CH commission approves PEACE Park plans

Sheryl Banks

On May 10, the city of Cleveland Heights’ Planning Commission approved the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System’s revised conditional-use permit for renovations to Coventry PEACE Park. This allows Heights Libraries to move ahead with its construction time line for the public park, with the understanding that it will provide the commission with additional plans for lighting, the walking path, and new trees at a future date.

“This public park has been the heart of the Coventry Village neighborhood for at least 30 years, ever since the current playground was built by volunteers in 1993,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “We are so happy, and proud, to be ushering in a new era for the park that will expand its use and make it more accessible to all members of the community, no matter their ages or abilities.”

Based on community feedback on the early design concepts—presented to the public in June and July of 2021, online and at public meetings—the new park designs include more than 100 new trees, a large pollinator garden, an accessible quarter-mile trail, a performance stage, and an updated playground featuring a large, cardinal-shaped structure that will include climbing features and a big slide.

The Fund for the Future of Heights Libraries (FFHL) is working with Earthscape Play on the PEACE Park playground design process. The park will also feature sustainable, nature-focused design concepts continued on page 17.

CHHS team wins ’Academic Challenge’

Mike Bier and Diana Drusheil

The Cleveland Heights High School Academic Team had a remarkable end to its 2022–23 season, with a local championship victory and a trip to a national tournament.

Seniors Derek Korane, Kenji Sakaie, Noah Sears, and Arthur Stadlin; juniors Natalie Bier and Niko Bell; and freshman Gabe Dodson comprised the team.

On May 27, News Channel 5’s “Nordson Academic Challenge” tele-

vision show aired its Championship Finale, in which Heights High and the season’s other top teams, Revere and Cloverleaf, faced off. In an extremely tight competition, Heights pulled off a come-from-behind win.

“I’m honestly still a little surprised we won the TV show,” said Bier. “Going into the championship game, we knew Revere was really good, and then they were ahead for much of the game. So, I had sort of accepted that we would get second, continued on page 14

FutureHeights will celebrate John Zagara on July 29

Emily Bean and Jason Hallaman

The Zagara family name was synonymous with quality grocery stores in the Cleveland area for more than eight decades. In late 2022, John Zagara made the difficult decision to retire from the grocery business, but the impact he and his family had on the community will be long remembered. This month, FutureHeights will honor John Zagara as Person of the Year at the nonprofit’s annual benefit.

John Zagara’s grandfather, Charles (Pa) Zagara, was an Italian immigrant and WWII veteran who settled in Cleveland after he returned from the war. Bricklaying turned to bar ownership post-Prohibition—a business Zagara expanded into a neighborhood bodega.

Zagara transitioned a print advertising business in Sav-Mor into his first large-scale grocery in 1936. Throughout the 1940s, Zagara expanded the Sav-Mor brand of large, cardinal-shaped structures that will include climbing features and a big slide.

The Fund for the Future of Heights Libraries (FFHL) is working with Earthscape Play on the PEACE Park playground design process. The park will also feature sustainable, nature-focused design concepts continued on page 17.

The Heights Music Hop will return this September for what is technically its 20th anniversary.

The Hop, founded in 2012, took a hiatus in 2020. FutureHeights, the community-development corporation serving the residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, launched this community-building event to generate support for the Heights’ many local businesses while showcasing the talents of local musicians.

Plans for this year’s Hop are well underway, but there’s still time to sign-up to sponsor the event.

Supporting the Hop has many promotional perks for donors, and guarantees that funds are funneled back to the local economy. Sponsorship-level details can be found at www.futureheights.org/2023-heights-music-hop-sponsorship-levels/.

Local businesses not in the designated districts, or not able to host music, can still benefit by placing an ad in the printed program, or by par- continued on page 11
Heights Observer policy on election-related content

The Heights Observer will review election-related submissions with a goal of providing fair and equitable access for those seeking office, or taking sides on a ballot issue.

Candidates for office are expected to identify themselves as such when submitting anything for publication.

Candidates’ supporters and campaign representatives, and anyone writing about any candidate or election issue, are expected to disclose any personal or professional relationship they may have with any candidate, or with the subject about which they have written. These disclosures are intended to inform Heights Observer review, and will be disclosed to readers when relevant. The Heights Observer will determine whether and when submissions will run in print, online, or both.

Contributions by and about candidates, and any election issue, are limited to a maximum of 400 words.

The Heights Observer does not endorse candidates, nor does FutureHeights, the nonprofit community-development corporation that publishes the Heights Observer.

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Remembering the Lee-Meadowbrook mural

Josie Moore

The Cedar-Lee-Meadowbrook construction began recently—a development that will revitalize this key commercial district. While I am excited to watch it take form, I couldn’t help but also feel sad to see the mural wall come down.

In 2017, Krissy Dietrich Gallagher was tired of seeing the empty green wall in the vacant lot. Her idea: bring fifth-graders from the two nearby elementary schools to paint a mural. She originally thought to depict a garden, but her friend and project partner, Bill Schubert, suggested something more manageable for kids: houses.

After project approval from the city’s Architectural Board of Review, which made clear that the city planned to develop the site soon, and with the city’s assistance in giving the wall a new light-blue base coat, Gallagher and Schubert got to work cleaning up the mural—outlining the houses to create more definition and filling in color to make it more vivid. Londyn Crenshaw and Mila Zelic from the Heights High Arts Club added paintings of the Cedar Lee business district and contributed many after-school hours helping with cleanup. Finally, a passerby with cleanup. Finally, a passerby and painter stopped and offered his services, so Charlie G’s Painting Co. gave the final product a clear protective coat.

As Gallagher said, “It was imperfect. It wasn’t shiny and new. But we created it together in our own Cleveland Heights kind of way. And it taught those students that when we come together, we can make something better.” I moved to Cleveland Heights in 2017, and watching this piece of community art take shape is indelibly linked to how I came to understand this place where my family had landed. It was literally building community by painting a community. The Lee-Meadowbrook mural, a temporary community art project, depicted students’ houses. But it represented what makes Cleveland Heights home.

Josie Moore is a Cleveland Heights resident, mom, and partner. She is passionate about environmental sustainability and community building.
Heights Observer July 1, 2023
www.heightsobserver.org

CH is becoming a city of dandelions

Alan Rapoport

Cleveland Heights soon may cease to be a City of Trees and instead become a City of Dandelions. That would be unfortunate.

Mayor Seren unilaterally declared a “No Mow May” earlier this year. This allowed dandelions to grow unhindered for an extra month in the early part of the growing season. He issued an “executive order” to suspend the traditional city code enforcement of tall grass violations. He restricted mowing on such city properties as parks, empty lots, and boulevards. And he encouraged homeowners to follow this example. The result was an increase in visible blight throughout the city.

The mayor calls his program a “re-sounding success.” He received a lot of personal publicity.

Mayor Seren claims he provided more food and shelter for essential pollinators like bees and butterflies. But more food and shelter for essential pollinators pollinators pollinating. Grass shaded critics suggest that if such pollinators there has been no city administrator. There was no prior public discussion. There was no city council authorization. What Seren now describes as a “starting point” is a very bad precedent.

