makers market opens brick-and-mortar shop

Heights High graduate Antoine Dunn to headline at House of Blues

Volume 15
Number 7
July 1, 2022

Read Local. Shop Local. Written by volunteers for Cleveland Heights and University Heights • Read more at www.heightsobserver.org

Published by FutureHeights

GardenWalk CH returns July 16 and 17

Lee Robert

After 65 years, Heights Cleaners has closed

Lee Robert

After 65 years in business, opening in 1957, Heights Cleaners—Coventry Village’s longest-running business with a single owner—closed on Saturday, June 4.

The owner, 98-year-old Manny Dishler, has retired after being in the clothes cleaning business for about 75 years.

Soon after Dishler returned from serving in the U.S. Army Air Force as a unit headquarters clerk in North Africa and Italy in the late 1940s, he started working as a home-delivery man for his father, Nathan Dishler, who owned U-Need-A-Laundry in Cleveland. “Those days, few people locked clothes cleaning business for about 75 years.

Longtime employee Terry Bahnick at the "second business line" pay phone, and owner Manny Dishler on Heights Cleaners last day.

started Prospect Laundry at 19th and Prospect in downtown Cleveland. Being the boss of his own business, he took time off and went courting.

He and Aline Cohen married in 1954 and lived in University Heights, in 1971, when he was 28, Dishler bought their house, in part, because of its size. By focusing on small, manageable sections, they installed a panoply of plants, integrating art and color into multiple intimate seating areas. They describe the result as “an experience of inspiration.”

Despite the apparent differences, a conversation with the four owner/gardeners revealed similarities. For example, all of them believe in working with nature, rather than against it, and owners chose to minimize manicured grass, and instead expand a stone patio.

Across the city, on North Park Boulevard, a relatively massive backyard presented the owners with both a challenge and an opportunity, because of its size. By focusing on small, manageable sections, they installed a panoply of plants, integrating art and color into multiple intimate seating areas. They describe the result as “an experience of inspiration.”

Despite the apparent differences, a conversation with the four owner/gardeners revealed similarities. For example, all of them believe in working with nature, rather than against it, and enjoy functional outdoor spaces with multiple seating areas, and water features. Their gardens, which they designed and planted themselves, are versatile enough to allow them to create, relax and entertain.

Interestingly, each of the gardeners described being inspired by birch trees. The Northampton homeowners bought their house, in part, because of the imposing river birch that takes a prominent place in their backyard. In deciding how to create the rest of the garden, they took their cues from the
Heights Observer recognized as Ohio’s best community newspaper

Bob Rosenbaum

The Heights Observer was recognized as “Ohio’s Best Community Newspaper” at the 44th Annual All-Ohio Excellence in Journalism Awards, a program of the Press Club of Cleveland. The honor was announced in early June at an awards dinner at the House of Blues.

For the fifth year in a row, the Heights Observer has received an award in this category, earning top honors in 2020 and 2022, and honorable mention in 2018, ’19 and ’21.

David Budin was recognized this year for his “Songs and Stories” column, with an honorable mention in the highly competitive category for Ohio’s best column. He won first place in that category in 2019.

The statewide awards program recognizes quality journalism in all types of media—newspapers, magazines, websites, television and radio. Approximately 700 entries were submitted in the various categories, with judging done by working journalists affiliated with other press clubs outside Ohio. Complete results can be found at pressclubcleveland.com.

The “Best in Ohio” award is based on review of three complete issues of the publication from 2021. We submitted the February, September and October editions for their content around last year’s local elections.

For the small, part-time team that works on the Observer every month, the honor makes for a nice moment. But it’s a bigger reflection on the community itself.

When I talk about the Observer, I often begin by saying it’s not an ordinary newspaper. That’s because it’s volunteer based, and everything we publish comes from community members across Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

At traditional publications, the “news package” (to use the jargon of editors) is planned, with stories assigned to reporters based on what’s happening, what’s interesting and what sells.

For us, the articles arrive with no advance notice, and we build the best “package” we can from whatever people submit.

It’s an imperfect model. Sometimes, big stories don’t get covered at all, or they only emerge once time from an accumulation of opinion pieces. We often struggle to make sense of articles submitted by laypeople on complex topics. (School finance comes to mind.)

But our model is designed for affordability in an economic environment where major m涤s can’t make ends meet. And it’s designed to encourage citizen engagement in the community and government—seeing that rarely figures into the mission of traditional publishing ventures.

The result is a publication that, on one hand, is frustratingly less than comprehensive, and, on the other, more reflective of its community than most.

Not every community could sustain a project like the Heights Observer. We’re blessed with all the right attributes: a strong collection of independent business and nonprofit advertisers that support it financially; an engaged community; a press club that provides a wide range of perspectives; and an “us against the world” mentality that breathes life into it month after month. That’s the real reason I think we keep getting this award. It’s a pretty good publication that’s part of an amazing community.

Our only real enemies are:

• Best daily newspaper (5,000+ circulation): The Cincinnati Enquirer
• Best small daily: The (Elyria) Chronicle-Telegram
• Best community magazine: Cincinnati Magazine
• Best news website: Akron Beacon Journal

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

Bremer Fisher deserves an article

Ruth Anna Carlson

I read with great surprise, concern and disappointment that Bremer Fisher resigned, effective immediately, from FutureHeights.

My husband and I moved to Cleveland Heights almost 16 years ago, so our experience living here has been very much impacted by the work of FutureHeights. We have supported it financially for many years.

