And the 2023 Best of the Heights awards go to . . .

Jessica Schantz

FutureHeights established its annual Best of the Heights Awards program 18 years ago to recognize the unique attributes of Cleveland Heights and University Heights businesses, and their contributions to the local economy. Voting for this year’s winners began Feb. 1 and concluded March 15, with a nearly three-fold increase in participation compared with last year.

FutureHeights, Cleveland Heights’ community development corporation, creates the categories, distributes the survey (in print and online) and tallies the results. It expanded the award categories this year to include trade services.

Winners and runners-up comprise longtime fan favorites, as well as new businesses—or businesses new to the awards.

Nova’s Performing Arts, a dance studio owned by Alicia Sloan, won the award for Best Place to Take Kids. In a full-circle twist, Sloan began her training as a child at The Dance Studio on Lee Road in Cleveland Heights.

MOJO World Eats & Drinks won this year’s Best Cleveland Heights Restaurant or Bar. When informed of the prize, owner Michael Herschman said, “The whole MOJO World Eats & Drinks family is excited.”

Address signs endure as pieces of Heights school history

Michael Bier

Forty years ago, the sounds of ball-peen hammers striking wrought iron on the horn of an anvil, and power tools shaping a piece of poplar, echoed through the basement of Roxboro Junior High School. This was the din of students in a mandatory shop class crafting projects that remain fixtures throughout Cleveland Heights.

In the early 1980s, (the era when I was in junior high—now called middle school) seventh-graders had one class period divided over the year into three courses: Home Economics, Art, and Industrial Arts, or “shop,” as it was called. Shop exposed students to an industrial world that most students today are unaware of. In shop, seventh-graders learned about electrical wiring, wood-working, and metal-smithing, among other skills. They learned through hands-on experience, making individual projects under the tutelage of two barking World War II veterans.

One project that all students worked on during their rotation in shop was fabrication of an ornamental house sign. Given a design to follow, the students worked with steel, wood, and hardware to shape and assemble distinctive house signs.

Heights EcoFest moves to May

Catalina Wegers

The third annual Heights EcoFest will take place on May 27 at Coventry PEACE Park, noon to 4 p.m. The event aims to raise awareness about local resources available to support and encourage greener and healthier practices.

The EcoFest is organized by Heights Libraries’ Coventry Village Branch and the Cleveland Heights Green Team (CHGT) in partnership with FutureHeights.

An activity table at the Heights Eco Fair in 2022.
Millikin neighbors thank school district

Cindie Carroll/Pankhurst and Robin Kosen

The playground at the corner of Maple and Wood roads is no longer the sad, dreary space it was as recently as 2019, when our group of civicly minded volunteers began to turn it around. The Millikin Neighborhood Group would like to thank the CH-UH City School District for its unwavering support. Since the group’s inception, the district has been an invaluable partner to us. By allowing us to use the playground space at the former Millikin school, the district enabled us to continue our community-building efforts. It has been gracious in advising us on what we may and may not do with the space. With district guidance and our fundraising efforts we have been able to add: a garden, a picnic table, a mural created by Heights High students, installations created by local artists, and new seating, a storage bench, playground equipment, and a multitude of donated toddler-play elements. With their permission, space, made to the space, we were able to host numerous community events over the last three years that drew more than 2,000 people. The space is in daily use by neighborhood children and their parents.

It is our hope that our presence there helps the school district as well, by demonstrating that it is a vibrant space full of joyful activity. We are committed to changing the too-common community perception that the school building is a vacant nuisance. Nothing could be further from the truth, and we happily tell folks how the use of the space to centrally house the trades and create parking to provide security and small storage, saves the district money. It also provides us with an invaluable resource to bring our neighborhood together.

So, we thank the school board members and Superman Kirby for their support. Also, we give a special shout out to the staff who help us through our routine maintenance of the playground and surrounding green spaces.

All of Cleveland Heights should celebrate the many ways the school district partners with organizations and community groups to improve our schools and what is offered to our children outside the classroom, and promote strong neighborhoods.

These partnerships are not a happy accident. They are proof of the vision and dedication of our school board and school administrators to leverage and amplify resources across the community as part of their diligence to serve Heights children.

Cindie Carroll/Pankhurst and Robin Kosen are members of the Millikin Neighborhood Group, working on community-building in their diverse neighborhood. Millikin Neighborhood Group is a multi-year FutureHeights mini-grant recipient.

CH Dems work to overcome barriers to voting

Jim Petros

Despite analysts across the political spectrum finding that voter fraud is exceedingly rare, Ohio dramatically overhauled its elections law in January 2023. While the legislation is wide-ranging, I will focus on new voter ID requirements, considered by many to be the strictest in the country, the impact they may have on students.

Before passage of the new requirements, students could use a bill from their college or university as a form of identification. This convenient practice was acceptable for over a decade, but now a student, or any other voter, may use only an Ohio driver’s license, Ohio ID card, U.S. passport, or military-issued ID. While requiring a voter to use one of these forms of identification might sound reasonable to some, it’s important to consider the impact that this requirement could have on voters.

Without a passport or military ID, a student must travel off campus to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) to obtain an Ohio driver’s license or ID card. As anyone who has visited the BMV knows, getting what you come for can easily take an hour or longer. While the BMV will waive the cost of an ID card if a person attests that they cannot afford it, there can be other costs beyond the cost of the card itself.

For example, in order to get a driver’s license or ID card, a person must bring documents proving their full legal name, date of birth, Social Security number, legal presence, and Ohio residency. There is often a cost to obtaining copies of these documents—the city of Cleveland, for example, charges $5 to replace a birth certificate and takes two to four weeks to process requests. These are not insignificant hurdles for someone looking to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

Overcoming these barriers will require a coordinated effort from university administrators, student groups, and voter outreach groups like Rock the Vote and Mobilize the Vote NEO. As Rep. Juanita Brent regularly reminds people, you are stronger when you come together as a fist than when you stand alone as individual fingers.

Cleveland Heights Democrats are working hard to overcome these and other voting barriers passed into law at the beginning of the year. We have been working with the Ohio Voter Rights Coalition, Ohio Promote the Vote, and other groups so that we can figure out all of the changes and develop strategies to reach affected voters.

Jim Petros serves as secretary of the Cleveland Heights Democrats and has announced his candidacy for CH City Council.

LETTERS/OPINION

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. Individuals throughout the community decide what stories they want to write, then submit them for publication. Anybody can submit a letter or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it’s about something specific to our two cities. And try to keep it under 500 words.

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

• For information about writing style, article length, etc., click on “Become an Observer” at the left. For questions that aren’t answered there, call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423 or e-mail info@futureheights.org.

Articles to be considered for the June issue must be submitted by May 8. We publish some articles online only. We also publish an e-newsletter each Tuesday.
Living with dementia in CH

Kristin Brooks

My mother was in the late-middle stages of dementia when COVID hit, and I needed to move her into our family home in Cleveland Heights.

A 60-year resident of the city, she had been living alone with the help of many caregivers, neighbors and friends. When her condition made her retirement from her beloved career necessary, she and her huge yellow Labrador became a fixture in their Coventry Road neighborhood.

I am sure that I have many neighbors to thank for her freedom to roam and linger without harm. I know none of this would have been possible without the help of local librarians, shopkeepers, fellow church members and, at times, even the Cleveland Heights police. I am deeply grateful she lived in this familiar, close-knit community.

Her path to becoming “deeply forgetful” has been so slow that many of those in her social circles did not see it. Some still do not.