Severance Town Center remains a mess. And, for too many periods of time, there has been no city administrator. Mayor Seren ordered selective enforcement of laws. This violated his mandatory duty under the city’s charter to “see that all laws and ordinances are enforced.” There was no prior public discussion. There was no city council discussion. What Seren now describes as a “starting point” is a very bad precedent.

A second approach, for the lawn we want to keep, is to switch to gas-powered leaf blowers for electric versions in Cleveland Heights. Even small changes in the way we care for our laws and gardens can make a difference in our contributions to climate change.

One very simple thing we can do to decrease our carbon footprints is to replace part of our laws with other plants that will take up more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and need less carbon-releasing care than grass.

I was thrilled to see the popularity of the recent exchange of gas lawn mowers for electric versions in Cleveland Heights. Even small changes in the way we care for our laws and gardens can make a difference in our contributions to climate change.

When I first heard about “No Mow May,” I was excited. I got the impression no-mow could encourage pollinators pollinating. Then I read a statement by a Cleveland Heights resident. After watching her two dogs on lawns that were knee high, she found three ticks on her companion animals. Let’s be clear: The incidence of tick-borne infection, such as Lyme disease, is greatly on the rise. One might say, so what, it can be treated with antibiotics. I worked as an RN and PA. Lyme can be difficult to diagnose. Without early diagnosis and treatment, the person can live with longstanding pain and suffering.

As more and more natural habitat is converted to cement and housing, deer in our neighborhoods is a common sighting. But deer just want to be deer. They aren’t intentionally carrying around ticks. Put together the two pieces of the equation—deer and tall grass. This is a recipe for serious insect-borne diseases.

Cleveland Heights has been on the forefront of ecological issues. I got the first-of-its-kind ordinance passed in 1995, banning artificial lawn chemicals on public properties. Trees are being planted on tree laws. Gas lawn mowers are being swapped for electric lawn mowers.

Rather than a catchy “No Mow May,” how about encouraging home owners to turn a patch of lawn into a native wildflower garden which can feed wild bees from spring through fall? There are myriad other ideas, e.g., mowing high, planting Food Not Lawns, and incorporating native pollinators into existing spaces.

Rather than keeping the lawn mower under lock and key for a month, there are lots of ways to support pollinators. Remember Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring? This isn’t only about the destruction of the delicate balance of nature. It’s about how we can all move forward in a positive way for the health and safety of our beloved Cleveland Heights.

Laurel Hopwood has been a community activist for 40 years, working to limit exposure of living things to toxins.
Would-be homebuyers: be forewarned, not foreclosed

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

During a March 4 event she sponsored, “Landlord & Tenant Law 101,” Cleveland Heights City Council Member Davida Russell changed the subject. She told several elderly tenants from the Alcazar, “You don’t have to rent. We can help get you into your own houses.” They protested, “We’ve been homeowners. We don’t want that burden anymore!” What they wanted, like so many other renters in CH and beyond, was a landlord responsive to their needs.

Russell repeated “101” in June, and will do so again in October, with the participation of CH Municipal Court Judge J.J. Costello, the Legal Aid Society, the Cleveland Housing Network, and two attorneys. We commend her for addressing the concerns of renters in our city, but that sharp turn concerns us, especially since Russell went on to present a two-part “Pathways to Home Ownership” workshop, featuring real estate agents and representatives of lending institutions, along with housing counselors.

Of course, we don’t oppose buying and living in one’s own home. We’ve seen how the decline in owner occupancy hurts housing preservation and neighborhood cohesion. And stable neighborhoods build a vibrant city. But buying a house—particularly one that is a century old—is not for the tentative, nor for anyone unprepared for costly surprises. (One of us recalls a 1985 charge would cost $3,000 today—and, no, the problem hadn’t been detected during point-of-sale inspection.)

Redirecting frustrated tenants toward home-buying is not a solution to the problem of bad landlords. There will always be renters in Cleveland Heights—students, medical residents, seniors, lower-income people, aspiring homeowners still saving up, to name a few examples. Rental units were built into the diversity of our housing stock during the city’s development in the early 20th century. Renting should be a viable and stable way of life for anyone who needs or chooses it.

As we have pointed out before, absentee landlords do not police themselves. If our city is to offer decent, attractive rental options, we need more owner-occupied duplexes and rigorous code enforcement, along with information and advocacy to empower tenants.

We must take care not to offer up our lower-income residents to predatory real estate agents and bankers. After all, these are the industries that brought us the foreclosure crisis of 2008. So-called NINJA mortgages (No Income, No Jobs, No Assets) specifically targeted poor people and minorities, who then saw their dreams of home ownership dissolve when banks foreclosed. The human cost was incalculable. As a plethora of empty lots and dilapidated houses attests, Cleveland Heights has not yet recovered from that debacle.

Yes, there are conscientious people in real estate and banking, but little has been done at the federal, state or local level to rein in opportunistic and unethical actors. Indeed, our economic system rewards those qualities.

We have been impressed by many of Russell’s efforts to serve her constituents. Where the real estate and banking industries are concerned, we caution her, and all of our elected officials at city hall, to make sure they—and we—are not being used.

Ohio Issue 1 is a direct threat to majority rule, the bedrock of a government in which We the People are sovereign. Vote NO at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections on weekdays starting on Tuesday, July 11, between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. That’s what we plan to do. There are 21 days offering early voting before Election Day, Aug. 8, with extended and weekend hours the last week.

Why wait?

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are writers, editors and longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heights-democracy@gmail.com.
Can Cleveland Heights and University Heights withstand the shift in culture and values—and the outright rejection of democratic principles—supported by state lawmakers who are determined to re-impose pre-Civil War thinking on our lives?

I am a law-abiding citizen, but I am not exaggerating here. I am a law-abiding citizen, but what do you do when lawmakers reject the Constitution by making publicly funded religious education an entitlement and ignore the desired outcome of higher education?

It's terrifying to see the reach by state government into the operation of local institutions and the private lives of residents. Republican legislators have long been the opponents of big government, but they are now using their elected positions and unchecked power as a hammer to determine what's allowed in environments where it's none of their business. I believe government is essential to solving big problems. Government should be a tool to meet the needs of society. It is a resource for the common good. But Ohio lawmakers have focused more on social control and enriching the lives of the wealthy than making people's lives better.

Our community has a tradition of resisting bad policy, and resistance is a key part of the democratic tradition. That's how our residents created housing integration in an era when discrimination was the norm. Our educators and school administrators have been leaders in searching for equity, valuing diversity, encouraging critical thinking and nurturing the whole child. They want our schools to be safe places for all students. We have to back them in supporting our community's values and contradicting the views of the supermajority in the statehouse.

We cannot disengage from the electoral process. Staying home can feel logical in this moment of unresponsive super-majority rule, but it will only punish those who care.

The most important thing we can do to protect our values and check the oversized power of our lawmakers is to vote in the Aug. 8 special election. There is one item on the ballot: Issue 1, which, if passed, would change the rules for ballot initiatives in ways that would make it nearly impossible for citizens to bring them about.