During the more than 14 years that Bremer Fisher worked for FutureHeights, she accomplished many things, including:

• Publishing the Heights Observer community newspaper, which has become an trusted source of information and has received several Excellence in Journalism Awards from the Press Club of Cleveland.

• Providing leadership skills training to more than 80 residents, and funding for more than 50 neighborhood-based projects throughout our community.

• Hosting public forums on a number of important issues, including the Noble Road Corridor, the transition to a directly elected CH mayor.

• Mentoring neighborhood groups and providing fiscal agency services for several local nonprofits doing great work throughout our community.

• Creating a signature event for Cleveland Heights—Heights Music Hop—that showcases local musicians and our wonderful business districts.

• Creating the Future Homes program that rehabilitates vacant, abandoned homes in several distressed neighborhoods, including the area surrounding our newly renovated high school.

• Increasing the city’s focus on distressed neighborhoods, such as the Noble neighborhood and University Heights neighborhoods, and facilitating the first comprehensive planning process for the Noble Road Corridor in at least 20 years.

• Facilitating a civic engagement process and creating a development plan for the Cedar Lee Mini-Park, an underutilized and neglected city-owned site.

• Compiling oral histories of The Victorian and people submit.

I understand that, however well-intentioned, nonprofit governance can be messy and misdirected. The immediacy of the resignation and the brief boxed announcement in the May issue of the Heights Observer at least suggests that there are differences between Bremer Fisher and the FutureHeights Board of Directors.

Nevertheless, an article detailing her leadership and accomplishments, with a thank you and an explanation, would be appropriate and welcome.

Ruth Anna Carlson moved to Cleveland Heights’ Cedar Fairmount neighborhood in 2006. She is a retired lawyer.
There is a cost-effective plan to save Horseshoe Lake

Jeffrey Balazs

If there [were] a plan to save Horseshoe Lake that addressed stormwater issues, controlled flooding, cost less, and also saved the lake, why wouldn’t our public officials request that the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD) implement that plan?

The NEORSD’s plan for destroying Horseshoe Lake and turning it into wetlands is no longer the only option on the table. Now is the time to consider the alternate plan and pause before we irrevocably damage a part of Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights that we will regret for generations.

Friends of Horseshoe Lake (FOHSL), a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving Horseshoe Lake, retained a team of engineering and dam experts from TRC Companies, as well as land use experts, to explore alternatives and develop a financially viable plan to preserve the lake and manage floodwater.

The experts presented this plan to Cleveland Heights City Council on June 6. TRC’s team, led by engineer Shawn McGee, with decades of experience on dam projects, presented a solution that would safely manage stormwater, address environmental issues, and cost less, all while saving Horseshoe Lake.

The FOHSL plan is one where everyone comes out a winner. According to McGee, a new dam, constructed behind the historic dam, and a reconfigured spillway would meet the goals of NEORSD, and protect the historic and cultural significance of Horseshoe Lake.

“The alternative dam can minimize the flooding happening downstream . . . and we could reduce overall costs by about $1 million to $2 million,” McGee noted.

The expert testimony focused on the benefits of the plan: it’s safe, reduces flood risk, manages stormwater, and costs less.

During the council meeting, dozens of supporters filled the room and spilled over into the standing-room-only hallway. Many spoke in support of Horseshoe Lake and commented on benefits of saving Horseshoe Lake that go beyond fiscal and environmental responsibility.

Horseshoe Lake has always been a key part of Cleveland Heights, enjoyed by tens of thousands of residents for over a century.

One supporter said, “There’s nowhere else in Cleveland Heights where you can go, that I can think of, that you can go and have a beautiful view.”

This is what we are fighting for. I, for one, have witnessed the beauty and serenity it offers throughout the seasons, not to mention a spot to rest for migratory waterfowl.

The message to council was loud and clear from supporters: Save Horseshoe Lake.

In November 2021, council voted to destroy Horseshoe Lake because there was no clear alternative. Now there is another option on the table, and residents, supporters, and FOHSL are urging council to pause and consider it.

Penny Allen, FOHSL vice president and secretary, asked council, “If there is a plan that’s safe, controls stormwater, and costs less, but importantly saves Horseshoe Lake for its tremendous recreational, historical, wildlife, and design value, wouldn’t you consider it?”

Cleveland Heights deserves a place like Horseshoe Lake. Now that there is an alternate plan, council should consider it as a viable way to address the concerns raised by the Sewer District and save Horseshoe Lake. To learn more, visit https://savehorseshoelake.com.

Jeffrey Balazs is craftsman, graphic designer and collaborator. He’s spent the past 30 years in Cleveland Heights, exploring and marveling at the area’s natural beauty during hikes, bike rides and kayaking, and capturing it through illustration and photography.
Is there a chance for PEACE?

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

At the front door of the Coventry PEACE Campus (CPC) building, outsized, fanciful light fixtures hang from the 18-foot ceiling, hinting at creative doings inside. Since 2011 the former elementary school has housed an eclectic mix of nonprofit organizations, devoted to empowering Heights residents of all ages through arts, education and community development.

CPC is not only a place, but an umbrella organization for the resident groups. In addition to presenting special events, in recent years the nonprofit has managed the premises and the leasing of space. CPC pays $10,000 for utilities and $500 in rent each month to Heights Libraries, which purchased the building from the CH-UH Board of Education in 2018 for $1.

Tenants currently include ARTFUL, Building Bridges Arts Collaborative, Cleveland Heights Teachers Union/American Federation of Teachers Local 795, FutureHeights, Grace Communion Cleveland, Lake Erie Ink, Reaching Heights, Singers Club of Cleveland, and Studio Institute.

