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2843 Washington Blvd. #105
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'808 Day' proclamation honors WJCU

Mike Cook

Aug. 8 isn't just Special Election Day in Ohio. In University Heights, it's 808 Day.

To honor the award-winning and Guinness World Record-holding WJCU 88.7 FM radio show "808s & Mixtapes," University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan has proclaimed Aug. 8 as 808 Day in the city.

808 Day falls on the upcoming 100th episode of WJCU 88.7 FM's six-time national award-nominated student-run radio show out of John Carroll University (JCU). "808s & Mixtapes" has been broadcasting live, worldwide, for the last two years—at the frequency 88.7 FM in Greater Cleveland, and around the world via the WJCU app and at www.808mixtape.com.

JCU students Zachary Sinutko, Emily Davala, Collin Kennedy, Teron Lee, Daunte Horton, Hamoud



The staff of the WJCU radio show "808s & Mixtapes" will be honored with the 808 Day Proclamation on Aug. 8, 2023.

Qotaynah, Danielle Turi and Jayden Beddingfield run "808s & Mixtapes" every Tuesday night at 10 p.m.

"I am delighted to proclaim this

Aug. 8 '808 Day' in the city for so many reasons," Brennan said, "most of all to celebrate the work that Zach, Collin,

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Fairmount Presbyterian Church achieves another environmental milestone



FPC members (from left) Gordon Landefeld, Elaine Price, Christine Winters, Keith Mills, Melda Graves, Ray McKinney, and Ben Sperry at FPC's pollinator garden.

Catalina Wagers

Each year, the Cleveland 2030 District and the NEO Local Leadership Team of USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council) Ohio host a friendly green building challenge to recognize exemplary new green construction and renovation projects in this region. In May, the winning entries were announced and—among recipients such as Oberlin College,

the Progressive Insurance Campus, and the Maltz Performing Arts Center—Cleveland Heights Fairmount Presbyterian Church (FPC) was recognized for its work in achieving a 50% electricity use reduction.

This milestone is one of FPC's many environmentally responsible improvements, rooted in the congregation's understanding of the connection between environmental

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LWV plans fall election forums for Heights voters

Elizabeth Tracy and Blanche Valancy

In the run-up to the Nov. 7 general election, the Cleveland Heights/University Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland (LWV) will host a series of four candidate and issue forums for the local city council and school board races and ballot issues.

On Nov. 7, Cleveland Heights voters will elect three city council members and one municipal court judge. University Heights voters will elect four city council members and vote on city charter amendments. Two positions for the Cleveland Heights - University Heights school board will also be on the ballot.

To help voters become knowledgeable about the candidates and issues, LWV has planned the following voter education forums:

- On Wednesday, Sept. 13, 6–8 p.m., the CH-UH Board of Education Candidates Forum will be held at the Cleveland Heights Community Center, 1 Monticello Boulevard.
- On Wednesday, Sept. 20, 6–8 p.m., the Cleveland Heights City Council Candidates Forum will be held at the CH Community Center, 1 Monticello Boulevard.
- On Monday, Sept. 25, 6–8 p.m., the University Heights City Council Candidates Forum will be held at the University Heights Library, 13866 Cedar Road.
- On Thursday, Oct. 5, 6–8 p.m., the University Heights Ballot Issues Forum will be held at the UH Library,

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Noble Gardeners' Market welcomes musicians this season

Brenda H May

Noble Gardeners' Market (NGM) 2023 will open for the season on Saturday, Aug. 5, and run for eight consecutive Saturday mornings, 10 a.m. to noon, through Sept. 23.

The market is located at the corner of Noble and Roanoke roads, at the site of the Noble-Roanoke Mini Park, one block north of the intersection of Monticello Boulevard and Noble Road. (The Cleveland Heights Centennial

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Noble Gardeners' Market takes place on Saturday mornings, Aug. 5 to Sept. 23.

Letters Policy

The *Heights Observer* welcomes letters to the editor. They must be submitted electronically, along with the writer's name, phone number and e-mail address, to: www.heightsobserver.org/members.

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the *Heights Observer*, its publisher and staff, or of FutureHeights, its staff and board of directors.

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. Anyone in University Heights or Cleveland Heights is welcome to contribute regularly, occasionally or even just once.

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

If you're writing a news article, it should be clear and factual. If you want to express an opinion, submit it as a letter to the editor or an opinion piece. Either way, make sure it's about something specific to our two cities. 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 September publication must be submitted by Aug. 14. We publish some articles online only.

FH intern Bryce Beard takes on new roles this summer

Bryce Beard

I am Bryce Beard, a new intern at FutureHeights, and soon to be a junior at Gilmour Academy.

The internship was made possible through Cleveland-based Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.). On my very first day at the FutureHeights office, Kristine Pagsuyoin, the executive director of FutureHeights and publisher of the *Heights Observer*, asked me to write about myself and outline in this article what I'll be working on as a summer intern.

In my first week, beginning July 17, my first assignment was to write this piece.

I have already learned that writing for a newspaper is completely different from writing for a school project. I've learned a new style of writing, including the inverted-triangle concept, a strategy journalists use to organize their writing. Using the inverted triangle, writers lead with the most important information.

After I finish this piece, I'll be working on distribution of the paper. As a resident of University Heights, I



Bryce Beard

hope to help expand distribution of the *Heights Observer* in that city.

I will also be working on the *Heights Observer's* social media, and I am already researching ideas to create a dedicated *Heights Observer* Facebook page.

I first learned of this internship opportunity in April, through a school mentor who encouraged me to apply for the Y.O.U. internship program.

Y.O.U.'s mission is to empower young people by providing opportunities that will enable them to become valuable members of Ohio's

workforce.

After applying, each student interviews with a Y.O.U. placement specialist and describes their interests and past experience in the field of their choice. Upon a student's acceptance to the internship program, Y.O.U. specialists begin looking for an appropriate placement. Throughout their 120-hour internships, all Y.O.U. interns receive professional-skills training, networking opportunities, and stipends, as well as hands-on work experience.

For myself and the other Y.O.U. interns, this will be our first real-world professional opportunity. To learn more about Y.O.U.'s internship program, visit www.youcle.org/internships.

For now, I look forward to making connections, asking questions, and gaining experience at FutureHeights. I cannot wait to see where this experience leads.

This school year, Bryce Beard will be a junior at Gilmour Academy, where he participates in speech and debate, cross country, and yearbook club. He is interested in journalism and law.

FAIRMOUNT PRESBYTERIAN continued from page 1

issues and social justice, manifested in part in addressing and implementing solutions to environmental concerns, including equitable access to clean air and water, and a healthy environment for all people.

According to Christine Winters, the church's communications manager, "FPC along with Forest Hill Presbyterian Church were the first two Presbyterian congregations in Ohio to earn the certification of Earth Care Congregation, an honor that is only awarded after the completion of a number of actions toward caring for God's earth in four categories: worship, education, facilities, and outreach."

"It has been a long road to get here," said Keith Mills, a longtime member of FPC's Earth Stewards. "We started our intentional transition to sustainable behaviors and practices in the late 1990s; first with small changes such as paper recycling and replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent and later with LED lights, tracking our monthly energy consumption, and identifying

low-hanging fruit to improve efficiency, such becoming more mindful of keeping windows closed in the winter and turning off lights."

It was not until 2013 that the group was able to demonstrate a meaningful decrease in energy usage, earning the support of church leadership to implement a more comprehensive and ambitious green strategy.

"Since then, the facility has experienced a complete electrical efficiency make over," Mills explained. "Appliances have been upgraded to Energy Star-rated products, the building is going through an extensive efficiency assessment, our parking lot renovation included a bioswale that prevents flooding and, most importantly, staff has become more mindful in identifying and embracing 'greener' behaviors."

"The most transformative changes can be seen in our members," noted Winters. "We have been very intentional about leading by example. By being open about what we are doing, sharing results, and inviting our members to participate, we increase

our sphere of influence, promoting and practicing sustainable living within and outside our congregation. This includes encouraging energy conservation, recycling, responsible water usage, food composting, and even planting pollinator gardens."

Asked what is next for FPC's Earth Stewards, Mills' answer is thoughtful and measured. "We have to be mindful of what works for this specific church," he said. "Our next step is to begin developing a plan for carbon emissions reduction. Considerations such as replacing our heating system or installing solar panels require capital investment and technological expertise beyond our own capabilities. Setting carbon reduction targets and strategies to meet them will require us to collaborate and seek expertise outside the church."

FPC's journey to sustainability will include participating in and promoting interfaith initiatives, partnering with environmental organizations, and working with community groups such as the Cleveland Heights Green Team, the national church, and local energy experts to promote environmental stewardship.

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*.

Perhaps the most important outcome of their efforts lies beyond the church's walls, as Winters explained, "Fairmount's sacred tradition teaches that God created us from the earth, and God then called us to care for the earth. As a Matthew 25 Congregation and an Earth Care Congregation, Fairmount is committed to both human-centered justice and creation-centered justice."

To learn more about FPC Earth Stewards, visit <https://fpccl.org/>.

Catalina Wagers is a Cleveland Heights resident who is actively involved in supporting causes and programs focused on the advancement of Northeast Ohio through better access to education, policy advocacy, and environmental protection. She is co-founder of Cleveland Heights Green Team.

Horseshoe Lake supporters file lawsuit

William Hopkins

Friends of Horseshoe Lake (FOHSL) has taken the next step in a legal effort, filing a lawsuit against the cities of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights to prevent the destruction of Horseshoe Lake by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORSD).

This lawsuit follows demand letters issued by FOHSL to both cities, citing violations of their lease agreements with the city of Cleveland.

According to attorney Anthony Coyne, a land use expert with the law firm Mansour Gavin that is representing FOHL, the lease agreements require Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights to preserve the existing conditions, which include the dam and lake; perform necessary maintenance, such as dredging and cleaning; and undertake any required improvements to ensure the park's upkeep. Coyne has stated that the NEORSD's proposed destruction of the lake blatantly violates several provisions within the leases.