Ballot initiatives are direct democracy. They allow voters to directly shape laws and circumvent the legislature. The August ballot item put forth by state lawmakers is the ultimate power grab by the supermajority. It's the latest in legislators' desire to thwart the will of the people.

Most Cleveland Heights voters—about 20,000—are Independents, followed by about 12,900 Democrats and 1,300 Republicans. Voter turnout in last November's general election was just over 51 percent, but only 28 percent of Independents turned out. Voters affiliated with a party are much more likely to vote, but defeating Issue 1 will require participation from everyone.

Special elections in August are notorious for low turnout. That's why advocates for this policy to limit direct democracy passed a bill to reinstate special summer elections. They are counting on you not to participate.

Don't stay home. Your vote against this issue is your chance to protect your power to shape our state and our community. Resistance starts by outfoxing them!

You can vote in person on Aug. 8 or apply now for an absentee ballot. Your vote can change the trajectory of our democracy!

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

Only you can protect direct democracy: Vote on Aug. 8
Two congregations consider next chapters

Kate Gillooly

On April 30, Halldor Gudmundsson, pastor of Church of the Redeemer (United Methodist Church) on South Taylor Road in Cleveland Heights, invited me, minister of Heights Christian Church (Christian Church/Disciples of Christ) on Coventry Road in Shaker Heights, to share my experience with the congregation I serve, and decisions made in recent years regarding the church’s future.

Heights Christian’s moderator (lay leader) Lynda Ackerman, and vice moderator (and Cleveland Heights resident) Jane Troha, attended as well, and shared their learnings with the congregation during coffee hour.

Members of both congregations discovered the two churches have much in common. Like many mainline churches, both Redeemer and Heights have seen declines in membership and finances, but both retain a core of active members who still want to serve the community.

While some people wish everything could go back to the way it was in the ‘good old days,’ Gudmundsson and I are convinced that our congregations are called to something new. We tell our congregants, “We need to discover new ways of being [a] church in the world now.” But figuring out what that looks like can be daunting.

Both congregations have been engaged in visioning processes for several years. Heights Christian made the decision to sell its building to another congregation and “nest”—or rent—space from Plymouth UCC. This helped us right-size our space for worship and staff, and relieved the congregation of caring for an aging building. Now, congregants can focus more attention and financial resources on outreach to the community.

Like Heights Christian, Church of the Redeemer is committed to social justice—both in terms of education/awareness raising and hands-on service.

Both churches partner with local schools and other organizations to provide support to individuals and families in need, and are committed to hybrid ministry—holding worship, study, and meetings both in person and online.

Each congregation is discerning what the next chapter of church life and mission will look like. Both Gudmundsson and I have training in congregational development. Now, pastors and members alike have found partners in the other congregation, and are seeking opportunities to collaborate. The future may be unknown, but hope shines through.

Kate Gillooly grew up in Cleveland Heights, as did her husband, Greg. They moved back in 1991, and have lived here ever since. Gillooly has worked for churches her entire adult life, in Christian education and congregational development. She became the pastor of Heights Christian Church in July 2022.
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.

And we have filed a legal complaint against Shaker Hts. and Cleveland Hts. requiring them to fulfill their obligations to maintain and preserve the Lake.

Learn more at SaveHorseshoeLake.com
Present were Mayor Michael Dyban Brennan and council members Michele Weiss (vice mayor), Barbara Blankfield, Christopher Conaway, Brian T. King, and John P. Rach. Council Member Steven Shaw was not present. Also present were Kelly Thomas, clerk of council; Luke McCarrone, law director; Dennis Kennedy, finance director, and Joseph Cunz, city engineer.

Public comments
Addressing Council Member Blankfield, a resident asked about a rumor regarding her imminent departure from University Heights, and whether she planned to resign her council position. No response was made by Blankfield nor the administration.

Mayor’s report
Ohio House Rep. Juanita Brent (District 22) addressed the council, as she is a resident. Brent is the farewell for the riverboat meeting. Brent is the executive of an eviction. The council plans to vote on the proposed amend. The proposed amendments, along with detailed explanations for each, can be found in the commission’s final report, in this meeting’s Agenda Packet at https://www.universityheights.org/council/agendaandminutes/.

Council actions
Council approved contracts:
• Requiring citywide traffic signal-monitoring services with Single Service Company, not to exceed $3,102.
• Accepting the bid for the 2023 street road improvement program from C.A. Agron.
• Accepting emergency IT support and service from Starfish Computer for the month of June, not to exceed $5,500.

Council modified the budget for the Washington-Sibley-Saybrook Intersection Community Civil Share Project; approved additional funding for the 2023 Juneteenth Celebration for additional security personnel, structures, and portable toilets; and authorized execution of “land lease and easement” with Heights Jewish Center.

Finance Committee: The draft audit was filed with the Auditor of State. An inspection visit to review the recycling collection process and assess needs. Council Member Shaw confirmed that residents having questions can contact the service department by email: servicedepartment@universityheights.org, at or by calling 216-932-7800, ext. 215.

Committee reports
Committee reports. The draft audit was filed on time, additional work will be completed in the next few weeks, with a final report filed by June 30. Preliminary May numbers came in with revenue exceeding expenses.

Service and Utilities Committee: SCS Engineering made a presentation at the May 24 committee meeting and recommended an inspection visit to review the recycling collection process and assess needs. Council Member Shaw confirmed that residents having questions can contact the service department by email: servicedepartment@universityheights.org, at or by calling 216-932-7800, ext. 215.

### University Heights Mayor Michael Dyban Brennan makes the announcement of Pennington’s hiring at the June 20 UH City Council meeting.

“Tn our next service director, I wanted someone who would share in and implement our city’s vision of a modern public works department, not only with modernized services and improved roads, but with year-round parks and recreation offerings,” Brennan said. “Someone who will help lead in developing the new facilities needed to fulfill this vision. Someone who brings other relevant expertise to move the city forward, as we improve our infrastructure and neighborhoods.

“As a public engineer, Allen Pennington has demonstrated success in Mentor in roads and infrastructure, and through his service on the NOACA Bicycle Subcommittee. He is up for his next career challenge. He will succeed, because he’s smart, he works hard, and he gets things done.”

As a licensed professional engineer, Pennington has a well-rounded background in capital projects and street maintenance. He managed Mentor’s road repair program for the last 17 years. Pennington has 22 years of experience in public project administration, design, and inspection.

In addition, Pennington has served on NOACA’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Council since 2021.

Prior to working in Mentor, Pennington’s previous work experience includes stints with CT Consultants and Gleason Construction. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, as well as the American Society of Highway Engineers.

“I have every confidence that Al-lan will do an exceptional job running our Service Department and serving the residents of University Heights,” Brennan said.

Pennington replaces Jeff Pokorny, who retired on April 1. His first day of service in University Heights was June 26.

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

Pennington is new UH service director
CH scouts clean up PEACE Park

Scouts from Pack 11 and Troop 620 helped clean up Coventry PEACE Park in May. Pictured are scouts Sabina, Yale, Max, Oliver, Arlo, Louis, Claire, Ellie, Tessa, Sue, and Anna, along with their volunteer leaders.

