Police academy scholarships are new focus of West memorial fund

Jay Henderson

The Officer Jason D. West Memorial Fund (OJWMF) has a new focus: The nonprofit organization will provide tuition reimbursement scholarships to selected graduates of the Martin G. Lentz Cleveland Heights Police Academy.

The academy was closed for two years during the pandemic, and will reopen in 2023. Citizens 21 years of age and older can apply for the academy’s January or July six-month session.

Tuition for the academy is $5,000. The OJWMF will select a limited number of academy graduates to receive a partial tuition reimbursement after each of the 2023 sessions.

“We are so happy that the academy is reopening,” said Lita Gonzalez, OJWMF board president. “Providing these scholarships is aligned with our goals to encourage young men and women to enter the field of law enforcement, and to strengthen the relationship between young people and the police.”

The organization originally continued on page 3

JCU proposes new South Gateway

Mike Cook

On Dec. 1, at a meeting of the University Heights Planning Commission, John Carroll University (JCU) outlined preliminary plans to redevelop its South Gateway at Fairmount Circle.

Once complete, the project will comprise new retail and commercial development that will include current businesses as well as new ones, plus student housing, and additional parking.

Phase 1 is a new parking garage.

JCU’s plans call for construction of a new parking garage, and two new mixed-use buildings.

It will provide parking for this new, mixed-use development, and replace parking that will be lost with the construction of a new fieldhouse, planned for South Belvoir Boulevard.

Phase 2 is the redevelopment of the northern side of the gateway, currently occupied by BP, Mr. Tire, and a commuter parking lot. This mixed-use development plan calls for retail/commercial on the first level, with student apartments on levels 2 through 5. Living continued on page 7

Record Revolution, rock haven, has closed

Lee Batdorff

“You get to pick the music [to play in the store]. You don’t get a lunch break,” said 40-year-old Rob Love, reflecting on his 35 years at Record Revolution, at 182 Coventry Road. The 57-year-old rock-and-roll institution is closing on Dec. 31.

Founded by Peter Schliewen, the store blossomed in 1967 along with the new hippie shops in a neighborhood with a new name, “Coventry Village.”

Coventry had been a rundown, half-century-old neighborhood whose immigrant population was leaving many storefronts empty; they were dying, or moving further east into the suburbs. Coventry Village became the Cleveland area’s first old neighborhood to undergo almost full youthful revitalization brought on by the baby boomer generation.

John Gorman, WMMS radio executive in the 1970s and ’80s, wrote

Record Revolution, at 1832 Coventry Road.

Insatiable curiosity 

It’s 2023, and some might be wondering, where are all the robots promised by our favorite sci-fi films and novels? While artificial intelligence (AI) exists, it often runs behind the scenes. It is rare to see the social robots we once imagined would be integrated into our everyday lives.

In December, Heights Libraries welcomed its first social robot to the library family. Misty, as she is called, is equipped with a unique set of physical and social skills, designed, according to producer Misty Robotics, for the purpose of “opening access to social robots and taking down today’s barriers.”

“Machine learning and robots are going to continue to be integrated into society,” said Technology Trainer Nia Turner. “As a social robot, Misty is a great ambassador to help people get acquainted with these ideas in a way that doesn’t feel intimidating.”

Misty has digital eyes that blink and transform to reflect a wide range of facial expressions. She is equipped with a camera and microphone, allowing her to recognize and respond to individual faces and sounds. She can also turn her head, move her arms up and down, and roll around on a track-based system.

“Misty is a very cool social robot that can be programmed to do a ton of things!” said Turner. “I’m in the process of learning more about her and coding her using both Blockly and Python before I unveil her to the library community.”

Continued on page 9
Thank you Zagara's
To the Editor:
It was good to read Dean Seick’s description and praise of Zagara’s Marketplace (Heights Observer, December 2022). I have a similar account.

Several years ago, I asked John Zagara if he would consider filling some of the “bare walls” in his marketplace with original art created by my art students. I stated that I taught art to senior citizens at Tri-C and the Cleveland Heights Public Library. I must have conveyed appropriate enthusiasm for this beautiful art, because John Zagara accepted! He told me, because of insurance requirements, he and his staff would hang the art.

Soon, the Zagara Marketplace aisles and shelves displayed glorious, colorful art created by more than 20 artists—more than 100 pieces altogether.

When we first walked through Zagara’s Marketplace to see the art my seniors had sold. Their creations were finally getting great exposure! (I am sure they never saw their art beyond their personal environment.

To add to this great tribute, the Sun newspapers took photographs and published a full-color, half-page article describing the exhibition. Before the grand exhibition was over, we had a party for the artists and their families. Floral centerpieces, food and punch were actually provided by John Zagara.

A close friend who came to the party remarked about the laughter and noisy conversation, and commented, “All that noise without a drop of alcohol!”

John Zagara brought joy! Often!

Kate Uhlir
University Heights

Moore resigns from CH City Council
Josie Moore

At the Dec. 16 Cleveland Heights City Council meeting, I submitted my resignation from council.

I’ve done a lot of reflection on how this year developed—how our new council started, and where we are now. I recall beginning the year excited to collaborate with my new colleagues to make our community stronger, to work on issues that are meaningful to me, to find and learn all that I can in the process.

And while I did learn a lot this year, I did not learn what I had hoped to learn. Among other lessons, I learned that, or, rather, I finally came to accept— that I do not have the thick skin I thought I had. I care too much, I lead from my heart, and this is not an easy way to be in the world. If I could snap my fingers and be different, be tougher, in a heartbeat I would. But I need to accept this as a part of who I am.

As a council member, I tried to do what I thought was good and helpful. I don’t claim to be perfect or to have done everything in the best possible way, but my intentions were always true. I tried to learn, to share, to collaborate, and to figure out how I can be an effective elected representative. But much of the time I felt like I was in the dark, the ground continually shifting under my feet, the goalposts always moving, while my intentions and actions were repeatedly and unknowingly mischaracterized.

The stress of this has had a negative impact on my mental health, and this has been increasingly affecting my physical health as well. Most importantly, I have been unable to prevent this stress from reverberating into every part of my life and affecting every role I perform.

Ultimately, I’ve come to believe that, despite my hopes otherwise, my presence in this city will not have any substantive impact on what happens in our city. Whether I’m there or not, what the city does will be the same. But the outcome for me and for my life will be very different depending on whether I continue or I retreat.

I am saddened that I’m letting people down. However, I must prioritize my well-being and my ability to be fully present with my family.

Josie Moore is a Cleveland Heights resident, mother, and wife.

Reinvest in CH Community Center
Barb Rosenbaum

A plan to permanently give up on the south rink at the Cleveland Heights Community Center recently brought the residents to speak out at a city council meeting. I was among them.

Not every child wants to play hockey or figure skate, and the Cleveland Heights Speedskating program offers a fun, wholesome and exciting alternative. Our current members represent nine cities and seven schools. One of our skaters is now a member of the elite U.S. World Cup team.

Pre-pandemic, we had up to six hours a week of practice ice. With the south rink closed, that’s down to 2.5 hours.

Apollo Ohno skated here twice in his journey to winning eight Olympic gold medals. In late November, we hosted the Junior World Championship of Speedskating, with 80 skaters from around the country for a national-qualifier skating meet. The meet used to be held over two days, and could accommodate far more skaters, but it was truncated to one single day by the shortage of available ice time.

I talked with a coach from another city who had skated at the highest level here with Ohno, and he asked why he still comes to our meets. He said, “... the atmosphere of Cleveland Heights, I love coming here. What’s happened here?...”

