New signs are finally coming to UH

Mike Cook

After implementing a new brand and logo back in 2018, University Heights will finally see the corresponding signs installed across the city this year.

“It’s been a long time coming,” Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan said. “But the prototypes look amazing, and I’m confident residents will feel the signs were worth the wait.”

Partial prototypes of the signs were delivered to UH City Hall last month. The signs for the city's major gateways will feature the four-color University Heights logo, built with transparent colored acrylic. The stained glass and mosaic effect will make the signs unique compared to any other municipal signs in Northeast Ohio.

Phase I of the sign program will include 20 signs to be installed at the city's gateway locations, as well as at Walter Stinson Community Park.

“The focus of the sign program in this phase is on brand expression and identification of the city's footprint,” said Gina Gerken of Guide Sign Company, which is leading the sign design and installation effort.

FH names Pagsuyoin executive director

Julie Sabroff

After an extensive search process, the FutureHeights Board of Directors is pleased to announce that it has named Kristine Pagsuyoin its new executive director.

In assuming the role, on Feb. 6, Pagsuyoin will now manage all day-to-day operations for FutureHeights, leading staff and programming, as well as marketing and fundraising efforts.

Pagsuyoin’s leadership and housing background, combined with a passion for community engagement and community building, will further advance the mission of FutureHeights. She brings a breadth of experience to her new leadership role.

“I have lived in the county since the late ‘90s and have always loved and admired Cleveland Heights for its beautiful houses, culture and especially its residents who are dedicated to making Cleveland Heights a great place to live,” said Pagsuyoin. She is passionate about public service, especially as it relates to access to affordable housing and preservation, and community development and engagement.

“I believe local organizations are critical to making Cleveland Heights a great place to live, and that’s where FutureHeights comes in,” she said.

Mayors both return to their respective city halls

Mayor returns Boyd to CH City Council

Kim Sergio Inglis

On Feb. 10, Cleveland Heights Mayor Khalid Seren announced his appointment of former CH council member and former state Rep. Janine Boyd to city council. She will serve out the unexpired term of Josie Moore, who resigned from council on Dec. 16. That term ends on Dec. 31, 2023; the seat will be on the ballot this November.

The mayor’s announcement came after the six Cleveland Heights City Council members failed to appoint a seventh.

The city charter stipulates that council has 45 days in which to fill a council vacancy, once it has voted to accept a council member’s resignation. Council voted to accept Moore’s resignation on Dec. 21, giving council members until Feb. 4 to appoint someone.

In his e-mail announcing that Boyd would be returning to CH City Council, Seren wrote, “Ms. Boyd was the only candidate that received a motion to appoint from the council. We will continue to work to increase the number of council members.”

Noble library preps for May renovation

Sheryl Banks

Heights Libraries will soon be significantly expanding its Noble Neighborhood branch. The planned renovation will double the size of the heavily used building, allowing the library to expand and broaden the services it provides to residents of the Noble Neighborhood and surrounding communities in the northeastern section of Cleveland Heights.

The branch will be closed beginning Sunday, April 16. The renovation is expected to last roughly a year (through May 2024), with a groundbreaking tentatively scheduled for May 2023.

The expansion’s design, created by architectural design company Bostwick Design Partnership and landscape design company McKnight & Sergeant, was approved by the Cleveland Heights City Council on Dec. 10.
letters/Opinion

The nuts and bolts of producing the Observer

Bob Rosenbaum

Assembling a publication like the Heights Observer is a puzzle. An average 20-page issue contains about 23–28 articles of varying subjects, length and immediacy; 60 ads in a dozen configurations; and a number of standing components that all need to be meshed into a neat and readable package.

Our deadlines are set up to allow a small, remote, part-time staff to follow a smooth and thoughtful production process. Still, it’s nontrivial to wonder what goes on in the typical two and a half weeks between our article deadline and the day the issue gets distributed. Here’s an outline of how an issue of the Observer comes together.

The first deadline for each issue is the article deadline. It’s always on a Monday, and is available for all to see at www.heightsobserver.org > submission instructions.

As soon as that deadline arrives, Editor Kim Sergio Inglis begins to review all the articles, letters, opinions and columns that have come in through our online submission system. She categorizes them by topic, considers the immediacy and impact of each—and its relevance to the Heights. She notes the length, and begins organizing where each contribution belongs in the upcoming issue—front page, opinion section, community news, weather, etc. She also begins contacting some of the writers for clarification, additional information—whatever is needed.

At the same time, she assigns some of the articles to a small group of volunteer editors, who have a few days to go over their assigned articles for inconsistencies, unanswered questions and other concerns.

On Thursday, four days after the article deadline, we close advertising sales. By 5:00 a.m. Friday, we’ll set the size of the issue and jump into production.

Issue size is mostly a financial decision. We aim to publish a paper that’s 65 percent editorial and 40 percent advertising (for profit publications typically reverse this ratio). If we’ve sold reverse this ratio). If we’ve sold 30 ads in a dozen configurations; and a number of standing components that all need to be meshed into a neat and readable package.

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Issue size is mostly a financial decision. We aim to publish a paper that’s 65 percent editorial and 40 percent advertising (for profit publications typically reverse this ratio). If we’ve sold the equivalent of 20 pages of advertising that indicates a 24-page issue.

If we have a lot of timely articles or some big community debate going on, we may spread pages to accommodate more voices in the paper. It happens most often around elections.

Four pages is the smallest increment we can add due to the way printing presses work. It increases our cost, but more important, with a press run of 8,000 copies, it adds 32,000 pages to the eventual waste stream.

With the page count set, our two-person layout team creates a blank template for the paper using InDesign publishing software. They place all the ads first, while the editor maps where in the layout each article will begin and end.

Over the next two weeks, the puzzle takes shape. Things move around a lot for a lot of reasons. Ads arrive in a different size than expected, revisions change the length of articles or the size of photos, some anticipated articles fail to come through, and late news arrives that we need to accommodate.

Each article is an individual project—fitted into its assigned spot, with byline, photo credits, and writer bio added, and headlines crafted to fit the space available.

There may still be holes throughout the paper at this point. Articles that arrive after deadline are still considered for publication right up until the last space has been filled. In the case of a too-full issue, worthy articles might unexpectedly need to be cut from the paper.

Proofs of the paper are generated three times throughout the production process—to days after the article deadline, two days later, and then once more in the final week of the month. After the third proof has been reviewed, the digital file is immediately uploaded to the printer.

Twenty-four hours later, a van shows up at FutureHeights with the new issue for our delivery volunteers to distribute throughout the community.

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

City Council during their appointment process. When we truly believe in someone, we speak up and endorse them unequivocally. My decision to appoint Rep. Grieve her passing.”

My mother, who also served on CH City Council: “I understand this application might surprise some. It honestly surprises me. My mom, the Honorable Barbara H. Boyd, departed this earthly plane November 5th, 2022. She gave so much to this city, and this city gave her a lot back. I cannot walk or drive down a street without seeing her warm face, or hearing her wise and unforgettable words. She taught me everyday I know about serving others through policy and practice, and leading with strength and humility. I believe this unforeseen opportunity, if it is meant for me, might give me a chance to honor and celebrate her life by continuing to serve Cleveland Heights and all of our neighbors, even as I continue to grieve her passing.”

Kim Sergio Inglis is editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer.
Cleveland Heights City Council should make council appointments

Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, and Davida Russell

As we welcome our new [city council] colleague, the recent appointment of Janine Boyd has brought some questions to the minds of residents, who would like to know why the mayor, and not city council, made this decision.

The three of us would like to be very clear about this:

• First and foremost, we, Council Members Larson, Russell and Cuda, believe council vacancies should always be filled by city council.

• When no applicant appeared to have the support of at least four members of council, the three of us were willing to compromise and give up our first pick to consider several other qualified applicants.

• When we left executive session on Feb. 2, we expected Council President Hart to announce that we had not reached a consensus. Instead, a motion was made to take a vote on Ms. Boyd. That vote failed to produce a majority for Ms. Boyd.

From our perspective, we saw no point in bringing forward another candidate’s name, knowing that they also would not be supported by a majority of our members.

• With more than 48 hours left to make a decision, the three of us were willing to continue to discuss other applicants and come to a consensus by compromising.