Mike Evano

May 6 was “Trash the Trash” day for the global scouting community, charging scouts worldwide to clean up their communities. Thousands of scouts participated, from Germany, Kenya, India...and Cleveland Heights!

More than a dozen scouts and their leaders gathered at Coventry PEACE Park to do their part in the effort. Boys and girls from local Cub Scout Pack 11 and Scouts BSA Troop 620G received a quick briefing from Coventry Village Library Branch Manager Maggie Kinney, before arming themselves with gloves and trash bags for the cleanup. The diligent group of scouts worked for more than an hour, picking up trash in the main playground area and the green spaces around it. Trash of all shapes and sizes was recovered and disposed of properly; with the team recovering nearly 20 bags of trash. The total collection just fit inside a 55-gallon trash container.

“It’s important that our community’s park is looking its best,” said Kinney. “I hope that when people see groups like these scouts out there keeping the park clean, they will do their part to do the same by simply throwing away their trash in the cans we provide. It’s a small thing that can make a big difference!”

While the clean-up effort was important work, the scouts had fun doing it.

“Come help,” shouted one scout late in the effort, “I found a landfill!” On hands and knees, four scouts got to work excavating cans and paper trash from underneath a playground platform, laughing the whole time.

“I’m glad we could help clean up,” said another participant. “We come here to play all the time and want it to be a clean and safe place, for us and for others.”

“Trash the Trash Day” is an international Messengers of Peace project for scouts, in which each scout is challenged to bring a friend or family member along and pick up at least one kilo (2.2 pounds) of trash each on the first Saturday in May. Locally, it is one of two communitywide service projects in which scouts in the Lake Erie Council, Boy Scouts of America participate; the other, Scouting for Food, is a national food drive held in August.

For more information about scouting in the area, visit www.lecbsa.org or call 216-861-6060.

Mike Evano has been a resident of Cleveland Heights since 2022. He serves as chief operating officer for the Lake Erie Council, Boy Scouts of America, and is a proud husband and father.

Organizers cancel 2023 GardenWalk CH

GWCH’s leaders—its founder—experienced a life-threatening medical condition. The treatment and projected recovery timeline are expected to last beyond mid-July.

GardenWalks are used to be resilient when faced with not enough sun, or too much rain, or pesky pests. In this case, with non-compliant weather and then a medical emergency, the GWCH committee had to affirm its priorities in making the decision to cancel GWCH 2023.

GardenWalk Cleveland Heights plans to be back in July 2024.

Judi Miles

GardenWalk Cleveland Heights (GWGH) 2023, planned for July 15 and 16, has been cancelled.

The organizing committee is grateful to the gardeners who had planned to open their gardens to the public, and to the sponsors and vendors who provided and pledged support.

Two factors led the committee to its decision to call off this year’s event.

The weather, wet and cool in April and early May, became a near drought in late May and early June. Several of gardeners expressed concern that their ornamental displays might not be tour-ready by mid-July.

More importantly, one of GWCH’s leaders—its founder—experienced a life-threatening medical condition. The treatment and projected recovery timeline are expected to last beyond mid-July.

Judi Miles is a 26-year resident of Cleveland Heights’ Noble-Monticello neighborhood. She happily volunteers with GardenWalk Cleveland Heights, having been inspired to garden by her father.

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Cleveland Heights City Council
Meeting highlights

MAY 15, 2023 - regular meeting

Council members present were Melody Joy Hart (president), Craig Cobb (vice presi-
dent), Joanne Westin, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthea Hart (secretary), and Kyle Gelfand. Present were Mayor Khalil Serrin, Clerk of Council Addie Balester, and Law Director William Hanna.

Charter Review Commission appointments
Council considered nine resolutions appoint-
ing members of the Charter Review Commis-
sion and approving a motion by Cobb to limit discussion to the merits of the applicants, as the process had already been thoroughly discussed at the May 8 meeting. Larson, and Russell voted no on Cobb’s motion.

Of the mayor’s three nominations, Drew Her- shey was unanimously appointed chair, but Jon Benedict and Stephanie Morris did not receive the required five votes, with Cuda, Larson, and Russell voting no.

Of the six council nominations, council unanimously appointed Harriet Applegate, Linda Mattox, Roland Angile, and Craig Kluge. Guy Thallian was appointed, with Russell voting no. Marty Geldand failed to receive the required five votes, as Cobb, Laron, and Russell voted no. Cuda noted that Geldand was considering running for office, and that council had previously decided to exclude elected officials from the commission.

Harriet Applegate said she would only serve if her nomination’s work would likely be concluded before the election in which Geldand would run.

Russell moved to direct the low depart-
ment to prepare resolutions of two additional nominees: Wes Schaub and Gary Bullard, but the motion for Bullard after Hanna explained that she could nominate only one, as five of council’s nominations had been filled. Cobb had refused to vote for any additional applicants until after discussing them in executive session. Russ-

ell’s motion failed, with Boyd, Cobb, Hart, and Mattox voting no. Russell explained that Schaub was the only applicant from the Caledonia area, Bullard was the only African American applicant from the Taylor area, and both were well qualified.

Other council actions
Council adopted two grants from the Ohio Department of Public Safety: 1) $658,197 for retaining police and for purchasing technology and equipment to reduce violent crime related to drug trafficking, and 2) $275,413 for police overtime for traffic enforcement.

Council amended the 2023 budget, in-
creasing it by $1,711,289. All but $64,000 has offsetting grant revenue.

Council increased funding for the Down Payment Assistance Loan program, managed by the Home Repair Resource Center, from $4,000 to $88,000 due to increased demand for loans.

Council received, and recommended no changes to, the Cedar Lee Special Im-
provement District’s five-year plan for public

CLIMATE FRIENDLY continued from page 4

There are very loud. Constant expo-
sure to loud noise can have drastic
mental and physical health. They are also toxic. Gas fumes can irri-
tate eyes, noses and throats; cause headaches, nausea and dizziness; and even lead to lung damage. Moreover, no one likes to reek of

Suntek, a lawn-care company in

ones, and is finding the run time

Council amended the zoning code

regarding private parking garages, drive-
way widths, fences, window transparency, regarding private parking garages, drive-
way widths, fences, window transparency,

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CLIMATE FRIENDLY continued from page 4

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mental and physical health. They are also toxic. Gas fumes can irri-
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Suntek, a lawn-care company in

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B’nai B’rith Health Run is July 23

Robert Grossman

The 35th B’nai B’rith Health Run is planned for Sunday, July 23, and will showcase Walter Stinson Community Park, at 2307 Fenwick Road in University Heights.

Registration and the award ceremony will be held at the park’s gazebo.

Both the 1-miler and 5K will start at the park’s entrance on Saybrook Road and end at the park’s Fenwick Road entrance.

The 1-miler will have overall winners and youth division winners. The 5K will have overall winners plus winners in 13 age groups.

Participants get a tie-dyed T-shirt with registration.

Refreshments will be available after the race.

For details and to register, go to bnaibrithhealthrun.org, or send an e-mail to bbfunrun@yahoo.com.