Unfortunately, the future of this vibrant community hub is not at all certain. In 2018, Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin told Patch.com, “Our goal is for the tenants to be independent...[W]e will be acting as a kind of incubator, supporting the tenants until they can take over ownership and management of the property themselves.” Four years later relationships are strained, ill will abounds, and the goal of independence seems distant.

The two parties give notably divergent accounts, but seem to agree on this much:

In October 2020, they negotiated a 15-month lease, with the option of a long-term extension, provided CPC could meet specific organizational and financial goals, and establish a reserve fund for future contingencies. Late last year, CPC presented documentation of its progress, but was told it did not meet the library’s minimum criteria.

The library board voted to decline the long-term option, and instead hire a management company to run the building and deal with the tenants. The board also approved a $15,000 “feasibility study” to determine rental rates. The library has since contracted with Cresco Playhouse Square for property management, and will raise rents to cover Cresco’s fees.

CPC tackled a daunting project during a pandemic, without dedicated staff, depending on in-kind labor and pro-bono professional consulting. Its member organizations are small nonprofits, running their own programs on shoestring budgets. The largest tenant, Ensemble Theatre, which had been donating bookkeeping and accounting services to CPC, departed in 2021 for South Euclid.

In comparison, the library might appear to have deep pockets and ample personnel, but Levin noted that she and other staff have put in “more [time] than on any other library project...during my 14 years in this position.” The library also fronted nearly $80,000 in HVAC repair costs.

As of mid-June, the tenants await letters of intent specifying their rent increases, to be followed by lease negotiations with Cresco. How many of them will be able to afford the higher rents remains to be seen.

Internal library e-mails reveal that demolition is not off the table.

The situation is painfully complicated and disappointing. We value both our well-managed, award-winning library system, and the creative synergy CPC brings to the Coventry neighborhood.

Levin has called her institution “a facilitator of democracy,” and we agree (Heights Observer, October 2018). CPC, as we have written (Heights Observer, July 2017) represents “the very kind of place-making that enhances quality of life and makes our community a more desirable place to live.”

If CPC tenants are dispersed, some perhaps to neighboring cities, Coventry and Cleveland Heights will be the poorer for it.

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are writers, editors and longtime CH residents. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Developer tasked with re-purposing Cleveland Heights’ Park Synagogue

Robert Brown

With the expansion of the Park Synagogue building in Pepper Pike well underway, the future of the historic 1947 “Park Main” property and its iconic sanctuary building in Cleveland Heights remains an open question. [The congregation announced a year ago that the Cleveland Heights landmark was for sale.]

Located in a heavily wooded site between Mayfield Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, east of Taylor Road, Park Synagogue in Cleveland Heights was designed by internationally renowned architect Eric Mendelsohn, and is considered one of the premier examples of modern religious architecture in the United States.

“We all felt a real responsibility to making the best solution for Park Main because of its architectural importance, because of Park’s history, and because of our commitment to Cleveland Heights and the good relationship we have with Cleveland Heights,” said Susan Ratner, president of the Park Synagogue congregation since 2019. “We didn’t want to become part of the urban exodus.”

In pursuit of its goals for preservation, Park has entrusted local developer Sustainable Community Associates (SCA) to work with the synagogue’s leadership and the local community on ideas to re-purpose the Cleveland Heights building, while enhancing and developing its 28-acre site. SCA, as the site’s master developer, will then implement the ideas that come from this process.

In a major boost to the preservation initiative, the state of Ohio recently announced that it will contribute $1 million from its capital budget to the restoration of Park Synagogue in Cleveland Heights. Additionally, the state has approved a major expansion of the historic tax credit program, which will benefit the restoration efforts.

While SCA proceeds with a master plan for the site, with new uses and new construction, it will simultaneously prepare for an historic tax credit application in March 2023.

“Time is really of the essence— with the historic tax credit expansion, it’s essentially as though 28 acres of new land is being added to the city,” noted SCA’s Naomi Sabel. “This unique circumstance requires full engagement of the city and the community in helping to define how Park fits into what CH aspires to be.”

“We hope the commitments made to date underscore, for the citizens of Cleveland Heights and the city government, the enormous opportunity for a cooperative initiative to re-use and redevelop the Park Synagogue property in a manner that reflects the best of Cleveland Heights values,” noted Rosen, “whether through economic development, aging-in-place housing, or nonprofit arts space.”

“We believe that working with the community to affirm and implement a shared vision through a master plan stands in marked contrast to the community’s recent experience at the Severance Center property,” Rosen added.

As SCA pursues discussions with elected officials and city staff in Cleveland Heights, the firm plans to continue engaging community members in developing a master plan focused on how best to repurpose the synagogue, reintegrate the campus into the broader Cleveland Heights community, and maintain much of the site’s green space.

To date, SCA has hosted numerous meetings and tours with neighboring residents and various civic groups regarding possibilities for the future of Mendelsohn’s building and its park campus. SCA anticipates making a presentation to Cleveland Heights City Council sometime this summer.

Robert Brown is a city planner with 45 years of experience; for nine years, he was Cleveland’s planning director. A resident of Cleveland Heights for more than 40 years, Brown is a FutureHeights board member.

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Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

MAY 16, 2022 - regular meeting

Present were Mayor Kahlil Seren and council members Melody Joy Hart (council president), Craig Coble (vice president), Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., Josie Moore, and Davide Russell. Also present were Amy Himmelein, clerk of council and finance director, and William Hanna, law director.

Public comments
Four residents expressed opposition to the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District’s (NEORSd) Horseshoe Lake Dam project. Another praised the public engagement plan.