• Bottom line, Council must be a strong, independent, co-equal branch of government, fully empowered to do its job.

The fact that council failed to compromise and make an appointment does not in any way diminish our new colleague. The charter is clear; if council fails to make an appointment, the mayor gets to choose.

The three of us would like to congratulate and welcome Ms. Boyd to city council. We are looking forward to working with her and expect to have a productive, collaborative relationship.

CH City Charter appointment process works

Melody Joy Hart

Councils and boards typically have an odd number of members so that stalemates can be avoided. When there are an even number, stalemates are not uncommon.

This was the case several years ago in Cleveland Heights, where the appointment of a new council member took close to a year to be resolved.

After that, a charter amendment was put in place to require an appointment within 45 days. If the council has a stalemate, after 45 days the mayor appoints a new council member. This is common in most cities.

In the most recent resignation, by Josie Moore [close to] Christmas holidays, the six-member council was unable to reach an appointment within the designated time.

On day 43, there was a motion for the Honorable former [state] Representative Janine Boyd, who had been on council previously and also spent eight years in the state legislature. Although there were many good candidates, no one else came close to her relevant experience. Nevertheless, the vote was a 3-3 split. In that meeting, no one else put forward a motion for any of the other candidates.

On days 43 and 44, there were no two council members exercised their right to demand another meeting. So, ultimately the mayor appointed within his 10-day requirement.

Ideally it is preferable that council appoints. But sometimes, even when people vote their conscience, they may not reach a consensus. But, the good news is that the charter amendment did what it was supposed to do. It ensured a timely appointment to CH City Council.

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

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Look Closer

Heights Observer March 1, 2023 3 www.heightsobserver.org
Politics shouldn’t interfere with CHPD

Alan Rapoport

I once asked former Cleveland Heights Police Chief Martin Lentz why his officers did not exercise discretion when issuing parking tickets. He asked if I really thought a large group of armed, uniformed officers should have such discretion. I got his point. The potential for abuse would be enormous. Our police are trained to enforce laws, period.

Chief Lentz further expressed to me his belief in strict traffic law enforcement. He mentioned what he called the “felon community.” He thought people with federal big laws frequently break small ones. He said drivers stopped sometimes were leaving the scene of a crime or had outstanding felony warrants. They could be armed. Traffic stops are unpredictable and potentially dangerous. They are not occasions for social work.

I remembered these conversations while thinking about a traffic stop on Sept. 22 that resulted in a complaint filed against Sergeant Naftali Wolf.

I watched the video. Demetrius Kern [the motorist] was angry and uncooperative. He loudly yelled at the officers. He refused requests to provide identification. The officers might reasonably have been concerned that Mr. Kern would become violent. Mr. Kern did not act appropriately.

But Sergeant Wolf was not a model of good behavior either. He got angry. The situation was stressful. He could have handled it better. He let it get too nasty. The prosecutor exercised discretion. He dismissed charges against Mr. Kern. Police Chief Britton ordered Sergeant Wolf to attend a “de-escalation training session.” Too bad Mr. Kern could not be ordered to attend himself. I believe the prosecutor and the chief appropriately handled the situation.

Unfortunately, the mayor is using this incident as his excuse to propose a brand new Bureau of Professional Standards. Chief Britton can administer reasonable discipline without one. Such a bureau will interfere with civil service procedures. And it will make personnel decisions unreasonably subject to political interference. This is an inappropriate power grab. It resembles an earlier bad proposal of the mayor to remove the police chief from civil service protection.

In the same video, the next driver stopped by a police officer was polite. He presented identification when asked. He volunteered that he was carrying a licensed firearm. Even so, he was treated with courtesy. Traffic offenders usually are treated well when they cooperate. The police in Cleveland Heights are professional. They deserve our sympathy and our respect.

Alan Rapoport, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, served on CH City Council (1980–87) and as council president/mayor (1982–87).

SAG continues planning and placemaking for the Severance Town Center property

Paul Volpe and Robert N. Brown

In 2020, a small group of Cleveland Heights residents began volunteering together and collaborating to examine ideas that might initiate the revitalization of the long-struggling Severance Town Center property.

The Severance Action Group (SAG) formed, and has invested considerable time, talent, and experience in this effort. In December 2022, we recognized the need to share our work with the Cleveland Heights mayor, city council, and the public.

Looking closely at the property’s deteriorated condition, extensive vacancies, and lack of investment, we quickly concluded a complete transformation and bold action are necessary. This commenced with a challenge to craft a vision that would build on and enhance the unique character of Cleveland Heights, and that acknowledges its social and economic diversity.

As planners we recognize that form generally follows function, so a program of viable uses needed to be conceived.

As a first-ring suburb, Cleveland Heights was conceived as a city of neighborhoods, and a diversity of housing was the priority. As the community and its residents are aging, this preliminary planning for Severance recognizes the critical need for the development of accessible and affordably priced housing, with first-floor master bedrooms that will serve the unmet needs of the growing population of older adults that wish to remain in our city.

Recognizing, as well, the continuing appeal of Cleveland Heights to younger households, the plan sees a considerable market at Severance for new rental and owner-occupied housing designed to meet the needs of these young households, including families with children.

Its proximity to University Circle, the largest employment district in the state, makes Cleveland Heights both a convenient and attractive place in which to live.

Cleveland Heights is a city of walkable commercial districts, we (see) the opportunity to activate Severance with both new and revitalized retail shopping and services. This would include the importance of retaining current key assets at Severance, including Dave’s Market and Home Depot, as well as such businesses as Office Max and Marshall’s. These businesses and others will serve (future) residents at Severance, as well as the surrounding community.

As an inherent objective, we recognize that true urban communities are both mixed-use and mixed-income. Specific to Severance, we believe that an ideal development scenario would be one that capitalizes on the recent expansion of the MetroHealth Medical Center. The potential addition of a non-traditional regionally focused medical, education, training, and related facilities anchor, would round out the ideal community balance of homes, stores, and jobs.
Heights Observer March 1, 2023

As volunteer columnists with busy lives, we can't often undertake extensive research, let alone far-reaching investigative journalism; thus, we forge addressing many interesting and important subjects. This month, however, our subject is Cleveland Heights housing inspections, about which seemingly everyone has opinions. We will describe some recent inspection issues, and encourage you to share your stories with us.

To be clear, we support rigorous code enforcement, which necessitates regular inspections. Sure, we gripe like anyone else when we encounter an especially picky inspector; yet, we can also, like anyone else, counter an especially picky inspector; we will describe some recent inspection issues, and encourage you to share your stories with us.

Cleveland Heights’ code enforcement was once a model for other cities; however, the foreclosure crisis, which seemingly everyone has opinions. We will describe some recent inspection issues, and encourage you to share your stories with us.

When conscientiously applied they contribute to good code enforcement, which necessitates regular inspections. Sure, we gripe like anyone else when we encounter an especially picky inspector; yet, we can also, like anyone else, counter an especially picky inspector; we will describe some recent inspection issues, and encourage you to share your stories with us.

One of Cindie Carroll-Pankhurst’s most recent experiences with Inspectural Services was a Feb. 1, 2022, inspection, during which they were never contacted to schedule a follow-up appointment. Their next housing-related communication was the annual November reminder to renew the Certificate of Occupancy for their rental unit. Upon logging into CitizenServe (the city’s online housing portal) they received a file included the phrase, “Unable to contact owner.”

Carroll-Pankhurst asked, at the meeting and in a subsequent e-mail to city officials, “What systems are in place to ensure accountability in Inspectural Services?” Shortly before we submitted this column, she had not received an answer, although she was granted a “reset” on her case, as was Deborah.

Both examples cited here involved the same inspector, prompting us to ask: Are there safeguards to ensure inspectors do not take shortcuts? Does the office document e-mail and postal communication with homeowners? How are those communications initiated? Are housing programs using CitizenServe software correctly and to its full capacity? Are all staff fully trained in its use? We don’t think these two cases are unique. They suggest a systemic problem, raising another question: Why are housing division problems with communications, record-keeping and follow-through chronic and persistent?