FOHSL has been actively involved in efforts to protect Horseshoe Lake since the sewer district announced plans to demolish the lake and dam two years ago.

Collaborating with engineering experts TRC, FOHSL developed a

comprehensive Horseshoe Lake Restoration Plan that not only preserves the lake but also addresses environmental, safety, and cost concerns.

The plan has been presented to NEORSD and the cities multiple times. However, despite FOHSL's efforts, the sewer district has persistently pursued its plan to destroy the lake, refusing to consider any alternatives that involve repairing the dam. Its plan could stick taxpayers with millions in costs for improvements and maintenance.

The lawsuit marks a significant turning point in the ongoing battle to protect the lake. FOHSL supporters are determined to safeguard this natural treasure for future generations.

"We had hoped that the demand letters would foster collaboration between FOHSL, the cities, and the sewer district to find a mutually agreeable plan for Horseshoe Lake. Unfortunately, the joint response from the cities refuted the allegations of lease violations, leaving us with no choice but to escalate our legal strategy. We are now seeking injunctive relief from the courts to preserve this cherished asset," said Coyne.

William Hopkins is a retired teacher and landscape architect, and is a member of Friends of Horseshoe Lake.

Vote for change on CH City Council

Cindy Evans

As a longtime Cleveland Heights resident, I have seen—and experienced—the good and the bad of our city's government.

Lately, I'm afraid, I'm seeing and experiencing the very bad, right in our city's council meetings.

The heart of our democracy is We the People. And We the People of Cleveland Heights are finding it harder to participate in our city government. Actually, we're being actively and aggressively turned away.

It all began in January 2022, when newly elected Council President Hart decided to reduce the time allotted to each community member participating in the public comments part of council meetings from five minutes to just three.

Hart also made up a new rule that any member of the public who wanted to speak about something not on that night's agenda had to wait

until the end of the meeting.

Both public-comments portions of council meetings are explained as one-way communications, not discussions or Q&A sessions. Speakers are not to expect more than a polite "thank you" from the chair. This is not a policy change from prior council meetings I have watched, attended, and spoken at.

These new limits would be bad enough if they were applied evenly. But, in my experience over the past year and a half, residents who take the time to prepare their comments, concerns, and even criticisms, and have the courage to speak at council or committee meetings, can expect to be aggressively "corrected." In contrast, speakers with whom the assembled elected officials agree are often granted extra time at the podium, and, certainly, are neither criticized nor corrected.

Maybe you saw the May 1 coun-

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CH needs a real city administrator

Alan Rapoport

There is a puzzle game called “Where’s Waldo?” In it, a lot of faces appear closely together in a picture. The player is challenged to find that one face belonging to a character called Waldo. That face is hidden and hard to find. This past year, Mayor Seren set up his own such puzzle at Cleveland Heights City Hall. What was hard to find there was the face of the city administrator. The mayor kept it hidden.

The CH City Charter requires Mayor Seren to hire a city administrator. As of this writing, this position remains vacant. It has been vacant much too long.

Daily tasks of local government are to be supervised by a talented profes-

sional. The mayor then could be free to tackle big strategic issues. Hiring a “city manager,” as in former times, would not be necessary. By failing to fill the position, Seren has ignored the mandate of Issue 26.

Mayor Seren previously hired Joe Sinnott as city administrator. Sinnott had a great résumé. He was a former mayor of Erie, Pa. He had executive experience. But at the direction of Mayor Seren, Sinnott played no visible role in governing. Like Waldo, he was in the picture but hard to find. He did nothing obvious to improve terrible communications between the executive and legislative branches of government. His talents were wasted.

Mayor Seren kept Sinnott away

from contact with CH City Council and the public. City services then became based less on need and merit than in the past. They became based more on political preferences. Consider “No Mow May” as a prime example.

Sinnott lasted only a year. He resigned in March. He accepted an opportunity in Pennsylvania that he said was “too compelling to pass up.” Sinnott claimed there were “no negative connotations or inferences” to be drawn from his abrupt departure. But maybe his reason for leaving was that the job was not what had been promised.

Dissatisfaction must have contributed to his resignation. He found returning to Pennsylvania more to his liking than working in Cleveland Heights.

Mayor Seren proved unable to use, motivate, and retain a highly qualified person as city administrator. Hopefully, his next hire will be more visible and more effective. Cleveland Heights needs a real city administrator. It does not need another highly paid Waldo.

Alan Rapoport served on CH City Council (1980-87) and as council president/mayor (1982-87).

CH mayor weaponizes city’s law department

Robert Jefferis

The mayor of Cleveland Heights has weaponized the law department. I have been asked to pay for sewer repairs on public property or “appropriate enforcement action may be taken.” The sanitary is blocked and has backed up from city property onto my property.

I confronted the mayor at the grocery store; he informed me that “[they] decided that the city would only take responsibility at the curb.”

I don’t believe the recent changes to our city charter allow the mayor to rule by fiat, nor is this the more responsive government we were promised. There is no local ordinance or state law that makes private citizens responsible for repairs on public property.

It takes time for the legal process to work. The city is relying on isolating the homeowner and forcing them to undertake repairs. The decision by the mayor to remove responsibility from public property is a money-saving maneuver by the city. This could also affect you.

Lateral lines from everyone’s property typically cross the public right-of-way (which includes the tree lawn) and connect with the sewer at or before the curb, which effectively means the city has just handed individual homeowners a liability for repairs on public property.

This is particularly appalling because we pay two sewer bills, the city is under a consent decree with the EPA for sewers, and the city has been asking how to spend the flood of stimulus money it has received.

Robert Jefferis is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights who cares about the city.

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Cleveland Heights needs leadership

Robert Koonce

I recently visited Lakewood for a great meal and stroll along the lake. What struck me were the notable differences between our cities. While Lakewood certainly has challenges to work through, what I didn't see was a vast wasted property like Severance, nor did I see crumbling infrastructure in its parks.

Unlike Cain Park's dilapidated gutters, broken retainer walls, frightening bathrooms, and accumulated trash, Lakewood's parks looked great.

I also didn't see empty storefronts in its key business districts, compared with Coventry's 19 vacancies.

Like Cleveland Heights, Lakewood has a long history of claiming to be a progressive city, but it appears that we embrace the symbols of being one while ignoring the substance. A progressive community would focus on the things that matter—a thriving small-business environment, beautiful parks, and actionable plans for its biggest challenges.

Why Cleveland Heights doesn't look like Lakewood boils down to our city hall. It's failing. Current council leadership is incapable.

Council failed to appoint its own replacement for Josie Moore, has repeatedly failed to exercise its charter mandate to get information from the administration, has failed to produce any meaningful legislation itself, and failed to establish council rules or priorities after three taxpayer-supported

retreats.

That leadership has the full backing of our mayor—someone who probably wants council to remain inept so that he can impose his own agenda on us. He has a growing reputation for lack of responsiveness and a keen ability to cover that up by leveraging gimmicks to get CNN interviews.

I have lived here most of my life and want nothing more than a city I can be proud of, but the combination of the current mayor and his enablers serving as council president and vice president don't know how to get it done.

We have an election this fall for council seats. I strongly recommend we avoid voting for those who have the mayor's support. We need an independent, wisely led city council—one that can work with the mayor while holding the administration accountable and passing strong legislation that improves our housing stock, revitalizes our business districts, tackles Severance by partnering with the Severance Action Group, maintains our parks, and, ultimately, grows the population and vitality of this city.

So, re-elect Gail Larson and look seriously at Jim Petras and any other candidate free from the mayor's direct influence.

Robert Koonce was born and raised in Cleveland Heights and has lived most of his adult life here, raising four children along with his wife, Divina.

Larson thanks CH residents for input, ideas

Gail Larson

I recently released a survey asking for input from Cleveland Heights residents about your experiences living in our city, what you see as our strengths and challenges, and what you want for our shared future. I am grateful to have received so many responses—thank you to everyone who took the time to contribute your thoughts and ideas.

I am proud that people from all across Cleveland Heights put their trust in me to share their feedback in this survey. As many people agreed, one of our city's greatest strengths is our diversity. I want to be sure I know what residents in every neighborhood want and need from our city government as we move forward.

As I've been thoughtfully reading through the survey responses, I've been thinking a lot about diversity. It's more than race, religion, gender, or sexual identity. It's also about how these parts of ourselves impact our experiences, influence the choices we make, and shape how we see our community. Each response on the survey is unique and valuable, and I appreciate the spectrum of perspectives that make up our great city. It is our diversity of viewpoints that truly makes us strong and resilient. Independent thinking and respectful disagree-

ment is not only OK; it is necessary for our democracy.

I bring these values of inclusion, responsiveness, and diversity to my role on city council. I value residents' input, whether it be through e-mail, comments at council meetings, citizen committees, or even while I'm out and about in Cleveland Heights. I believe that leadership requires listening, and it is the role of a democratic government to empower citizen voices, bring them forward, and facilitate what we learn into a coherent and actionable vision for our city.

This is also why I am committed to responding to every communication from residents. I want you to know that your voice is heard, and I will do whatever I can to address your concerns and answer your questions.

If you did not get a chance to fill out the survey, it will remain open on my campaign website, gaillarsonforclevelandheights.com, on the "Your Feedback" page. Again, thank you to everyone who put your trust in me and shared your input and ideas for Cleveland Heights!

Gail Larson is currently a member of the Cleveland Heights City Council, and lives on Montevista Road in the Noble Elementary School neighborhood. She is a candidate for CH City Council in this November's general election.



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Weak council leadership gives mayor too much power

Tonya Horn

In 2019, I, along with nine other Cleveland Heights residents, formed Citizens for an Elected Mayor (CEM). I was tired of stagnant leadership, and I often referenced Cleveland Heights as a tale of two cities: the vibrant, growing, and developed south side, and the red-lined, ignored, and voiceless north side.