The hustle and bustle of families of all races and socio-economic status scurrying to get on the ice is missing. There is no longer a vibrant community atmosphere. Classroom spaces and programs like Safety Town have gone dark, and much of the building is empty at times when it used to be packed with families. It makes me sad.

Programs like speedskating, hockey and learn-to-skate bring families through the doors. The meets and tournaments bring visitors to our business districts.

But after years of neglect, the community center can’t effectively support those activities anymore. [This] threatens the existence of programs for which Cleveland Heights has long been admired, and it fails to meet the city’s promise to residents.

The demand for ice programming exists and is growing. If City Hall has the will to revitalize our community center, there are creative ways to finance the cost of rink repairs and upkeep. I’ve been to a lot of rinks across the country and see it. I know we can do this if we work together.

I ask the mayor and city council not to give up on the long-term vision of what a vibrant community center means to our city and its residents, and to develop a plan for reinvestment.

Barb Rosenbaum has lived in Cleveland Heights for more than 30 years, and has run the speedskating program for 15 years.

About the Observer
The Heights Observer is not a conventional newspaper; it is a nonprofit publication for residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

The Heights Observer has no writing staff; it is written by you—the readers. If individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. Anyone in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even just once.

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

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

• To make a submission of any kind, go to www.heightsobserver.org and click on “Member Center” at the left.

• For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on “Become an Observer” at the left. For questions that aren’t answered there, call the Heights heights at 216-397-4243 or send an email to info@futureheights.org.

• Articles to be considered for the February issue must be submitted by Jan. 9. We publish some articles online only. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.
Cleveland Heights council president reports on transition and collaboration

Melody Joy Hart

In 2019, 60% voted for having an elected-mayor government in Cleveland Heights. The people then elected Khalil Seren as mayor, by about a 60% vote, to implement the new government in 2022. As president of council, I had a vision of a council that works together harmoniously to enact a common vision. Since we were transitioning to an elected-mayor form of government, part of that vision and our responsibility is to make that transition go smoothly.

The future of our city depends on it.

Day-to-day operations of council have gone well. City business is enacted, and some groundbreaking legislation passed. Economic development projects are also moving ahead. In-fill housing is being built in multiple neighborhoods.

There have been some bumps in the transition, but that is to be expected when you are undergoing a big change.

Communication between the two branches of government needed to be sorted out so that staff were not overburdened by council requests, but council members received information necessary to do their jobs. After some initial bumps, the administration provided e-mail access to directors of departments and [authorized] them to attend committee meetings when warranted by the agenda.

Council wanted additional access and spent [its] time working on a charter amendment to put on the ballot. It attempted to provide unfettered access to staff. In its drafting, the administration was not consulted to collaborate to ensure that access would not disrupt the workflow required to run the city and its services. Even had it succeeded, a process would have been needed.

The charter already gives council members the ability to inquire (Art. III, Section 6), while pointing out that the mayor is in charge of the administration, and council can give no instructions to a city staff member. This is a common-sense rule. These are the charter changes for which the residents voted—the mayor runs the city.

To address the process issue, the council vice president [Craig Cobb] and I worked with the mayor to create a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), establishing a process for council to get access to information and [department] directors without disrupting city services. The charter contains no process, it just provides the right of inquiry.

Council leadership, during several meetings, asked council members what they would like in the agreement. The MOU was completed, and was announced in September.

The MOU has a process. There is a dedicated e-mail address for all council members to contact the city staff with an inquiry. A response is required within seven days, which was not in the charter amendment. If the response is negative for any reason, the issue is discussed between council leadership and the mayor, and a resolution is reached. Additionally, the mayor can be contacted by council members via phone or text.

The MOU also included the budgetary process that will be followed. The mayor’s budget was received by council in mid-November, and hearings will be held individually with all the department heads regarding their budget requests. This is a much more rigorous process than ever conducted by council in the past.

The communication issue has been dealt with by working together collaboratively with the administration, rather than one party trying to force its will on the other. Each branch of our city government has a role, and both need to be successful for our city to continue to be a vibrant thriving community. Council and the mayor are a governing team. Working collaboratively going forward will benefit our city.

Melody Joy Hart is the Cleveland Heights City Council president. She has 35 years of experience in finance as an executive.

Despite Misty’s small stature—she stands only 14 inches tall and 8 inches wide—she contains an impressive array of features. Along with possessing facial and object recognition abilities, she can be programmed to hold conversations in more than 50 languages through a text-to-speech system, and perform speech recognition and natural language understanding in English in real time. This means that she can learn to make meaning of the words she hears, and convert commands into actions.

“The most interesting thing about her is that she has a personality,” said Turner. “Sometimes, when I hear about AI, it feels very abstract. I’m hoping that by seeing Misty in action and being able to code her, AI will seem less like science fiction, and more like a tool you can interact with every day.”

Misty currently lives in the Library’s HKIC STEAM Lab, and represents the department’s initiative to invite library users to engage with innovative technologies, such as Meta Quest VR Headsets, Sphero robots, MakerBot Sketch 3D Printers, and more.

“Misty presents a powerful opportunity to teach the community about coding, computer science, and AI,” said Turner. “We would also love to have her come along to programs, community events, and school visits to promote literacy in

RBOC continued from page 1

 Heights Observer January 1, 2023

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Heights Observer January 1, 2023

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www.heightsobserver.org
A lead-safety ordinance is good, actually

Moshe Koval

I am writing in response to Alan Rapoport’s opinion [in the December Heights Observer] regarding the lead-safety ordinance that was recently enacted in Cleveland Heights. In it, Rapoport stated, “Children are not busily eating lead paint.” As someone who works with children on the autism spectrum, I am sorry to report that this is not always the case.

Many of my clients are diagnosed with pica, a disorder in which people eat objects such as clay, dirt, paper, and yes, even paint. Even neurotypical toddlers are known to put pretty much anything in their mouths, not hesitating to determine whether it is lead-based paint.

And children are not the only ones who might end up ingesting lead paint, as I’m sure pet owners are well aware.

The lead-safety ordinance is a measure that was enacted to ensure the safety of Cleveland Heights residents. While landlords may be paying for the inspections, surely it is a small price to pay for the safety of their tenants.

Landlords are accustomed to maintenance fees. That is part of owning and renting units and comes with the privilege of receiving a passive income. If landlords cannot afford the inspections required to maintain a safe environment on their properties, they may have to look into acquiring another source of income, such as a job.

Rapoport stated that the new law “declares [landlords] guilty as a group until they each prove their innocence,” but I don’t think the law is about the landlords at all. Rather, it’s about protecting tenants from being poisoned by lead present in 45-plus-year-old buildings.

Rapoport also expressed concern that there may not be enough licensed inspectors for all of the rental properties in the Heights to be inspected. City council foresaw that possibility and has stated that “the enforcement date [of June] could be pushed back a year if the necessary staffing and funding is not yet in place.” Additionally, the Ohio Department of Health will perhaps devote resources to accrediting more lead inspectors, leading to job creation.

Moshe Koval is a student who lives in Cleveland Heights.

Lowering speed limits was a bad decision

Alan Rapoport

Ordinance No. 160-2022, introduced by Cleveland Heights Mayor Seren, was passed by CH City Council on Nov. 21. It lowers the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph on parts of five city streets, affecting portions of Euclid Heights Boulevard, Lee Road, Noble Road, and North and South Taylor roads.