The number of Cleveland Heights landlords who reside in the city is small, and the number who actually live in a dwelling along with their tenants is even tinier. The worst problem properties are likely to be owned by out-of-town investors; but landlords residing in the city are easier to find. How are your dealings with Inspectural Services? Good, bad, indifferent, we’d like to hear about them. Send your stories to us in confidence at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are writers, editors and longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Generations ago, humans retreated deep underground after an environmental disaster ruined the world above. Nature is now simulated through brain-implanted chips, and fertility is regulated by keeping the surviving population in balance. Anna and Oliver want to have a baby, and their options are running out.

When the polio epidemic swept the nation in 1956, I was 9 years old. This disease left one of my friends partially paralyzed, and a family friend died from it. My mom kept my sisters and me out of public places; we spent the summer at home. Swimming at the beach was off limits, and she thought dimming the lights would help protect us.

Then came the Salk vaccine. I remember standing in line in the cafeteria of my neighborhood elementary school in Madison, Wis., waiting for the shot that would quell the spread of the deadly disease and liberate us from our confinement. My sister said her best friend fainted awaiting her turn.

What better place than a school to deliver essential medical care to a whole neighborhood? It made perfect sense then, and it makes sense now. When students are healthy, they can attend school, engage, and help keep the whole class stay on track.

Health conditions that go untreated can have serious consequences for an individual or a whole classroom. Cleveland Heights-University Heights public school students, their families, and school district staff are now eligible to receive health care in the newly opened Heights Wellness Center at Cleveland Heights High School.

Instead of standing in line in the cafeteria as I did, members of our school community can make an appointment with a physician and meet in individual examination rooms and private offices on the school’s ground level.

I toured the Wellness Center after its Jan. 17 ribbon-cutting. The celebration attracted about 80 community leaders, school district personnel and Dr. Airica Steed, CEO of MetroHealth, the medical partner for the project.

The renovation was funded with a $500,000 grant to the school district from the Ohio Department of Education, and MetroHealth personnel and Dr. Airica Steed, community leaders, school district members, and Ohio Department of Health to expand school-based health services in Cleveland and CH-UH. The program depends on people using it. The cost to the district is mostly for cleaning and some coordination.

Dr. Vanessa Maier, a Heights High graduate and medical director for the project, and Dr. Marcus Germany will see patients at the high school on alternating Fridays. Alverness Ford, a community health worker, will be in the center daily to meet with patients and facilitate what is called a “warm hand-off.” She will help patients navigate the health care system.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that students and faculty are not learning machines. They are human beings whose school engagement is connected to their emotional and physical well-being. It’s all part of one.

Three years ago, Gov. Mike DeWine recommended funding wrap-around services in public schools to remove barriers to learning. This recognition that many out-of-school needs can interfere with learning is crucial to equalizing the opportunity to benefit from what happens in school. Funds for wrap-around services were included in the last state budget.

The Wellness Center takes this idea one step further by making it easy for students and their families to access health services. Health disparities are unacceptable and undermine opportunity. This facility can cut into that disparity by reaching a significant number of people who hadn’t previously had easy access to fundamental health services. This inspired project is one piece of solving the equity puzzle.

Our public schools belong to the community, and the community has much to offer our educators and children. The Wellness Center exemplifies what that can look like. It’s a powerful partnership that can interrupt some of the negative forces that undermine our young people.

To learn more about this program, visit https://www.chuh.org/

Susie Kaiser moved to Cleveland Heights in 1979. She is the former director of Read- ing Heights, and is active with the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the League of Women Voters. A community booster, she is the author of a book about local activism, Resisting Segregation.

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Brennan outlines plan to move UH forward

Mike Cook

At his fifth State of the City address, University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan reported the state of University Heights is strong. "And to remain strong," he said, "we must keep moving forward. To do that, it depends on all of us."

In five years, said Brennan, residents, city employees, business owners and educators have teamed up to accomplish much. "But we’ve only just begun," he said. "We will not let University Heights fall behind."

In his one-hour address, the second-term mayor gave updates on future projects, while proposing new initiatives.

**DEI Officer:** Brennan said recognizing and celebrating diversity is "something we need to be actively doing every day, not just in February (for Black History Month) or just in June (for Pride Month and Juneteenth). Not merely ceremonially, but in the day-to-day operation of our city.

"The time has come for the city of University Heights to create and fill the position of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer (DEI)."

The DEI Officer would be charged with leading the institutionalization of DEI principals in all city policies, decision-making and services, while also working across city departments to ensure a diverse workforce and to facilitate training and ongoing conversations on equity and inclusion.

**New municipal facilities:** Brennan discussed the need for new facilities for the Police, Fire, and Service departments, as well as an accessible and convenient City Hall and City Council chambers.

"Our new facilities must also provide community space," said the mayor. "We have seen with the renovated University Heights Library the intense demand on the meeting rooms they built. And we have felt the loss of those rooms with the flood [the library] suffered last year.

"As we assemble our land and before we design the space, we must acknowledge the limited available space in our community and for our community."

Brennan said he understands the need for community space, but there are additional needs. "We already hear the calls for meeting rooms. But what about a renovated pool with a splash pad? Or an indoor pool? Or workout facilities? What about a dog park? What about winter and year-round recreation? Perhaps an auditorium for speakers, music, theater and other events?"

Brennan said his administration will actively seek input from the community regarding what is called for.

**Onward at John Carroll University (JCU):** Brennan praised JCU’s launch of a new nursing school, the upcoming construction of a fieldhouse, as well as plans for redevelopment at JCU’s South Gateway.

JCU’s plan will bring to Fairmount Circle mixed-use development, with student residences over restaurants and retail, together with a parking garage. There will be new businesses coming to the Circle as part of this redevelopment, and the opportunity for current businesses to stay, as well.

"Once this project is complete, it will have a ripple effect," Brennan said. "Many students will live closer to campus; and, as they move into university housing, this will create opportunities to refurbish student rentals across University Heights, and potentially create room to re-envision Warrensville Center Road."

**University Square:** Brennan reported that the framework is set for negotiating the rest of the deal at University Square so construction can begin on a mixed-use development, including 206 market-rate apartments and new businesses.

Brennan teased that one new business is already on the way.

**City finances:** Brennan reported the city’s financial position is sound: "Today, we have a carryover balance of $6.5 million and over $70 million across all funds."

He noted that residents rightfully expect a lot in return for their tax dollars: "You choose to live in a community like ours and pay the taxes you do, and so you expect a lot in return. It is incumbent upon city government to bring you not only good value, but full value."

"As always, I will continue to advocate for doing better by you while responsibly utilizing our public resources."

Brennan’s complete address is available at on the city’s website, www.universityheights.com.
can have the greatest impact on the day-to-day lives of people and can be utilized effectively to improve a community and quality of life," Paguyoin noted.

Prior to joining FutureHeights, Paguyoin recently served as the Housing and Building Commissioner for the Village of Newburgh Heights. Her experience there reflects her strength as a collaborative leader who created a strong team that solved problems for constituents and worked strategically to strengthen the organization. Paguyoin is known for engaging residents, businesses, organizations, and public officials in advancing a shared goal of social justice and economic vibrancy for the community.

Paguyoin is an organizational development, public administration, community engagement, and education professional with diverse expertise in leadership roles within multi-faceted local government, civic and nonprofit organizations. She is skilled at conducting community outreach, base building, training, education, and leadership development, and has an excellent record of working alongside civic leaders and elected officials to facilitate public initiatives.

Paguyoin earned a Master of Education from DePaul University in Chicago, and an undergraduate degree in communication from the University of Akron.

She has lived in Lakewood for more than 20 years with her husband and two children. Paguyoin is a lover of books, flea markets, the arts, hiking, travel, and, of course, her 4-year-old dog, Finn.

Julie Sabroff is the board president of FutureHeights.

### University Heights City Council Meeting highlights

**January 17, 2023**

Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan was present, as were Council Members Michelle Weiss (vice mayor), Barbara Blankfeld, Justin Gould, Brian J. King, and Sheri Sax. Also present were Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas, Assistant Law Director Michael Cicero, and City Engineer Joseph Comn. Not present were Council Members Christopher Cosney and John P. Ruch.

**Public comments**

John Focolini, assistant service director of University Heights, expressed his personal views on the recycling issue. He said that the city has neither the equipment nor the personnel to adopt council’s proposal, based on council’s interpretation of survey results, for backyard pickup of loose (instead of in the current blue bags/recyclables). Council Member Sax, who shared the meeting that resulted in council’s backyard pickup proposal, said that this is what the community wants.