To volunteer (volunteers will receive a T-shirt), send an e-mail or call 216-291-4045.

There are parking lots at the park’s Saybrook entrance and at the University Heights Library on Fenwick Road, and street parking is available.

Robert Grossman is the race director for the B’nai B’rith Health Run.

HRRC’s July classes include air-conditioning

Anne Marie Goodfriend

Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) will offer a free class on Air Conditioning Maintenance and Upkeep on Monday, July 10, 7–9 p.m.

Taught by an expert in central heating and air conditioning, the class will help participants get their AC units ready for summer.

HRRC’s Electrical Series, a popular three-week course, will begin on Tuesday, July 11, 7–9 p.m. It will provide hands-on experience in diagnosing and repairing electrical issues, and cover basic electricity, including replacing outlets, switches, wire cutting, and using specialized electrical tools. The fee for this series is $75.

On July 13, 7–9 p.m., HRRC will offer its Power Tools 101 Class. Participants will gain proficiency in using various power tools, including miter saws, reciprocating saws, drills, and grinders. They’ll learn about tool safety and choosing the right tool for each job, and will also get hands-on practice in using the tools. The fee for this class is $25.

Cabinet Refinishing is up next, on Thursday, July 27, 7–9 p.m. This class will cover retrofitting old cabinets, modernizing handles and knobs, pep work, materials, and painting techniques. Participants will have the opportunity to sand and paint cabinets themselves. The fee for this class is $25.

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

To register for any HRRC class, visit http://hrrc-ch.org or call 216-381-6100 ext. 16.

HRRC’s Teaching Center is located at 2520 Noble Road in Cleveland Heights.

Anne Marie Goodfriend is HRRC’s education coordinator.
Elizabeth Tracy

At the University Heights Memorial Day parade on Monday, May 29, democracy was on the minds of many, especially Wendy Deuring, Marilyn Singer, Kathy Flora, Sharona Hoffman, Pat Solomon and Eefje Kolkmann.

These six League of Women Voters (LWV) of Greater Cleveland members marched the 1.8-mile parade route, sharing information on new voting laws, the Aug. 8 special election, and the LWV’s position against State Issue 1. These stalwart marchers joined LWV members Janice Foster and Blanche Valancy at the voter information table at the Memorial Day Festival at Gearity elementary school.

Some voters along the parade route wondered why the LWV of Ohio had taken a “Vote No” stand against the Aug. 8 referendum, State Issue 1, which would make it more difficult for citizens to initiate changes to the Ohio state constitution. If State Issue 1 is approved on Aug. 8 (by a simple majority of voters in a special election that typically has a very low turnout), any citizen initiative that is on this November’s ballot will now require a supermajority affirmative vote (60 percent), and all future ballot initiatives not already approved for signature collections will be required to collect a required number of valid signatures in all of Ohio’s 88 counties. This means that, regardless of how many signatures were collected overall, a citizen proposal could be blocked in one county.

The LWV of Ohio has determined that the referendum was placed on an Aug. 8 special election (notable for low turnout) for special interests who want to permanently lock up Ohio’s constitution for their benefit. It would allow a small group of voters to make decisions affecting the whole state.

At the voter information table, LWV members answered questions, helped with voter registration, and handed out applications to vote by mail in the upcoming Aug. 8 election.

League members made people aware of a recent change in Ohio voting laws that requires voters to present a photo ID to vote in person; voters can still use the last four digits of their social security number when voting by mail. The LWV members also advised voters that they should verify that their registration is up to date at least 30 days before the election. The LWV suggests all voters make a voting plan—either to vote early, vote by mail, or vote in person on Election Day.

Wendy Deuring, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights LWV chapter chair reflected on the group’s parade experience, noting, “It was truly remarkable, and heartwarming, and rather overwhelming, the number of people who cheered and clapped and raised their fists in support when they saw our banner.” LWV members will be at other events and festivals this summer.

To learn more about voter registration and voting requirements, including important deadlines and voting hours, check the websites of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections (https://boe.cuyahogacounty.gov) or the Ohio Secretary of State (www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters).

Elizabeth Tracy is a member of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.
School supply drive honors Heights High alumnus

Laquetta Washington

The Power of 3 Foundation is hosting a back-to-school supply drive in memory of Larry (Laurence) Hurt, a 2012 Cleveland Heights High School graduate, who died of heart complications.

Supplies needed include notebooks, paper, folders, pens, pencils, crayons, markers and binders.

Donations will be collected through Aug. 1, and can be dropped off at the U.S. Post Office at 1568 South Green Road in South Euclid. The supplies will be distributed to students in various Greater Cleveland school districts on Aug. 5.

Hurt went on to earn his associate degree at Tri-C, and a master’s degree at Cleveland State University. His family hosts this annual back to school event in August, in his memory.

Laquetta Washington founded the Power of 3 Foundation in memory of her brother.

Learn about resources to help cover home utility costs

NEED HELP WITH UTILITY BILLS?

Utility Assistance Resource Fair

July 14 & 15, 2023

Mayor Michael Bremer | University Heights & Mayor Kiah | swore | Cleveland Heights

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Need help paying for utilities, such as water, sewer, electric, or gas?

The cities of University Heights and Cleveland Heights have partnered with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Cuyahoga County, and others to provide residents an opportunity to learn about available resources, and sign up for specific assistance programs at a Utilities Assistance Resource Fair.

The fair will take place at the Cleveland Heights Recreation Center, 1 Monticello Boulevard, on two consecutive days: Friday, July 14, 1-3 p.m., by appointment only, and Saturday, July 15, from 9 a.m. to noon, with appointments strongly encouraged.

To learn more about what to expect and what to bring with you, as well as make an appointment, visit www.medina.org/utility-assistance-resource-fairs or call 216-983-8247.

ACADEMIC CHALLENGE continued from page 1

but then we won in the last round and it was just amazing.”

With help from the $6,000 “Academic Challenge” grand prize, it was on to Atlanta over Memorial Day weekend, where the team competed in the National Academic Quiz Tournaments (NAQT) National Championship, which, compared to Academic Challenge, is the big-league.

The 2023 NAQT Nationals comprised 304 local-tournament-winning teams and 1,500 players, from high schools from across the country. Heights High qualified out in the second round, earning a NAQT tournament in Solon in the fall.

Under NAQT rules, each 18-minute match offers up to 24 toss-up questions, with the quickest correct response earning the team three themed bonus questions.

“Each question drops these little hints that I can use to piece together the answer with my own knowledge,” said Bradlin. “What wins a game is being able to piece together the answer faster than the other team.”

At a grueling schedule of 10 matches, Heights had a record of 6-4, which qualified them for the playoffs.

“We did really well at Nationals,” said Bier, “but even then, there were some teams that did so much better than us.”

Victorious in their first playoff match, the Tigers were knocked out in the second round, earning a tournament rank of 60th.

“I have an amazing, brilliant group of students,” said advisor Karl Neitzel, a social studies teacher at Heights High. “They have been training for this moment since middle school, and it shows.”