I have no regret that [the elected mayor ballot issue] passed. I truly believed that we would finally have co-equal branches of

government that would serve our city better than the city manager form of government.

Our council members are failing to get work done. Their disjointed efforts are often left at a standstill or stalemate of sorts, preventing priorities from getting completed in any timely manner. There seems to be an us-against-them mentality, and a clear divide between some members and the mayor. As a result, all are losing sight of residents' needs.

Leadership starts at the top with the mayor and the council

president. In my opinion, neither is faring well.

I have witnessed inappropriate, disrespectful, and unprofessional interactions, and that is concerning. As a result, we lost a respected, hard-working council member, Josie Moore.

With an election on the horizon, watch, listen, and be informed. Is this the leadership you hoped for?

As I witness the actions of "leadership," it is clear something needs to change if Cleveland Heights is to have a fully functioning council.

Council Member Gail Larson and challenger Jim Petras are two who will be seeking our votes.

Gail Larson has been a calm, thoughtful legislator who has brought her community values and dedication to the Noble neighborhood, producing legislation to help homeowners and, in particular, seniors. Each time I contact the council to share concerns, Gail has always responded with an acknowledgment.

Jim Petras is a young professional, the next generation, eager and passionate about this city. His measured and [engaging] approach brings people together every day to collaborate and solve problems. I have had the pleasure of working with him in the community, and I know him to be a hard-working leader who deserves a chance to serve his city.

There is a lot at stake in this election. Cleveland Heights needs a strong, independent, and productive city council that works well with the mayor, but also serves as a check and balance when necessary. This is far from how council is functioning now. Remember this in November when you cast your ballot.

Tonya Horn is a concerned Noble neighborhood resident and was a member of the Citizens for an Elected Mayor campaign. She is a Future-Heights board member. The opinion expressed here is her own.

Fire pits should be prohibited in warm months

Tom Bier

This past May, the Cleveland Heights administration featured Air Quality Awareness Week. The online "City News Update" stated that "Cleveland Heights is working hard to find ways to lower our contributions to poor air quality and make this a lung-friendly city."

Recently, when smoke from Canadian wildfires was a health threat, "City News" advised us to "[t]ake steps to protect your health. Unhealthy air quality increases health risks for everyone, but is more worrisome for Sensitive Groups, those at risk for pulmonary episodes such as asthma." And the Cleveland Heights Fire Department asked us to "[p]lease observe the current moratorium on open fires, such as fire pits, that generate smoke."

If Cleveland Heights is to be a "lung-friendly city," why are smoke-producing open fires, such as fire pits, permitted? They shouldn't be.

Smoke is a serious health risk for some. It also is a nuisance. Most Cleveland Heights homes are not air-conditioned. The scent of lilacs coming through open windows should not be swamped by the smell of smoke. Blaring music is considered a nuisance and is not permitted; nor should unhealthy, disturbing smoke be—during months when windows are open.

That's my view. I suggest you submit yours to Council Member Janine Boyd (jboyd@clevelandheights.gov) who chairs council's Public Safety and Health Committee.

Tom Bier has lived in Cleveland Heights for 50 years.

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What we see and hear



HEIGHTS OF
DEMOCRACY

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

In putting together these monthly columns, we work through our thoughts about and hopes for hyper-local democracy—specifically in Cleveland Heights. We try to express opinions only about what we can observe, avoiding speculation about the unseen and unheard—including people’s possible motivations. For that reason, since our first elected mayor took office in January 2022, we’ve written much more about CH City Council than about Mayor Kahlil Seren’s administration. Except for frequent executive sessions, council meetings are open to the public, livestreamed and archived on YouTube. Agendas and legislation are posted on the city’s website.

We hoped for a mayor who would actively engage with the community, govern with transparency, and welcome the public to City Hall when it re-opened post-pandemic. Instead, most of the administration’s work takes place behind doors that, since 2022, are not only closed, but locked. The receptionist in the atrium has been replaced with a police officer. The mayor is invited to address the public regularly during city council meetings, but rarely has much to say. He is known to seldom return phone calls or reply to e-mail.

Seeking contact information for our city’s chief executive or his staff via the Cleveland Heights website is a challenge. While Mayor Seren’s phone number and e-mail appear under his photo on the Mayor’s Office landing page, most users will first see the staff directory on the left and click on that. It lists the mayor, Special Assistant Patrick Costigan, and Mayor’s Action Center Coordinator Brandon Upchurch, with no phone numbers and an e-mail address given only for the mayor. Many other sections of www.clevelandheights.gov similarly lack complete, current, well-organized information and user-friendly design.

This year, the city’s *Focus* magazine reappeared in residents’ mail-

boxes after a hiatus in 2022. The first two issues contain a lot of valuable information but lack organization and professional polish. The second issue features a two-page announcement about the long-awaited Mayor’s Action Center. How to access this new service should be prominently boxed and in bold type. Instead, you have to read to the end of the article to find it, and the new coordinator’s name is never mentioned.

When things at City Hall don’t get done, or are not done well, we can’t always tell whether it’s due to insufficient staffing or incompetence. We have preferred to assume the former, but for frustrated residents it doesn’t matter. Running the city is Mayor Seren’s responsibility. Council passed his budget, fully funding his requests for new staff; yet key positions, some vacated on his watch, remain unfilled.

Although this column does not endorse candidates for office, individually we both strongly supported Kahlil Seren in our city’s first mayoral race. We felt he was the best qualified of an underwhelming quartet of candidates, and we still do. But we’re concerned about what we’ve seen—and not seen—thus far.

The mayor appears to have spent countless hours with city council in executive session, wrangling over appointments to council and the Charter Review Commission. We know that he has severely restricted communication between council members and staff, and that staff has become less accessible to the public and the press as well. This is far from the direction in which Seren promised to take the city during his campaign.

Certainly, spin and political maneuvering are endemic to all governments, and conflict between mayors and city councils is hardly unique to Cleveland Heights. But if residents and neighboring communities see more of these things than steady progress toward solving chronic problems (think housing, Severance, and revitalizing the Noble and Coventry business districts), there will be trouble ahead.

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

CH-UH City Schools Walk-In Hiring Events

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We have great kids in our Heights community



THE COMMON
GOOD

Susie Kaeser

Summer has a way of flying by. The 2023–2024 school year will begin in Cleveland Heights–University Heights on Aug. 23, and, as we anticipate this annual back-to-school transition, I want to brag about our kids and reassure my fellow citizens that investing in our young people is worth it! We have great kids and we have a lot to learn from them and give to them.

Like most senior citizens and residents of our community, I don't have a lot of everyday contact with young people. As director of the Reaching Heights-sponsored Heights Summer Music Camp, though, I have spent a week every

summer since 2005 surrounded by adolescents. This summer I witnessed the interactions and musical development of 75 Heights students who had just completed fifth- through eighth-grade in our public schools, 27 Heights High teenaged musicians, two college student alums of the Heights music program, and 18 amazing music professionals.

In one week, this intergenerational hodgepodge of unique individuals became a special community, united in a common project, supportive of each other and willing to tackle significant musical challenges. They grew by leaps and bounds!

Our young people are vulnerable and can be awkward as they look for social acceptance, establish their identities, navigate individual challenges, and make sense of this often-harsh historic period. It's a lot, but the camp setting was a perfect environment for developing com-

petence and comfort, and observing their strengths.

Music-making is a collaborative project. Campers worked on their skills as members of a chamber group; orchestra; instrument section; or a percussion, ukulele or jazz ensemble. It was cooperative and cognitively demanding. As our campers adjusted to the daily routine and started to work in each musical setting, their warm hearts, sincerity, curiosity, uncertainty, desire to grow and acceptance of others were visible.

High school mentors helped diagnose issues to be solved, coached campers as they worked on skills, demonstrated what is achievable, brought creativity and fun to each day, and modeled what a love of music looks like. Their enthusiasm, skills and patience were always on view. They were a fabulous resource for campers, each other, and adult staff.

Every part of the camp day oozed with one-to-one connections that helped campers build skills and confidence, and develop friendships. These connections enabled campers to feel at home, cared about, capable and important. They soared!

More than one staff member said the camp's inclusivity was what made it such a positive place. From enrollment and staffing to the attitudes and interactions among staff and

campers, everyone was included and welcomed, regardless of skill, age, race or gender identity. Diversity is a strength, and it showed at camp.

Saxophone specialist Nathan Holaway bragged about the inclusive attitudes of the jazz players, who used every free moment to jam in the band room, while welcoming novice players and teachers to join them.

Low brass specialist Daniel Hershman-Rossi appreciated that the camp was playful and welcoming. Conductor Dan Heim's ability to inject humor into the hard work of a rehearsal, and the playfulness of silly hats, stuffed animals and group costumes, added to an environment where everyone could be themselves.

Music camp puts me in touch with great kids and shines a light on the kind of support and environment that helps them thrive. Great kids are everywhere. They need us to support, encourage and trust them. Thanks and best wishes, teachers, for doing your best to bring out the best in our great kids!

Susie Kaeser is the former director of Reaching Heights, and is active with the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the League of Women Voters. She is the author of a book about local activism, Resisting Segregation.