**Mayor’s report**

Mayor Brennan reported the deaths of Steven Comn, on Jan. 4, and Judge K.J. Montgomery, on Jan. 17. Comn had been the city engineer; 1973-1990. Montgomery had served on the Shaker Heights Municipal Court, which also serves University Heights, from 1991 until August 2021.

**Council actions**

Council approved the Planning Commission’s recommendations for John Carroll University’s new Athletic, Wellness and Event Center. Prior questions on safety requirements were resolved upon consultation with the University Heights police and fire departments. Changes made to the site plan include sidewalk widening, access to a designated fire lane, and reorientation of the traffic signal on Bevor Boulevard.

**Staff reports**

The law department will be filing an eminent domain action this week for the property next to city hall. It is also pursuing a housing violation prosecution against the Cedar Taylor garage, which must be brought up to code within six months.

LWV Observer: Marilyn J. Singer

**February 6, 2023**

The mayor and all council members were present, as were the clerk of council, law director, city engineer, and Finance Director Dennis Kennedy.

**Lobbying firm**

Council authorized a contract with LNE Group, a lobbying firm, for an amount not to exceed $30,000. Lee Weingart, president of LNE Group, presented the firm’s business model and explained how it could help University Heights obtain federal funds for sewer infrastructure. The cost would be $10,000 to lobby Sen. Sherrod Brown and Rep. Shontel Brown, an additional $10,000 if the proposed federal budget includes the funds desired, and another $10,000 if that budget is passed.

A May 2020 study by the Northwest Ohio Regional Sewer District indicates that needed upgrades for University Heights, to comply with Clean Water Act requirements, would cost $178 million. If all the money (were to come) from the city, each household would pay an additional $420.00 per year. By seeking federal funding, the city will be demonstrating ongoing attempts to comply with its obligations. Two years ago, the administration unsuccessfully attempted to do this on its own, and now is seeking the assistance of a lobbying firm.

**Recycling**

Sax presented a first reading of Loose Recycling Services legislation, and read a lengthy analysis. After reviewing the results of the solid waste surveys, the Service and Utili¬ties Committee is making recommendations consistent with the will of city residents. The goal is to increase recycling while maintaining side/back door service. The proposed ordinance calls for the current methods of solid waste collection to remain in place while the city transitions to loose recycling, that the administration increase the quality of recycling by requiring an opt-in program, and that the administration purchase 32-gallon bins for residents who opt in.

Council Member King expressed opposition to the opt-in proposal. He questioned statistics showing that wheeled carts increase the amount of recycling per household by more than 100 pounds per year, asked about data showing that opt-in requirements are detrimental, and asked how pickup routes would be managed as some households opt in while others opt out.

Sax was unable to address these questions directly, but indicated she looks forward to working with the administration and other council members on this.

**Contracting procedures**

Council approved a Contracting Procedures ordinance after amending it to exclude the city engineer. First discussed one year ago, the ordinance requires competitive bids for service contracts exceeding $50,000. City Engineer Comn said that this ordinance, as introduced, does not reflect his understand¬ing of the process that had been discussed. He stated that the proposed ordinance has pragmatic problems that change the way the city engineer can function and, if passed, he would resign. After further discussion, council amended the ordinance to exclude the city engineer’s contract.

**Staff reports**

Finance Director Kennedy said that the lobbying contract would require an amendment to the budget.

LWV Observer: Marilyn J. Singer.
There are So Many Reasons to SAVE HORSESHOE LAKE

1. Horseshoe Lake is an irreplaceable asset. Once it is gone, it is gone forever.
2. Horseshoe Lake makes our communities more vibrant.
3. Horseshoe Lake has been enjoyed by generations of families.
4. It’s a nationally registered historic site.
5. It’s a vital habitat for wildlife and a key migrating point for birds.
6. Our communities have said clearly we want to save Horseshoe Lake.
7. The Sewer District’s plan would permanently destroy Horseshoe Lake.
8. The Sewer District has not listened to residents or worked to compromise.
9. The Sewer District admits to having no plan to pay for their proposed park or maintenance and could cost millions.
10. There is another option that would save the lake - The Horseshoe Lake Restoration Plan. It’s safe, controls stormwater, and costs the same as the Sewer District’s plan that destroys the lake.

SaveHorseshoeLake.com
Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

Present were Mayor Khalil Seren, Council President Melody Jay Hart, Council Vice President Craig Cobb, and Council Members Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Matteo Jr., and Davida Russell. Also present were Clerk of Council Addie Bales and Law Director William Hanna.

Mayor’s report
Mayor Seren announced the hiring of Kelly Ledbetter as the new director of parks and recreation; he will start in February.

Council actions
Council approved a resolution expressing concern about delays in United States Postal Service mail delivery. Council authorized an agreement with Friends of Mandelach to contribute $45,000 to Mayor Wallman, LG for historic preservation services related to placing Park Synagogue, 3300 Mayfield Road, on the National Registry of Historic Places and for its designation as a National Landmark. Council authorized the purchase of four pickup trucks with plows from Classic Ford of Madison; these for the parks and recreation department and one for the public works department; total cost is not to exceed $258,000.

Committee of the Whole
Experiences using the right of inquiry e-mail process were discussed, with some suggestions for modification. Council also discussed the budget process and offered suggestions for next year. Because 27 applications have been received for the charter review commission, the application deadline will not be extended.

LWV Observer: Jill Tatem.

JANUARY 23, 2023 - special meeting
The mayor and all council members were present, as were the clerk of council and Finance Director Andrew Unetic.

Vehicles purchased
Council authorized, on first reading and on emergency, the purchase of six 2023 Chevy Bolt EVs from VanDevere Chevrolet for a price not to exceed $180,000.

LWV Observer: Jill Tatem.

FEBRUARY 2, 2023 - special meeting
All council members were present, as were the clerk of council and the law director. Mayor Khalil Seren was not present.

Council appointment
Council met to consider an appointment to the council seat vacated by Josie Moore, who resigned in December. Only one candidate, Janine Boyd, was proposed. Council Members Cobb, Hart, and Matteo voted in favor of appointing Boyd; Council Members Cuda, Larson, and Russell voted against. The motion failed. Unless council acts by Feb. 4, Mayor Seren will then have 10 days to make the appointment.

Council member comments
Cobb, Hart, and Matteo described Boyd’s legislative experience, her understanding of municipal and state government, her knowledge of Cleveland Heights, and her other attributes. Hart noted that this council, with three members having three years of experience and four members only one year of experience, needs someone with collaborative experience.

Larson explained her preference for appointing someone qualified, currently involved in the community, and from an under-represented community, e.g., LGBTQ, youth, and renters. Russell explained that, while she supported Boyd, she preferred other candidates that could represent the LBGTQ community. Cuda said he preferred that council make the appointment, and regretted that it was not able to achieve consensus on a compromise candidate.

LWV Observer: Jill Tatem.

FEBRUARY 6, 2023 - regular meeting
Present were the mayor, all council members, the clerk of council and the law director.

Mayor’s report
Mayor Seren noted that, as repairs to the north ice rink are not a permanent solution, a request for redesign and rebid quotes will be issued. The city has made no decision about the south rink, and will solicit input from the community.

Seren announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded Cleveland Heights $200,000 Safe Streets and Roads for All grant, for the development of a comprehensive road safety plan. He offered condolences to the families of Sophia Villanueva and David Ewler, who were killed by speeding cars on Lee Road.

The mayor announced his selection to fill the vacant council seat would come from the applicant pool.

Council actions
Council approved purchases of two 430 Caterpillar backhoes, an F-350 Ford pickup truck, and a freightliner 114SD Plus Sleeper Tractor from Ohio CAT, Classic Ford of Madison, and Valley Freightliner, for the public works department.

Council approved a fifth amendment to the Wade Trim Inc. agreement for engineering services related to the sanitary sewer overflow control project and the EPA partial consent agreement.

Committee of the Whole
Referencing council’s April 2022 retreat to develop a three-year vision for the city, council members discussed the need to set goals to achieve that vision.