These streets have had 35 mph speed limits for many decades. The new ordinance cites no history of incidents, nor does it cite proof of design problems. It simply adopts the “ideal, principles, and concepts” of a utopian program developed in Sweden in the 1990s called “Vision Zero.” That program has as its goal “zero traffic deaths and serious injuries.”

Slowing traffic is Mayor Seren’s chosen way to achieve that goal.

Speed limits are set by state law. They depend upon the design of streets and the relationship of some streets to others. Certain streets are listed as “through highways,” with 35 mph speed limits. By local ordinance, a municipality may select and designate any street as no longer being a “through highway.”

Once an ordinance defines a street as a “non-through street,” the speed limit on it becomes 25 mph. Council made such a speed limit change by redesigning five streets. It may have acted legally, but it acted unwisely.

These five streets are, have been, and always will be true “through highways.” They were designed to handle higher volumes of traffic than other streets. They were designed to take a traffic burden off other streets. Thanks to the new law, these five streets will no longer move traffic through the city as efficiently.

It will take longer now to get to shops, banks, restaurants, parks, libraries, churches, and schools. Safety problems will increase as slower traffic on these five streets encourages...
Severance Action Group works to develop plan

Larry Nowak

Many of us living in Cleveland Heights have been concerned for years about the steady deterioration of the Severance Town Center, formerly known as the Severance Mall.

We have watched the occupancy rate fall to well below 50%, and feared that we might lose Dave’s, Home Depot, Marshall’s and OfficeMax, the few remaining major occupants. We have seen horrific potholes develop that might cause a pedestrian fall, or damage a vehicle. And we could not see that anything was being done to address these issues. All of this in the very heart of our city and right next to City Hall.

A little over two years ago, under the auspices of the FutureHeights Planning & Development Committee, a small group of people, who felt that transforming Severance was an existential issue for Cleveland Heights over the long term, began to think about how Severance could be transformed.

This group, the Severance Action Group (SAG), considered many potential plans, including simply revitalizing Severance as an updated retail shopping center. But the difficulties of such centers all over the country in this age of online shopping and pandemics, coupled with the collapse of so many of our sister city malls on the east side of Cleveland, convinced us that retail was no longer a viable growth engine for Severance.

We came to a similar conclusion with respect to mixed-use residential development. Although less clearly problematic than retail, it is still fraught. Population decline has created an overabundance of housing of many types on the east side of Cleveland, with an exception being single-level living for the elderly. Thus, we see a definite need for a substantial housing element, including single-floor living residences and units serving diverse income profiles as part of a financially viable redevelopment concept, but we do not believe housing alone can drive the transformation and future growth.

As we thought about what we could have as a powerful draw to the Severance area, we wanted something that would grow, something that was recession resistant, something hopefully unique, and something that was consistent with the ethos of Cleveland Heights. We determined that capitalizing on the wonderful MetroHealth expansion by incorporating medically oriented higher education would be ideal. However, we face a real conundrum. We do not control the property. We do not have the funding to purchase the property even if we can persuade the current owners to sell for a reasonable price. That leaves SAG with several key tasks going forward:

• Find a way to persuade the current owner to sell at a reasonable price.
• Identify one or more development concepts that incorporate the key vision elements, remain financially viable, and that the city government can support.
• Assemble a wide-ranging team, including developers, operators, academic institutions, and support services, able to take the concept and run with it as soon as we control the property.
• Have one—or a consortium—of the team members willing and able to write the purchase check to the current owners, or to the city should it be the initial buyer of the property.

We have made considerable progress. We have developed an exciting, unique and defensible development concept for a mixed-use village. We have presented the concept to Mayor Seren and CH City Council (see SAG Presentation to Council Committee of the Whole November 14, 2022 - YouTube), all of whom have been highly supportive. Finally, we have taken major steps toward building a strategy for achieving ownership and communicating with the citizens of Cleveland Heights. We plan to address the development concept in depth in a future issue of the Heights Observer.

Larry Nowak is the chairman of FutureHeights’ Severance Action Group.

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Can our schools survive the legislature?

Suze Kaeser

At the beginning of a year, I like to look forward with hope and resolve. However, as a public-school advocate who believes in the value of every child and the essential role of public education in our democracy, I feel not hope, but not, as I anticipate 2023.

We will have new elected officials representing us in Columbus, and they will have to contend with whatever the supermajority in the Ohio legislature has up its sleeve in terms of further weakening our public schools, privatizing education, centralizing power, limiting student rights, maligning educators and censoring classrooms.

None of this is good for kids, our communities, or democracy; but the legislature appears hell-bent on destruction. We must live with the consequences of what they have done and prepare for the next attack. As the year begins, single-party rule in all echelons of state government moves from theoretical to real. What options do we have for protecting our values when those with power have different ideas?

Last year, when the supermajority approved new maps for state elected offices and perpetuated gerrymandering, Cleveland Heights was grouped with communities that are less like it. This change also coincided with the departure of state Sen. Sandra Williams and Rep. Janine Boyd, elected officials who knew our community and have represented our interests with vigor. Isn’t especially hard to lose our great ally on the State Board of Education, Meryl Johnson, who will still serve but in a district that does not include us.

Our new statehouse representatives, Sen. Kent Smith and Rep. Juanita Brendt, support public education, as does our new state board member, Tom Jackson. If we want them to represent us, outnumbered as they are, we need to welcome them, get to know them, and help them know us. We need to encourage them to fight in battles where the outcome may already be decided.

Our second line of defense in this difficult climate is the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education.

We live in a "local control" state where most important decisions about the operation of our schools are local concerns. The state’s primary obligation is to fund public education, yet most funding is local. Elected boards of education provide oversight to make sure our public funds are well spent and reflect community priorities.

This structure gives the board authority to set policy. Ingrain greater local control standing up to the bullies in the statehouse.

Last year, board members led the charge with a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of EdChoice vouchers, which compete with public schools for insufficient state education funds. They testified in Columbus and passed resolutions rejecting initiatives in the legislature and state board to censor instruction, reject equity as an education priority, and value some students over others.

It is hard to know how far our local leaders can go to protect our community’s commitment to our students, and to equity as a guiding principle. We need them to reassure our teachers that our nation’s history of racial injustice is a reality that should not be ignored, and to continue to make school a safe place for all students. They are bucking state laws in some cases. We need to stand with them. If there were ever a time to pay attention to our district and its commitment to serving our community, it is now. Local control can only endure if we support our local leaders.

This is a horrible moment for our democracy and for creating a just and inclusive society: No matter how hopeless it feels, we can’t turn our backs on the governance of our public institutions. We remain the bulwark of a just and inclusive society.

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OPINION

Democratic speaking . . .

Heights Observer January 1, 2023

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

After one year, Cleveland Heights City Council and the mayor are starting to get their sea legs with our new form of government—and each other.

As longtime CH government watchers, we are astounded by the hours this council expends in regular meetings, committee meetings, special meetings, and emergency meetings. Their attendance record is excellent compared with that of other councils we have observed over close to a decade. With nominal pay and negligible benefits, these supposedly part-time legislators have put in full-time hours, even rescheduling vacations to meet the mayor’s last-minute meeting requests.

Their dedication is impressive, but going forward, they must make it clear to the administration that council’s schedule is to be respected and observed. The mayor, who is very protective of his staff’s time and schedules, should be the first to understand this.

Meanwhile, the comment portions of council meetings need immediate work. Members of the public must now sign up in order to speak, but not everyone knows that. A large sign outside council chambers should explain this procedure. A basket could be provided there for completed forms; better yet, replace individual forms with a roster on a clipboard.