She was diagnosed by world-class physicians, and then was essentially left without help navigating through the early stages.

We did not find help connecting us to resources or support, nor any blueprint to follow to help our family prepare. We, like millions of others living with or caring for those with cognitive impairment and other “different abilities,” made it up as we went along, and missteps were made. But that’s not the hardest part.

The hardest part of our experience has been the isolation that only grows as symptoms progress. Cognitive impairment can be a tragic self-fueling cycle, but it does not have to be this way.

Cleveland Heights has taken steps to come together to support policies needed to care for those affected by and living with dementia, including myself and my mother, and it recently was recognized as a “Dementia Friendly City.”

May 15–20, the Lee Road branch of Heights Libraries will host a Dementia Friendly Week to celebrate this milestone and provide resources and information to continue to empower the community to embrace dementia friendliness.

The moral intensity of the daily decisions caregivers like myself face was best described by Dr. Jason Karlawish, of the University of Pennsylvania’s Penn Memory Center, who said we are telling “stories about people struggling to live with a disease that early and relentlessly chips away at the very foundations of personhood: identity, privacy and ability to self-determine one’s life.”

Things will get better if we look for and listen to these stories. They may inspire our community to create additional pathways to support and provide people living with dementia that are, as Karlawish put it, “safe, social and engaged.”

My mother has settled into her new neighborhood in the Heights. Her post-COVID world, like all of ours, has changed. Yet she has developed new friendships and routines. She still relies on the talents and kindnesses of neighbors to thrive here, and her days are made richer because of where we live.

I hope the Heights community’s understanding of our interdependence continues to deepen. Cleveland Heights has often been at the forefront of positive social change and this designation is a new opportunity to fuel it.

Kristin Brooks is a care partner with her mother, Leslie Brooks Wells, who is living with dementia in Cleveland Heights.
I remember waiting for the classroom assignments for my kids to be posted on the front door at Boulevard Elementary the week before school opened. This was part of creating excitement for the upcoming school year. Now I watch for the EdChoice “designation list” to be posted on the Ohio Department of Education website. This list names the public schools that the legislature has characterized as failing, and determines where the state can award performance-based vouchers. Vouchers are publicly funded scholarships to private schools.

I am pleased to report that the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District is not among the 57 districts where new EdChoice vouchers will be authorized for the 2023–24 school year. Being named on this list, in which a school is officially branded a failure, is loaded with an expensive stigma. I am glad this misrepresentation of our public schools and students is finally gone.

Ohio has two kinds of EdChoice vouchers—income-based, which are available to any household with income at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level, and performance-based, which gives students a way to leave a school listed as failing, even if they never attended that school. Building a narrative of failure is essential to justifying privatizing education. That’s why voucher advocates like state Sen. Andrew Brenner trash public education whenever they can. Oddly, it doesn’t lead them to recommend ways to improve the public system.

The state’s testing program gives lawmakers a convenient way to define failure, even if it is biased against schools serving poor children. It is inappropriate to use standardized tests for high-stakes decisions. The designation list is based on indefensible evidence.

In 2020, just as the list was about to include nearly every school district in Ohio, Sen. Matt Huffman orchestrated a last-minute rule change that made performance-based vouchers a program for high-poverty school districts only. He knew wealthy school districts would be up in arms once the designation extended beyond schools serving children of color in urban neighborhoods. The rule changes now limit performance-based vouchers to the lowest-performing schools in districts where 25 percent or more of the students are eligible for assistance under Title I. The EdChoice designation has haunted our high-poverty district since 2013. Test scores do determine eligibility trapped us forever. No matter how hard our teachers work, aggregated test scores won’t capture real progress. Teachers can’t make poverty disappear.

While the unfair failure label has been lifted, there is no way to bring back the public funds that were diverted from our public schools. The damage is permanent, even if the designation is not.

As the number of schools designated for performance vouchers starts to shrink, the privatizers are now shifting the emphasis to income-based vouchers. Gov. DeWine’s budget proposal would make income-based vouchers available to families with incomes near 400 percent of poverty, or nearly everyone. Income is much easier to assess than quality. If approved, it will give lawmakers an escape route from their irresponsible performance-based system and will achieve what they’ve always been after: universal public funding of private choice.

Advocates for privatization now claim public funds for private education as a right. They have dropped any facade that vouchers are about quality or financial hardship. They are willing to replace our public system and its service to the common good with private choice.

Public education and private education are not the same. There is no legitimate justification for transferring public funds to a system that does not exist for a democratic purpose. We may be off the list, but privatization is still ours to fight.

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

HEIGHTS OF DEMOCRACY

Deborah Van Klee and Carla Rautenberg

In her April column, “HCC legacy can guide us,” Susie Kaeser paid heartfelt tribute to this recently shuttered organization. “Its purpose,” she wrote, “was to mobilize the whole community to fight racism, advance equity and inclusion, and protect racial integration.

In its heyday, Heights Community Congress (HCC) did cutting-edge work in pursuit of fair housing. Staff and volunteers researched and documented illegal practices such as redlining. They pressured municipal government and confronted racial steering by real estate agents, helped create block clubs and neighborhood organizations, and developed services and working groups to meet the needs of specific constituencies. The group’s skilled leadership, high level of community participation, and shrewd strategizing set the bar for future activist organizations.

HCC’s profile was lower in its later years, but activism is perennial in Cleveland Heights. Vibrant neighborhood organizations have been reborn in Boulevard and Noble. Growing numbers of residents are responding to climate change with Friends of Heights Parks and the Cleveland Heights Green Team. Heights Coalition for Public Education is fighting state policies that undermine our public schools.

Grassroots organizing has often taken the form of successful one-off campaigns. Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights residents defeated the county’s freeway scheme in the 1970s, saving the Shaker Parklands and, in reality, the two cities themselves.

In 2003 the LGBT community and its allies launched and won a citizens’ ballot initiative to establish a domestic partner registry for all unmarried residents. It takes fearless grassroots organization to push, cajole, demand, and sometimes scare those with political and economic power into doing what is necessary and right.

Problems needing citizen-led advocacy and agitation include, but certainly are not limited to, the following:

• An estimated 20 percent of police service calls nationwide involve a mental health or substance use crisis. Just as we would not expect a police officer to perform a cardiac catheterization on someone experiencing chest pain, we should not rely on our safety forces to provide critical mental health care. Neighboring Shaker Heights has recently piloted a Mental Health Response Team, embedding a social worker with its police and fire departments. With Metrolight’s new behavioral health unit located just across the ring road from Cleveland Heights City Hall, our city could be in a uniquely advantageous position to do likewise, but will it? Perhaps not, unless pressure is brought to bear.

• Forty-three percent of Cleveland Heights residents rent their homes, some of which are unsafe and inadequately maintained. This is particularly true for the approximately 16 percent of our residents living in poverty. The right to decent, affordable housing sits at the convergence of racial and economic justice. We need a tenants’ union, possibly in cooperation with surrounding cities.

• Unfortunately, we still need vigorous advocacy for housing code enforcement. The Greater Cleveland Congregations Housing Team operated from 2010 to 2023, but some of its members had already devoted decades to the cause of housing preservation. A new generation of activists must step up.

Real change most often comes from outside entrenched institutions. For our city’s slogan, “All are welcome,” to be fully realized, an organized community must lead.

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

SAVE THE DATE:
Cleveland Heights’ 10th Annual Democracy Day public hearing will take place on Wednesday, June 7, at 7 p.m. at City Hall. Please join us!