LWV Observer: Jill Tatem.
2023 Crowdsourced Conversations start with March survey

Sarah Wolf

FutureHeights is at the beginning phase of planning the 2023 edition of Crowdsourced Conversations, a discussion-based forum series that premiered in 2022. It was created in response to feedback that residents wanted more community conversation and follow up after a community event. Organizers initiated this series to provide Heights residents and stakeholders with a space in which to have action-oriented discussions about communitywide topics. Participants and organizers alike enthusiastically agreed that Crowdsourced Conversations should continue in 2023, so FutureHeights asked for suggestions for topics.

Nearly 50 ideas emerged, and a Heightswide survey narrowed it down to the top four: Perceptions vs. Reality of Our Schools; Re-Thinking the Roads as Community Space, Not Just for Cars; Rental Properties and Absent/Negligent Landlords; and Planning and Development in the Heights.

The specific event dates and locations are still to be determined, program organizers are looking to hold the first event, on the topic of Perception vs. Reality of Our Schools, at the end of March. The second event will be at the end of June, the third at the end of August, and the fourth at the end of October.

The survey related to Perception vs. Reality of Our Schools aims to get to the heart of our public schools currently. The survey is expected to be available for a period of roughly a year, from later this fall to the winter of 2023.

The design is the result of input from both library staff and community members, gathered at six community events over the course of roughly a year, from March 2022 through October 2022.

Since our last renovation of the Noble branch, in 2011, the building has grown more and more crowded, bursting at the seams some days with people of all ages,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “We realized the best way to serve our Noble Neighborhood residents was to expand the building, but we also knew we needed to listen to our community members and staff to see what they needed in an expanded building.”

Noble Neighborhood Library’s services have continued to expand to meet the needs of the significant refugee population living nearby, and the increasing numbers of teens and children who spend time at the branch during after school hours. Computers in the adult, teen, and children’s areas are in constant use. Doubling the size of the library will accommodate larger, and better separated, areas for children, teens, and adults. Outdoor spaces with seating will be added, as will public meeting rooms. The original, historic Walker & Weeks building will be left intact.

During the library’s closure, limited services will continue to be provided in the neighborhood at two satellite locations. A small space at the BNH Building at 2940 Noble Road, open during limited hours, will contain public computers, holds shelves, circulation and reference services, and a small collection of materials to check out. After-school programs will be offered at Disciples Christian Church, 3663 Mayfield Road, on a regular basis, beginning in April.

The BNH building is a roughly 30-minute walk or 7-minute drive from the Noble Branch. Disciples Christian Church is a roughly 18-minute walk or 3-minute drive. Both locations are close to public transit stops on Mayfield Road. All Noble Neighborhood Library staff will remain employed by Heights Libraries, and those not working at satellite locations will work at other branches.

Programs will continue to be listed online at heightslibrary.org, and in Heights Libraries’ Check Us Out publication.

For detailed information about the renovation, including drawings of the building’s design and landscaping, visit heightslibrary.org.

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

The final primary programmatic piece of the redevelopment puzzle was an acknowledgement of the public realm. In today’s urban-planning lingo, we call it “transformative placemaking.”

The objective is to create walkable, connected, vibrant, and inclusive communities. This sounds like the Cleveland Heights we are all working so hard to retain.

We can accomplish this challenging transformation with the addition of pedestrian streets and intersections, public spaces, a 4 acre central park, lots of trees, a community plaza and food hall, public art, and a rich mixture of uses. The support of city government and residents with the civic will, courage, and commitment can get it done.

Today, looking back on the last half-century of Severance’s development, and looking ahead to the next half-century or more, we hope that we can work together in an open engagement process, to transform and re-establish Severance as a great asset in Cleveland Heights.

Sadly, 365 acres of our city has been asleep for decades—we think it’s about time to wake it up!

Paul Vipps is an architect, urban designer, and member of FutureHeights and SAG. Robert N. Brown is a city planner, a SAG member, and past president of the FutureHeights board. Both are residents of Cleveland Heights.

An August 2022 Crowdsourced Conversation on community safety. 2023 Crowdsourced Conversations planning committee.

Follow the FutureHeights Facebook and Instagram pages for updates about event dates and locations, as well as each topic’s pre-event survey. Learn more about the program on the FutureHeights website, or by sending an e-mail to swolf@futureheights.org.

Sarah Wolf is the community-building program manager at FutureHeights.
March 2 forum introduces state legislators

Susie Kaiser

The Heights Coalition for Public Education will host a forum on March 2, at Cleveland Heights High School, to welcome and introduce the newly elected state officials who represent the Heights.

The public officials invited to attend are state Rep. Juanita Brent (District 23), state Rep. Daniel Troy (District 23), state Sen. Kent Smith (District 23), and state Board of Education (BOE) member Thomas Jackson (District 10).

Presentations will begin at 7:15 p.m., in the Heights High cafeteria. The forum’s emphasis will be on public education. Community members attending the event will have the opportunity to ask questions, as will the public officials.

Prior to the forum, tours of Heights High’s new Heights Wellness Center will be conducted, being part of University Heights.

In addition, the program will give University Heights a stronger presence coming from I-71, and as the home of John Carroll University.

New signs for Purvis Park and City Hall will come in a future phase of the sign project.

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

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Ken G., actual customer

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GH SIGNAGE continued from page 1

Assuming there are no supply chain issues, the signs will be fabricated and installed this year.

In this phase of the sign program, University Heights aims to better identify Cedar Center, University Heights, and Cedar Road intersections, as well as the South Taylor and Cedar Road intersections, as part of the team that developed the city’s logo and branding, approved by UH City Council in October 2018.

Heights Observer March 1, 2023     www.heightsobserver.org

The group believes if everyone does their part—whether that be planting a front-yard tree, requesting a tree-lawn tree from their city, or encouraging friends and neighbors to take advantage of these free resources—the Heights will become a stronger, healthier, and more attractive community.

If you would like to host a new tree, request a free front-yard tree from the Heights Tree People by visiting, www.heightstreepople.com, or sending an e-mail to heightstreepople@gmail.com. To request a tree-lawn tree, call 216-601-3717 in Cleveland Heights, or 216-932-8531 in University Heights.

Josie Moore is a Cleveland Heights resident, mother, and wife. She believes in effecting change to address the climate crisis by working from the ground up.

request a free tree for spring planting

Josie Moore

Heights Tree People is beginning its fifth year as a volunteer organization, working to rebuild the tree canopy in Cleveland Heights and University Heights by planting trees in people’s front yards, free of charge.

The group is currently accepting tree requests for spring planting of trees, which runs April through May.

Requesting a tree now enables them to conduct a site visit prior to planting season, to find the right location and tree for a specific front yard.

Arborist and Heights Tree People founding member Laura Marks summed up the extensive benefits of trees, saying, simply, “People are happier and healthier when they live with trees. Trees civilize us.”

When trees are lost, so are their benefits. The Cuyahoga County Tree Canopy Assessment shows that Cleveland Heights lost 14 percent of its tree canopy between 2015 and 2019, and University Heights lost 26 percent during the same time period.

Heights Tree People wants to stop—and even reverse—this decline.

Almost a year to the date after their former leasing arrangement with Heights Libraries expired in December 2021, the tenants of the former Coventry School building have signed new leases to stay in the building, effective Jan. 1, 2023. The library owns the building and the adjacent Coventry PEACE Park.

All of the tenants that were in the building at the end of 2021 will be staying for at least another 18 months, with an option to renew for an additional term: Lake Erie Ink, Reaching Heights, Artful, Grace Communion Church, Building Bridges, Coventry PEACE Inc., the Singers Club, the CH Teachers Union, and Future-Heights.

While Heights Libraries owns the former elementary school, property management and leasing of the building is now handled by Cresco-Playhouse Square Property Management, which facilitates repairs, cleaning, and administrative tasks such as finding new tenants for vacant spaces and collecting rent.

“We are so pleased to be moving forward,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “We hope to continue to partner with the tenants on free community programs like the Pekar Park Comics Fest and others, but are thrilled that we can now put more of our time and energy into improving the PEACE Park and playground, which is an important asset for the Coventry neighborhood and the city.”

Heights Libraries’ foundation, The Fund for the Future of Heights Libraries, has started fundraising to replace the Coventry PEACE Park playground, which has reached the end of its useful life. Conceptual plans for the new playground pay homage to the current playground, while creating new, creative spaces. Details about the park and playground renovation can be found on the library’s website, heightslibrary.org.