Before public comment begins, speakers are directed to start by clearly stating their names for the record. The council president should prompt those who do not, and, when necessary, remind them to speak into the microphone.

Past councils have seldom responded to public comments during meetings. Council President Melody Hart takes a different approach, often replying to speakers as they return to their seats. Frequently, a dialogue ensues. But unless speakers go back to their seats, a half. Often, members of the public and council have carefully prepared, in order to cover their points within the allotted three minutes. Perhaps the president does not realize that arbitrarily cutting people’s time in half with no notice is not only unfair and discourteous; it violates the democratic intent of inviting public comment at all.

We certainly hope she will reconsider and eliminate this practice. We would also like to see all public comment returned to its place of honor early in the agenda.

After we originally submitted this column, we learned of CH Council Member Josie Moore’s sudden resignation. This is a loss to the city, and another challenge to council, which now has only 45 days to appoint her replacement. We wish the council luck and courage.

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

was formed by citizens, business owners and police officers in 2008, after Cleveland Heights Police Officer Jason D. West was killed in the line of duty.

Initially, the group’s focus was to grant college scholarships to Heights High seniors who completed the Career Tech Criminal Justice program. In 2021, the school district discontinued the program, and the organization then searched for new ways in which to best accomplish its mission.

“Our board is very excited to partner with the academy, and we look forward to learning about the applicants and selecting several for the scholarships,” continued Gonzalez.

“Officer West was a role model who inspired young people to serve their community,” said Cleveland Heights Mayor Kahlil Seren. “With the reopening of the police academy and the launching of this scholarship, Officer West will remain an inspiration for years to come.”

To ensure the fund is adequate to provide several scholarships, the OJWMF has contacted previous donors and is planning a fundraising event for early 2023.

To donate to the scholarship fund, send a check to The Officer Jason D. West Memorial Fund, PO Box 18662, Cleveland Heights, OH, 44118-9998. Checks should be made payable to The Officer Jason D. West Memorial Fund.

The OfficerJasonWest.org website is up, and will soon be accepting online donations.

For more information, and to apply to the academy, visit the Cleveland Heights Police Academy website, www.clevelandheights.gov/366/Cleveland-Heights-Police-Academy.

Joy Henderson is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights who volunteers on the marketing committee for The Officer Jason D. West Memorial Fund.
space depicted in the floor plan on level 1 could be converted to retail, upon market demand.

Phase 3 is the redevelopment of the southern side of the gateway, straddling Shaker Heights. JCU plans to raze and replace the current [shopping] plaza there, which the university owns. The current tenants will have the option of moving into the new building that will have been constructed in Phase 2 of the redevelopment plan.

“We welcome JCU’s investment in itself and in our community,” said UH Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan. “This project is a culmination of efforts by JCU and the city working together over the course of the past year. John Carroll University is our city’s largest employer, largest economic driver, and of course, our city’s namesake—there would be no University Heights without the university.”

JCU has submitted preliminary drawings for purposes of discussion. These drawings illustrate where the new buildings will be located. Their presentation also includes ideas for what the building facades could look like. The illustrations are posted online at www.universityheights.com.

JCU will be back before the city’s Planning Commission in early 2023, and plans to solicit feedback from University Heights residents.

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

### University Heights City Council

#### Meeting highlights

The League of Women Voters (LWV) welcomes Marilyn Singer and Tanis Swan to their LWV Observer corps as they help us resume coverage of University Heights City Council meetings. Both are UH residents. Singer’s first reports cover the Nov. 7th and Dec. 5th UH council meetings (she was unavailable for the Nov 21 meeting).

**NOVEMBER 7, 2022**

Present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan, Vice Mayor Michelle Weiss, and council members Christopher Cooney, Justin Gould; Brian J. King, John P. Rach, and Sheri Sax. Council Member Barbara Blankfield was not present. Also present were Kelly Thomas, clerk of council; Luke McCume, law director; Dennis Kennedy, finance director, and Joseph Cuni, city engineer.

JCU wellness facility plan

Mayor Brennan made a motion to approve the site plan for John Carroll University’s (JCU) new fieldhouse wellness facility. Representatives from the JCU facilities department and the architect made a presentation and answered questions. The site plan had already received contingent approval from the University Heights Planning Commission. Council Member Rach, who is a member of the Planning Commission with Mayor Brennan, suggested tabling the motion until the site plan is ready. Both the fire chief and the police department representatives from the JCU facilities department and the architect made a presentation and answered questions. The site plan had already received contingent approval from the University Heights Planning Commission.

**DECEMBER 5, 2022**

Present were the mayor, all council members, the clerk of council, the assistant law director, and the finance director.

Mayor’s report

Mayor Brennan reported that, on Dec. 1, JCU presented a three-phase plan to the Planning Commission, with (construction of a) new fieldhouse designated as Phase I. Phase II involves the property west of the main entrance to JCU and east of the BP station on Warrensville Center Road, including the station and the parking lot behind it. JCU proposes a five-story, mixed-use commercial and residential building on the site. Tenants of the existing plaza that straddles Shaker Heights would be offered space in the new building. Upon completion of Phase II, Phase III would commence with the razing of the existing plaza and the construction of a new building.

Food bank presentation

Kimberly LoVano, director of advocacy and public education for the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, gave a presentation regarding the work of the food bank in this time of increased costs, decreased donations, and increased demand. She commented that, in 2022, 1,800 people in University Heights utilized the food bank, up from less than 1,300 pre-pandemic.

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PACE, Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, provides services that address medical, rehabilitative, social, and personal care needs of older adults.

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**University Heights News**

JCU continued from page 1

Mayor Brennan noted that, in a unanimous decision of council, the city of University Heights was awarding $10,000 of its ARPA funds to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

**Council actions**

Council approved the annual transfer of funds to the Community Investment Corporation (CIC). Cooney and King voted no. Mayor Brennan spoke against the ordinance, stating that his administration would not support the transfer until CIC is restructured to work only on real estate, as was intended when it was created.

Council adopted legislation to purchase the property at 2308 Warrensville Center Road, titled to Yeshivath Adath B’nai Israel, for the purpose of expanding municipal facilities. The law department will be preparing an action for eminent domain, as the owner has rejected the city’s offer to purchase the property.

**Mayor and council comments**

Vice Mayor Weiss initiated a discussion regarding future meetings to the council chamber in city hall, as the chairlift making the chamber accessible has been certified. She also explained that anyone unable to access the chamber could participate remotely from the city hall annex using portable equipment purchased during the pandemic. Mayor Brennan said that while the chairlift was certified, it did not work consistently. He believed the law director needed to advise on whether participation from the annex would meet all requirements. (Law Director) Cicaro commented that the law department would report on relevant issues by the next meeting.

LWV Observer: Marilyn Singer
november 21, 2022

Present were Mayor Kahil Seren, Council President Melody Joy Hart, Council Vice President Craig Cobb, and council members Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Matteo Jr., Josie Moore, and Davida Russell. Also present were Addie Balester, clerk of council, and William Hanna, law director.

Public comments

Alison Mccann, of the Cleveland Heights Senior Hockey League, and Jay Tekus, of the Cleveland Heights Youth Hockey Association, urged the city to reopen the south ice rink in the community center.

Agreements approved

Council approved funding from the Ohio Department of Transportation to upgrade traffic signals at six intersections on Monticello Boulevard, and to remove signals at the intersections of Monticello Boulevard and Quarry Drive, and Forest Hills and Mount Vernon boulevards.

Council authorized two agreements with Cuyahoga County for 1) services to help move city's sonorities from sewers, and 2) resurfacing Warrensville Center Road from Mayfield Road to the city's south corporation line.