Nine residents opposed the plan for the Wellington Means development on the former Carmack property at Fairmount Boulevard and Lee Road.

One resident complained about adolescents riding electric scooters at high speeds on sidewalks, and urged the city to remove the scooters.

Robin Van Lear, representing Coventry PEACE Inc., criticized Heights Libraries’ recent decisions about the PEACE campus.

Frank Greenland, NEORSd’s director of watershed programs, reported that a $1.5 million contract has been awarded to AECOM-Stimson for pre-design activities for the Horseshoe Lake Dam project. The next phase, development of a detailed design, is expected to happen between May 2023 and May 2024, with construction to start by the end of 2024.

Ordinances/charter amendments
Law Director Hanna explained that passage of Issue 10 created a conflict between the amended charter and the ordinance regarding the finance director serving as clerk of council. The resolution would resolve that conflict. Amy Himmelein, who will continue as finance director, would be relieved of clerk of council duties when the amendment is certified.

Tony Cuda outlined a potential ordinance or charter amendment to permit council to mandate: 1) that city employees and appointees to city boards or commissions respond to council requests for information without unreasonable delay or denial; and 2) that city employees attend, when requested, council and committee meetings. He provided examples of other cities with similar provisions. Both the mayor and council members expressed concern about excessive demands on staff time, an overly broad scope, and the fact that similar methods could provide council information it needs. Cuda will make revisions based on feedback.

Council actions
First reading, council approved resolutions:
• Expressing opposition to Ohio House Bill 616, which seeks to prohibit the teaching of divisive or racist concepts in Ohio’s public schools.
• Expressing council’s opposition to Ohio Senate Bill 123 and Ohio House Bills 480 and 598, which will ban all abortions in the state, at any time after conception, if Roe v. Wade is reversed. There will be no exceptions.
• Continuing Ohio House Bill 454, which prohibits affirming health care for Ohio transgender and non-binary youth, and sensible, and expressed skepticism of the alternative plan.

Public comments - agenda items
Nine residents spoke concerning Horseshoe Lake. Those wanting to save the lake urged pursuing an alternative plan, such as that proposed by Friends of Horseshoe Lake. Another noted that the contractor will have public engagement meetings. Another stated that the NEORSd plans were reasonable and sensible, and expressed skepticism of the alternative plan.

Other public comments
Four residents noted an increasing deer problem.

Horseshoe Lake presentation

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bore it, noting where its root system was and researching which plants would thrive in cooperation. Over time, they observed how and where to plant based on the position of the filtered sunlight. Now, myrtle, oakleaf hydrangea, ornamental ginger, hakonechloa and other plants encircle the space.

When the owners bought it, the North Park home’s massive backyard was filled with old, diseased trees and brush, and they spent several years clearing it. Inspired by the birch tree alley at Stan Hywet in Akron, they planted more than a dozen white river birch trees on each side of a lengthy stone walkway. In just four years, the trees have grown to form a canopied path that leads to a stone planter with a large mirror. Throughout the garden, they created intimate seating areas, with perennials and annuals displayed in pots and on walls.

Garden Walk Cleveland Heights is a free, self-guided tour that will take place from noon to 5 pm on Saturday, July 16, and Sunday, July 17.

A map of participating gardens is on this page, and can also be found online at gardendh.com.

Signs will be posted in front of this year’s participating home and public gardens. For more information, visit the Garden Walk Cleveland Heights website, or send an e-mail to info@GardenWalkClevelandHeights.com.

Judi Miles is a 26-year resident of Cleveland Heights who enjoys vegetable gardening. She is a little envious of gardeners who are able to create beautiful outdoor spaces.
COMMUNITY NEWS

Wizbang’s ‘social circus’ builds skills

Sarah Wolf

On May 21, Danielle and Jason Tilk of Cleveland Heights’ Wizbang Circus Theatre, a 2021 FutureHeights Mini-Grant recipient, brought their third Free Circus Day for kids and teens to Coventry PEACE Campus. There, 16 kids, ages 8-15, spent the day learning prop balancing, plate spinning, hula-hoop tricks, juggling, stilts walking, unicycling, and aerial arts, and enjoyed a healthy lunch provided by Tommy’s restaurant.

Wizbang’s Free Circus Day started in 2018, in the open space on Lee Road, bringing together a large group of neighborhood kids for the first time. An hour in, those who were once strangers were laughing together while juggling. At the end of the day, e-mails, numbers, and group selfies were shared. A bond was formed—all under the umbrella of what is known as “social circus.”

Social circus practitioners support students as creative change-makers through the collective development of self-esteem, solidarity, and trust. Circus activities are all-inclusive and non-competitive, and have been proven to increase memorization, concentration, self-esteem, social/emotional well-being, physical awareness, and focus. Juggling is scientifically proven to be helpful for those with ADHD, dyslexia and dyspraxia. Danielle Tilk currently teaches at Wizbang Circus Theatre on Lee Road, and provides afterschool programs for schools in the CH-UH and Cleveland Metropolitan school districts.

She has also created programs for Ruffing Montessori and Lawrence schools, and the Jewish Family Service Association, where she developed activities for adults with cognitive impairments, mental illness, and autism spectrum disorders.

For more information about Wizbang’s programs and performances, visit www.wizbangtheater.com.

Sarah Wolf, the community-building programs manager at FutureHeights, compiled this article based on information provided by Danielle Tilk.