June 2–June 24
Tickets $18 - 23
For Tickets & Info:
www.convergence-continuum.org
or call 216-687-0074
LIMINIS THEATER | 2438 Scranton Rd.
Cleveland OH 44113

For all other information or to order tickets, please visit: www.heightsobserver.org
University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
MARCH 20, 2023
Council members present were Michele Weiss (vice mayor), Barbara Blankfield, Christopher Cooney, Brian J. King, John P. Bash, and Shen Sa. Justin Gould was not present. Also present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan, Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas, Law Director Luke McCormell, and Finance Director Dennis Kennedy.
Council actions
Council approved purchase of a used 2012 real-load packer truck for rubbish collection. The 2006 Freightliner owned by the city engineer has failed and repair costs exceeded the cost of purchase.
Council declared the property at 3777 Bushnell Road a public nuisance, enabling the housing department to bring the house into compliance and put a lien on the property to recover expenses. Geoff Englandreich, director of housing and community development, noted that the owner has not responded to requests for clean-up and is $18,000 behind on taxes despite an agreed payment plan. The property is currently unoccupied, and its condition is an issue for the neighbors.
Staff reports
Mike Cook, communications and civic engagement director, reported that the charter review has nearly concluded, and that council should start planning how to present items from the review to voters. He will work with council on communications and offered to put together a video. LWV Observer: Marilyn Singer.
APRIL 3, 2023
Present were all council members except Justin Gould. Also present were the mayor, clerk of council, finance director, and law director.
Public comments
Four residents spoke in support of the resolution favoring restoration of home rule on regulation of firearms. One resident recommended that the resolution be reviewed to consider all implications and potential for litigation.
Mayor’s report
At the March 22 Committee of the Whole meeting the mayor committed to a competitive bid process to hire the next city engineer, even though this is a mayoral appointment under the city’s charter.
The mayor said the resolution to restore home rule for firearm regulation comes out of various concerns in the community regarding allowing guns at public places, such as pools, and at public events. Concerns have been expressed by both pro and con groups through the years. The mayor stated that gun violence continues to increase in the country and gun safety is a matter of local concern.
Council referred to committee a resolution favoring restoration of home rule on regulation and calls upon the state of Ohio to ban AR-15 and AR-15-style semi-automatic weapons, among other common-sense gun-safety reforms. Council referred the resolution to the Safety Committee to review legal complexities and consult the police chief and legal department for considerations of enforcement and other ramifications.
Staff report on road construction
The council reviewed a project at Seyborn Drive and Silby roads and Washington Boulevard will begin Monday, April 10, and is scheduled for 43 days to be completed before Memorial Day.
LWV Observer: Tams Swan.
Free books mailed to your young child!
If your child is 4 years old or younger and lives in Cuyahoga County Please register online at:
ImaginationLibrary.com
Put a stop to weeds and add color to your lawn this spring
When you think green… and add color to your lawn this spring
Put a stop to weeds
it is the same lawn.”
Ken G., actual customer
Heights Observer May 1, 2023  www.heightsobserver.org
Heights Observer May 1, 2023
Dun-dun! UH native guest stars on ‘Law & Order: SVU’

Mike Cook

In the television acting system, an appearance on “Law & Order: SVU” is considered a prime gig for up-and-coming thespians. In University Heights, we are especially proud of hometown actor Gabriel Sidney Brown for his performance on a recent episode. This is his story . . .

“I hope I get it.” Brown was no stranger to the show’s casting director. “I auditioned for ‘Law & Order: SVU’ several times and also numerous other shows within the Dick Wolf Productions’ world previously,” Brown said.

“Law & Order: SVU,’ ‘FBI: Most Wanted,’ and even ‘Chicago Med, PD, and Fire’ all exist in the same universe and can have crossover in plot line,” explained Brown. “The same casting director works on each of these shows so, as an actor, auditioning for one puts you well in the mix for any roles which might come up across all of them. I was in the final running several weeks prior for a different character on an episode of ‘FBI: Most Wanted,’ and was fortunate enough that while one didn’t go my way, I was thought of for this episode.”

“This episode” was “The Presence of Absence,” and in it, Brown plays a young medical student. “Pleading the fifth.” Before the show aired, Brown didn’t just have the right to remain silent—his silence was mandatory. He couldn’t tell anyone if he played a crime victim, a perpetrator, or a witness.

“With a show like ‘Law & Order: SVU,’ the writers and producers can be very tight-lipped about the full plot lines to avoid any leaks of the script or spoilers,” Brown said.

The table read through was the first time Brown had seen the entire script. “My neck was sore from the whiplash I got at each twist and turn,” he said. “It was crazy! This show has been on now for 24 seasons and still has the ability to keep its viewers guessing and on their toes.”

The character. Brown played a young, handsome medical student named Cooper—much to the delight of everyone at UH City Hall. In the show, a detective describes Brown’s character as “tall, blue eyes, medical school—someone won the genetic lottery.”

“I noticed quite a coincidence (between the character Cooper and the University Heights Brand Ambassador),” Brown said. “I think the only thing missing was the beautiful plumage, and Cooper the Chicken would have been a dead ringer for this role.”

Too shy for selfies. Brown shared the screen with “SVU” stars Ice-T and Molly Burnett. While Brown says the entire cast and crew were a joy to work with, he singled out the two co-stars for praise. “This is Molly’s first season on ‘SVU,’ and she is clearly such a welcome addition to the main cast. For someone who has been working on this show for as long as he has, Ice was incredibly kind and professional and an all-around nice guy. A true legend.”

“Coming into an episode of a long-running show like ‘SVU,’ it can feel intimidating being the new guy on set,” he said, “but I felt comfortable immediately and had such a fun time goofing around with them off set as well as on.”

“The Presence of Absence” episode, in which Brown appears, originated aired on NBC on March 24. It is now available on the Peacock streaming service.

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

University Heights native Gabriel Sidney Brown recently appeared on an episode of “Law & Order: SVU.”

Doan Brook Restoration
Public engagement continues

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District will hold its next public engagement meetings this spring. We hope you will continue to be a part of the conversation and the future of this important community space.

As we near the completion of the Doan Brook Restoration Near Horseshoe Lake Park pre-design phase, watch for details, register for our virtual meeting, and join our mail list at neords.org/doanbrook.

Monday, May 15, 2023 (6:00-7:30 p.m.) / Virtual Public Meeting

Thursday, May 18, 2023 (5:30-7:30 p.m.)
Public Engagement Open House / Cleveland Heights Public Library

Mike Cook is the communications and civic engagement director for University Heights.
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 resident Tom Raithel’s new book of poetry, This Easy Falling, will be published at the end of May.

The collection comprises poems Raithel wrote between 2015 and 2022, before an accident paralyzed him. In July 2022, Raithel slipped in a hotel shower and broke his neck. The accident left him a quadriplegic.

The power of words continues to strengthen Raithel as he recovers and rebuilds his life.

“The accident made me more appreciative for the power of poetry of others,” Raithel said. “I’m grateful to still be able to release this book, which means so much to me.”

“I hope readers will find the book challenging and a comfort to the soul,” said Raithel. “I use the language of the seasons and everyday experience to tell the story of birth, aging, change, loss, and joy.”

Lori Martin, poetry editor of "Midwest Quarterly," wrote of Raithel’s new collection: “Tom Raithel’s poetry occupies space in the here and now, but slips always into the ineffable. There’s a stunning sense of the beauty of the world and its reverberations in the soul. His technical facility is remarkable.”