Speed limit reductions

Council approved legislation to reduce speed limits to 25 miles per hour on Euclid Heights Boulevard, Vernon boulevards, Cemetery Road to South Taylor Road, on North Taylor Road and Noble Road, from Monticello Boulevard to the north corporation line; on South Taylor Road, from Fairmount Boulevard to Euclid Heights Boulevard, and on all of Lee Road.

Cedar-Lee Meadowbrook development

Council approved legislation for the Cedar-Lee Meadowbrook development that declares property improvements a public purpose exempt from real property taxes, makes provision for the collection of service payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT), establishes an urban redevelopment tax increment equivalent fund (TIF) for the deposit of the service payments, and describes the efforts that she, the former mayor, made to plan such an addition to Denison.

City School district.

Proposal to add $500,000 to the 2023 legislative procedures. She described council for failing to establish council rules and procedures. She described a statement criticizing council leadership council member comments

Council President Hart parroted that responsibilities of the Finance Committee are now assigned to the Committee of the Whole.

Council Member Moore reported that the Municipal Services and Environmental Sustainability Committee is conducting early discussions about requiring owners of multi-unit rental residences to provide recycling service for tenants.

Council Member Mattox announced that the Planning and Development Committee is working on a GAP financing program.

Council Member Larson stated that the Public Safety and Health Committee is in the early stages of exploring a sidewalk repair program and a sidewalk snow removal program.

Committee of the Whole

Mayor Seren explained the factors leading to proposed legislation changing speed limits on several roads, including making progress on achieving Vision Zero, which was adopted August 2021, and the difference in accident severity between crashes at 25 mph and 35 mph.

The mayor provided an update on the NOPFC electricity program NOPFC is continuing to extend its customers to other electricity providers and to defend its program before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

LW Observer: Jill Tatem.

DECEMBER 5, 2022

Present were the mayor, all council members, the clerk of council, and the law director.

Public comments

Twenty two ice rink users, including residents, non-residents, adults, and children, urged council to open both ice rinks at the community center, noting the high demand for ice, and for other reasons.

Mayor's report

Mayor Seren explained residents that Dec. 21 is the effective date for speed limit reduction from 35 to 25 mph on Lee Road and sections of Euclid Heights Boulevard, Noble Road, North Taylor Road, and South Taylor Road.

Charter Review Commission

Council approved establishment of a nine-member Charter Review Commission (CRC), with the city council naming its voting no. Codis explained that he supports a CRC, but objects to the mayor naming 16 members.

Other council actions

Council authorized application for grant funding under the Cuyahoga County Department of Development's Community Development Supplemental Grant program, to install benches in parks and other public spaces.

Council authorized an agreement with the Economic and Community Development Institute for program management services for the city's Small Business Support Program.

Council member comments

Council Member Cobb announced that applications for the Charter Review Commission would be available soon, with announcements (to be published) on the city's website and in other communications. Council Member Moore read a statement criticizing council leadership for failing to establish council rules and proceedings. She described her own efforts to draft such documents. Council President Hart replied by describing unsuccessful attempts earlier in the year to have council adopt rules. She thanked Moore for her efforts, and referred to the upcoming council retreat as the vehicle (by which) to adopt rules and proceedings.

Committee of the Whole

Council Member Matteo explained his proposal to add $500,000 to the 2023 budget for a splash pad at Denison Park. Council Member Russell endorsed the plan, and described the efforts that she, the former park and recreation director, and residents had made to plan such an addition to Denison. LW Observer: Jill Tatem.

Speed limit reductions continued from page 4

Drivers are seeking faster short cuts on side streets. The quality of life in Cleveland Heights will change for the worse if safety were a genuine concern, the mayor and council first could have commissioned a traffic engineering study. They do not do this.

Instead, they blindly made safety decisions for ideological reasons. They ignored speed limits long ac-cepted under state law as safe. They added inconvenience to daily living. They did not protect public safety; by creating an environment for drivers to drive faster on side streets, they actually have endangered it.

Alan Rapoport, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, served on CH City Council (1986–85) and as council presi-dent/mayor (1982–83).
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String light collection drive will benefit zoo’s conservation program partners

Natalie Elwell

Last year, the Heights community recycled 1,200 lbs. of string lights and cords, benefiting the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo’s Lights for Lions program.

This year, the Cleveland Heights Green Team is again partnering with other community organizations—the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, the Millikin Neighborhood Group, and Heights Libraries—to collect broken, non-working, and used strings of lights and extension cords for recycling.

The recycling drive begins Dec. 13 and runs through Jan. 31.

Drop off bins are located at the Nature Center; the Lee Road Library; and in the Millikin neighborhood, at 1541 Maple Road. (Please don’t include any bags or other packaging when dropping the lights and cords in the bins.)

Proceeds from recycling support the Zoo’s lion and cheetah conservation program partners, the Ruaha Carnivore Project and Lion Landscapes (www.clevelandmetroparks.com/zoo/lionandcheetah).

With its partners, Cleveland Zoo is working to mitigate human-carnivore conflicts, and develop effective, long-term conservation strategies for large carnivores in Tanzania. The program helps reduce the negative impacts of carnivore presence by providing important conservation-related benefits to local communities.

Natalie Elwell is director of gender equity practice at World Resources Institute in Washington, D.C. She is co-founder of the Cleveland Heights Green Team. She works remotely, and dedicates her free time to advocate for environmental protection and activism.

Heights centers offer strategies for coping with eco-anxiety in the new year

Catalina Wagars

The beginning of a new year is often a time for reflection and hope. For some, the new year can intensify anxious thoughts, rooted in the notion of a planet in distress.

A 2018 survey by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found that “almost 70% of people in the United States are worried about climate change, and around 57% feel helpless.” Researchers call this state of mind “eco-anxiety”—chronic or severe anxiety related to humans’ relationship with the environment.

Most levels of eco-anxiety can be addressed through personal action and lifestyle adjustments. Two centers located in Cleveland Heights offer strategies and ideas.

Dean Williams, Zen Sensei (teacher) at the Crooked River Zen Center, at 1813 Wilton Road in Cleveland Heights, quotes from the book Ecodharma, by David R. Loy: “The

continued on page 12

Heights residents donated more than 1,200 lbs. of lights in 2022.

Nemo Salam-Grin leading a cardio drumming class at The Mindful Mix.

courtesy chgt

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COMMUNITY NEWS

MetroHealth CH expands breast cancer care and screening

Angela Townsend

In early December, MetroHealth began offering 3D breast cancer screening services inside its Cleveland Heights Medical Center at 10 Severance Circle.

The permanent onsite service replaces MetroHealth’s Mobile 3D Mammography Coach, which had been a weekly fixture at the medical center for the past three years.

Breast cancer screening mammography at MetroHealth in Cleveland Heights is now available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

MetroHealth acquired the former Cleveland Heights HealthSpan building in 2016. Instead of offering breast cancer screenings using outdated equipment, the health system invested in a Mobile 3D Mammography Coach.

The new machines, which reduce the overall radiation dose, have a higher sensitivity rate and a more comfortable curved surface. Multiple low-dose images are captured during 3D tomosynthesis, also known as 3D mammography, as opposed to two-dimensional images obtained with 2D mammograms.

“The volume of data with 3D has more information about the breast than standard 2D mammograms,” said Venkataramu N. Krishnamurthy, M.D., chair of MetroHealth’s Department of Radiology. “When there is more data, there is less chance of missing a cancer. Our accuracy in finding breast cancer improves incrementally.”