These accomplishments are a first for the program, which had to pause during the COVID pandemic. While the team will miss those members who have graduated, it is extremely proud of what it accomplished, and looks forward to competing again next year.

Mike Bier is a 1968 Heights High graduate and proud father of Natalie Bier, a 2009 Heights High graduate. Diana Drudele is a CH-UH City School District Parent & Community liaison.

DANDELIONS continued from page 4

There were matters more important than “No Mow May” which required mayoral attention.

Mayor Seren celebrated as many virtual-signaling dandelions as he could. Some may praise him for that. But he instead derives blame for lowering community standards while neglecting important community issues.

Alan Rapoport, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, served on CH City Council (1980–87) and as council president/mayor (1982–87).
Twins inspire two books by Heights author Ewing

With time on her hands, and nowhere to go, Ewing decided to sew a cloth alphabet book for the babies-to-be.

“The COVID lockdown was a very weird time, especially with my daughter pregnant so far away. I was partly trying to capture that time,” Ewing said.

The making of the cloth book inspired a second book, which Ewing wrote to the “grown-up” grandchildren. It is about the construction of their cloth ABC book, and about the history and derivation of each letter of the alphabet. (Ewing was a Latin teacher for more than 20 years).

The book is also full of engaging, touching, and entertaining family stories, and recalls the events of the pandemic days in the wider world as they relate to each letter of the alphabet.

Mac’s Backs - Books on Coventry hosted a June 24 book launch for Ewing. On July 8, Ewing will be at Loganberry Books’ Author Alley, on Larchmere Boulevard, from noon to 4 p.m.

Robin Koslen
Cleveland Heights resident Kathy Ewing has just published A Grandmother’s ABC Book—a veritable treasure for her twin grandchildren and for anyone who is, aspires to be, or knows a grandparent.

In 2020, Ewing learned that her daughter, Margaret, and son-in-law, Tim, were expecting twins. These would be Ewing’s first grandchildren, and she was more than ready. But the world had just been locked down due to the COVID pandemic, and the expectant family was hundreds of miles away in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Robin Koslen is a mom, grandma, Cleveland Heights resident, retired teacher, part-time activist, and full-time rebel.

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Cleveland Heights – University Heights Board of Education

Meeting highlights

MAY 9, 2023 - regular session

Board members present were President Beverly Wright, Vice President Lodi Souvign, Dan Henitz and James Posch. Malia Lewis was not present. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

Public comments

A few parents reported a topic culture at Roxboro Middle School, saying the administration has failed students and teachers, and the climate was preventing learning and causing anxiety and social-emotional problems.

Superintendent’s comments

Weekly climate-planning meetings are occurring at the secondary schools. A parent meeting was held at Roxboro Middle School on May 4.

Third Quarter Data Cohort Meetings started with secondary schools. School principals and assistant principals will discuss data, review progress, and discuss plans for the 2023–24 school year. Website visits held in April focused on transition from middle school to high school, and on college and career readiness.

Superintendent Kravitz emphasized the need for state lawmakers to increase funding for school safety and student wellness.

Assistant Superintendent Paul Lombardo presented the first reading of Policies C, which include revisions on public comment, threat assessment, promoting a tobacco-free environment, and more. The board will vote on this after two more readings.

Treasurer’s report

Treasurer Gainer explained the Ohio two-year budget, which includes the Fair School Funding Plan. Planning is in progress, as school districts do not know how much funding will be approved.

Every year Gainer requests reimbursement for costs accrued for students with disabilities.

The Five-Year Forecast is submitted to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) twice a year, in November and May. Gainer submits monthly forecasts to the school board.

The ODE prepares the District Profile (Copp) Report. Its purpose is to compare “similar” districts and each district to the state as a whole.

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Treasure’s report

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

Equity principles

Felisha Gould, assistant superintendent of education, emphasized that the principle of equity is one of fair—rather than equal—treatment, to help students achieve.

She presented the six goals of the district’s equity policy: equitable access to inclusive classrooms, support to reduce the need for intervention, and a focus on positives. Family engagement is important so that teachers understand family goals for their students.

Kearlene Sa’ad, Equity instructional coach, provided support for all Equity teachers to improve instruction and support the diverse needs of students. She assists with Gearity Grad Centers, a student-led initiative that celebrates the success of a student’s personal growth, and Springboard, an after-school reading program for students in kindergarten through third grade.

Steve Walker, TASSEL coordinator, presented how TASSEL (Toward a Skillful and Successful Empowered Life) focuses on credit recovery and credit flex for current ninth- and tenth-graders, as well as non-negotiable and align all district policies, procedures, and funding. With this approach, equity is non-negotiable and aligns all district policies, procedures, and funding.

Treasurer’s report

Gainer presented the five-year forecast. A positive cash balance is anticipated through 2027; however, he noted that the financial situation contains significant uncertainty. The forecast could change depending on the state budget.

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Integrated Comprehensive Systems (ICS) partnership

Could presented the district partnership in ICS for equity. ICS provides a framework to transform their entire educational system to eliminate inequities. The ICS approach has four cornerstones: focus on equity, align staff and students, transform teaching and learning, and leverage policy and funding. With this approach, equity is non-negotiable and aligns all district policies, procedures, and funding.

Noble Elementary School Principal Patrick Carpenter, Vice Elementary School Principal Patrick McNichols, and Gearity second-grade teacher Angela Hosig, representing the Noble and Gearity leadership teams, discussed how programs in their schools aligned with the ICS cornerstones. They emphasized inclusive classroom, supports to reduce the need for intervention, and a focus on positives. Family engagement is important so that teachers understand family goals for their students.

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We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America,” published in 2027, was very positive about the student discussions after viewing the film, “Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America,” as shown part of the ICS program. She shared the Heights Family Academy’s approach to social justice, which includes developing to engage families as part of the equity initiative.

Treasurer’s report

MAY 16, 2023 - work session

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

Equity principles

Felisha Gould, assistant superintendent of educational services, emphasized that the principle of equity is one of fair—rather than equal—treatment, to help students achieve.

She presented the six goals of the district’s equity policy: equitable access to instruction, equitable distribution of staff, creation of pathways of success for students from all groups, development of equity analysis tool, provision of opportunities to understand the impact of one’s identity, and empowerment of all students and families in educational decision-making.
Library partnership will address child literacy

Sheryl Banks

Heights Libraries has joined seven other Northeast Ohio libraries to help young people in Greater Cleveland who have fallen behind in their literacy skills due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The partnership program, Cuyahoga Reads, will focus on helping children and their families form positive and consistent reading habits, foster a love for reading, and equip young people and families with the literacy skills necessary for future success.

The program is funded by the Ohio Department of Education’s Libraries Accelerating Learning grant, which is designed to help libraries create or expand literacy programs for Ohio’s Pre-K through 12th grade students.

To accelerate student learning, part of the funding was used to hire Making a Difference Consulting, which analyzed the Ohio Department of Education school report card data, and conducted focus groups and community surveys at each library system to tailor literacy support based upon the needs of K-12 students in each community. That support will include special weekly programs that will directly address child and teen literacy in the Heights community.