Advance orders for This Easy Falling can be placed with the publisher, Finishing Line Press (http://finishing-linepress.com/), and will ship May 26. The book will be available from other booksellers, including Mac’s Backs, in June.

Bruce Hennes is Tom Raithel’s brother-in-law.

CH poet’s new book coming in May

Advertise in the Observer

On Monday, April 10th, we delivered 400 signatures to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. Not only were we the first campaign to submit petitions, but we also collected signatures from all 33 of Cleveland Heights’ precincts!

We are excited to be the first campaign on the ballot and look forward to hearing your ideas over the coming months!

To learn more about our campaign and how you can get involved, visit Jim4CH.com!
Cleveland Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
MARCH 20, 2023

Present were Mayor Khalil Seren; council members Melody Joy Hart (president), Craig Cobbs (vice president), Janine Boyd, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., and Davida Russell; Clerk of Council Addia Balesker; and Law Director William Hanna.

Mayor’s report
Mayor Seren announced acceptance of a $757,958 bid for Lee Road rehabilitation.

Joe Sinnott, city administrator, resigned his position because he has “a compelling opportunity” to work in Pennsylvania. Seren praised Sinnott’s contribution.

Council actions
Council authorized an agreement with Wade Trim Inc. for professional design engineering services relating to control of sanitary sewer overflows CH-13 (Hampshire Lane at Euclid Heights Boulevard) and CH-61 (Hampshire Road), and illicit connections on Hampshire Road, at a cost of $540,460.

Council authorized an agreement with Cleveland Competition for acquisition and installation of a new transfer-station compressor for the Public Works Department’s Refuse and Recycling Division, at a cost of $217,039.12. This is less than originally budgeted.

Council acknowledged receipt from the Coventry Village Special Improvement District (SID) of a five-year plan for public services and improvements, and returned the plan to the SID’s board of directors without comments or recommendations for changes.

[Errata: Contrary to the LWV’s last report, the above three pieces of legislation were not approved at the March 6 meeting. They were first readings only at that time.]

Council passed an ordinance to establish salary schedules, position classifications, and other compensation and benefits for city officers and employees, and amended the 2023 budget appropriations accordingly. A 2 percent across-the-board raise will begin April 1. Tony Cuda voted no on the ordinance, stating he had insufficient information about some of the raises over 2 percent.

New business
Melody Joy Hart announced Janine Boyd’s committee assignments: Municipal Services, chair; Community Relations and Recreation, vice chair; and Planning and Development.

Executive session
Council went into executive session for one hour to consider sale or lease of city-owned property, and appointment of Charter Review Commission members.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.
APRIL 3, 2023

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

Opioid settlement
Council approved two ordinances to accept the 2021 National Opioid Settlement Agreement terms with pharmacies Walmart and Walgreens’ and with manufacturers Teva and Avergan. These ordinances allow funds to flow into the city and are necessary for the city to join the group receiving settlement money.

Other actions
Council amended the appropriations and expenditures for the 2023 budget year to update the budget.

Council authorized an easement to the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company to relocate power lines as part of the Cedar-Lee Meadowbrook redevelopment.

Council approved a consent agenda to declare May 2023 National Preservation Month and May Duluth Bike Month in the city of Cleveland Heights, and to appoint three members to the Transportation and Environmental Sustainability Committee.

Committee of the Whole meeting
In this meeting, held prior to the regular council meeting, Finance Director Andrew Unetic explained the budget amendments to be voted on this evening. More than $50,000 in adjustments involved re-allocations, including for ice rink renovations. Unetic and council discussed his new, more transparent budget format.

Bonds worth $10.2 million came in and were delivered to the Cedar-Lee Meadowbrook developer.

Council met in executive session to consider the appointment of Charter Review Commission members.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.
Support the drive for a new Coventry park

Thomas Hodgkiss-Lilly

It was early in my tenure as an elementary-schooler at the old Coventry Elementary School when a community of parents and civic leaders conceived, fought for, designed, and helped physically build one of our city's recreational gems. It was an heroic effort, and the Coventry PEACE Park playground has been enjoyed by three decades of children since the early 1990s to my four kids right now. It is an incredible edifice to the profits of community cooperation and engagement.

The park is in need of renewal, however. Wooden planks are typically slated to last 20 years, perhaps a bit more with quality maintenance. Our playground was built well, but, at well over 30 years old, it is time to transition to a newer, safer playground—one that takes into account the current needs of the community and surrounding neighborhood.

When it was built, hundreds of children who went to Coventry school played on it every day. It required a volume of equipment that is no longer needed now that the Coventry building is no longer a school. The needs of the community are different, and the park should be updated to reflect that.

As a neighborhood realtor, I am compelled to care about offending those holding a reading list to our Covener City. It is probably a given that it is more appealing to live in an area with updated amenities versus amenities that no longer appropriately serve the needs of the neighborhood.

The more free, public-good, community-building features we can offer current and future residents, the more we are able to enjoy our city and attract new residents. Parks are a tangible manifestation of the quality of life for our citizens. We are able to interact, enjoy the ambiance of Cleveland Heights, celebrate our diversity of people, and assume that, for all of us, we are all a part of the shared culture.

Please support the fundraising drive to help revitalize one of our treasures by visiting bit.ly/FPHLPlayPark.

Thomas Hodgkiss-Lilly, a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident, is an attorney and realtor, and member of the Cleveland Heights Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. He has an affiliation with the Coventry PEACE Park fundraising committee, nor will it interfere with the Coventry Village Business District (CVBD).
FH awards $10,500 to 13 Heights projects

The FutureHeights Neighborhood Mini-Grant program has awarded $10,500 to 13 Heights projects in its spring 2023 round of grantmaking.

The program invites groups to apply for up to $1,000 in funding for neighborhood-level, community-building projects, programs, or initiatives in Cleveland Heights or University Heights.

Artful's project, This Art is for the Birds, received $1,000 to support arts workshops directed by Robin VanLear that will result in an outdoor Greek theater-style production to take place in Coventry PEACE Park this summer.

Building Heights' project, Heights Middle School Shorts, received $1,000 to support a week-long summer camp at which CH-UH middle-school-aged children have the opportunity to write, direct, and produce their own short films.

GALLERY 260's project, Come Home With Me, received $1,000 to support the first-ever solo exhibition by artist Antwoine Washington, which the Coventry Village neighborhood will host beginning in June 2023.

Heights Tree People's project, Nela View Road Tree Watering, received $1,000 to support a week-long summer project, where the newly planted trees on Nela View Road in the Noble-Caledonia neighborhood.

Millikin Neighborhood Group's project, Community Building through Shared Events, received $1,000 to support the wide array of activities and entertainment it brings to the Millikin Playground—a place it has taken stewardship of since the school closed.

A Lennox Road neighbors project, Reducing Trash on Lennox Road, received $1,000 to install two new trash receptacles in the Cedar-Fairmount neighborhood, in an effort to reduce littering.

Start Right CDC's project, Neighborhood Book Fair, received $1,000 to support the creation of a book fair to help promote reading and literacy in the Caledonia neighborhood, where there is no library within walking distance.

StudioCat's project, Art Workshop Series for Cognitively Disabled Adults, received $1,000 to support an eight-week art-making class for 12-15 disabled adults in Cleveland Heights. The workshop will conclude with an exhibition of the art created during the program.

Coventry Living Project's Coventry Living Room Project received $500 to support the creation of an "outdoor living room" in the Coventry neighborhood intended to serve as a gathering and performance space for the community.