The demand for screening mammograms is expected to increase in the wake of a new Ohio law, in effect since the end of September, which requires most health insurers to cover one screening mammogram a year, regardless of age or risk factors.

The law also requires most insurers to cover supplemental screening exams for those patients with dense breasts, or at an increased risk of breast cancer because of personal or family history, ancestry, a genetic predisposition to the disease, or other reasons determined by their health care provider. Covered supplemental screening exams offered at MetroHealth include ABUS and MRI.

“Our goal with screening mammography and supplemental screening exams is to find small, early-stage disease and have the opportunity to give our patients better outcomes and a chance of cure,” said Christina Clemow, D.O., MetroHealth’s division chief of Breast Imaging and Intervention, who testified in support of the new law.

MetroHealth now recommends that every woman should get an annual mammogram starting at age 40.

At the time of their appointment, patients are given a risk assessment to determine their calculated lifetime risk of breast cancer. The risk score is used to determine if they would benefit from risk-reducing medications or additional screening surveillance.

To make a mammography appointment at MetroHealth, call 216-957-BRST (2778).

Angela Townsend is a senior writer in the department of marketing and communications at The MetroHealth System.

UH donates to food bank

Earlier this year, University Heights City Council unanimously voted to contribute $10,000 of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. On Dec. 5, Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan and council members presented a check to Kimberly LoVano, the food bank’s director of advocacy and public education. A similar donation will be made to the Kosher Food Pantry.
Problem-solving court takes on housing violations

J.J. Costello

A property owner stands before me to be sentenced for failing to paint the garage of a rental property in Cleveland Heights. The owner has acknowledged they have not yet brought the property into compliance, but believes that if they have another 60 days, the work can be done. I sentence the owner, but rather than impose hefty fines or even jail time, I suspend most of those traditional penalties and instead impose community control, often called probation. If the owner fails to bring the property into compliance, or violates any other condition of community control, I can reevaluate and revise the original sentence.

This community control approach was first implemented by the late Judge Raymond L. Pianka in Cleveland Housing Court. He saw his role, and that of the housing court, as a problem-solving role, and our Cleveland Heights Municipal Court takes the same approach. Our court emphasizes compliance with housing code requirements as the primary goal of criminal housing prosecution. Punishment alone does not always function as a deterrent, and our Cleveland Heights Municipal Court upholds the appropriate sanction.

Once that discretion is exercised by the court and a criminal proceeding is commenced, the control of the case shifts from the prosecutor to the court. If a person or entity refuses to appear once summoned, the court can and does issue warrants and hold them in contempt. Upon finding guilt, it is my responsibility as judge to determine the appropriate sanction.

Recently, more than half of the cases filed by the city have been against individuals who both own and reside in the home. The city and court have worked together to implement a diversion program for these cases. This program allows the owner-occupant to explore potential resources, like the Home Repair Resource Center, and, if they bring the property into compliance within a reasonable period, avoid a criminal conviction altogether.

For more complicated cases, and those cases where the property is not owner-occupied, the community control, with a requirement of repair and maintenance, is more appropriate.

Additional supervision is required to make sure those goals are met. Therefore, the court will soon hire its first-ever housing court specialist. The specialist’s role will be to oversee community control obligations imposed on an offender. The specialist will offer assistance, identifying which repairs need to be addressed sooner than others, and identifying resources that may be available to the offender. The specialist will also bring the offender to the realization that she needed help.

According to Williams, “The environmental crisis is a crisis of the human spirit because it is a crisis of our values, our priorities, and our relationship with the earth.”

“The work we each have to do is the work right here and right now. Whatever it is, just take care of it,” Williams urged. “In the face of great stress, some people may find it easier to ignore or just look away, when in fact the best course of action is to stay with it, be present in the present. There is not a prescribed course of action; instead, there is a wide range of options emerging from being still within.”

According to Nema Saleem-Green, owner of The Mindful Mix, at 1799 Coventry Road, “It is important to balance a desire to do good in the world with self-care and equanimity. There is only so much we can accomplish in any given day, and a burnt-out activist is not going to be much help.”

A clinical counselor, certified art therapist, and program manager at the East Cleveland Neighborhood Center, Saleem-Green spoke from experience. “After spending many years helping people in our community, I found myself burned out,” she recalled. “I realized that I was not practicing what I was preaching.” Saleem-Green embarked on a journey of self-reflection and evaluation that led to the realization that she needed to create space for herself to heal and practice mindful self-care.

She created The Mindful Mix to provide “a space for every one to come together to connect with themselves through movement of the body in the form of cardio drumming, art creation, and community building.” She described it as “a place to be present with one’s own self and like-minded people.”

Since its opening, Saleem-Green said, she has seen “a genuine and authentic energy that people embody when they are in the present, experiencing themselves. This positive impact permeates in their interactions with each other and their surroundings.”

Both Williams and Saleem-Green agree that being more present promotes awareness and a more mindful way of living. Increasing well-being, value clarification, awareness, empathy, and compassion are helpful tools to transition toward more sustainable choices.

Catalina Wagers lives in Cleveland Heights’ Fairfax neighborhood, and is a co-founder of the Cleveland Heights Green Team.
Pharis, others, honored for work with schools

Krista Hawthorne

The Reaching Heights Friend of Public Education for 2022 is Stewart Pharis, a generous volunteer and dedicated supporter of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools.

Also receiving Reaching Heights awards for 2022 were the Greater Cleveland Food Bank (GCFB) and four school district employees—Carolyn Yoo, Edie Fiala, Wendy Burkey and Heather Higham.

“Over the past 20 years,” said Pharis, “I have had the privilege of being able to work with so many terrific children, and to form relationships with the dedicated and caring adults, both teachers and volunteers, who work so hard to educate them.”

As a PTA member at Fairfax, his children’s elementary school, Pharis stepped up to serve as treasurer and co-president, and served again as secretary and treasurer of Roxboro Middle School PTA. He accepted the role as the first volunteer coordinator for the then new Many Villages Tutoring Program, and tutored at every grade level for nine years. He also assisted Joan Levin, art teacher, in creating and teaching a program that introduced fourth-graders to stained glass and the work of Frank Lloyd Wright and other Prairie School artists.

Volunteering as assistant coach for the Roxboro Middle School and Heights High Science Olympiad teams for nine years was another intensive experience for Pharis. Students he coached won medals in a wide variety of events, at invitational and regional Science Olympiad tournaments. Particularly notable was the 2015 first-place medal won by his Heights High students in the Experimental Design event at the highly competitive CWRU Regional Tournament.

Pharis has logged most of his volunteer hours, and found the most joy, assisting middle- and high-school instrumental music teachers for the past 15 years.

An accomplished violist and violinist, Pharis received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music from Northwestern University. He was active as a freelance musician in the Chicago area, and was a member of the New World Symphony for two seasons.

He has arranged music pieces for middle- and high-school performances, assisted with instruction, coached chamber groups, maintained the high school’s instrumental music library, and played in the Pit Orchestra as a community performer in many high school musicals. He is also a much-valued volunteer on the leadership team of the Reaching Heights Summer Music Camp, where he is a violin section and chamber music coach, music theory teacher, and music arranger.

The GCFB received Reaching Heights’ Outstanding Community Partner award for 2022. The need for nutritious food is high among Heights students, their families, and the community. This award, accepted by Amanda Papp, the food bank’s manager of programs, recognizes the professionalism of GCFB’s client services team in coordinating food deliveries for the School Markets and the Backpack Program. Also honored were school social workers.

continued on page 19

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Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District

Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby will deliver the 2022 State of our Schools Address on Feb. 1, 7 p.m., at Cleveland Heights High School.