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

Synagogue’s sign promotes gun-violence awareness

Ari Klein and Ditte Wolin

Temple Israel in Canton, as part of its social justice initiative, developed a program called The Silhouette Project, designed to promote awareness of gun violence.

It created a sign, with moveable numbers, to display the ever-increasing number of gun deaths in the U.S.

Beth Wachter, a member of Beth El - The Heights Synagogue, and its social action chair, brought to the board the idea of displaying such a sign.

A decision was made to participate by posting a sign on the synagogue’s lawn, at Desota and Berkley roads, to help bolster awareness of this escalating gun-death crisis.

Beth El encourages other congregations or individuals to consider displaying the sign to help reach other areas within our community.

New tallies are sent out weekly, and daily gun-death counts can also be obtained by scanning the QR code right on the sign.

It links to the nonpartisan Gun Violence Archive (www.gunviolencearchive.org), which collects data on the number of deaths, regardless of cause, whether from suicides, mass shootings, officer-involved shootings, or officer deaths.

The 40-inch by 40-inch signs are available from Temple Israel. To get a sign, send a check for $36, payable to Temple Israel, to Temple Israel, 432 30th St. NW, Canton, Ohio, 44709.

Ari Klein and Ditte Wolin are long time Cleveland Heights residents and members of Beth El - The Heights Synagogue.

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Ari Klein and Ditte Wolin are long time Cleveland Heights residents and members of Beth El - The Heights Synagogue.
LEI to host fundraising tournament

If you love word games, you will love this news: After a four-year hiatus, Lake Erie Ink (LEI) is inviting you to hone your word-play skills and join the 11th Annual Giant Bananagrams tournament, at Cleveland Heights High School, on Saturday, March 18, 1–4 p.m.

Bananagrams is a game that encourages creative thinking, collaboration, and teamwork. For the LEI tournament, the stakes are amplified with a 30-foot x 30-foot board and a live emcee. Teams of five will compete. To register and participate, each team must raise $500.

To learn how to set up a team and raise the registration fee, go to LEI’s Give Butter page, https://givebutter.com/aeTGtH, for a short how-to video guide through the process. The deadline for registering is March 11.

The tournament, which began as a way to promote literacy, language, and fun, has become a unique community event for people of all ages. Also making a return this year is the All Things Banana Haiku Contest.

The following businesses have made donations for prizes, raffles, and more: Dobama Theatre, Made Cleveland, Music Box Supper Club, the Goodtime III, Mac Backs Books, Talespinner Theater, and others.

All proceeds from this interactive community-building event will support LEI’s programs for young people, including LEI’s upcoming Summer Ink. For more information about LEI’s summer programs, go to lakeerieink.org/register.

Randee Stroud is LEI’s marketing and communications manager.
Register now for Reaching Heights summer music camp

Heights Observer March 1, 2023

Heights Observer March 1, 2023

Krista Hawthorne

Registration is now open for Reaching Heights’ Summer Music Camp, June 12–17. This year’s camp will be held at Cleveland Heights High School.

It is open to 85 young musicians, in grades six through eight, who live in the CH-UH City School District, and who have at least two years of experience playing an instrument.

The camp fee is $200, and scholarship support is available.

The one-week camp will bring together local musicians and music educators to create a fun music-immersion experience.

Each day, camp runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Campers participate in two orchestra rehearsals, a master class and sectional rehearsal, and a chamber group rehearsal.

They develop their understanding of music theory in small groups, and explore new musical interests, such as jazz, percussion, ukulele or choir.

Somehow, there is also time in each day for lunch, outdoor play, and arts and crafts.

The camp music director is Dan Heim, director of orchestras for the Heights schools.

A large team of music professionals provide expert instruction, including district music teachers Tamar Gray, Kym Carter, and Daniel Hershman-Rossi, former district instrumental experts Pam Adamson and Katie Holaway, and 10 additional instrumental specialists.

They are supported by Heights High musicians who mentor campers and bring enthusiasm and energy to each jam-packed day.

In one intensive week, the campers and music educators affirm every person’s ability to learn and work together toward a challenging common goal.

At the end of the week, the campers will perform in a chamber group recital on Friday afternoon, June 16, and in the finale concert on Saturday morning, June 17. The public is invited to attend both performances.

This is a popular camp that fills quickly with returning campers. Families can sign up their young musicians online now, at www.reachingheights.org. For paper applications, call Reaching Heights at 216-932-5150, or send an e-mail to krista@reachingheights.org.

Krista Hawthorne is the executive director of Reaching Heights.

CH-UH district kindergartens announce March info nights

Beginning March 14, each Cleveland-Heights-University Heights City School District elementary school will host a Kindergarten Information Night for incoming and prospective families. Attendees will have an opportunity to meet school principals and teachers, ask questions, and take tours of the buildings.

To find the school that corresponds to your address, use the district’s online interactive boundary map, at www.chuh.org/Interactive-BoundariesMap.aspx. Each information night will run from 6 to 7 p.m., on the following dates:

Boyle Avenue – Tuesday, March 14
Canterbury – Tuesday, March 15
Fairfax – Thursday, March 16
Gearity Professional Development – Tuesday, March 21
Noble – Thursday, March 16
Oxford – Thursday, March 16
Roxboro – Wednesday, March 15

The CH-UH school district’s kindergartens are full-day, tuition-free programs. Areas of instruction include music, art, Spanish, physical education, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math).

For additional information, and to enroll in a district school, visit the CH-UH district’s registration page, at www.chuh.org/RegistrationEnrollment.

Cathan Cavanaugh is the supervisor of communications for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.
Cleveland Heights – University Heights Board of Education

Meeting highlights

JANUARY 24, 2023 – Work session; Board members present were President Beverly Wright, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, and James Posch. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer. Board Member Jodi Sourine was not present.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) update

District staff presented an update on the CTE program. The board expressed concern about the program, and whether it is meeting expectations. They extensively discussed the state assessments of programs, student performance, student placement, and industry credentials acquired. They had concerns about how the data, both from the state and in the school district, is presented, and how to generate greater student interest.

Funding sources for CTE

The CH-UH City School District is part of a CTE consortium with four other districts: Bedford, Shaker Heights, Maple Heights, and Warrensville Heights. Treasurer Gainer reported on funding sources for CTE. The state sends funds for district students enrolled in CTE programs, and the district also receives funds for other consortium students enrolled in Heights programs. Only 25 percent of the funds can be used for salaries.

School Spotlight: Roxboro

The School Spotlight, a newly implemented way to recognize points of pride in each school, highlighted Roxboro’s guidance office. Guidance Counselor Lindsey Self provided her schedule and discussed her eagerness to work with students. She highlighted how using mindfulness assists students in managing their emotions. She said the biggest gamechanger is that she now has a new room for meeting with students. She has been able to see each student once a week.

ELA curriculum recommendations

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Christina Bauer presented the first reading of the recommended English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12. She presented the new ELA English recommendation and explained how it aligns with the district’s strategic plan. Program Specialist for Literacy Karen Heinberg presented the process that was used to review and select the curriculum.

School funding and policy

Treasurer Gainer said it was important to watch the state’s biennial budget because it will focus on vouchers, and money that is left will go to the fair school funding plan. The Ohio Senate has referred to the Senate Education Committee the following Senate bills: SB 1 (renames the state department of education and revises the duties of the state board of education), SB 11 (expands eligibility for U.S. military veterans to be employed as teachers with out licensure), and SB 17 (expands eligibility for SNAP, Medicaid, and unemployment). Senate Bill 1, first proposed in 2022, transfers most of the state board of education’s oversight and control of education policy to the governor. Board President Wright commented that these actions show that the public school system is being attacked.

Recognitions and awards

Twenty-seven Heights students were winners in the Martin Luther King Essay Contest. Their work will be displayed at the Cleveland Heights Community Center. Twenty-four students won awards at the Scholastic Art & Writing competition. Student Cadre members Dashara Tumer and Taylor Evans reported sports team successes, and noted that this is the girl’s wrestling team’s inaugural season.