Community Building, received $500, to support the creation of an "outdoor living room" in the Coventry neighborhood intended to serve as a gathering and performance space for the community.

The Neighborhood Mini-Grant Program offers two rounds of funding annually, once in the spring and once in the fall. The deadline to apply for fall funding is Sept. 15.

To learn more about this FutureHeights program, visit www.futureheights.org/programs/community-buildingprograms/minigrants, or send an email to swolf@futureheights.org.

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

Celebrate We are Noble May 19–21

We Are Noble 2023, the May 19–21 celebration of the people and places in the Noble Road neighborhoods of Cleveland Heights, will kick off on Friday, May 19, 6–8 p.m., with NobleFest, the Noble Elementary School family fun fair, on the school grounds. Kids will have the opportunity to enjoy games and activities with friends.

The complete weekend schedule for May 19, 20 and 21 is unfolding at www.nobleneighbor.com. There, Noble neighborhood residents, businesses and institutions can find information about We Are Noble 2023.

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

All Noble neighborhood residents are invited to host a yard sale at their homes. Businesses and institutions are invited to showcase their products, services and missions by offering special sales, give-aways, food and performances. Real estate agents will hold open houses throughout the Noble neighborhood.

A returning special feature is a seedling plant sale on Saturday, May 20, from 10 a.m. until noon, at Noble Gardens' Market at the corner of Noble and Roanoke roads, one block north of Monticello Boulevard. Neighbors will sell seeds they harvested last fall, seedling vegetable plants they started growing at home, and flowering plants divided from their backyard perennials. Buyers are encouraged to plant their own backyard vegetable and summer flowers grown just outside their own backdoors.

The Noble Gardeners' Market's full selling season runs August through September, when all of the backyard and community garden abundance is ripening. Anyone is welcome to be a seller at the market, both at the May 20 seedling sale and during the August-September selling season. Sellers should bring their own tables or ground cloths, and be prepared to make change for customers. To learn more about the market, visit www.nobleneighb ors.com/noble-gardener-market.html.

Brenda H May is one of the Noble Neighbor leaders. Check out their story at www.nobleneighbors.com.
Beth El dedicates reading corner to Rabbi Adler

Carol Brunl

Beth El-The Heights Synagogue (BE-THS), on Desota Avenue in Cleveland Heights, dedicated a library corner to the memory of Emeritus Rabbi Moshe Adler on March 18. Rabbi Adler’s most treasured books, along with a few others, are available for study in this quiet, comfy place: a place for practice of Torah or Haftarah, a place for learning or contemplation, a place for prayer, or simply a place for inspiration.

Rabbi Adler’s faith in HaShem (G-d), and devotion to Torah, both written and oral, were joyous and seemingly limitless. He wore his breadth and deep learning with such an unassuming, unimposing, humble sweetness that all who knew him delighted in finding reasons to praise him. His lightning sense of humor and beautiful tenor singing voice enlivened the services he so plainly enjoyed. Adler was accepting, respectful, considerate and gracious to everyone. He believed passionately in egalitarianism and inclusion, always in ways that Halacha could accommodate.

An ardent Zionist, along with his late Israeli-born wife, Nili Sharon Adler (a longtime director of Hebrew Studies at the Cleveland College of Jewish Studies, now Siegal College), Adler wanted everyone to share with him the mission of reclaiming and rebuilding Zion through learning, prayer and devotion to Mitzvot, and by furthering justice and equality.

Moshe Adler was far too modest a man to specify what his “legacy” should be. Had he done so, the congregation believes he would have wanted just what he wanted in all his years with BE-THS: that we be invited, without imposition or assumption, into his world of HaShem and Torah, through the library corner.

Many BE-THS members worked to preserve, assemble, and shelve the books; decorate the library corner; design and procure the plaque; and install everything as a fitting memorial to their accepting, respectful, considerate and gracious beloved Rabbi.

In addition, as another remembrance of Rabbi Adler, BE-THS is in negotiation with a soferet (a female Torah scribe) to have a brand new, lighter-weight Torah written in memory of Rabbi Moshe and Nili Sharon Adler. The congregation has coupled the new Torah with a campaign to raise funds to ensure that the small congregation remains viable for the next generation. Donations from the community are welcome for this project, and can be sent to BE-THS, 3246 Desota Ave., Cleveland Heights, 44118.

Anyone who has questions about the Torah or would like to visit the Pinat Moshe is invited to call or e-mail BE-THS (216-320-9667 or info@bethelheights.org) to request an appointment.

Carol Brunl is the communications chair and newsletter editor for Beth El/The Heights Synagogue.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Guided park walks begin May 20

Peggy Spaeth

Many Heights residents and visitors are surprised to learn that there are 140 acres of nearby parks offering accessible trails and a rich history. Friends of Heights Parks, a non-profit organization, will present a monthly free Walk in the Park at 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of every month, May through October, to remedy this.

Some people have an innate fear of walking in the woods, as if the Big Bad Wolf or Hansel and Gretel’s Wicked Witch is lurking behind a tree. However, if poison ivy is identified and avoided (“leaves of three, let it be”), and walkers remain on the trail, any lingering fear can be replaced with pure enjoyment.

All of the one- to two-hour walks will encompass both human and natural history, and will feature exploring more than hiking.

The first walk is at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 20, at Lower Lake in the Doan Brook watershed. Park management is shared by Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights, with a group of volunteers from several cities coming together every Sunday to remove invasives and plant native species at this popular regional park. Armed with historic maps and colorful stories about the Canoe Club (1907-1976) that was a longtime fixture at the lake, veteran volunteer John Barber will lead the one-mile walk, with additional comments from the morley group of volunteers who will enthusiastically point out work they’ve done over the past six years.

Four of the walks will wend their way through the west branch of the Dugway Brook, largely culverted to create the connected park system. The parks that will be explored are Cain Park, Schoolhouse and Cumberland parks, Forest Hill Park, and Lakeview Cemetery. An especially interesting walk through nature will be at “Area 51”—an undisclosed location along the Doan Brook.

The walks will be led by residents well versed in park history, including Elsa Johnson (Forest Hill Park) and Kara Hamley O’Donnell (Cumberland Park). To view the full schedule of walks, and to register for one or more, visit http://cuts2.com/htsGF.

Peggy Spaeth is co-chair of the Friends of Lower Lake, president of the Friends of Heights Parks, and a guide for the Heights Native Pollinator Path.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Heights Observer May 1, 2023
www.heightsobserver.org
Noble library services to continue during renovation

Sheryl Banks

Heights Libraries’ Noble Neighborhood branch closed to the public on April 16, for a year-long renovation and expansion.

However, residents of the Noble neighborhood still have access to library programs and services in multiple nearby locations.

Starting May 1, the BNH Building at 2940 Noble Road will provide limited services Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Customers will have access to public computers, a copier/fax machine, circulation and reference services, and a small collection of materials for checkout, and will be able to pick it up. The site also features a small space where adult programs will be offered. The phone number for the Noble branch will remain the same for this new location: 216-291-5665.

Disciples Christian Church (DCC) at 2163 Mayfield Road has generously offered space for regularly scheduled youth programs for the duration of the branch renovation. DCC will be the site of Noble Summer Spree © DCC, a series of free, weeklong-themed programs for ages 6–18. The programs will take place Monday through Friday, 3:30–5:00 p.m. Separate registration is required for each week, and snacks will be provided.