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14591 Superior Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH
Advance $25 | Day of Show $30
INFO/TICKETS: groundworksdance.org/summer2022
or take a photo of the code with your smartphone

A scene from Wizbang Circus Theatre’s Free Circus Day at Coventry PEACE Campus.
Seminar to cover assassination, songs, and a French film controversy; the falafel’s optional

Bruce Hennes

On Thursday, July 14, 2–5 p.m., the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association is sponsoring a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminar that begins inside the Garfield Memorial at Lakeview Cemetery. The seminar is open to the public.

After a quick tour of the memorial, presidential historian James Robenalt will discuss the life of the 27th U.S. president, who was assassinated in 1881, and former U.S. Senator Robert Hammond will talk about presidential assassinations.

Next up is a performance of songs from Stephen Sondheim’s Tony Award-winning musical “Assassins.” From there, the seminar moves to Coventry High School Theatre, where Andrew Geronimo, Case Western Reserve University Law School professor will cover the 1990 arrest of theater manager Nico Jacobellis which led to Jacobellis v. Ohio, the famous court decision that held that the French movie “The Lovers” was not obscene.

Seminar attendees will also hear from Kara Hamley O’Donnell, principal planner for the city of Shaker Heights, who did her master's thesis on the history of Coventry Village, and from the creator of the Coventry Village Special Improvement Tax District—the second such district in the state of Ohio. The seminar will be capped off by an optional dinner at Tommy’s.

The seminar is free to the public. There is a fee for attorneys requesting CLE credits. For a fuller description of the event, and registration information, visit https://tinyurl.com/CuyahogaCLE2022.

Bruce Hennes is a 4-year resident of Cleveland Heights and past president of Coventry Neighbors. He is on the board of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, and created the Coventry SID.

Green Team plans July reusable-bag drive

After a series of delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuyahoga County’s ban on single-use plastic bags went into effect on Jan. 16, 2022. Some large chain stores, such as Giant Eagle and CVS, have already eliminated plastic bags.

“The county is actively working with stores to help them transition from using single-use plastic bags to the checkout ahead of any enforcement action,” explained Sheryl Harris, director of the county’s Department of Consumer Affairs.

“Retailers are not facing fines yet, but are being actively encouraged and supported by the county to switch to paper bags and reusable bags before enforcement begins,” she added.

The Cleveland Heights Green Team (CHGT) recognizes that not all people have equal access to adequate reusable bags, and that businesses of different sizes have different levels of ability to respond to the ban.

“In the case of the plastic ban, what we ultimately want is for our residents to embrace the idea of changing shopping habits for all its positive outcomes, and to remember to bring them on their shopping outings,” explained Gavin Andersen, a CHGT member. “For some shoppers and business owners, the transition from single-use plastic bags can be regarded more as a burden,” Andersen noted, “over budgeting, trying to account for all the positive effects on the environment, and long-term health benefits. Retailers who want to offer disposable paper bags, but aren’t willing or able to eat the cost, can charge per bag, or sell reusable bags of their own. These fees can have an unfair impact on disadvantaged groups. To lessen the impact, in particular on the working class, governments should make free-of-charge options available and accessible, for example by stocking them at grocery stores and other high-traffic places, mailing them to residents, giving them away at events, and so on.”

Taking a step toward such goals, CHGT, in partnership with Heights Libraries and the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, will collect reusable shopping bags July 1-30. Heights residents are invited to drop off reusable bags at the Nature Center, and at all four branches of Heights Libraries—Coventry Village, Lee Road, Noble Neighborhood, and University Heights.

The donated bags should be clean and in good condition. Once sorted and laundered, the bags will be made available to residents in early fall.

According to Andersen, “Most people already have extra reusable shopping bags lying around in our car trunks, pantries, and garages. In the absence of a large-scale government program to distribute reusable bags, or sufficient unilateral effort by private businesses to provide them, this is a way of meeting that need on our own.”

Catalina Wagers lives in Cleveland Heights’ Fairfax neighborhood, and is a co-founder of the Cleveland Heights Green Team.

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Early voting starts July 6. Election: August 2

"When you see a good fight, GET IN IT!"
Self-portraits go beyond skin tone

This spring, elementary students across the CH-UH district had an opportunity to paint self-portraits under the guidance of professional artist Debbie Apple-Presser, in a project titled “Together We Rise.” The project, funded by local arts funding organization RoxArts, was designed to show how students, despite all that they have been through over the past two years, have come out even stronger.

The children couldn’t use any of the colors traditionally associated with skin tone; there was no brown, tan, black or white paint available to them. Instead, they used red, blue, green and purple to express their inner selves—their feelings and identities that go far beyond race or skin tone.

“It was really an SEL project,” said RoxArts board member Andrea C. Turner, referring to the social-emotional learning that is common in district schools.

The project complemented the color-coded Zones of Regulation adopted by Boulevard Elementary School to help students regulate their emotions.

Apple-Presser, a mother of Heights alumni, used a pre-recorded video to lay out the project with every class, in kindergarten through grade five, in all seven of the district’s elementary schools.

Students discussed with their teachers and classmates what emotions or characteristics different colors could represent, then moved to their art classes to create the actual portraits.

“The portraits are so revealing,” said Apple-Presser. “They’re very telling about who each child is.”

Continued on page 12

Read the full story at judsonsmartliving.org/blog

Completely engaged. That’s how Joe Coyle feels about his life at Judson Manor.

“Expanding my curiosity about life is what it’s all about.”

An award-winning journalist who has lived in Paris, Santa Fe, and New York City, he arrived in July 2020 via the suggestion of a fellow resident. He’s been delighted ever since.

“As a writer, I enjoy spending time alone, and these surroundings are perfect: my apartment is quiet, and the views overlooking the Cleveland Museum of Art are lovely. But by far the best part of Judson is the people. Everyone is so knowledgeable about art and culture. I wanted to have stimulating company to spend my time with, and I’ve found that here. These are wonderful, interesting people,” says Joe.