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CONGRATULATIONS

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Class of 2023

The graduates were accepted to the following colleges, universities, and more:

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Alabama State University	Georgia Institute of	Pennsylvania State University	Colorado
Albany State University	Technology	Greater Allegheny	University of Pennsylvania
Allegheny College	Georgia State University	Portland State University	University of Pittsburgh
Allegheny Community	Hampton University	Queens College of Charlotte	University of Pittsburgh
College	Harvard University	Robert Morris University	Bradford
Arkansas Pine Bluff	Hilbert College	Rochester Institute of	University of Rochester
Baldwin Wallace	Hobart and William Smith	Technology	University of South Carolina
Barnard College	Colleges	Santa Barbara City	University of Toledo
Bates College	Howard University	Community College	University of Vermont
Bennington College	Inner State Beauty School	Siena Heights University	Ursuline College
Bluffton College	Jackson State University	South Carolina State	U.S. Military
Boston University	Jacksonville University	University	Washington University
Bowling Green State	Jamestown College	Southern University and	Wayne State University
University	John Carroll University	A&M College	Wheaton College
California State Maritime	Kent State University	Spelman College	Wingate University
Academy	Kentucky State University	St. John's University	Worcester Polytechnic
Case Western Reserve	Lafayette College	Syracuse University	Institute
University	Lake Erie College	Temple University	Xavier University
Central State University	Lehigh University	Tennessee State University	Xavier University of Louisiana
Clark-Atlanta University	Louisiana State University	Texas A&M University	Yale University
Clemson University	Loyola University Chicago	Texas Southern University	Youngstown State University
Cleveland Institute of Art	Medaille University	The New School	
Cleveland State University	Miami University	The Ohio State University	
Colgate University	Michigan State University	Tiffin University	
College of Wooster	Middlebury College	Trinity College	
Colorado State University	Miles College	Tuskegee University	
Columbia College Chicago	Morehouse College	University of Akron	
Columbia University	Morgan State University	University of Alabama at	
Columbus State Community	New York Institute	Birmingham	
College	Technology	University of Arizona	
Cooper Union University	New York University	University of Charleston	
Cuyahoga Community	Norfolk State University	University of Cincinnati	
College	North Carolina Agricultural	University of Kansas	
Dartmouth College	and Technical State	University of Maryland	
Delaware State University	University	Eastern Shore	
Dominican University	North Carolina Central	University of Michigan	
Duke University	University	University of Mississippi	
Earlham College	Northeastern University	University of New Mexico	
Eastern Michigan University	Norwich University	University of North Carolina	
Fisk University	Notre Dame College	at Chapel Hill	
Florida A & M University	Occidental College	University of North Carolina	
Fordham University	Ohio Dominican	at Charlotte	
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By Lauren Gunderson

Nan has decided to teach her abusive husband Kyle a lesson. With the help of her friend Simon (acting as her emotional -- and actual -- cheerleader) and a stripper named Sweetheart, she tapes Kyle to a chair and forces him to watch as they reenacts scenes from their painful past. In the piece de resistance, they plan to cover the room in meat and honey so Kyle will be mauled by a bear. Through this night of emotional trials and ridiculous theatrics, Nan and Kyle are both freed from their past in this smart, dark revenge comedy.

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The City of Beautiful Welcome Signs

Mike Cook

Good signs come to those who wait.

For years, University Heights was known as “The City of Beautiful Homes.” While a rebranding campaign in 2018 updated the door knocker logo and city motto, University Heights still has beautiful homes, and now it has beautiful welcome signs to match.

Last month, new welcome signs were installed across University Heights, with more to come later this summer and fall.

“The new signs were a long time coming, and now that they’re finally being installed, they exceed my expectations,” said University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan. “More importantly, the response from University Heights residents has been overwhelmingly positive.”

The signs feature the new University Heights city logo and colors. The four colors of the logo are made with transparent plastic, creating a stained-glass appearance that allows sunlight to pass through the signs.

“Mayors from other cities have reached out to me, asking how their cities can have such beautiful signs,” Brennan said.

Seven signs were installed the first week of July, with eight more to go up soon. In addition to the welcome signs, a new sign was installed at Walter Stinson Community Park.

The city logo and the new signs were designed by Guide Studio. Design consultant Kevin Fromet said



New signs have been installed in University Heights, and more are on the way.

he is thrilled with the finished product. “The University Heights brand represents the community mosaic,” Fromet explained, “and it is great to see that come to life in the physical environment.”

“Translating the brand into signage provided an opportunity to create a more dynamic brand experience,” noted Fromet. “The transparent colors in the signage are meant to mimic stained glass, allowing light and scenery to show through in various ways depending on time of day, location, and the viewer’s vantage point.”

Future signs will include monument signs, plus signs at Purvis Park and UH City Hall.

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



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University Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

JUNE 20, 2023 – regular meeting

Council members present were Michelle Weiss (vice mayor), Christopher Cooney, Threse Marshall, Brian J. King, and Sheri Sax. Council Member John P. Rach was not present. Also present were Mayor Dylan Brennan; Kelly Thomas, clerk of council; Luke McConville, law director; and Dennis Kennedy, finance director.

Public comments

Comments mostly addressed the Charter Review Commission (CRC) recommendations. Steve Wertheim, chair of the CRC, and Chris Myrick, vice chair, urged passage of all 10 proposals, which the commission approved by large majorities. Wendy Deuring, chair of the Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters (LWV), said that the LWV supports ranked-choice voting (RCV), which assures a majority rule rather than a plurality. Several others spoke supporting the amendments, especially the RCV proposal, including Sean Logan of Lisbon, Ohio, a former member of the Ohio House of Representatives; Kyle Herman, executive director of Rank the Vote Ohio; and several residents.

Mayor’s report

Allen Pennington has been appointed the new service director and will start June 26.

Council vacancy

Winifred “Win” Weizer was nominated to fill the council seat vacated by Barbara Blankfeld. The motion failed, with Cooney and King voting no. [Weizer was re-nominated and appointed at a June 28 special meeting, when the four council members present, Weiss, Sax, Rach, and Marshall, all voted yes.]

CRC proposals

Placing a charter amendment on the ballot requires five council votes. Therefore, due to Blankfeld’s resignation and Rach’s absence, the five members present at this meeting must all vote yes to approve a charter amendment proposal.

Sax read a statement thanking the CRC, but maintaining that council should not rubber stamp all recommendations. King and Mayor Brennan expressed support for all proposed amendments, with the rationale that council should trust the commission and the voters.

Council approved the first CRC amendment proposal to revise the charter to reflect gender neutrality and remove anachronistic references.

Council failed [to approve] the second amendment proposal, which would eliminate term limits, with Weiss, Cooney, and Sax voting no.

Council failed [to approve] the third amendment proposal, which called for the mayor to appoint the law director and removed council’s role in an appointment to an executive department. Cooney, Sax, and Weiss voted no. Sax said this change would remove council’s role to provide checks and balances.



Council failed [to approve] the fourth amendment proposal, which called for charter review no less than every 10 years. Weiss and Sax voted no. Sax said this was too short a period, as some council members could be in office for two reviews.

Council approved the fifth amendment proposal to modernize the names of departments named in the charter, to conform with modern usage.

Council failed [to approve] the sixth amendment for RCV, with Sax, Weiss, and Cooney voting no. Michael Cicero, the city’s assistant law director, who drafted the ordinance and supported the proposal, said the board of elections (BOE) would be ready to accommodate RCV by 2025. Sax said she had conducted her own investigation with the BOE and was told that it would not be ready. Law Director McConville said that, as a charter community, University Heights and its citizens have the right to decide how to conduct their elections and the state has to abide by their decision.

Council approved the seventh amendment proposal, changing the recall process.

Council approved the eighth amendment proposal to modify the method to put initiatives and referenda on the ballot by basing the required number of petition signatures on the number of voters voting in the previous election.

Council approved the ninth amendment proposal, making the vice mayor, rather than the mayor, the presiding officer at council meetings.

Council approved the tenth amendment proposal, which would add anti-discrimination language to the charter.

Other council actions

Council standardized the rental-permitting process by creating uniform timing for requests.

Council modified a 2021 pilot program for electric scooters by removing the pilot program language, changing time restrictions, and prohibiting more than one rider per scooter.

Council modified an ordinance, adding enforcement regarding trash cans left out overnight.

Council passed an ordinance giving the city the right to inspect common areas and dwelling units in a rental property for the purpose of fire prevention and protection of renters.

Council extended IT support services from Starfish Computer for another month.

Council passed an alternate tax budget for tax purposes with no change in tax rate.

Council tabled an agreement with SCS Engineers regarding the recently passed recycling ordinance to allow input from the new service director.

LWV Observer: Marilyn Singer.

LWV continued from page 1

13866 Cedar Road.

The LWV, FutureHeights and Heights Libraries are co-sponsors of the forums.

Candidate forums give voters an opportunity to hear the candidates discuss issues important to them in this election. At each candidate forum, candidates will present brief statements and answer written questions from the audience.

At the Issues forum, the substance of each ballot issue will be presented by proponents and opponents, who will then answer written questions from the public.

The LWV of Greater Cleveland is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to informing the public about the election process and the individuals who are asking to represent us in government. The LVW neither supports nor opposes candidates or political parties. It advocates for policies and issues that support good government. League-sponsored voter education

VOTE FOR CHANGE continued from page 3

cil meeting, where President Hart reached over to turn off a council member’s microphone, yelled at citizens and fellow council members, and threatened to change the number of votes required for making appointments to the Charter Review Commission? Another council member was allowed, by Hart, to reprimand residents who advocated for change.

Do you remember the Oct, 3, 2022, meeting, when Hart tried to “save time” by cutting public comments to just two minutes per person? I was one of those people. I had prepared three minutes of heartfelt, well-researched comments, and I was

NOBLE GARDENERS continued from page 1

Celebration mural was installed on an exterior wall of the building next to the park.)

New this season, NGM is welcoming area musicians who are willing to offer their gift to the neighborhood. Interested musicians should send an e-mail to nobleneighbors@gmail.com for additional information and to get on the schedule. NGM particularly welcomes young musicians—high school students or recent grads—as well as more seasoned local performers.

NGM provides a hyper-local opportunity for neighbors to sell to neighbors—fresh flowers, plants, and fruits and vegetables. Anyone who grows in their backyard or in a community garden is welcome to sell, for a single week, a few weeks, or for the entire eight-week season. No processed food is permitted; only freshly picked fruits and veggies, cut flowers and potted plants.

NGM is staffed by volunteers. Vendors are not charged for space.