The in-person event is open to the public. The event will also be broadcast live via the district’s YouTube channel.

Kirby will discuss strategic planning updates, achievements and notable events from the past year, and the major new initiatives taking shape. The event will also feature musical performances by students, and building highlights.

“I’m looking forward to sharing the many accomplishments of our students and staff over the past year,” said Kirby. “Tiger Nation has overcome challenges and seen wonderful successes together, and there is much to celebrate.”

Cathen Cavanaugh is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

To celebrate Tiger Nation’s successes, the district will host a State of our Schools Address on Feb. 1, 7 p.m., at Cleveland Heights High School.

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**Triskaidekaphobia? Not at Rox’s spelling bee**

Beth Woodside

Back in person, after nearly three years of online spelling, the 13th Annual Roxboro Middle School Spelling Bee was held in the school’s auditorium on Dec. 6. Eight spellers, all sixth- and seventh-graders, competed for prizes and their name on the bee trophy.

Brie Bourbeau, champion and seventh-grader, will represent Roxboro at the regional bee, which will be online. Spellers from Ohio and Michigan will compete in the event. Sixth-grader Marcus Shabalala was Roxboro’s second-place winner. He will be the alternate for the regional forum. Congratulations also went to sixth-grader Gloria Chasney, who earned third place.

In addition to the three winners, Eliana Kennedy, Mila Seitz, Jachin Anderson, Jadien Richards, and Addie Craft competed. Participants were required to spell some difficult words, including braise, traditional, donkeys, squinched, wrestle, unacknowledged, defunct, retribution, reenactment, configuration, intubated, counterfeit, and Brie’s winning word — fumatorium.

The bee consisted of multiple rounds — mostly spelling words. The fifth and thirteenth rounds, however, were all about word meanings. Spellers had to answer multiple choice questions about words and their definitions.

Beth Woodside is a violinist with the Cleveland Orchestra, member of the Music Settlement violin faculty, former board member of Reaching Heights, and coordinator of the Roxboro Middle School spelling bee.

**Kirby to address State of our Schools on Feb. 1**

Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District

Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby will deliver the 2022 State of our Schools Address on Feb. 1, 7 p.m., at Cleveland Heights High School.

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**Heights Schools**

Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District

Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District

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Library offers virtual-reality job training

Kaela Sweeney

Thanks to a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), awarded by the State Library of Ohio, Heights Libraries will offer skilled-trades job training with Interplay Learning virtual-reality software and SkillMill’s training platform.

“As pillars of our communities, libraries and museums bring people together by providing important programs, services, and collections. These institutions are trusted spaces where people can learn, explore and grow,” said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. “IMLS is proud to support their initiatives through our grants.

The Interplay Learning pilot program will begin in January. Interplay Learning’s 3D simulations and immersive training modules include expert-led video courses, and learning paths to help customers advance their technical skills.

The interactive modules provide training in industries including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, solar, construction, and more. Completion of the Interplay Learning modules builds skill sets in high-demand trades, and provides industry-recognized certifications.

“Our goal is to champion workforce development and become a center for job training resources,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “We are excited to partner with Interplay Learning to provide another career service for the community.”

Interplay Learning’s training modules can be completed using virtual-reality headsets at home or in the Heights Knowledge and Innovation Center (HKIC) at Heights Libraries’ Lee Road branch. The modules can also be accessed in 2D with a tablet or computer. Customers who sign up for the training modules will be enrolled for future training.

What’s going on at your library?

Coventry Village Branch
1925 Coventry Road, 216-321-3400
Monday, Jan. 30, 3 p.m., 4 p.m., and 7 p.m.
Escape the Room. You were having an ordinary day at the library until you got sucked into a magical book . . . literally! Can your team solve the book’s puzzles and escape in 30 minutes or less? For ages 12+. Registration is required, and begins Jan. 3.

Lee Road Branch
2347 Lee Road, 216-932-3600
Tuesday, Jan. 17, 6 p.m.
HTML Coding Basics Part 1. This three-part class covers the basics of HTML coding, using Codecademy. Familiarity with the computer and mouse, as well as an e-mail address, are required, as is registration, which opens Jan. 3.

Noble Neighborhood Branch
2800 Noble Road, 216-931-6605
Tuesday, Jan. 31, 4 p.m.
Escape the Room. You were having an ordinary day at the library until you got sucked into a magical book . . . literally! Can your team solve the book’s puzzles and escape in 30 minutes or less? For ages 12+. Registration is required, and begins Jan. 3.

University Heights Branch
13866 Cedar Road, 216-321-4700
Tuesday, Jan. 17
Diamond Painting Take-and-Make Kits. Diamond painting is paint-by-numbers with a twist. To create a visually dazzling mosaic artwork, apply colorful resin rhinestones to a richly pigmented canvas. We will provide everything you need to create art that sparkles. Kits are limited in number, and registration is required.

Continuing Passions

At 90, Nina’s passion for arts and culture still thrives today. After decades of advocating for and celebrating Cleveland’s treasures, landmarks and communities, Nina is still winning lifetime achievement awards and experiencing the joys of her hometown as a Judson assisted living resident.

Bringing Assisted Living to Life.

Judson Assisted Living residents have the independence they like with as much or as little support as they need. Our highly trained, caring team can assist with daily activities, medications and householding. Our three beautiful and inviting communities offer open gathering areas, art studios, libraries, pools, fitness centers, along with around-the-clock healthcare to support, engage and inspire the mind and body.

(216) 350-0326 judsonsmartliving.org
Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board
Meeting highlights

NOVEMBER 7, 2022 - special meeting. Library board members present were President Gabie Crenshaw, Vice President Max Gerboc, Patti Carlyle, Dana Fluellen, Annette Iwamoto, Tyler McTigue, and Secretary Vikas Turakhia.

Covington PEACE Campus dispute

The special meeting was held regarding the dispute with Covington PEACE Campus (CPC) and proposed settlement terms for resolution of eminent domain action. The settlement deal included utility costs, unpaid repair work, and other claims. The leases with CPC will end, and negotiations will be made with the individual tenants for new leases.

LWV Observers: Elizabeth Tracy and Judith Beeler.

NOVEMBER 21, 2022
Not present were Vice President Max Gerboc, Annette Iwamoto, and Secretary Vikas Turakhia.

Board resolutions

The board authorized the following:
- A contract with Buckeye Design Partnership, the architect for the Noble Branch renovation and additions, in the amount of $793,560.
- The construction document phase for the Noble branch with the Buckeye Design Group and Independent Construction.
- A contract with Johnson Controls for the installation of HVAC in the new study rooms at the Lee Road Branch.
- The purchase of 10 Windows laptops for mobile lab classes, and two replacement laptops.
- [Hired] Pearwind Solar and Lighting to convert light fixtures from fluorescents to LED fixtures.
- An agreement with a W. Farrell & Son to repair the Coventry Village Branch roof.
- An agreement with The Centers for Families and Children to provide services to customers at the Lee Road Branch.

Personnel report

The board approved human resources policy manual changes. Some wording was changed to be more inclusive and to include employees. Many recommendations came from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. A new rule was added to the Use of Personal Devices and Library Phones policy that prohibits use of personal devices and employees from making voice recordings of conversations, and clarifies that test messaging is considered a public record and subject to public records requests.

Director’s report

Four completed applications for the library trustee vacancy were received. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education will conduct interviews on Dec. 6.