This month, Heights residents will start to see Cuyahoga Reads signage on buses, trains and select bus shelters, created in partnership with locally based Lamar Advertising and the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
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Register now for free cigar box guitar workshop

Don McBride

Back for its third year, the Noble Cigar Box Guitar Project is again offering a free summer Cigar Box Guitar Workshop for middle-schoolers in early August. Registration is open now, and space is limited.

The workshop comprises four sessions, August 7–10, 1:30–3 p.m., to be held at Disciples Church, 3663 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights.

Participants will build their own three-string cigar box guitars from a kit that will be provided. They will learn how a guitar makes music, the basics of playing the guitar, and the origins of cigar box guitars.

The first rule of cigar box guitars is that there are no rules.

Cigar box guitars are versatile. They incorporate a range of materials—cigar boxes and cookie tins as bodies, paint-can lids, pie plates as resonators. They suit a range of musical styles—rock, jazz, folk, and blues.

In the hands of creative people, cigar box guitars demonstrate how commonplace, throwaway objects can be re-purposed into impressive musical instruments.

For additional information, and to register, visit www.noblecigarbox-guitarproject.com.

The Noble Cigar Box Guitar Project is a collaboration between Hum & Strum (a Cleveland Heights Senior Center program) and Noble Neighbors, and is partially funded by a FutureHeights Neighborhood Mini-Grant.

Don McBride is part of the Noble Cigar Box Guitar Project and is a member of Hum & Strum and Noble Neighbors.

Lake Erie Ink cooks up creativity

Alexis Watkins

Lake Erie Ink (LEI) is stirring up something special. Its 2022 community cookbook, Stirring Stories, has inspired another round of community, cooking and storytelling—reimagined.

The 2023 iteration of Stirring Stories—Stirring the Pot—aims to raise program funds for the nonprofit through community workshops and a culminating fundraiser.

The first course of the project comprises a series of writing workshops led by an LEI teaching artist, held at restaurants around Greater Cleveland. These Mix It Up events, hosted in partnership with local chefs, are open to community members over the age of 14 (cost is $20 each), with the exception of the Aug. 12 program. Events will be held on June 14, 6:30–8 p.m., at Larder, July 9, 5:45–7 p.m., at Ninja City; July 15, 9:30–11 a.m., at Convenient Vegan, July 24, 2:30–4 p.m., at Amba; June 29 and Aug. 24, 6:30–8 p.m. at Mitchell's Ice Cream; Aug. 12, 6:30–7:30 p.m., at Doki Doki (this event is specifically for teenagers, and donation-based); and Aug. 16, 6:30–8 p.m. at Sausisson.

Other community Mix It Up workshops will also take place free of charge; June 20 and Aug. 22, 6:30–8 p.m., at City Fresh; July 18, 6:30–8 p.m., at Public Square; and Aug. 12 from 10–11:30 a.m., at Noble Gardeners Market (at the corner of Noble and Roanoke roads).

In addition, community members are invited to contribute a recipe to this year’s cookbook. Writing samples of up to 250 words relating to place or palate are also welcome submissions for the project. The cookbook submission deadline is Aug. 25.

“Everyone is connected,” said Amy Rosenbluth, LEI’s executive director. “When the community engages with us in creative projects it’s strengthening that support network for the youth we serve; it’s also modeling a creative community.”

“Being a part of this project helped me feel more in community with my neighbors,” said Eli Millette, friend of LEI and a Cleveland Heights resident.

“Cooking and eating together has always been a part of how my family stays connected, so participating last year helped me feel more connected to everyone else who submitted a recipe.”

To close the project, LEI will host Culinary Creativity on Sunday, Oct. 1. The event will launch Stirring the Plot and raise funds to benefit the nonprofit. By attending, guests will help support ongoing after-school programs, Comic Con, and the annual Teen Book Project, all while enjoying the Dunham Barn venue and interacting with local chefs.

To learn more about LEI, to register for upcoming Mix It Up workshops, and to buy tickets to Culinary Creativity, visit lakeerieink.org/stirringstories2023.

Alexis Watkins is the Cleveland Foundation intern at Lake Erie Ink. A writing space for youth.
Heights Arts presents poets and artists in conversation

On Thursday, July 20, Heights Arts presents another entry in its engaging ekphrastic writing series, **EKPHRASTACY: Artists Talk and Poets Respond**, bringing together visual artists and poets for a night of collaboration and creative reflection.

This time, the subjects are the concurrent exhibitions **Group Show** and **Paula Damm**, on view at the Heights Arts Gallery on Lee Road. The event will highlight poetry written in response to the work of Spotlight artist Paula Damm and the creatives featured in **Group Show**, a special exhibition presenting the work of artists Charlotte A. Lees, Yiyun Chen, Bruno Casiano, Sawsan Alhaddad, and Donald Pein. The exhibition's goal is to present a selection of exceptional artists in the form of a group of solo displays.

Featured poets will consider the exhibitions’ pieces, and write original poems inspired by the artwork. Additionally, the visual artists will have the chance to speak about their work during the event, adding to the dialogue.

Heights Arts’ Heights Writes Community Team chose the featured poets through a competitive process. The team comprises volunteer literary professionals and enthusiasts who help determine Heights Arts’ Literary programming.

The participating poets are Zuggie Tate, Quartez Harris, and Rikki Santer, who will appear along with Heights poet laureate Siaara Freeman. Harris, a former second-grade teacher for Cleveland Public Schools, has published two books of poetry. His work has been featured in *The Plain Dealer*, on Ideastream, and at the City Club of Cleveland. Santer is also a published author and has been honored by organizations such as *The Poetry Forum*, Black Lawrence Press, and the Ohio Poetry Association. Tate, July’s Heights Arts Literary Artist of the Month, received the Margie’s Hope Living Heritage Award in recognition of her work as a poet and advocate. She also received a Baldwin House writing fellowship in partnership with Twelve Literary Arts.

**EKPHRASTACY: Artists Talk and Poets Respond to Group Show** takes place on Thursday, July 20, 7 p.m., at Heights Arts, 2175 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights. Admission is free, but those interested should RSVP at www.heightsarts.org. Cameron Gorman is the assistant director for Heights Arts.

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**Support Coventry PEACE Park today!**

Your gift will be matched up to $50,000 through October 1. Renovation plans include a new accessible playground with a big slide, a storybook loop, a stage, a reading garden, native plants, and over 100 new trees.

Support Coventry PEACE Park today! Your gift will be matched up to $50,000 through October 1.

**Friends of Coventry PEACE Park**

For more information, contact Kaalia. kswеннey@heightslibrary.org

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Design concept subject to change.

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**Diagnosed with high blood pressure?**

Researchers at University Hospitals are seeking participants for a research project designed to find out if a technology-based intervention helps African-Americans with self-managing high blood pressure.

**For more information about Doors of Opportunity, visit friendsofcainpark.org.**

Lisa Manzari is a 17-year member of Friends of Cain Park and a resident of Cleveland Heights.
Cain Park Arts Fest is free July 7–9

Marc Lefkowitiz

For 46 years, Cain Park has hosted hundreds of artists and thousands of visitors for what is likely the city’s largest annual event: the Cain Park Arts Festival. Year 46’s event will be held July 7–9.