Sellers will need to provide their own tables or ground cloths, post their prices, and be able to make change for their customers. Sellers do not need to live in Cleveland Heights to participate.

NGM seeks to offer buyers

forums follow League procedural rules. In the event that a race is run unopposed, League rules require that no forum be held.

VOTE411.org is an LWV-sponsored website that provides the public with verbatim candidates’ responses. This is another avenue for voters to compare and choose among candidates and issues. Heights-specific candidate and issue information will also be published as a printed Voters Guide, to be included as a special insert in the October *Heights Observer*.

The LWV urges voters to mark their calendars and, as the busy general election season proceeds, take advantage of the opportunities offered by LWV of Greater Cleveland, FutureHeights, and Heights Libraries to become fully informed on the candidates and issues.

Elizabeth Tracy and Blanche Valancy are members of the Cleveland Heights/ University Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.

suddenly supposed to edit them down to just two minutes?

Vote for the change you want to see in Cleveland Heights this Nov. 7. Let’s start by voting for candidates who respect democracy and transparency. Clearly, that excludes Council President Hart.

Cindy Evans is a 30-year resident of Cleveland Heights who raised both of her daughters here. A retired teacher, she is currently working to revive the Caledonia neighborhood by attending council meetings, voicing her concerns, and joining other organizations. She is trying to be the change she wants to see.

the freshest produce outside of what they can find in their own backyards. Most sellers harvest that morning for the market.

Buyers should bring small bills and coins to help support their neighbor-sellers. Parking is free at the meters on Noble Road and in the city parking lot across Noble Road from the market.

All participants—growers and musicians—should be aware that there are no utilities on site; there is no electricity, water or restroom facilities.

The primary goal of NGM is to foster community-building by bringing together people with common interests. Folks share growing and cooking tips, stories about grandparents who grew their own food, and dreams of future gardens. The community is enriched by these growing friendships, and more healthy eating of these home-grown foods.

For more information, look for the Noble Gardeners’ Market flyer at www.nobleneighbors.com, or send questions via e-mail to nobleneighbors@gmail.com.

Buyers, sellers, musicians and volunteers are all welcome!

Brenda H May is one of the Noble Neighbors leaders. Check out their story at NobleNeighbors.com

808 continued from page 1

and Emily do both on the air and off the air that bring the city and the campus together through music.”

“808s & Mixtapes” broke the Guinness World Record for the World’s Longest Radio Interview in February 2022. Since then, the crew has won three national student production awards, helping WJCU become one of the nation’s top 25 collegiate audio programs.

Sinutko, Davala and Kennedy came in second place for the Best College On Air Personalities in the United States in the 2023 Broadcast Education Association awards.

“I’m extremely proud of the work Zach and the ‘808s & Mixtapes’ team

have done over the last two years, and I look forward to seeing what they accomplish in the year to come,” said Jasen Sokol, general manager of WJCU. “I thank Mayor Brennan and his administration for their continued support of our students.”

The 808s crew is looking to continue its winning streak at the upcoming 2023 Collegiate Broadcast Incorporated Awards and bring some more hardware back to the Tim Ruskert Department of Communications at JCU.

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

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Cleveland Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

JUNE 20, 2023 - regular meeting



Council members present were Melody Joy Hart (president), Craig Cobb (vice president), Janine Boyd, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., and Davida Russell. Also present were Mayor Kahlil Seren; Addie Balester, clerk of council; and William Hanna, law director.

Horseshoe Lake
Council authorized amending the 2018 Stormwater Project Agreement with Shaker Heights and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) regarding the Shaker Lakes dams. The amendment will accept NEORS's recommendation to not rebuild the Horseshoe Lake Dam and instead decommission the dam and return the lakebed to its naturalized state.

Denison Park splash pad
Council authorized the purchase and installation of a splash pad for Denison Park, at a total cost of \$476,418.18.

Lead hazards
Council amended "Lead Hazards" and other pertinent sections of the city code dealing with lead-safe certification of rental dwellings built before 1978.

Other council actions
Council approved the Coventry Village Special Improvement District's public services plan and the 2024 tax budget. Council authorized an agreement for paper products, mats, and cleaning and other supplies for up to 60 months for \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year; and an agreement for a zoning parcel record dataset, which will assist planning and zoning professionals and developers doing business with Cleveland Heights. Council cancelled its July 3 and 17 meetings for a recess. The next council meeting will be Aug. 7.

Council member comments
Gail Larson reported that the Municipal Services and Environmental Sustainability Committee spoke with the parks and recreation director about sidewalk snow removal.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

JUNE 22, 2023 - special meeting

All council members were present, as were the mayor, clerk of council and law director.

Charter Review Commission
Council appointed Stephanie Morris, Jonathan Ciesla, and Graham Ball to the Charter Review Commission (CRC), with Davida Russell voting no. She explained that her vote was not an objection to the individuals but concerned geographic representation and diversity; 35 percent of the city's population lives north of Mayfield Road, yet none of the commission nominees do.

Council extended to Jan. 31, 2024,

the deadline for the CRC to submit a report and recommendations to council.

Cain Park 'stramp'
Council authorized use of \$1.5 million of ARPA funds for the Cain Park Village Stramp Project, with Russell and Cuda voting no.

Out-of-county property owners
To improve the housing code and clarify the registration structure, council amended several sections of the city code regarding registration of dwelling structures and business structures by out-of-county owners.

Council member comments
CRC: Mayor Seren said diversity should be embraced, celebrated, and pursued. He noted that four members of council live north of Mayfield Road, and council ultimately decides what will be put on the ballot.

Larson expressed support for Russell's concern, but [said she] voted yes as it was past time for the CRC to convene.

Cuda said the need to seat the CRC outweighs his concerns about process. He thanked the applicants for their patience.

Hart commended council members for their effort and noted their willingness to compromise.

Cain Park Village Stramp: Council held a robust discussion regarding the proposed stramp, focused on whether this was the best use for ARPA funds.

WXZ Development Incorporated presented the stramp as part of the Cain Park Village development proposal in February. It would be located on the north side of the Cain Park sledding hill. Mayor Seren noted that close to \$100 million in private investment is committed to the Cain Park Village development, which can also attract multiples of \$1.5 million in state money through "transformational mixed-use funds." No other ARPA funds have been considered for parks, although parks and recreation were third on the list of needs identified in citizen surveys.

Russell said she preferred sending ARPA funds to organizations and businesses, or using them for major city equipment needs or help with housing issues. She added that confusion has delayed ARPA fund allocation.

Boyd noted [there is a] July deadline for making applications to Ohio for ARPA funding.

Cobb stated council has been slow in allocating ARPA funds and must commit to as many meetings as necessary in August to make these decisions. He added that money has been allocated to sewer projects, which was the public's first priority in surveys.

Cuda said the stramp was not the most important need in the city.

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.

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For Cleveland Heights City Council

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& SUSTAINABLE
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Brown celebrates Coventry with 'Lov for Cov'



Bob Brown and Ori at Spirit Corner near their Coventry Village home.

Lee Batdorff

Robert (Bob) Brown has lived in Cleveland Heights for 47 years. For the past 20, he's been a resident of the Coventry Village neighborhood with his wife, Susan Berger. They share their home with their current dog, a Labradoodle named Ori.

In spring 2023, Brown self-published a 68-page photo essay he authored, *Love for Cov*. In it, he provides a loving history of Coventry Village and its unique architecture, people and walkable neighborhood. Brown's Coventry Village is defined as bordered by Coventry Road on the west, Superior Avenue on the east, Mayfield Road on the north and Euclid Heights Boulevard on the south.

From Marcus M. Brown, who

pushed the streetcar and inter-urban rail line through Coventry in about 1903; to the late Rabbi Zalman Katzen, the butcher at the old Coventry Poultry Market; to interviews of the owners of Tommy's and Mac's Backs—*Lov for Cov* has it all. There is a reference copy in the Coventry Village Library, and a pdf of *Lov for Cov* can be found online at www.citybobbrown.com/single-post/lov-for-cov-coventry-village-in-cleveland-heights.

Brown grew up in Philadelphia and, later, in an adjacent suburb he describes as similar to Coventry but “not nearly as cool.”

He started college at the counter-culture Goddard College in rural Vermont, where, Brown recalled, “I didn’t know what I wanted to do as a job,” though he wanted to do

“societal good.”

His life changed when he read the great urban theorist and activist Jane Jacobs' book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. "I realized that a small town in rural Vermont was not the place to be to learn about cities," said Brown, who found a bachelor's degree program at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) that "was a good fit for my newfound interest in city planning."

(Though Brown didn't come to study in Northeast Ohio because of it, the region played an important role in America's history of local zoning regulation and land use planning. In a 1926 landmark case, the *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty*

Co., the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that land zoning is a valid exercise of government's police power. Soon thereafter, most local governments in the U.S. began practicing what became known as Euclidian Zoning.)

In 1976, after graduating from CWRU in 1973, and undertaking a two-year master's program at Columbia University, Brown hoped that his first full-time city planning job would be working in the city of Cleveland for Norm Krumholz, who was nationally known for his pioneering work in "equity planning," which focused on creating choices for residents who otherwise had few

continued on page 14

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West memorial fund awards scholarship to police academy cadet



Jermaine Smith (center) received the Officer Jason D. West Memorial Fund scholarship at the Cleveland Heights Police Academy graduation on June 28. The award was presented by the organization’s president, Lita Gonzalez (at right) and Liz Radivoyevitch, its vice president.

Joy Henderson

The Officer Jason D. West Memorial Fund (OJWMF) awarded a \$5,000 tuition reimbursement

scholarship to Jermaine Smith, a June graduate of the Cleveland Heights Police Academy.

The \$5,000 award honors Officer West, a member of the Cleveland

Heights Police Department who lost his life on May 26, 2007, while responding to a disturbance call.

“The board felt that Jermaine exemplifies all the qualities that endeared Officer West to the Cleveland Heights community and made him an exemplary police officer,” said Lita Gonzalez, OJWMF board president. “He will be an asset to whichever police department and community he chooses to serve.”