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Judson Park Cleveland Heights | Judson Manor University Circle | South Franklin Circle Chagrin Falls
Heights Observer July 1, 2022

Boyd Bey and Gentry are 2022 Ron Register Scholars

In conceiving the scholarship, the Black Caucasus of Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian, immediately reached out to the broader church and surrounding community. The scholarship committee was, and remains, multi-racial, comprising members of both the community and the church, which administers the program.

Those interested in learning more about, or wishing to contribute to, the Ron Register Scholarship can contact Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian (wesley@fhpres.org). A transplanted former New York resident, Quentin Smith is a member of Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian, and the Ron Register Scholarship Committee.

Cleveland Heights – University Heights Board of Education Meeting highlights

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Board members present were President Gabe Hawthorne, Patti Carlyle, Dana Flaxler, Annette Ivanovits, Tyler McGlue, and Vika Turakhia. Vice President Mas Gierke was not present.

Public comments

Cuyahoga PEACE Campus (CPC) Board President Krista Hawthorne presented a written statement to the board opposing the library’s entering into a contract with Cleveland Real Estate/Playhouse Square Management as property manager of 2843 Washington Blvd. According to Hawthorne’s written statement, “the signing of a contract with Cleveland Playhouse Square will have a negative effect on the Coventry PEACE Campus, and we are asking that, instead, you grant the long-term lease we all agreed to in October of 2020, or sell us the building. We urge you to come back to the negotiating table with Coventry PEACE so that both our organizations can get back to what we each do best.” Hawthorne noted the library’s repeated refusals to meet with CPC in a meaningful way, and stated that CPC had met the criteria stated in the governing document to allow conversion to a long-term lease. Nine additional community members and CPC tenant-artists also spoke (in two-minute time allocations) in opposition to the board’s property management agreement. Among the concerns shared was the fear that the property might be converted into condos, the ways in which the community and children, in particular, would be negatively affected by a lack of art services and events, the economic contributions of CPC to area businesses; and a lack of opportunity for meaningful discussion on this issue. Speakers also stated appreciation for library services to the community.

Board resolutions

The board unanimously approved a contract with Cleveland Real Estate/Playhouse Square Management to be the exclusive managing and listing agent for the building at 2843 Washington Blvd. The board authorized the fiscal officer to pay CRESCO the initial startup fee of $2,750, as well as the property management fee of $2,750 per month for the one-year term, for a total amount for property management services not to exceed $36,000. Each board member present gave a statement about his/her rationale for voting to approve the contract. All stated that tearing down the CPC building and converting to condos is against their fiduciary trustee responsibility to the library, the issues in selling property between a public agency and a private group, the repairs that are still needed to the building that have not been paid by CPC, the fact that CPC had not shown financial viability nor the ability to achieve independent economic sustainability for the long term, as well as other concerns. Board members stated they had independently read and reviewed every document and email, and came to this decision on their own. Board members also stated that they wanted CPC to succeed.

The board approved a resolution that stated, “Cleveland Heights - University Heights Board of Library Trustees stands in solidarity with the Cleveland Heights - University Heights Board of Education and strongly opposes Ohio House Bill 616. The resolution further stated, ‘The Library is concerned that HB 616 seeks to limit candid conversations about race and gender identity in our schools, spaces in which all children should feel safe and welcome.’” The board approved the purchase of Make-It-Flex Tables for HKIC and dinner wares for meeting rooms at Lee Road library, construction of additional study rooms at the Lee Road library, landscaping at the University Heights library, and a contract with Buckwheat Design Partnership to provide professional design services as the architect of record for the Noble library renovation and addition.

The board approved a contract with the Hedge Group to prepare plans for a redesign of the Coventry PEACE Park and playground construction.

The board changed masking requirements, making masks voluntary for staff. Consumption of food and beverages will be allowed as of May 19, until such time as masking may be reinstated for customers.

Personnel report

As of the end of April, 249 new applications had been received for 10 jobs advertised. Nearly all applicants were from Ohio. Tyler McGlue asked that further geographic breakdown data be provided for Ohio.

Public service report

Kim DeNeo-Ackroyd shared the 2021 strategic plan annual report, which lists library activities and progress toward each of the following goals: 1) foster diversity, equity, and inclusion, 2) promote safety and security for the community, 3) facilitate communication and be a bridge builder for community concerns, and 4) be a bedrock for community workforce development.

LWV Observer: Elizabeth M. Tracy

Information about the board, meeting minutes and audio recordings of board meetings can be found at https://heightslibrary.org/locations/heights-libraries-board.
Made Cleveland opens on Coventry

Jessica Schantz

Made Cleveland, the new “marketplace of independent creators” in Coventry Village, opened its doors on June 3. It hosts the work of approximately 120 vendors, mostly from Northeast Ohio, whose wares include perishable and non-perishable food items, apparel, beauty products, refillable cleaning products, home goods, furniture, art and jewelry.

Owner Ash O’Connor describes her path to opening Made Cleveland as part determination and part good luck and timing.

After moving to Northeast Ohio from Philadelphia in 2017, to take a job as a hotel food and beverage director, O’Connor decided to stay in Cleveland when it turned out the job was not a good fit. Two years later, with a partner and a newborn, she hadn’t yet made her next professional move.

That holiday season she had hoped to shop online for locally made goods, but couldn’t find a central directory. That sparked the idea for Made Cleveland’s original iteration: a hyper-local, online vendor space and makers community.