Public comments

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher announced the formation of the Heights Athletic Boosters, which will connect students across sports. They plan to raise funds to sponsor coaches and students, and intend to create sports-specific user guides so that students and families will have information needed to make sports accessible to all students.

Sonia Greenhow spoke about the appreciated that equity is a stated goal for the district, but changes are needed to promote equity—notably changing the name of Monticello Middle School because of the name’s link to slavery. She also objected to pictures of students in district publications not correctly representing the racial balance of the schools.

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FFHL raises funds for PEACE Park updates

In early January, around 30 PEACE Park founders and friends gathered to hear details about, and give feedback on, new park plans. Coventry PEACE Park is a beloved gathering place in Cleveland Heights, and Heights Libraries is committed to its revitalization.

For the past 10 years, the Fund for the Future of Heights Libraries (FFHL) has raised funds to support Heights Libraries’ buildings and services. FFHL is now focused on raising funds to make Coventry PEACE Park a safe, fun, and accessible green space for people of all ages and abilities.

“Now, more than ever, we want to encourage community. The PEACE Park is a focal point of Coventry, where the community can gather and share in play and festivities,” said Jackie Nachman, FFHL president. “We are looking toward the future of our libraries, and revitalizing Coventry PEACE Park will make a positive impact on the Coventry library branch and the surrounding community.”

The original playground was designed by landscape architect Jim McKnight with input from local children, and built by community volunteers, led by parents from the former Coventry school. Their mission was to “create a multi-purpose public park that would serve all the neighborhood's children and families.” On a rainy day in October 1993, the volunteer group built the one-of-a-kind playground.

Many involved in the original fundraising and construction of the park describe it as one of the best community-led efforts they have ever been a part of.

Since acquiring the park in 2018, Heights Libraries replaced benches, organized park cleanups, planted trees, and installed new dog clean up stations. The park remains a place for community events, including movie nights hosted by the Coventry Village Special Improvement District, Eco Fairs hosted by the Cleveland Heights Green Team, performances by the Cleveland Shakespeare Festival, the Pekar Park Comic Book Fest, Coventry PEACE Campus Inc.’s Chalk Festival, and many of the libraries’ outdoor programs.

“Where the mission, vision, and values of the library, which see us fulfilling community aspirations, motivated us to acquire the PEACE Park as a well-loved community asset for people of all ages,” said Nancy Levin, Heights Libraries director. “We are excited to update the park for future generations.”

A full civic engagement process, including surveys and public meetings with landscape architects Drew Sargeant and Jim McKnight, revealed that the community wants the park to reflect nature. New features will include safety and accessibility features as well as a new shaded walking path, performance stage, playground, half-court basketball, and a reading garden. More than 60 new trees, a large pollinator garden, interpretive signs, and rainwater biofiltration will be featured throughout the park. As of February 2023, the FFHL is over halfway to its $1.2 million goal to rebuild the park.

Thirty years after the original construction, the park remains a community asset. But the park needs the support of the community to thrive. The FFHL encourages all to get involved. Contact Heights Libraries to record your stories for its PEACE Park local history collection, or spread the word about FFHL’s fundraising efforts. Additional information is available online at https://bit.ly/FFHLPeacePark.

Kaela Sweeney is the strategic projects manager for Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
H eights Observer March 1, 2023
www.heightsobserver.org

JANUARY 23, 2023

Board members present were President Max Gerboc, Vice President Vikas Tura- khia, Secretary Annette Iwamoto, Patti Carlyle, Dana Flourian, Tyler McGivney and Melissa Soto-Schwartz.

Financial report
Deborah Herrmann, fiscal officer, provid-
ed the board with a historical perspective of revenue and expenditures, comparing pre-pandemic with post-pandemic years. While expenditures have increased with a full complement of staff, post-pandemic, interest rates (4.88 percent) have been favor-
able for the library. Cash balance on hand at the end of December 2022 was $21,181,946.26.

Board actions
The board:
• Adopted the 2023 planning calendar. Regular board meetings are held the third Monday of each month.
• Accepted donations made in 2022 to the general and memorial funds.
• Approved 2022 accomplishments, pur-
chase orders made before the end of the year.
• Approved replacing a flat roof on the north side of the Noble Branch.
• Approved additional pay for library managers who assumed interim roles, in addition to their regular job respon-

dibilities, while the adult services man-
gers position was vacant at the Lee Road Branch.

Planning and External Relations Committee report
The library is able to fund all of the No-
ble Branch expansion [costs] with its $10 million construction fund. A recent zon-
ing meeting for the plans was successful. Groundbreaking is expected in May.

Negotiations with the Coventry PEACE building occupants are nearly completed. The library has agreed to begin rental leases with Cresco property manager in January 2023 rather than December 2022. Both sides have reached an agree-
ment on the amount of time for announc-
ing meetings was filled. Interviews are underway for the next library manager position.

Personnel report
The part-time technology assistant posi-
tion was filled. Interviews are underway for two remaining positions in the Lee Road Branch’s adult services department. A continuing-education manager position was recently advertised, with a new fo-
cus on management of the HKIC [Heights Knowledge and Information Center] and development of public training and pro-
grams for all age groups.

Director’s report
Heights libraries has joined the MYCom Network in Cleveland to serve teens. MYCom is a unique set of physical and social skills, designed, according to producer Misty Robotics, for the purpose of “opening ac-
cess to social robots and taking down to-
day’s barriers.”

Coventry Branch adult services staff member Ben Ouyias arranged with local journalist David Budin to offer a program on the history of the Coventry neighbor-
hood. Eighty-four people attended Budin’s presentation, and offered some of their own memories.

Take-and-make kits continue to be ex-
tremely popular at the University Heights Library. In December, 142 people took [one of] nine different kits, [intended] for a wide variety of ages.

Circulation in 2022 was 1.5 million items.

JWV Observers: Elizabeth Tracy and Ju-
dith Beeler.

Information about the board, board meet-
ing minutes and audio recordings of board meetings can be found at https://heights-
library.org/locations/heights-libraries-
board.
Stone Oven returns to its bread-baking roots

Bob Rosenbaum

When the Stone Oven Bakery and Café opened in 1995 in the Cedar Lee Business District, owners Tatyana Rehn and John Emerman had already been baking bread for distribution to area stores and restaurants for two years.

As they continued to add new wholesale customers, that part of the business eventually required a larger production facility, which they located on East 36th Street in Cleveland. Rehn ran the wholesale operation, while Emerman looked after the retail business.

Now, though, Rehn is back to baking bread in small hand-made batches, exclusively for Stone Oven’s Lee Road café.

In an effort to create a simpler and more satisfying business, Emerman and Rehn sold the wholesale bakery in a transaction that closed on Jan. 1, 2019. The deal included a commitment to continue buying bread from the wholesale bakery for their retail locations. That agreement expired at the end of 2022.

“We really wanted to get back to our roots—making bread in small batches right here on Lee Road,” Rehn said. “The quality is far superior to what we were doing in huge batches. And walking through the dining room with a tray of fresh bread taken straight from the oven gives me so much joy! And the customers are really thrilled, too!”

Rehn said the wholesale bakery was producing 2,200 loaves a night at the time of the sale. Now, she’s baking about 100 loaves a day.

“I became somewhat disconnected from the process and more involved in dealing with customers, and just managing employees, etc.,” she said. “I missed getting my hands in the dough and the feeling that you get when you pull a beautiful loaf out of the oven.”

Currently, Rehn is baking Miller’s Multigrain, Siciliano and San Francisco Sourdough, with plans to reintroduce other varieties over the coming months. Her bread is only available at Stone Oven’s Cleveland Heights storefront.

The wholesale business continues to supply bread to area grocery stores under the name Stone Oven Wholesale Bakery.

The second Stone Oven café, at Eton shopping plaza in Woodmere, was sold in late 2019 and continues to operate under separate ownership. Its pastries are supplied by the Cleveland Heights Stone Oven, said Rehn, while its bread comes from the wholesale bakery.

Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum is co-chair of the Heights Observer Advisory Committee, and is responsible for its advertising sales and market development.
Two choruses join voices in free March 12 concert

David Gilson
Western Reserve Chorale and Choral Arts Cleveland will perform together in a concert at Malz Performing Arts Center at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) on Sunday, March 12.