In his application, Smith wrote that he sees becoming a police officer as not just a job but a calling. He said he is passionate about helping people and making a difference in his community.

Previously, Smith worked in a mental health hospital. That experience, he said, has helped him approach crisis situations in a way that can help de-escalate potential conflict and maintain a safe environment for everyone.

The Officer Jason D. West Me-

morial Fund was created shortly after West’s death. It has awarded 23 scholarships to Heights High graduates who planned careers in law enforcement. The fund also awarded tuition reimbursement scholarships to two past recipients, enabling them to attend the CH Police Academy. OJWMF is currently focused on providing tuition reimbursement for selected CH Police Academy cadets.

OJWMF plans to award another tuition reimbursement scholarship to at least one member of the December 2023 CH Police Academy class.

For more information, visit www.officerjasonwest.org and follow the Office Jason D. West fund’s Facebook page.

Joy Henderson is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights who volunteers on the marketing committee for The Officer Jason D. West Memorial Fund.

HRRC’s August classes include popular plumbing series

Anne Marie Goodfriend

Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC), located at 2520 Noble Road in Cleveland Heights, announces the following lineup of classes for the month of August.

Aug. 2, 6:30–8:30 p.m., Paver

Stone Patios and Walkways. This hands-on workshop will teach the step-by-step process of designing, planning, and creating outdoor spaces using paver stones.

Aug. 10, 7–9 p.m., Siding Installation and Repair Class. The instruc-

tor will explain the different options available when it comes to siding. Participants will also learn how to prep for a siding job, what tools they’ll need, and even get a chance to try installing siding on HRRC’s model exterior wall. The fee for this class is \$25.

Aug. 14, 7–9 p.m., Common Household Fixes. This free class will cover such topics as vinyl floor tile repair, loose hinges, stuck window sashes, sticking doors, loose floor boards, dripping faucets, and more. Bring your questions!

Aug. 15, 7–9 p.m., Knob and Tube Wiring. For the many homeowners who have knob and tube wiring in all or part of their home, this workshop will help answer any questions. Participants will learn how to ground the system, how to ground individual plugs, how knob and tube is replaced with Romex, see knob and tube up close, and learn the issues one may face. The fee for

this class is \$25.

On Aug. 16, 7–9 p.m., HRRC will present the first of six classes in its popular Plumbing Series for Women. The six-week course will cover how the plumbing in your house works, how to make common repairs, and even how to work with contractors on jobs that you don’t want to tackle yourself. This series will provide the tools, terms, and know-how for you to start tackling plumbing issues yourself. Space is limited, so early registration is advised. The fee for this series is \$150.

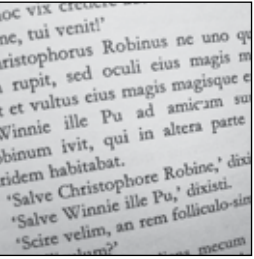
To register for any HRRC class, visit <http://brrc-ch.org> or call 216-381-6100 ext. 16.

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


Anne Marie Goodfriend is the education coordinator at Home Repair Resource Center.

Observe!

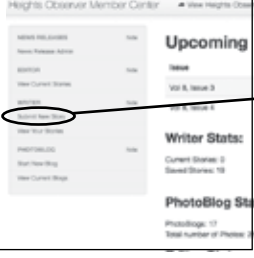
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4. **Reward yourself**; you’re about to be published. We’ll review and edit your article, and let you know if we have any questions.

BROWN continued from page 13

if any choices in life. After Krumholz told him that the city planning office was trying to avoid layoffs and had no jobs available, Brown took a job with Cuyahoga County’s planning commission, where he worked for nine years.

In 1985, Brown finally got his “dream job” when the Cleveland Planning Office, under Director Hunter Morrison and Mayor George Voinovich, hired him to manage the Civic Vision 2000 Citywide Plan, creating a plan and zoning for Cleveland’s neighborhoods. After the plan was completed, Brown became assistant planning director under Morrison and Mayor Michael R. White.

Brown served as Cleveland’s planning director 2006–2014, suc-

ceeding Chris Ronayne, and working under Mayor Jane Campbell, and continuing under Mayor Frank Jackson. He retired in 2014.

According to Brown, one of the most important skills of a planning director “is to treat everyone with respect regardless of the opinions they hold.” A *Cleveland Plain Press* article, describing Brown’s leadership of a contentious neighborhood meeting, stated that he “radiates honesty and sincerity, along with good humor.”

Lee Batdorff moved to Cleveland Heights on Aug. 14, 1966, the day The Beatles played Cleveland Municipal Stadium. He was editor and publisher of Coventry Shopping News, 1977–78, and editor and co-publisher of the Cleveland Express, 1978–80.

Heights Observer August 1, 2023

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www.heightsobserver.org

Reaching Heights' Hawthorne plans 2024 retirement



Reaching Heights Executive Director Krista Hawthorne.

Ditte Wolin

After nearly 18 years with Reaching Heights—the organization that champions the excellence and opportunities of public education in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District—Executive Director Krista Hawthorne will retire in June 2024.

During Hawthorne’s tenure, Reaching Heights has produced 17 community spelling bees, 15 summer music camps, and four Reaching Musical Heights concerts at Severance Hall (in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019).

Hawthorne joined Reaching Heights as a communication assistant, then served as assistant director before becoming executive director—a role she has filled for nearly 10 years.

“We’re lucky in the Heights to have a rich and diverse community committed to public education,” said Reaching Heights Board President Nat Morehouse. “The generous and hardworking people who support our public-school students and their teachers, the role models and tutors who visit classrooms and share knowledge, the volunteers and donors who make the work of Reaching Heights possible. But all of that has to be guided, managed, and led. That’s where Krista shines: in bringing people into our schools to participate in the education of our students, in motivating our residents to give, and most importantly, in executing the direction and vision of the board and the organization to

champion our schools.”

Hawthorne and her husband have lived in the Heights for more than 35 years. Their two daughters attended Coventry and Boulevard elementary schools, Roxboro Middle School, and Cleveland Heights High School. They have hosted seven AFS exchange students—Hawthorne has been a lead volunteer with AFS Intercultural Programs for more than 20 years—all of whom attended Heights High.

“I am proud to have been involved in bringing people into our schools,” said Hawthorne, “for the community spelling bee, to tutor and speak with our children, for our summer music camp and Reaching Musical Heights, and more. Many moments stand out for me, like the privilege of giving the awards for Friend of Public Education and Outstanding Community Partner at the Reaching Heights annual meetings.

“Over the past 18 years, I’ve had rare access to a full view of the school district. I’ve been welcomed and

trusted as a partner in every building and by the district administrators. This access is critical for Reaching Heights: it allows us to help promote to the Heights community the deep learning, excellent teaching, and great care our school and district staff provide our children. It has truly been an honor and privilege to work at Reaching Heights and carry on the legacy of my predecessors to support public education in the CH-UH City School District.”

A search committee has been formed to find a new executive director for Reaching Heights, with the goal of hiring a replacement in early 2024 to facilitate a smooth transition before Hawthorne steps down.

Reaching Heights Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that works to connect the community to the Cleveland Heights-University Heights public schools with information, programs, and events that raise awareness of public education, support teachers, and enrich students.

Ditte Wolin submitted this article, written in cooperation with Mazie Adams and Lance Godard. All are all members of the Reaching Heights board and its Search Committee, and are parents of Heights High students and graduates.

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Student musicians connect with community at summer camp

Diana Drushel

During the second week of summer, 75 instrumental music students from the CH-UH City School District's middle and elementary schools were not quite ready to put their instruments away. Instead, they attended the 17th annual Reaching Heights Summer Music Camp, learning from alumni and experts in the community, that culminates in a full orchestra performance.

Every summer, Reaching Heights organizes a weeklong, affordable music-immersion experience for the district's middle and elementary schools' orchestra and band students.

Over the course of the five-day camp, the student musicians participate in orchestra rehearsals; work in their instrument group in a master class and a sectional rehearsal; participate in a chamber group; and explore a new musical interest such as jazz, a percussion ensemble, ukulele or choir. This is all in preparation for a recital on Friday that features the chamber groups, and a final full orchestra performance on Saturday morning.

The 47 staff members, comprising music educators, Heights High students, and local musicians—many of whom are alumni of CH-UH and the camp itself—come back year after year to “pay it forward” to an experience and program that helped many of them grow as musicians and

individuals.

Maple Buescher (Heights High class of 2021), a junior at Bates College who has opted not to pursue music professionally, recalled her time as a camper and being encouraged by staff to be involved with music. “I think that’s just a super cool part of camp,” Buescher said. “It’s so open to everyone, no matter if their career is going to be music-based or not.”

Being a camper, and then a counselor as a high school student, played a part in Heights High alumna Kym Carter’s (class of 2013) decision to become a music educator. Now the orchestra director for Roxboro Middle School, Carter has been involved in the camp since 2006. There, she met her first violin teacher, who later convinced her to pursue music education. As the teacher for many of the current campers, Carter said the immense progress they make during the week nearly brings her to tears. “It’s important for the middle schoolers to see how much they can progress and grow in their time at the camp,” Carter said. “It just gives them more confidence.”

The camp’s success would not be possible without the 28 high school student counselors, who work in tandem with adult staff. From teaching theory lessons, to helping with the many small tasks that make the camp run smoothly, to providing musical

continued on page 23



Heights middle-school cellists at full-orchestra rehearsal at the Reaching Heights Music Camp.



Kym Carter leads middle-school musicians in chamber group rehearsal at the Reaching Heights Summer Music Camp.