O’Connor planned to launch MadeCleveland.com in September 2020; when the pandemic hit in March 2020, she expedited the process, and launched in May of that year.

In December 2020, and again in December 2021, O’Connor tested out brick-and-mortar spaces on Coventry Road, hosting two pop-up holiday markets.

Given the markets’ success, and availability of a large retail space (previously occupied by City Buddha), O’Connor approached the city about a long-term lease, with the help of Malory Kent, the Coventry Village Special Improvement District director.

The store is designed to complement the website, and O’Connor’s goal is to offer one-stop-shopping convenience while providing “experiences,” such as DIY classes taught by vendors, coupled with tastings from the pantry. She hopes to offer curbside pickup soon, and possibly home delivery in the future.

Larchmere Fireworks—a glass-blowing and blacksmithing retailer and studio that collaborated with O’Connor on one of the pop-up markets—has a permanent space at Made Cleveland, where patrons can watch
David Budin

Antoine Dunn is a star. His singles and albums have charmed high on Billboard. His songs, including “Can’t Forget” and “Miss My Love,” can be heard on SiriusXM, BET and MTV. The singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, producer and record-label owner also happens to have grown up here. He went all through the CH-UH school system—Gearing, Wiley and Heights High—graduating in 2006.

Dunn, who now lives in Los Angeles, has toured nationally with other top R&B artists. He’ll be performing in Cleveland, at the House of Blues, on Sunday, Sept. 4, 7 p.m.

Dunn grew up on Revere Road. “We would walk to Cain Park,” he remembered, “and ride our bikes there, go sledging there.” His father still lives in Cleveland Heights, but his mother died in 2011, “just before my music career took off,” Dunn said. “She was a big supporter.”

Dunn credits a few people from his high school experience with contributing to his success. One is Glenn Brackens, his music teacher at Wiley. “There were so many people from his program who went on to do great things,” Dunn said. “He really conditioned us for [Heights High] A Cappella Choir. We were doing college-level pieces in middle school. I still keep in contact with him.

At Heights High, Dunn was a member of the Choir, the Heights Singers and the Gospel Choir; the first two were directed by Craig McGaughey. “[McGaughey] really developed some good talent,” Dunn said. “He didn’t treat us like kids. That was the through-line from Glenn Brackens. We were already used to that level of criticism, if you will.”

Dunn also wrestled, coached by Larry Hoon. “Coach Hoon really believed in me,” Dunn said. “The discipline I learned in wrestling is something I take to every area of my life, and I attribute my success to that. Wrestling builds a certain amount of mental toughness and rigidity that team sports don’t really help you with because you’re depending on all these other people. Wrestling changed my life.”

He also is grateful for his guidance counselor. “My grades started slipping depending on all these other people. They’ve met several times since then—though he has yet to tell Wonder the Nighttown story.

Dunn used to play his songs in his CH basement, and pretend he was a disc jockey announcing the record. “It never really occurred to me,” he said, “that one day I’d actually hear my song played after a Beyoncé song; or that I’d be blessed to tour with him, twice. It’s incredible to me. It’s just crazy.”

Dunn recalled. “[Pianist] Jackie Warren was playing and she came over and said, ‘I know you’re a songwriter. This could be a great opportunity for you.’ Would you like to come up and play a song while Stevie’s here? So, I played a song I wrote and Stevie loved it. He and his band called me over to their table. Stevie told me, ‘Man, you really got it. Whatever you’re doing, don’t stop, cause it’s working for you.’

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Dunn used to play his songs in his CH basement, and pretend he was a disc jockey announcing the record. “It never really occurred to me,” he said, “that one day I’d actually hear my song played after a Beyoncé song; or that I’d get to meet one of my idols, D’Angelo, and he would know me by my first name. And that I’d be blessed to tour with him, twice. It’s incredible to me. It’s just crazy.”

David Budin is a freelance writer for national and local publications, an author, and a professional musician and comedian.
I was talking with Susanna Niermann O’Neil before her May 2 retirement from the city of Cleveland Heights, where she had served for 45 years, most recently as city manager. We talked about some of the hidden gems in Cleveland Heights.

I mentioned that when I was involved with the Friends of Cain Park, we used to sell raffle tickets before most Cain Park concerts. When I did that, I talked to as many people as I could about the park. I was always surprised by how many of them—people who had come to hear Lyle Lovett or Sheryl Crowe or Arlo Guthrie, for instance—had never heard of Cain Park before, even though it’s been here since the 1930s and has presented concerts and musicals almost the entire time.

Even some people who had lived in Cleveland Heights for their whole lives said they’d never heard of it. I belong to a Facebook group that focuses on Cleveland-area architectural history. Recently, someone posted an old picture of Cumberland Pool (which looked almost exactly like current Cumberland Pool). Many responded that they’d never heard of it. That’s a little more understandable, since it’s only open to Cleveland Heights residents. Several people said that when they were younger, they only knew of Coventry Village, and they thought that was Cleveland Heights.

The Cedar Fairmount shopping district, which I live near now, was built a few years before Cleveland Heights even was a city. Coventry came along a few years after that. The Coventry library is another hidden gem, even though it’s not exactly hidden. I mean, everyone sees it, but I’m guessing not many from outside the city ever go inside.

I practically grew up in that library. It was built in 1926. I started going there, probably as a baby, with my mother, who later worked there when I was attending Coventry School across the street. I’m always amazed when I step inside the library that it not only looks pretty much like it did when I was a kid, but, also, that it still smells the same. You could blindfold me and take me there and I would know where I was.