The programs are:
- **Walk, Roll, Ride! June 12–16** This week emphasizes physical activity, and offers education about muscle movement and fitness, bike and scooter maintenance and safety, and drawing maps of routes around the neighborhood.
- **Pollinator Week: June 19–23** Kids will learn all about bees, butterflies, and other helpful insects that make the world bloom and food grow. The week will end with a Pollinator Parade, featuring the kids in their hand-made pollinator costumes.
- **Legends, Myths and Mysteries July 10–14** — Kids will learn about local legends and create their own. The week will end with a mythology themed DIY escape room.
- **Young Adventurers Academy July 17–21** — Kids will learn to identify and appreciate local plant and wildlife, then test their knowledge with a choose-your-own-adventure challenge.
- **Designers in the Wild: Aug. 7–11** — Kids will use natural and upcycled materials to create something new to wear or enjoy.
- **Noble’s Got Talent: Aug. 14–18** — Kids who are singers, dancers, magicians, comedians, or any other kind of performer, can join the staff for a week of fun.

In addition to Noble Summer Spree © DCC, youth programming will take place around the Noble Neighborhood community in places such as Forest Hill Park, Denison Park, and the Start Right Community Development Corporation.

Days and times for youth and adult programming can be found in the Check Us Out program guide and at www.heightslibrary.org.

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

Highs Heights’s Evans wins Student of Integrity award

Sara L. Jennings

Better Business Bureau Serving Greater Cleveland (BBB) presented its Students of Integrity Awards on April 20 to four Greater Cleveland high school students including Taylor Evans, a Cleveland Heights High School senior.

The awards went to students who personify integrity through their leadership, community service, academics, and strong character ethics.

Evans received a $1,000 scholarship. She is a member of the Heights High Student Council, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Superintendent’s Student Cadre, Principal’s Partners, and Minority Student Achievement Network—all groups that discuss ongoing issues in the school and ways they can be resolved.

Evans also mentors young women and seeks ways to increase diversity throughout the district. Her guidance counselor said, “She has single-handedly inspired me to connect struggling ninth- and tenth-grade students to high-performing and socially active 11th- and 12th-grade students earlier in the school intervention process. Taylor’s ability to connect with, inspire, motivate, and support students is direct evidence of her personal ethics and strong character.”

Public and private high schools within BBB’s five-county service area each selected their own Student of Integrity who submitted an essay to BBB.

“The Students of Integrity Awards program is one of several BBB initiatives that emphasize the importance of continually enhancing and focusing on character building in all aspects of one’s life, whether you are a high school student or a business leader,” said Sue McConnell, president of BBB.

The three other students who received scholarships are Aubria Hills, Notre Dame Cathedral Latin; Yikun Zhou, Westlake High School; and Mohammad Zoraiz, Mayfield High School.

BBB also recognized six area students as honorees.

The Students of Integrity Awards competition is supported by Dominion Energy and CBIZ, with support from Rad Air Complete Car Care and Tire Centers, Company 119, Easton Telecom Services LLC., New Image Media, & Sheakley.

Sara L. Jennings is the public relations and investigative specialist for Better Business Bureau Serving Greater Cleveland.

HRRC announces spring home-repair classes

Anne Marie Goodfriend

Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) has announced its spring lineup of classes.

The Women’s Electrical Series, a popular six-week course, will meet on Wednesday evenings, 7–9 p.m., starting May 3. Classes are designed to take the fear out of electrical repairs and empower women to save money by making repairs themselves. The course will cover topics that include how electricity works, wiring switches and outlets, rewiring lamps, and working with service panels. This is possibly the most popular series HRRC offers, so early registration is encouraged. The fee for the electrical series is $75.

A Roofing and Guttering class is up next, on May 4, 7–9 p.m. This hands-on class will cover the different types of roofing materials, common roof repair problems, installation of new shingles, and repair and maintenance of gutters. The fee for this class is $47.

Income-based discounts of 50 percent to 100 percent are available to those who qualify.

To register for any of HRRC’s classes, visit www.hrrc-ch.org or call 216-381-6100 ext. 16.

HRRC’s Teaching Center is located at 2250 Noble Road in Cleveland Heights.

Ann Marie Goodfriend is the education coordinator at Home Repair Resource Center.
Tiger 5K/Fun Run serves up ice cream and community

Alicia Zeigler Costello

Anyone interested in ice cream for breakfast? Then get on your mark, and join the CH-UH elementary schools for the second annual Tiger 5K and Fun Run on May 20.

All proceeds will be split equally among the Heights elementary schools, supporting PTA programming across the district.

At 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 20, at Cleveland Heights High School, the CH-UH elementary school PTAs will host a districtwide 5K, followed by a Fun Run for younger runners at 10 a.m.

Take a jog or walk through historic Cleveland Heights at this energetic community event.

After last year’s run, Cleveland Heights Mayor Kahlil Seren said, “So good to be back home; this is my home. Tiger Nation through and through, baby!”

At the end of the race, stick around for ice cream provided by alumni Pete and Mike Mitchell of Mitchell’s Ice Cream, a DJ, a raffle table, and more. All registered runners will receive an official Tiger 5K T-shirt.

Check out highlights from last year’s run at https://evemo.com/50423722. Advanced sign-up is encouraged. To register, go to https://runsignup.com and search Heights Tiger 5K.

Questions and sponsorship inquiries should be e-mailed to CHUHTiger5K@gmail.com. All donations are greatly appreciated.

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

Native plants are focus of June 3 sale

John Barber

This spring, a sale of native plants for your yard from next door, parks are invaded by horticultural specimens that outcompete native plants, interrupting a complex interaction among native species that co-evolved—plants, insects, and birds—that is beneficial to all partners. Residents are encouraged to join a global movement to replace non-native species with native ones to build a beneficial, beautiful, and resilient landscape.

Native species are hard to find at garden centers, and should never be collected from natural areas. That is why this sale is so special.

The vendors at this sale, who have grown the plants they are selling, are an invaluable resource. They encourage residents to plant for the planet.

Amy Goletz of Avonlea Gardens in Chardon is a master gardener and naturalist with decades of gardening experience. Julie Slater of Meadow City Nursey in Collinwood has collected and propagated local eco-types, growing her interest from a master’s degree in ecological restoration into a business. Jennifer Johnson of Native Roots in Richfield left engineering to pursue a Master of Science in environmental science. And soon-to-be-retired Joe Kriss of The Shady Nook in Madison has been providing garden centers with plants for many moons.

For more information, visit http://cutz2.com/Tj.cser, or send an e-mail to friendsofheightsparks@gmail.com.

John Barber is co-chair of Friends of Lower Lake, and co-founder of Friends of Heights Parks. He serves as a Honorary Life Trustee of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.
Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board

Meeting highlights

MARCH 20, 2023

Board members present were President Max Gerboc, Vice President Vika Turovskaya, Secretary Annette Ivanovskaya, Patty Carley, Dana Flavell, and Melissa Soto-Schwartz. Ty McFigure was not present.

Unpacking history programs

John Piche, adult services librarian, provided an overview of the Unpacking History program, formerly The 1619 Project. There have been over 40 interviews, since 2020, with lawyers, authors, and professors of academia discussing the content of the New York Times’ 1619 project. A $5,000 Carnegie-Whitney American Library Association Grant will fund organization of a new website dedicated to those interviews that will enable searchability of the collection on Heights Libraries’ website.