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Cleveland Heights – University Heights Board of Education

Meeting highlights

JUNE 13, 2023 - regular meeting

Board members present were Beverly Wright (president), Dan Heintz, James Posch, and Jodi Sourini. Malia Lewis was not present. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

School Spotlight

The June Spotlight featured Principal Patrick Carpenter, of Noble Elementary School, who presented Noble School's family and community engagement work during the 2022–2023 school year. The elements for student success align with the college and career readiness program AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), Community Learning Center framework, National Network of Partnership Schools, and the PTA Partnership, all of which seek to create an inclusive school atmosphere to promote equity.

Summer school

The number of students enrolled in the summer school programs are 393 in kindergarten through fifth grade, 195 in middle school, 142 in high school, and 19 in the algebra middle school bridge program.

Resolution against HB 103

The board approved a resolution opposing Ohio House Bill (HB) 103, which requires school systems to purchase and use "American Birthright: The Civics Alliance's Model K–12 Social Studies Standards." Wright warned that HB 103 would drastically alter the teaching of civics and history. Copies of the resolution will be delivered to Speaker of the House Jason Stephens, Senate President Matt Huffman, and Gov. Mike DeWine.

Treasurer's report

The Ohio Senate has released the state biennial budget. Gainer stressed the need to advocate for the district's needs. He presented the difference between the House bill and the Senate's substantial reductions. The budget returns to the House but must be presented to Gov. DeWine by June 30.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

JUNE 27, 2023 - work session

Dan Heintz and Malia Lewis were not present. The other board members were present, as were the superintendent and treasurer.

Board actions

The board approved temporary appropriations for fiscal year 2024 and a consent agenda.

Semester two academic update

Four key performance indicators were reviewed:

- Attendance—Overall school attendance rates remained about the same or increased compared to school year 2021–2022. The elementary school with the best attendance was Canterbury. Oxford Elementary and Roxboro Middle schools demonstrated the most improvement.
- Chronic Absenteeism—The chronic absenteeism rate is the percentage of students who are absent 10 percent or more of school time, and includes both unexcused and excused absences. Chronic absenteeism rates for all schools decreased from 2021–2022.
- Early Literacy Instruction—Acadience Reading, the reading diagnostic test, shows that kindergarteners who started [school] in

2019 and 2020 are rebounding.

- Instruction (Northwest Evaluation Association measures of progress)—Assessments for both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math are completed three times a year to guide instruction and adjustments to increase student performance.

The district has researched instructional materials and implemented programs for ELA that includes Wonders, Heggerty, Group Core Phonics, and My Perspectives. New instructional materials for mathematics (Envision Math, Into Math, and Reveal Math) will be piloted 2023–2024.

LWV Observer: Judith Beeler.

JULY 11, 2023 - regular meeting

All board members were present, as were the superintendent and treasurer.

Consent agenda

The board approved several consent agendas. One included a memorandum of understanding for a partnership between the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public School District (CH-UH) and the Jackson Public Schools in submitting a federal grant application to fund recruitment and retention, professional development, instructional leadership teams, and more. This relates to CH-UH goals for diversity and equity.

Policies Group C

The board approved Policies Group C, which is relevant, but not limited, to public comments at board meetings, restrictions regarding tobacco use and vaping on school campuses, and technology use by teachers and students.

Superintendent comments

School leaders met to receive feedback, reflect on performance data from the 2022–2023 school year, and plan for next year. The Equity Ally Academy, beginning July 19, will educate participants about CH-UH's equity efforts and provide ways to partner with equity goals.

New administrators

Kirby introduced Sean Patton, compliance/Title IX officer; Andrea Walker, Fairfax Elementary School principal; Kristen Riley, Boulevard Elementary School principal; Toni White, assistant principal, Oxford Elementary School; and Michael Jenkins, director of curriculum and instruction.

Finance

Gainer presented three things about district finances:

1. Temporary appropriations must be passed July 1 to start the school year. The permanent budget will be approved Oct. 1.
2. The user-friendly Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) is available on the district website.
3. Excess Cost Reimbursement relates to costs for educating students with disabilities who may need to attend a different school district to meet the student's needs.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

LWV reports published in the online Heights Observer often contain more details. Documents for all board meetings can be accessed at www.chuh.org/BoardofEducation.aspx. Board meetings are livestreamed at www.youtube.com/CHUHSchools and recorded for later viewing.



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Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board

Meeting highlights



JUNE 26, 2023
Board members present were Max Gerboc (president), Annette Iwamoto (secretary), Dana Fluellen, Patti Carlyle, and Melissa Soto-Schwartz. Vikas Turakhia (vice president) and Tyler McTigue were not present.

Summer reading program
Nearly 300 people attended the summer reading kickoff program. Youth Services Manager Sam Lapides and Adult Services Librarian Jen Mihalik shared positive feedback about the summer reading program, which runs from June 1 to Aug. 11. The youth program requires that participants read, or are read to, for 20–30 minutes each day. Youth sign-ups number 1,100. The adult program offers an opportunity to enter a raffle with each book read. To date, there have been 689 entries. Details for these programs can be found online at <https://heightslibrary.org>.

Noble Neighborhood Library building
The interior demolition has progressed well. Steam piping is underway. Digging the trench for underground wiring has begun. Budget remains as expected, except for a recent significant [price] increase for Cleveland Heights city permits.

- Board actions**
The board:
- Authorized a contract with Preferred LLC for painting exterior metal items at the Lee Road branch and HKIC building.
 - Approved a purchase order to Cresco Real Estate to advance cash for repairs with the expectation that the library will be reimbursed in the future.
 - Approved a contract with Findley Landscaping to improve the grounds around the Lee Road Branch and the HKIC, and to re-launch the children's garden at the Lee Road Branch.
 - Approved the lease with People's Choice Payee Services at the Coventry PEACE Building. This is a nonprofit organization that empowers people with resources they need to thrive and to live the lives they envision in their communities of choice.
 - Approved a Procurement Diversity Policy.
 - Approved 2023–2024 employee medical and prescription coverage with CIGNA. Employees will continue to share the costs. The plan provides three plan-design options and four coverage levels for eligible employees.
 - Approved an additional 35 cents per hour additional pay to those certified as Passport Application Agents.
 - Approved an increase in base salaries for 2023 (2 to 5 percent based on market ranges) for all active employees, effective June 25. This includes a step-pay increase for pages, starting at \$15 per hour, and a \$1,500 lump-sum payment to librarians with page supervisor responsibility.
 - Approved the elimination of page PTO

(paid time off) policy, to be replaced with ETO (earned time off) and sick policy. Current PTO earnings would go into the new ETO bank and/or sick-leave banks.

Director's report
University Heights branch meeting rooms and the lower-level areas for children and teens will reopen on or before July 10. Staff are currently reshelfing all materials that were moved due to the flood.
A \$50,000 matching grant has been received [from] an anonymous donor for the PEACE Park building project, doubling all donations made between July 1 and Oct. 1. Another \$50,000 needs to be raised. F. Buddie Contracting and Regency Construction have submitted bids for the project, which the board will review.
Coventry Village merchants have provided donations and discounts for the summer reading program kick-off event.

A website (cuyahogareads.org) was designed for the grant-funded Cuyahoga Reads partnership. The Cuyahoga Reads program will kick off Aug. 5 at the Great Lakes Science Center. Admission is free and there will be programs all day for families.
A staff and board training opportunity on book banning from *Library Journal* will be available Sept. 27.
The University Heights and Lee Road branches will be polling places for the Aug. 8 Special Election.
If approved, changes proposed in the Ohio State Budget could lead to a Public Library Fund reduction of about \$39 million over the biennium, which would significantly impact public libraries.

Public service report
John Piche, adult services librarian, helped coordinate programming for a very successful Dementia Awareness Week.
The third Heights EcoFest, co-sponsored by the Coventry Village Branch and Cleveland Heights Green Team, in PEACE park, was held on May 27 with more than 500 people in attendance.
The Noble Neighborhood Branch opened its temporary location at the BNH building on Noble Road. After-school programming and Friday Story Stop continues at Disciples Church. Community Storytime at Right Start Church has had 15 children [attend] in the last two weeks.
Youth Services Associate Shamekia Chandler had 34 participants in her Snack GEO program, a sampling of international snacks.
University Heights' Youth Librarian Hannah Van Jura presented information about the library's summer reading program at a Gearity elementary school pre-K event.

LWV Observer: Judith Beeler.
Information about the board, board meeting minutes and audio recordings can be found at <https://heightslibrary.org/locations/heights-libraries-board>.

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UH Library reopens flood-damaged areas



Youth services staff welcomed customers back to the repaired children's room on July 6.

Sheryl Banks

On July 6, Heights Libraries' University Heights branch officially reopened its lower level, home to its Teen and Children's departments, which had been closed since August 2022 due to damage caused by flooding. The flooding destroyed flooring, walls, and built-in furniture, rendering the space unusable. The library hired construction company Millstone Management Group to perform the renovation work, after Neptune Plumbing installed new clean-out drains in the space to prevent future flooding. "Several engineers were consulted and all agreed that there was nothing structurally wrong with our building, the storm sewers, or the water lines around our building," said University Heights Branch Manager Sara Phillips. "It was a freak incident, a perfect

storm of factors, like days of heavy rain and concurrent roadwork, but regardless, we'll be in good shape if anything like it ever happens again." Millstone was able to return the popular space to its previous layout, and the flooring has been updated with more durable materials that should last for years to come. The children's service desk and all lower cabinetry are brand new, while other, movable furniture, such as tables and chairs, were saved. The popular murals, created by local award-winning artist Jamey Christoph, were reprinted and reinstalled. "We had about 15 people waiting at the door the day we reopened the space, including two tween boys who were very excited to learn that the teen area was reopened," said Phillips. "Youth services staff are beyond

thrilled to have the full collection back, and are looking forward to holding storytime in a dedicated space again." Phillips added that she appreciates how patient customers have been during the lower-level closure, and how creative and flexible the staff were during the past year. Staff moved the entire teen and children's collections to the branch's meeting rooms, and held storytimes in a makeshift area on the first floor and at nearby Walter Stinson Park. All cleaning and repair costs were covered by the library's insurance.