If not many outsiders know about Cumberland Pool, even fewer seem to be aware of Cumberland Park. I was recently in London and while there, at every historical site, my mind went back to Cumberland Park, where I would skip school in the autumn and spring of eighth and ninth grades, hiding out in a clump of trees and bushes (which is still there) and read about British history.

Cumberland Park is the home of the Cleveland Heights Veterans Memorial. At its opening in 1943, the program stated it was "dedicated to the sacred valor of those who gave their lives to perpetuate freedom and justice and to all whose bravery and sacrifice have glorified the armed might of America and her Allies.” Several years ago, the Memorial was expanded to honor CH veterans who served in the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars.

When I was a kid, the memorial had my name on it. Spoiler alert: I didn’t die in WWII; my father’s brother, David A. Budin, was a U.S. Army veteran. I don’t know why my name disappeared. Neither did Susanna when I talked to her. Maybe someone figured out that Uncle Dave died after the war.

I’ve written before about the benches all over Cleveland Heights. I only discovered them three summers ago, when I started walking for the first time in decades. On one of my walks, I ran into former City Manager Bob Downey and mentioned the benches. He told me that it was

Continued on page 19
Heights Arts brings the music

Tom Masaveg

Heights Arts is emerging from two years of disrupted music programming with a new mix of offerings at community sites and in its gallery at 2175 Lee Road. Heights Arts musical events transform front yards into concert venues, and blend music with poetry in the new offering, ARThar.

When the pandemic made live music unavailable, listening trends changed. Before the pandemic, the classical genre wasn’t among the most popular music played by young people. But during the isolation of COVID-19, playlists for working, studying and relaxing that included classical music spiked more than any other genre, including among young audiences.

In 2022, Heights Arts is putting extra effort into staging live performances for classical audiences and performances of new genres that speak to more types of listeners. With ARThar, Heights Arts brings intimate musical and cross-disciplinary events to its gallery space in a comfortable cafe setting where attendees can sit down and enjoy a drink while listening.

Meanwhile, Random Acts of Art Live transports music to shared outdoor spaces, serving new audiences and spreading music throughout neighborhoods. These concerts offer a safe way for neighbors and friends to gather and celebrate with song and dance.

Free gallery concerts at Heights Arts increasingly go beyond the classical genre. On July 23, at 7 p.m., The Katy, an indie trio fronted by songwriter, vocalist and bassist Cathalyn, and featuring Cleveland natives Ashanti Allison (drums) and Eli Hanley (keyboards), will take the stage at the Lee Road gallery. The Katy’s music is ever-evolving, an earnest, genuine blend of influences strained and sifted through the trials of life and rooted in trust and love. Its energetic melodies, pulsing, driven tempos, and purposeful lyrics address inequality, relationships, adoration and struggle.

For more information on Heights Arts’ community programs and events, including house concerts and gallery performances, visit www.heightsarts.org.

Tom Masaveg is a public artist specializing in augmented reality installation and graphite works on paper, and is the programs manager at Heights Arts. Contact him at programs@heightsarts.org.

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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
COS theater returns with ‘Little Mermaid’

Following two seasons of darkness and shuttered curtains, Communion of Saints School’s (COS) drama program returned to the stage in May, when 49 children in grades K–8 sang and danced in Disney’s “The Little Mermaid, JR.”

Sea animals, seagulls, merpeople and royals all took to the spotlight. Bright costumes flashed before painted sets. The student stage crew behind the scenes helped ensure that everything ran smoothly. After months of rehearsing, the show went off without a hitch.

The production was directed by Kelly Monaghan, with support from drama coordinators Carlita Skok, Beth Sluzewski, and Jeanne Gordon, and numerous volunteers.

“Communion of Saints drama program is a family affair,” said Sluzewski, a parent and volunteer. Parents, grandparents, alumni, and parishioners came together to design and build sets and sew costumes. The result transported theater-goers from the school gym to King Triton’s court.

The drama program builds on the arts foundation established by Fr. John Mary Powers, founder of St. Ann’s School and Parish (now COS). Powers, an avid theater and music fan, formed the parish theater troupe, The Power Players, more than 50 years ago. For decades, students have learned and honed their skills on the Power Players stage.

Eileen Ryan Ewen

Eileen Ryan Ewen is a children’s book illustrator and volunteer librarian at Communion of Saints School. Her children attend COS School.
Cain Park raffles off Heights prizes and OSU football tickets

Lisa Monzari

Friends of Cain Park, supporting Cain Park for more than three decades, is back this summer selling memberships and raffle tickets to support this regional treasure. Raffle tickets can be purchased online at friendsincainpark.org/raffle, and at the Cain Park Arts Festival, July 8-10. [Admission to the Arts Festival is free on all three days.]

Each raffle ticket costs $5; $20 purchases five. Six baskets, each valued $200 to $500, features items from Cleveland Heights businesses, as well as Guardians tickets. Participating businesses include The Wine Spot, Zhug, Dewey’s Pizza, MOJO world eats & drink, Boss Dog Brewing Company, Phoenix Coffee, Rising Star Coffee, and Larchmere Fireworks. In addition, Ohio State football fans have the chance to win two tickets on the 30-yard line for the Rutgers game on Oct. 1, in Columbus. The lucky winner will also win a $250 Visa gift card, for a prize package worth $250. All raffle winners will be drawn on Sunday, July 10, at the close of Arts Fest.

If you are a local Heights business interested in donating to, or otherwise supporting Friends of Cain Park, send an e-mail to womanzari@ameritech.net.

Lisa Monzari is a 16-year resident of Cleveland Heights, and a member of Friends of Cain Park.
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