Cain Park is one of the reasons Cleveland Heights calls itself “home to the arts.” It’s the oldest municipally owned outdoor performance venue in the country, with music, dance, theater, and comedy performances every summer.

It was designed from the beginning as a place for and by the community and the arts came together.

Dina Rees “Doc” Evans—a teacher at Heights High and the first person in the U.S. to earn a Ph.D. in Dramatic Arts—organized Cain Park’s first outdoor theater performance with students and community members in 1932. The amphitheater and theater grew out of her vision.

Under Doc’s guidance, Cleveland Heights built an arts park where generations of staged productions helped inspire a vibrant artistic community.

The Cain Park Arts Fest is free and open to the public, and if you’ve never been—or attend every year—it’s worth the trip. More than 100 accomplished artists from across the country will descend on Cain Park to compete in a juried exhibit and sell their art.

Whether you plan on purchasing or just browsing, you and your family can take in a wide variety of arts under Cain Park’s tree-lined pathways. You can sample some great food and enjoy nine free musical performances during the festival. The music lineup can be found online at www.cainpark.com.

Arts Fest isn’t the only free activity coming to Cain Park in July. During the month’s 31 days, Cain Park will offer 15 free performances on eight different days.

Cain Park will present two free concert series that feature blues, roots, rock, jazz, and classical performances: the Tuesday Evening Concert Series and the Sunday Afternoon Concert Series. Four of these performances take place in July.

Cleveland dance company Inlet will present free performances at the end of the month, including a matinee for children on July 28.

It all happens in a park—where one can have a picnic, play tennis and basketball, watch kids enjoy the playground and splash pad, and stroll up to the Evans Amphitheater or Alma Theater and enjoy world-class art and music.

Marc Lefkowitz is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights. He has served on the city’s Transportation Advisory Committee, and on the board of the Home Repair Resource Center, and is currently a public relations specialist with the city.

His street celebrates July 4th with an annual block party that has been going on for nearly half a century.

‘This Art is for the Birds’ wants you

Robin VanLear

On July 22 and 23, Artful Cleveland will showcase its first original outdoor community theater presentation, “This Art is for the Birds,” in Coventry PEACE Park. The interactive, outdoor theater piece is being created in the tradition of Greek comedies, complete with its own chorus, and backed up by the reggae band No Bad Days.

Showtimes are Saturday, July 22, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, July 23, at 4 p.m.

In the lead up to the performances, there are opportunities for community members to participate in the making of the show. All are designed to enable participants to create their own bird masks and costumes, and join one of the bird flocks putting their bird brains to work trying to save another Earth from destruction.

The four adult workshops begin July 5. The next of three family workshops, geared to parents and children 6 and older, is July 1. The final weekend youth camp begins Monday, July 10, with a morning session for 10- to 12-year-olds and an afternoon session for 13- to 16-year-olds.

Built into this schedule of camps and workshops is an entire make-up week that is free for participants in any of the preceding camps and workshops, providing more time for all to finish their projects.

To learn more, and to sign up for a camp or workshop, visit artactivedh. wixsite.com/my-site or artfulcleveland.org.

On July 22 and 23, the community is invited to find a seat on the curve of sloping hillside of Coventry PEACE Park, at the PEACE Arch end of the park. Bring a blanket, come early and enjoy the show.

Robin VanLear is a member of Artful at Coventry PEACE, and created its lantern festival. The founder and former director of community arts at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), VanLear created Parade the Circle, the “I Madonnari” Chalk Festival and CMA’s Winter Lights Lantern festival. She and her artist husband, Jesse Rinfret, are 33-year residents of Cleveland Heights.
The other Internet

I've been using the Internet since 1991, when I started my job as the editor of Cleveland Magazine. Then I got a personal computer for home use in 1992. But, really, I was using a different form of it in the mid-'70s. It was called "Coventry." Coventry Road, between Mayfield Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, was Facebook at least 10 years before Mark Zuckerberg was born. It was also e-mail, and Google. And Twitter—though with way more than 40 characters.

It's 1976. I'm walking up Coventry. Local musician Linn Roath stops me and says, "Someone told me I could find you here. My band, Flatbush, is recording a couple of songs at Cleveland Recording next week. Can you do horn arrangements for them?" We talk, and we work out all the details and agree on everything.

I continue on, and reach Tommy's—the original location, at the top of street, in the back of the old Ace Drug store. I walk in and say, "Has anyone seen Norman Tischler?" Several people answer. "I saw him a half hour ago on Hampshire." "I saw him 10 minutes ago in Carroll Drugs." And so on. I go down to Carroll Drugs. He's there. "Norm. Can you play a session at Cleveland Recording next Wednesday?" I know the answer is going to be yes. It's always yes. He says, "Yes." I say, "It's a horn section on two songs—alto sax, tenor sax and trombone." He says, "Who are the other players?" I say, "You are." He says, "Fine." We work out the details. He says, "I'm going to Tommy's." I start walking back down Coventry. Two guys are standing and talking in front of Record Revolution. One says, "What was here before the record store?" The other says, "What was here before the record store?" The other says, "Uhh . . . I think it was Henry's Toy Store." I stop and say, "No. Henry's was down toward Mayfield. This was the fur store." The first guy says, "Yeah—that was it." And, pointing down, he says, "The tiles. Look at the tiles—the white and brown little octagonal tiles in the entrance. This was the fur store." I move along. Two stores farther, there's a political debate going on—a man and a woman; the man's viewpoint is on the left, the woman's is on the far-left. By Coventry standards, it's a debate. A few other people join in. It starts to get loud, and tedious, so I leave.

I stop in at Irv's and order a cup of coffee and plan to sit . . . anywhere, with . . . anyone. I stop at one table, where some older people are discussing philosophy. It's over my head. Plus, I suspect they don't know what they're talking about. Another table is exchanging bad jokes. I've heard them all. And I didn't think they were funny the first time. I move on to another table, where they're talking about rock-music history. I settle in.

Cindy MacKay comes in, carrying a guitar case. She comes over to me and says, "Have you seen Norman Tischler?" I say, "Try Tommy's." She says, "Thanks," and takes a couple of steps. I say, "He's busy continued on page 23
SONGS & STORIES continued from page 22

next Wednesday.” She stops for two seconds to ponder that, and
continues out of the restaurant.

After a while, I leave Irv’s
and head up Coventry, toward my
little apartment on Euclid Heights
Boulevard—an efficiency that
is, like Groucho Marx and has always
wanted to be a comedian. As usual,
he’s carrying some kind of meat
wrapped up in white butcher paper
from the last remaining butcher
shop from Coventry’s old days. We
talk. I say something that makes
him laugh. He says, “That’s good.
Can I use that?” He takes a pencil
out of his pocket and starts writing
with a lot more walking.

We part, and I go home (to my
rock band.”

I work till my brain gets tired,
demos.

I say, “Sure,” because,
my clarinet, and
our humor, how can it miss?” As
always, I say, “I can’t. I’ve got my

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

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