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

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Yiddishe Cup dedicates Aug. 17 concert to Walter Stinson



COURTESY BERT STRATTON

Yiddishe Cup will play its final outdoor concert of the season on Thursday, Aug. 17, 7 p.m., at Walter Stinson Community Park, 2301 Fenwick Road, in University Heights. The band plays klezmer and Motown. The concert is free. "To some," noted Bert Stratton, leader of Yiddishe Cup, "Walter Stinson is a park, aka 'The Walt.' To some, Walter Stinson is a person. He died in October. He worked for the city of University Heights for decades. He first hired Yiddishe Cup in 1994 for a University Heights concert. On Aug. 14, 2003, the entire East and Midwest had a power blackout on a brutally hot and humid night. I thought Walter was joking when he said the show must go on. I said to him, 'McDonald's is closed, there are no street lights, and the radio says stay home.' He said play. Our keyboard player switched to upright bass, and our sax player went to acoustic guitar. We did an entirely acoustic show. Yiddishe Cup dedicates its Aug. 17 concert to the memory of Walter Stinson. Gotta respect Walter's show-must-go-on 'tude!" [Yiddishe Cup members pictured above (from left): Steven Greenman, Alan Douglass, Bert Stratton, Tamar Gray, and Alice Stratton.]



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Make a date for free performances at Cain Park



Artrageous will perform a free show at 11 a.m., Aug. 16, followed by a Q&A, then a ticketed performance that evening.



Alla Boara will perform modern arrangements of near-extinct Italian folk songs in a free concert on Aug. 15.

Marc Lefkowitz

Free concerts and performances are dotted throughout the month of August at Cain Park. Mark your calendars and schedule a sitter (or bring the kids; many of the events are family friendly).

With 250 seats in the intimate Alma Theater, 2,532 split evenly between the Evans Amphitheater's pavilion and lawn, an art gallery, and a summer program schedule that features free and paid live performances through September, Cain Park provides ample opportunity to enjoy local and national talent—in some cases with no admission fee.

August's schedule starts with a performance from Cleveland Public Theatre's Student Theatre Enrichment Program (STEP), a rigorous arts-based program that provides hands-on job training, and engages young people in a powerful learning experience that develops job skills, academic achievement, and interpersonal skills. STEP will showcase the work of its students in a free performance on Tuesday, Aug. 1, 7 p.m., on the pathway outside the Alma Theater.

It pays to read the fine print, as ticket-holders can bring children under the age of 3 for free to an Aug. 3 performance of Bindlestiff Family Circus, a troupe of contemporary circus, vaudeville, burlesque, and sideshow performers who celebrate

the diverse world of circus arts. The performance takes place at 7 p.m., in the Evans Amphitheater.

Cain Park has two free concert series running throughout the 2023 season: its Tuesday Evening and Sunday Afternoon concerts.

On Sunday, Aug. 6, 1-4 p.m., the Sunday series features AirChiefs, a 1960s-soaked rock band hailing from Cleveland. On Sunday, Aug. 20, 1-4 p.m., the Don DeSantis Quintet, a jazz ensemble inspired by the Las Vegas lounge acts of the 1960s, will perform.

On Tuesday, Aug. 15, at 7 p.m. in the Alma Theater, catch a performance by Alla Boara, a Cleveland group whose modern arrangements of near-extinct Italian folk songs bring recognition and new life to Italy's diverse history of regional folk music. Jazz enthusiasts should mark their calendars for a Tuesday, Aug. 22 performance by the Brad Wagner Quintet. Its lineup features songs by musicians who would have turned 100 years old in 2023, including Dexter Gordon, Thad Jones, Wes Montgomery, Milt Jackson, Percy Heath, Tito Puente and more.

Don't miss Artrageous, an electrifying art and music circus that offers a free family event at 11 a.m. on Aug. 16 (ahead of its ticketed performance that evening at 7 p.m.).

Round out an artful summer with a visit to the Feinberg

Gallery at Cain Park to see *A Smoker's Etiquette: Social Complexities at a Designated Smoke Table*.

This show—the gallery's second summer art exhibit, is curated by Daly Horton and runs from Friday, July 28 through Saturday, Sept. 22.

To see all of the performances

scheduled for August, visit www.cainpark.com.

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.

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Baseball kids—it runs in the family



SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

I watched some of my granddaughter's Heights Youth Baseball League (7- and 8-year-olds) games this summer. This was the first baseball team experience for these kids. There were more girls than boys on the team, the Purple People Eaters, with their uniforms of purple jerseys, caps and socks, and white pants. My daughter-in-law was the coach and my son was one of the assistant coaches. All of the coaches were volunteers.

At this level, the teams' coaches pitch to their own teams. They play with a regular baseball, a hardball. Three or four of the coaches go onto the field when their team is playing defense, to guide the kids, but the coaches don't do any fielding; for that matter, neither do the kids, much; though that did improve by the end of the season. Games were played in early evening, and parents, and others, came to watch and cheer the teams on.

All of this was quite different from my baseball experience when I was growing up in Cleveland

Heights and playing for the Cumberland Park team. It was only for boys, for one thing. And it was softball. Hardball was for Little League, but you had to be pretty good to play Little League back then. Our team was not very good. I don't remember ever winning a game.

Cumberland and Cain parks and most of the elementary schools in Cleveland Heights had teams, with a paid coach—usually a college guy—assigned to each place.

Cumberland's coach, every year I played on the team, was a nice guy named Mike. Even though I started out big for my age, my eyesight was bad, which hurt my hitting and fielding. But I was fairly strong, so if I accidentally hit the ball, it went far. And I was fast, which helped if I ever got on base, which I mostly didn't. Teams had 10 players, rather than nine, on the field, with an added position called short-center. That was my position, because there would be three guys behind me to go after the balls I misjudged.

I started in the summer between sixth and seventh grades. Since Cumberland was in the neighborhood of the junior high I was about to start, Roosevelt, I met a bunch of kids I'd be going to school with in the fall. I didn't really care about most of them, but I did a couple, and became good friends



My granddaughter and some teammates at a Forest Hill Park baseball diamond, waiting to get into a game, which every player always did.

with those guys, one to this day.

We practiced every day, on a baseball diamond that no longer exists in Cumberland Park. We had games against other teams almost every day. Parents never came to watch; this was just a kid thing. We didn't have uniforms; we just wore our street clothes.

We played on each team's field, which, in the case of some schools, like Coventry, was completely asphalt. I don't remember that anyone of us minded that. Cumberland's home games were played at Forest Hill Park, probably because our own field wasn't regulation size, outfield-wise. Many of my granddaughter's

team's games were played at Forest Hill, too, but on newer and greatly improved baseball fields.

My second summer playing on the Cumberland team found me bigger, but with no better vision, thus not improved. Except I was still a fast runner, and a man who started coming around to Cumberland noticed that and pulled me aside after one of our practices. He told me that his name was Mr. Tupta, and that he was in charge of the Cleveland Heights part of the Junior Olympics, and he asked me to try out for it.

continued on page 23



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STUDENT MUSICIANS continued from page 16

support and encouragement when it gets overwhelming—they do it all, and more.

“It is a really important connection,” said Daniel Heim, the director of orchestras at Heights High, who has been involved with the camp since 2010. “And it’s a great source of support and encouragement for the campers to see their peers, who are just a few years ahead, doing so well.”

Instrumental music is a beloved program in the CH-UH school district, and Reaching Heights helps its young musicians grow by providing an opportunity for them to stretch themselves with the more challeng-

ing music that is a precursor to high school. With the support and encouragement of alumni and community members, they truly see what their hard work can do.

The Reaching Heights Summer Music Camp is open to instrumental musicians in grades five through eight who live in the CH-UH City School District. Scholarship support is available, as are school instruments to borrow. Reaching Heights Summer Music Camp 2024 is planned for June 10–15 at Heights High.

Diana Drushel is a 2011 Heights High graduate, parent and community liaison for Cleveland Heights High School, and special projects coordinator for Reaching Heights.

SONGS & STORIES continued from page 22

Try-outs consisted of running a 50-yard dash on a section of the asphalt walkway that ran—and still runs—through Cumberland Park, from Cumberland Road west to the stairs that take you up to Hampshire Road. I did that, on the asphalt, in my street shoes (I didn’t own tennis shoes, other than the ones I had to save for gym class in the fall) and made the team.

I raced—still in street shoes and clothes—in Junior Olympics preliminaries, held on Heights High’s track. I really liked doing that, though I lost my race.

Afterward, Mr. Tupta, who was the boys’ guidance counselor at Roosevelt, strongly suggested that I try out for the school’s football team in

the fall. He kept saying, “With your size and speed . . .” I made the team, but, again, despite my potential, I couldn’t see without my glasses, so I was relegated to the line, which meant crashing into bigger guys on every play. I also made the track team later.

By high school, I had quit all sports to concentrate on music. But that whole experience gave me a little direction, and a lot of self-esteem. Plus, it was fun. And it changed my life.

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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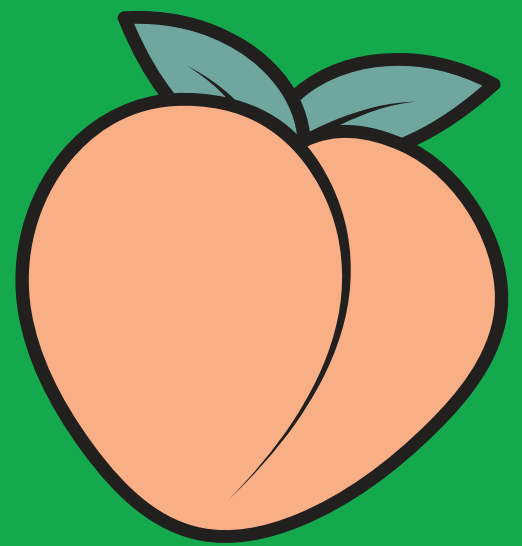


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