Cresco: Property Management will commence its contract to manage the Coventry PEACE building on Dec. 1, 2022. Letters of intent with all tenants are being received, and new leases are anticipated early in December.

The renovation of the Coventry Village Branch is close to completion. The elevator did not pass a state inspection on Nov. 14. Contractors from Thysen and others were called last week to resolve outstanding issues.

All drains at the University Heights Branch were reinspected to confirm there were no issues. The Remedial Roofing will be the placement of a commercial size sump pump.

The library and Buckeye Design Group are in the process of seeking approval from the Cleveland Heights Planning Commission and Architectural Board of Review for the Noble branch renovation and addition. Currently, groundbreaking is anticipated for May 2023. A satellite branch will be established at the BNI building on Noble Road, and programming will be scheduled in other neighborhood sites during construction.

Planning has begun for a May 23, 2023, Dementia Friendly Week in Cleveland Heights. The library will be an integral part of the planning team. Partners include the Alzheimer’s Institute, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education, and Dementia Friendly Ohio.

Public service

Tech Trainer Nisa Tamer relaunched a two-part HTML Coding Basics workshop that introduced the foundation for building and editing Web pages.

In partnership with the Cleveland Heights Green Team, the Coventry Village Branch hosted the second annual EcoFair, an event to promote sustainable living, in the PEACE Park. More than 30 organizations participated. Louise Lathrow and Steve Eights, Coventry Village Library youth staff, hosted Harvest Fest in the PEACE Park, featuring crafts, snacks, and engaging family activities.

Homecoming at the Noble Neighborhood Branch brought a larger than usual number of customers. Homecoming Hippo, aka, Programmer Hillary Brown, welcomed all guests and provided photo opportunities.

Programming at the University Heights Branch was executed primarily via take-and-make kits, due to the flooding. One Story Stop occurred, with four people attending.

Youth Services continues its partnership with Fairfax Elementary School. Librarian Sara Beeler introduced a new weekly drop-in homework help program, Art & Soul, where kids can create art in a relaxing atmosphere.

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Circulation continues to rise.

LWV Observer: Judith Beeler.

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

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Because of some of the things I do—like performing and writing—I’ve always come into contact with a lot of people. And living in Cleveland Heights, where I grew up and went to school, and where my parents did, too, I especially know lots of people in this city.

It used to be that when my kids were teenagers, and we’d go to a concert at Cain Park, at intermission they would jump up and ask me to give them a head start to get to the Terrace for food, because they’d learned that if they stayed with me, we’d never make it there before the house lights started flashing.

I don’t see old friends everywhere anymore. Though now I’ve noticed that when I’m anywhere around here with my son and daughter-in-law, that happens to them. In their lives they come into contact with hundreds of people—through my son’s work with his Heights Tigersharks swimming program and the high school’s swim team, which he coaches; plus other projects he’s led, like the first few years of FutureHeights’ Music Hop; and because my daughter-in-law is a teacher at Heights; plus, they both grew up here.

These days I get approached not as much by old friends, but by strangers, because of this column.

People recognize me from that little picture, and stop me everywhere I go in Cleveland Heights. Readers often e-mail me or contact me through this paper, but many talk to me in person, too.

Before, after (and even during) my December talk at the Coventry library, people mentioned things to me about my life and about this city that they’d read in my columns. While I was going from store to store during last month’s Coventry Village Holiday Festival, several people mentioned specific stories I had told here.

As I was walking down Lee Road after the Heights High homecoming parade in September, a man on a bike stopped and said, “Are you the writer?” I said yes, which might not always be the best answer, because you don’t know why they’re asking. But, luckily, he had no grievances; he just told me that he always reads this column and that he enjoys it.

I was out walking one summer morning when a woman, also walking, passed me (which is, unfortunately, very normal). She glanced back at me, slowed down to my pace, and stopped to ask me if I was the writer. I said yes, again, and she smiled, thanked me, and continued on her way.

At my talk at the Coventry Village Library in December, people in the audience seemed to remember a lot of things I’ve written in this column.

‘Are you the writer?’ Yes. Wait—I mean, why?
Heights Arts doubles down on new exhibitions and events

Tom Masaveg

The first Heights Arts exhibitions of 2023 feature a group show by dual-disciplined artists, and a powerful solo exhibition by Nick Lee.

Dual Duel features visual artists who are also musicians (musicians who are also visual artists), and explores how these dual modes can cause both tension and inspiration. The participating artists are Dave Cintron, Hadley Conner, Jill Eisert, Gene Epstein, John Howitt, Kasumi, Scott Pickering, Priscilla Roggenkamp, Sam Silverman, William Reed Simon, Doug Unger, and John Williams.

In the Spotlight gallery, Lee’s new work, celebrating local, queer artists of color, will be on view. The figurative oil paintings explore those who have been overlooked and underrepresented in the history of portraiture. Said Lee, “It is crucial that we honor these people of color through portraits because their images are often overshadowed in our media by their white counterparts, even in the queer community. When we have accurate reflections of who we are as people, then we see each other as the real human beings that we are.”

The traditional exhibition opening for both shows is planned for Friday, Jan. 13, at 5 p.m., at Heights Arts, 2175 Lee Road. The opening will feature refreshments and live entertainment, including music composed by Dual Duel artist/musician Sam Silverman.

“I’ve always felt a strong connection between music and visual art,” said Silverman. “Through hearing my compositions, and seeing my art that goes with it, the audience can get a window into my imagination and creative processes.”

On Sunday, Jan. 15, 2:30–5 p.m., Heights Arts, in partnership with CLE Urban Winery, 2180 Lee Road, will amplify the musical side of select Dual Duel artists. At CLE, across the street from the Heights Arts gallery where the show’s visual art is on view, visitors can take in the music of Rock Salt and Nails and The Hot Club of Cleveland.

For more information about Dual Duel and Nick Lee, and details about the Jan. 13 and Jan. 15 events, visit www.heightsarts.org.

Tom Masaveg is a local public artist specializing in augmented reality installation and graphite works on paper. He’s also the programs manager at Heights Arts. Contact him at programs@heightsarts.org.
Heights Observer February 1, 2023
www.heightsobserver.org

two months before their seat is made available to the next customer. "Interplay Learning provides a practical, real-world application of a technology that many people think is just for teens and gamers," said Continuing Education Manager Heather Howier. "Using VR in this way helps learners practice and perform tasks and procedures so they are better prepared for real life.

If customers are new to virtual reality, or want to learn more about Interplay Learning, Heights Libraries staff will be available to demonstrate the VR technology and Interplay Learning platform at the following informational sessions in the HKIC:

- Tuesday, Jan. 10, 6 p.m.
- Friday, Jan. 20, 2 p.m.
- Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2 p.m.

SONGS & STORIES continued from page 17

speed, and said, “Are you Budin?” I said, “That depends” (slightly better than an automatic “yes”). She said that she had just read my column, and proceeded to relate her own, similar, experience. Then she picked up her original pace and took off.

There was a Zagara’s Market-place employee, who, whenever he saw me, said something about my most recent piece. Like, one time, after I’d mentioned Dorothy Fuldheim in that month’s column, I reached the end of the checkout, where he was standing, and he said, “Dorothy was terrified of cats.” I expressed surprise. He added, “She’s probably where she picked up her original pace and took off. She’ll probably see this, and where she might be, and she can contact me through the publication. And so can you, if you have anything to ask or tell me.

And that’s why I write this column: knowing that some people enjoy it and maybe even get something out of it. And it’s gratifying when people talk to me about it. I think that’s what every writer strives for.

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