The two choruses will join professional orchestral musicians and soloists Amanda Powell, Joanne Ulatowski, Brian Skoog and Brian Keith Johnson to present Remembrance and Hope, a concert featuring two very different approaches to the Requiem mass.

First, the ensembles will present Michael Haydn’s Requiem in C Minor. Though written under time constraints and duress, it is a work of lyricism, depth and beauty. Leopold Mozart and his 17-year-old son, Wolfgang, newly returned from Italy, played in the orchestra at the funeral performance. Young Mozart, with his photographic memory, later used themes from this work in some of his own. (You may recognize the direct influence Michael Haydn had on Mozart’s Solemn Vespers and Requiem.)

The Haydn Requiem will be followed by Jonathan Willscocks’s From Darkness to Light, a major work that presents settings of the Requiem Mass alongside settings of the poetry of Ryland Baldwin written during the height of the Korean War. Baldwin was with the First Marine Division in 1950 and was involved in the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. The poetry that came from that experience is gripping, with three of the poems featured written from his recollections of that battle.

A fourth poem, “Visit to Bellau Wood,” was written after a visit to the American Cemetery at Bellau, France.

At the premier of From Darkness to Light, Baldwin stated, “Remembering is the price of surviving. . . . Darkness can represent disaster, calamity, adversity, time out of joint. There are corporate or national disasters and there are personal disasters: a friend and loved one diagnosed with cancer, terrorist bombings, mass shootings, accidents, and disease. All can be seen as the darkness when adversity falls upon us. But we also have the promise of light that can overcome the darkness; the dawn finally comes and leads to a new day.” Remembrance and Hope honors the sacrifices of veterans who have served in times of war, focusing on the need for all human souls to find hope when faced with the darkest of situations.

Part of this artistic project includes collaborations with local veterans (who are invited to share) their own poetry, which will be featured in the keepsake program book.

Reservations are recommended for this free concert (donations are encouraged). Reservations can be made online at case.edu/maltzcenter, or by phone at 216-368-6064. The Malz Performing Arts Center at CWRU is at 1855 Asell Road in Cleveland’s University Circle.

David Gilson is the artistic director of the Western Reserve Chorale and director of music at Church of the Saviour UMC. He will direct the two choruses in the March 12 concert.

UH Symphonic Band performs free concert March 26 at JCU

Edward Seiss
The University Heights Symphonic Band will return to John Carroll University’s (JCU) Dolan Science Center Atrium on Sunday, March 26, 3:30 p.m., to perform its annual, free, spring concert.

The program will comprise 20th- and 21st-century concert band music, directed by Devlin Pope, music director.

Selections will include “The Hounds of Spring,” by Alfred Reed, celebrating young love in springtime; “Inchon,” by Robert W. Smith, about the U.N. invasion of North Korea; “Sevens,” by Pittsburgh native Samuel Hazo, described as a jazz-flavored barn burner; “Americans We,” by Ohio native Henry Fillmore; an adagio, “O Magnum Mysterium,” by Morten Lauridsen; and more.

The Dolan Science Center is the closest JCU building to Fairmount Circle. Concert seating will be available both upstairs and downstairs, and there is free parking.

Edward Seiss is president and business manager of the University Heights Symphonic Band.
I'm writing this a few days before the 2023 Super Bowl. But this isn't about the Super Bowl. It only mentioned it because of the Kelce brothers, Jason and Travis. Though this isn't really about them, either. This is really about the perception of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, expressed by people who moved away years ago.

I'm a member of at least three Cleveland Heights-related Facebook groups, one dealing with the past, one with the present, and one about Heights High. During this run-up to the Super Bowl, I've seen quite a few comments, in those groups and on individual people's pages, wondering why Cleveland Heights, in general, is making such a big deal about a football game, and making it clear that they don't think it's worth that much of our attention.

I'm not a football fan and I don't follow the sport (though I used to go to Heights High games when my kids were students there). But I have followed the Kelce's careers. My daughter was in Jason's class at Heights (and at Roxboro Middle School). And Travis came along two years after Jason, so there was some overlap.

They were both outstanding players in high school and I was interested to see where they would go. Where they went was to the NFL, which is not easy to accomplish. Jason plays for the Philadelphia Eagles and Travis for the Kansas City Chiefs, who are the opposing teams in this year's Super Bowl—the biggest sports event in this country (even, somehow, without me as a fan). And not only are they playing in the NFL, but they're among the best at their positions. And now, with this game, they're making history, as this is the first time that two brothers have played against each other in the big game. But, proud as I am of Jason and Travis, that's not what really matters most to me about them.

I've responded to several of these Facebook cynics and complainers—like one who asked if the Kelces playing in the Super Bowl was the only good thing to have happened to Cleveland Heights in (however many years he's been gone) years, and two or three who had some negative feelings about Heights High lighting up the front of the school with the team colors of the Eagles and the Chiefs, and others who think we're giving the Super Bowl too much importance—by saying that it's not about the football game.

It's about the fact that the Kelce brothers are both so loyal to their hometown and their school. And that they passionately and emotionally always give credit, in national media, to the city and the school for their success. And that they come back, when they can, to visit Heights High and interact with students. And that their foundations have given money to school programs. People are usually surprised to learn about all of that.

Former residents, in these Facebook groups, also often talk about the ways they believe the city has changed, for the worse—though they haven't really been back here. They're "heard" things. For instance, crime is often a topic. I try to point out that, first, there was, actually, crime in Cleveland Heights when I was growing up here in the 1950s and '60s. And, in fact, the city practically began with a sensational murder, in the early 1900s, possibly committed by one of the city's founding fathers (the case was never solved). So, crime is not new here. And, second, crime rates have risen everywhere.

People who have left the area also talk about how bad they think things are. I was growing up here in the 1950s and '60s. And, in fact, the city practically began with a sensational murder, in the early 1900s, possibly committed by one of the city's founding fathers (the case was never solved). So, crime is not new here. And, second, crime rates have risen everywhere.

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Heights Arts announces the return of its Close Encounters chamber music series with five concerts: the first was Feb. 26, the subsequent concerts will take place on March 26, April 30, May 21, and June 25. Each of the Sunday afternoon concerts begin at 3 p.m.

This popular series is known for its world-class performances, featuring Cleveland Orchestra musicians and locally acclaimed ensembles performing in unique settings that create intimacy between the audience and musicians.

Heights Arts Executive Director Rachel Bernstein commented, “After a hiatus due to the pandemic, I am excited to present our 16th Close Encounters season featuring four performances with outstanding musicians from the Cleveland Orchestra, and an additional performance by the critically acclaimed Alla Boara ensemble. The series, planned with our new artistic director Dane Johansen and our talented music community team, is sure to deliver both the excellence we have shared from prior series performances, and a new twist as we introduce our audience to the incredible talent of local ensembles not previously featured. Of course, all of these performances will be heard up close and personal—in the beautiful, intimate settings so generously provided by loyal home-owners and venues.”

Composers featured are: Feb. 26 - Caroline Shaw, Haydn, and Mendelssohn; March 26 - Mozart, Stravinsky, and Britten; April 30 - Bartok and Brahms; May 21 - Beethoven, Shostakovich, and Sibelius; and June 25 - modern takes on Italian folk music.

A Close Encounters five-concert subscription is $255/Heights Arts members $215. Individual concerts are $60/Heights Arts members $51.

Close Encounters performances sell out, so order early for guaranteed seats. For more information, visit https://www.heightsarts.org/.

Stephan Haluska is a harpist, composer, and improviser active in new and experimental music in Cleveland. He brings his passion for music curation and arts management to the Heights Arts team.
the schools must be. Some have been saying this (coincidentally, I guess . . .) since the Black population of Cleveland Heights and University Heights started growing, in the ’70s. Even some of my old school mates say things to me like, “So, Heights schools have really changed, right?” Which is code for, “There are now Black kids in the system.” They want me to confirm for them how this has destroyed the schools. I always call them on it and they (almost) always backpedal and claim that wasn’t what they meant. But it was—because nothing else has changed. My kids went through the Heights schools and now my grandchildren are there, and they’ve all thrived.

David Budin is a freelance writer for national and local publications, the former editor of Cleveland Magazine and Northern Ohio Live, an author, and a professional musician and comedian. His writing focuses on the arts and, especially, pop-music history.
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