Board actions

The board:
• Authorized a contract with JMC Consultants to provide expert assistance in overseeing bidding and construction of the Noble Neighborhood Branch Library addition, renovation of the University Heights Branch basement and the Lee Road Youth Services room, and improvements to Coventry PEACE Park.
• Approved a memorandum of understanding among the libraries participating in the Cuyahoga Reads initiative funded by the Ohio Department of Education’s Libraries Accelerating Learning Grant of approximately $21,000 for each participating library.
• Approved an agreement with Corrigan Movers to box and store all library materials from the Noble Neighborhood Branch during construction, April 2023 until June 2024.
• Approved a contract for repairs at the University Heights Branch.
• Approved a resolution opposing Ohio House Bill 1, which would cut local government funding.

Director’s report

The library will have an Ohio Means Jobs representative on site in the Levy Room on Wednesdays starting in April. A resource officer from the Centers for Families and Children will work at the library on Fridays.

The library is sponsoring a movie at the Cleveland International Film Fest, “Aliens Abducted My Parents (and I feel kinda left out).”

On May 21, a documentary about dementia, “Alive Inside,” will be screened at Osborne Theatre as part of Dementia Friendly Week. A new provider will boost Internet speed in the library.

The Communications Department has promoted new online job-search resources: JobNow and VetNow. Both are accessible on the library’s website, under Job Search and Job Training Resources.

DEI report

The 2022 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) progress report included the following information:
• The Collection Services Department continues to work at maintaining and increasing a diverse collection of materials. Twenty percent of the library’s collection covers diverse topics, which is more than the industry average.
• The library expanded recruitment resources to include sources that African American or Black professional candidates may visit to seek jobs, such as LinkedIn, Black Caucus of American Library Association, and the online news publication, Black News. The library also partnered with Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOUD) to provide an opportunity for youth to intern at the library over the summer.
• The staff association co-chair is also a member of the DEI Committee; this is intended to provide a direct connection between staff and DEI Committee members.
• The library established a budgetary process to support all specialty teams, including the diversity team, and purchased collection software to provide a monthly diversity audit of the collection.

Board members Dana Flavell and Melissa Soto-Schwartz offered suggestions for specific targeted groups and organizations to reach.

Public service report

Results from the 2022 annual public service report were shared. Total circulation (physical and e-media) in 2022 was 1,505,633. Library cardholders totaled 44,960. Circulation staff created 3,795 new library cards. The passport acceptance service relaunched in April 2022, completed 522 passport applications, 626 photos, and generated $32,372. Adult outreach staff delivered 1,100 items to Judson Park and Cleveland Food Bank Mobile Pantry. The monthly Great Seed library service expanded to all four branches in 2022. Lee Road’s Youth Services Department expanded homework help through partnerships with Cleveland State University and Case Western Reserve University, instructed fifth-graders in evaluating online sources and basic research skills, added a weekly art program, and expanded outreach to school sites with 21st century grant programs. In addition, a full-time librarian was hired to introduce and expand services to meet the needs of school visitors. Summer reading program registration comprised 1,318 children, 152 teens, and 1,950 adults. The monthly Greater Cleveland Food Bank Mobile Pantry served 1,318 people and 596 households.

WVQ Observers: Elizabeth Tracy and Judith Beecher.

Information about the board, board meeting minutes, and audio recordings of board meetings can be found at https://heights-library.org/locations/heights-libraries-board.
Library offers two paid internships for teens

This summer, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System will once again provide two paid, six-week technology internships to local teens as part of its Teen Tech Ambassador Program.

In partnership with Ohio Means Jobs, Heights Libraries is now offering free career services and resources. The CDS can help people figure out what skills they have, and what new skills they may need, and help them find training.

By the end of the program, interns will demonstrate what they have learned by co-teaching a computer class with help from one of the library’s Tech Trainers. Interns will also have the opportunity to document their work and achievements using Adobe Portfolio.

Some people,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “Everything is online now, and not everyone is comfortable using the Internet. The job market has also changed drastically, and many people need additional training to qualify for newer jobs. The CDS can help people figure out what skills they have, and what new skills they may need, and help them find training.”

The CDS can also assist with résumé writing and interview preparation, and even help people figure out if they qualify for tuition assistance for training programs.

Customers can get a head start by filling out a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult and Dislocated Worker Application at www.omjcc.us, or can visit the CDS on Wednesdays at the Lee Road Library for in-person assistance.

This partnership with Ohio Means Jobs/Cleveland-Cuyahoga County is the result of the work of the library’s newly formed Workforce Development specialty team, made up of library staff members from different departments who share an interest in workforce-related services and resources.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
Cleveland Heights – University Heights Board of Education
Meeting highlights

MARCH 28, 2023 — work session

Board members present were Beverly Wright (president), Dan Heinitz, Malia Lewis, James Pouch, and Josh Soder. Also present was Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby. Treasurer Scott Gainer was absent.

Community partnerships update

Nancy Pelper, supervisor of community and school partnerships, introduced two programs under her department, the MetroHealth Partnership and Community Learning Centers (CLC).

Kate Davis Bellamy, MetroHealth’s executive director of community and corporate health, gave an overview of the progress and goals of the collaboration between MetroHealth and the district. A major focus was the opening and use of the Wellness Center located at the high school. District students, families of students, and staff may use the center.

Kristina Cope-Minor, CLC organizer, gave an update on the Noble Elementary School CLC. Community and family surveys highlighted community-identified goals of fun activities, exercise opportunities, and tutoring. Examples of activities that have taken place at Noble are weekly fun Fridays during the summer, exercise classes, and after-school activities. Many of the vendors hired for the activities are Noble families.

Sabrina Collins, newly hired CLC organizer for Oxford Elementary School, shared her ideas for Oxford. She is particularly interested in helping with an end-of-year celebration, a back-to-school extravaganza, and [filling].

PBIS Reward Program results

Oxford Elementary School Principal Jackie Taylor and Oxford second-grade teacher Amy Robinson explained the PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support) Reward Program that rewards students for good attendance and good behavior. Since the program has been in place, chronic absenteeism at Oxford has dropped from 40.7 percent last year to 22 percent for 2022–23.

Treasurer’s report

Scott Gainer explained several financial procedures, which the board has approved, that must be completed to receive state money. He said public schools are obligated to present accountability based on state requirements under which each public board of education must operate. The district meets state requirements, but it is a difficult and costly process.

Wright noted that the plan, a bipartisan effort, is not fully funded. It is to be phased in over six years, although it is in the biennial budget and guaranteed for only two years. The funding is based on 2018 wages and prices.

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‘Deer Karen, I’m writing in response to . . .’

David Budin

Just to be sure, I looked up the term “Karen.” A slang dictionary said: “Karen is a pejorative slang term for an obnoxious, entitled middle-aged woman who uses her privilege to get her way.” I’ll get back to that.

I’m a member of a Facebook group about Cleveland Heights. A few weeks ago, a woman posted on it that she was getting worried that the deer had disappeared and weren’t going to come to her yard anymore, and that she was planning to plant a garden that would attract them.

I could tell from the photo she included that she lived on the next street, approximately behind my house. I said that we get three to five deer every day, usually from behind our garage (in other words, from the direction of her house), and that, as with all of my neighbors’ yards, the deer are extremely destructive and eat much of the stuff we’ve spent a lot of time and money on, and which we are then not able to enjoy in the few months we have in which to do that.

She told me to put up a fence behind my house. I pointed out that they come up my street, too, and approach my house, and all of my neighbors’ houses, from the front as well. She said that she liked looking at deer. I said I like to look at them, too, but they don’t belong in the city, especially where they’re so destructive.

One early commenter posted: “Here is just one of about a million resources you can easily find on why feeding wildlife is not a good idea,” with a link to a pamphlet titled “Please Don’t Feed the Deer” from the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Under the heading “More harm than good,” the pamphlet’s introductory paragraph reads: “While feeding deer may enhance wildlife viewing, decades of research has clearly shown that supplemental feeding leads to increased disease risk, long-term habitat destruction, increased vehicle collisions, habituation to humans and alteration of other deer behavioral patterns and, ultimately, the demise of the value of deer and deer-related recreation. With CWD [chronic wasting disease] approaching our borders, the increased potential for disease transmission and outbreak is perhaps our greatest and most immediate concern, but habitat degradation, resulting in loss of wildlife diversity and abundance, and the introduction and invasion of exotic plants are consequences of feed that have been documented throughout North America and are a concern for Pennsylvania. Supplemental feeding diverts the attention, resources and efforts of wildlife management personnel away from more beneficial work; and studies universally reveal many disadvantages and few advantages to the practice.”

Then the pamphlet goes on to explain each of those points in detail. The original poster responded by saying, basically, that she didn’t care.

continued on page 23

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.

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-tremely grateful and hopes this fine community will continue to support local businesses, eateries and bars. We have a lot to look forward to here in the Heights, and the journey begins with the fine folks who live in the Heights!”

Both Sophie La Gourmande and Nubeigel, situated across the street from each other in the Cedar Lee Business District, garnered many votes and much praise (multiple mentions of “must-try” beet-infused lattes at the former, and perfectly executed bagel chew at the latter), in the category of Best New Cleveland Heights Restaurant or Bar.

For the third year in a row, Bialy’s Bagels won Best University Heights Business, followed closely by neighbor Geraci’s Restaurant.

“I want to congratulate all of the Best of the Heights winners and encourage people to shop locally,” said Kristine Pagsuyoin, executive director of FutureHeights. “FutureHeights recognizes how important it is to support our small businesses and looks forward to growing our local business outreach programs in the near future.”

A notable takeaway from this year’s voting is that Heights residents enjoy a good laugh. In the categories of Best Place to Recharge and Best Place to Pamper Yourself—categories whose results were dominated by salons and yoga studios—a number of respondents named their favorite Heights watering holes.

Winners received awards to display at their businesses, and will be recognized at the FutureHeights May 4 open house event, which the community is invited to attend. Visit (www.futureheights.org/may-the-4th/#.ZEyRmWHMKU8) for details.

Each person who submitted a ballot was entered into a drawing to win one of four gift-certificate packages to Heights businesses. The winners of this year’s raffle will be named at the May 4 event.

If you are a Heights business owner who’d like to learn more about the Best of the Heights, and other FutureHeights programs that support the local economy, e-mail jschantz@futureheights.org, or call 216-320-1423.

Without further ado, here are the winners and finalists of the 2023 Best of the Heights Awards:

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BEST OF HEIGHTS continued from page 20

Best New CH Restaurant or Bar: Winner – Sophie La Gourmande; Runner-Up – Nubeigel

Best New CH Business (other): Winner – Lotus Flower Yoga Collective; Runner-Up – Made Cleveland

Best University Heights Business: Winner – Bialy’s Bagels; Runner-Up – Geraci’s Restaurant

Yummiest Delectables: Winner – Mitchell’s Fine Chocolates; Runner-Up – Luna Bakery & Café

Coziest Atmosphere: Winner – Gigi’s; Runner-Up – Quintana’s Speakeasy

Coolest Vibe: Winner – Green Tara Yoga; Runner-Up – Sophie La Gourmande

Best Place to Work Out: Winner – Green Tara Yoga; Runner-Up – Lotus Flower Yoga Collective

Best Place to Get Pampered (hair): Winner – Quintana’s; Runner-Up – Shawn Paul

Best Place to Get Pampered (nails): Winner – Quintana’s; Runner-Up – Shawn Paul

Best Place to Get Pampered (other spa services): Winner – Quintana’s; Runner-Up – Shawn Paul

Best Place to Recharge: Winner – Green Tara Yoga; Runner-Up – Lotus Flower: A Heights Yoga Collective

Best Place to Define Your Style: Winner – Avalon Exchange; Runner-Up – Passport to Peru

Best Place to Take Kids: Winner – Nova Performing Arts; Runner-Up – Sil Vous Play

Best Place to Get Your Car Serviced: Winner – Washington and Lee; Runner-Up – Bryan’s Marathon

Best Plumber: Winner – Verne & Ellsworth Hann; Runner-Up – Herb’s Plumbing

Best Electrician: Winner – Skettle Electric; Runner-Up – Dave’s Electric

continued on page 22

Summer Reading Kick-Off Party

Adventure awaits! Begin your summer adventures at our Summer Reading Kick-Off Party at Coventry PEACE Park!

- Activities for all ages, including reading recommendations by the Heights Libraries Matchmakers and fun writing games from Lake Erie Ink
- Special guests from the Metroparks, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Cleveland Heights Parks & Recreation, the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes, Cleveland Heights and University Heights Green Teams, and more!
- Special deals and discounts from your favorite Coventry Village businesses like Tommy’s, Mac’s Backs, Cilantro Taqueria, and more!
- Live performance by Living History historical re-enactors

In the PEACE Park! WEDNESDAY JUNE 7 • 6-8 PM

Live music by Erin Nicole Neal & The Chill Factors

www.heightslibrary.org
BEST OF HEIGHTS continued from page 21

Best Carpenter: Winners (tied) – Eve’s Painting & Home Repair, Brauer Home Services

Best HVAC Service: Winner – Verne & Ellsworth Hann; Runner-Up – Cleveland Boiler Pros

Best House Painter: Winner – Eve’s Painting & Home Repair; Runner-Up – Sweeney Painting & Decorating

Best Snow Removal/Landscaping: Winner – Grace Bros. Limited; Runner-Up – Keep Right Landscaping

Best Home Renovation Company: Winner – Apple Construction; Runner-Up – Harmoni Design, LLC

Jessica Schantz is the associate editor at the Heights Observer, the projects manager for FutureHeights, and a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights.

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SONGS & STORIES continued from page 19

Then someone else posted an article called “Feeding Deer,” that did not say anyone should feed deer, but that if they did feel feed to give them the right things (food that wouldn’t kill them). She, apparently, interpreted that as meaning he was encouraging her, because she responded with a three-second video of a woman literally dropping a microphone.

Our conversation continued for a while. She claimed that all of her neighbors liked the deer and wanted them to come to their houses. That’s possible. But it’s a pretty drastic change from just one block over, on my street, where no one wants them. (A city council member I talked to said one of his neighbors is also actively trying to attract deer.)

She shifted slightly, saying that she was planting a nice garden, and if it happened to attract deer, there was nothing she could do about that.

Someone stepped in and said it sounded like a “you-do-you and she’ll-do-her” kind of thing, and that she could do whatever she wanted in her own yard because she pays her taxes.

I compared that to the situation in a movie theater when a person behind you is talking and you ask them to stop and they say they paid for their ticket, just like you, so they can do whatever they want. The difference, of course, is that my not talking does not bother them or anyone else, while their talking bothers me and, probably, everyone else. He said the two things weren’t the same.

The original poster said, essentially, that she didn’t care. I asked her if she also didn’t care about her neighbors. She called me a “Karen”—which really seemed to describe her, more than me (see above)—and told me to leave her alone.

I told her that I hope her garden turns out nice, and signed my response “Karen.” (For the record, she “liked” my response.)

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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