Heights Music Hop celebrates 10 years

Amanda Isaacson

On Sept. 23, the 2023 Heights Music Hop will celebrate its 10th year. Sponsored by the nonprofit FutureHeights, a community development corporation for Cleveland Heights and University Heights, this community event supports local artists and businesses while promoting the Heights to Greater Cleveland.

The Hop, scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 23, will be held at the Noble Gardener’s Market in the morning and in the Cedar Lee District Saturday that night. The event is free.

Kasia Bufford, manager of the Heights Music Hop, expressed excitement about the upcoming event, noting, “The Music Hop committee has created an event that will be diverse with lots of ways for people to participate.”

Bufford anticipates approximately 30 artists will be performing, with 14 businesses serving as music venues.

The Heights Bicycle Coalition (HBC), a chapter of Bike Cleveland formed in 2010, has teamed up with FutureHeights to encourage people to walk or ride to the Hop. Deidre McPherson, an avid rider and HBC member, is reminding everyone to, “Leave your car at home and bike to the Hop, then enjoy a casual bike ride with members of HBC.” HBC will be organizing a Ride to Hop that meets at Best Gyros (a Main Stage Venue) at 6 p.m.

Once cyclists arrive, the Ohio City Bicycle Co-op, a nonprofit, volunteer-driven cooperative helping people to use bikes, will greet riders who want to valet park their bikes. This service is being offered in collaboration with FutureHeights for anyone riding to the event, and will be located at the event information center on the corner of Lee and Meadowbrook in the city parking lot.

Kristine Pagsuyuin, executive director of FutureHeights, said, “Safety at the Music Hop is a top priority. Hopefully, encouraging...”

continued on page 11

CH’s Frabotta medals in Pan American U20 Championships

Cat Wagers

Cleveland Heights resident Damon Frabotta earned the bronze medal in the 400-meter hurdles at the 2023 Pan American U20 Championships, held in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Aug. 4-6.

Frabotta is a rising sophomore at Boston College, and a former standout hurdler for Saint Ignatius High School, from which he graduated in 2022.

Frabotta clinched one of two coveted spots on Team USA’s Junior National Team at the USA Track & Field U20 Junior National Championships, held at historic Hayward Field in Eugene, Ore., July 8 and 9. There, Frabotta took the silver medal in the 400-meter hurdles, and set both a personal record and a Boston College record in the event, with a time of 51.89.

Crowdsourced Conversations launches final 2023 survey

Sarah Wolf

Crowdsourced Conversations is a forum series that prioritizes action-oriented, small-group discussions on topics significant to the Heights community. Each topic begins with a Heights-wide survey that helps to inform the discussion.

This September, a community-wide survey on the topic of “Planning and Development in the Heights,” the final topic in this year’s series, will be live. All Heights stakeholders and residents are encouraged to participate. All responses are anonymous.

The survey can be accessed online on the FutureHeights website, futureheights.org. Details about the forum itself—now in the planning stages and slated for late October or early November—will be available soon.

The goal is to use the data collected in the survey to generate a report that can be shared with the public and enable program stewards to craft action-oriented small-group discussion questions.

At Crowdsourced Conversations events, groups that average 6-10 people come together to think productively about the topic of the evening and strategize ways that any resident can take action or become more involved.

Since the program’s inception in spring 2022, Crowdsourced Conversations topics have covered “Sustainability” (April 2022), “Housing and Neighborhood Preservation” (June 2022), “Community Safety” (August 2022), “Gis Engage” (October 2022), “FutureHeights” (November 2022), “Gus Engage” (February 2023), and “Sustainability” (March 2023). Future events are expected to take place in mid-2023.

Church welcomes all to diverse arts community

Ronald Werman

The congregation of Disciples Christian Church (located at the corner of Mayfield and Yellowstone roads) is joyfully partnering with the arts community to share its 30,000-square-foot building.

The church’s Cultural Arts Center (CAC) welcomes local artists of all genres, and seeks to collaborate with community partners to create a safe, accessible place where young people can engage in artistic expression that reflects the community’s diversity.
Longtime resident sees improvements in Cleveland Heights

To the Editor:

As a citizen of Cleveland Heights for 35 years, I would like to mention some cool things Sue (my wife) and I noticed as we walked, rolled, and biked around the Heights.

People are moving into the new apartments at the Top of the Hill. We see signs of life, like plants out on the balconies. Next door, Nighttown is looking good; the deep blue wall colors are quite attractive.

It’s great to see Coventry Road getting resurfaced, and it will be so much smoother for bicycles when it’s finished. The “bike the city” people rode past our house one night; it sounded like they were having fun.

The new trash containers are great. The streets around here are much cleaner on trash day. We’re glad to see that Horseshoe Dam is going to be dismantled. We look forward to the area reverting to a more natural state.

The new stone entryway at Mitch’s candy store is really gorgeous and perfectly level for wheelchair users.

Dave’s Market is spiffing up the building on Lee Road—new chili cabinets, and what fun to name the aisles after Cleveland Heights streets!

And what do you know? We have a mental health hospital right here in the city.

All these might seem like minor improvements to life in the Heights, but to us, every little thing counts.

Jerry Hannibal
Cleveland Heights

Loving the woman of the Heights

To the Editor:

Fifty years ago, I was a pretty young art student working on Coventry and couldn’t afford anything above the $10 I had to live on. I met all of my girlfriends were interesting and cute and also caused a lot of havoc. I hated the war and worked on ending it in between making jewelry and hanging out in the coffee houses and bars in Cleveland Heights and University Circle.

Now, I’m an elderly, crippled woman with no car. I do have a mobility scooter, though. Had to renew my ID at the DMV to vote because—another birthday. Durn, every year! DMV is several miles away. A little worry about the range I had with the scooter, but I did it. Rode up on Sparky all the way.

I was attending a conference at the Rec Center, also a couple miles away, in another direction. (Cleveland Heights is BIG!) Made it up there! Voted NO on Issue I! We don’t need to enable the doozy legislature to pile on the votes to thwart our rights!

Saw many wonderful, beauti ful, vibrant women of a certain age doing the same thing. This is why I love Cleveland Heights!

Susana Prendergast
Cleveland Heights

 Authorities are deaf to motorcycle noise

To the Editor:

This summer, Cleveland Heights has seemed to let the scofflaws rule. Motorcycle noise, day and even late at night, has disturbed the peace usually enjoyed by taxpaying homeowners.

Major roadways, such as Lee, Taylor, Cedar, Mayfield and Monticello, have become favorite speed ways as motorcycles fly by over speed limits, often with music blaring in addition to their no muffler vehicles. Cleveland Heights DOES have a noise ordinance (509.03), but authorities seem deaf to it. At one time, Cleveland Heights residents lived in fear of being ticketed for an unruly muffler. Why is this noise being tolerated now?

It would be great if motorcycle owners would be considerate while riding within the city, saving their high gear for the countryside, but more than likely, the riders are not local taxpayers and don’t care. Our authorities should care.

Jan Milic
Cleveland Heights

The nonprofit Heights Observer seeks delivery volunteers

The nonprofit Heights Observer relies on volunteers to help distribute each print issue, on or before the first day of the month. If you are interested in delivering the paper to CH and UH businesses and institutions, please contact Brenda Bailey, volunteer coordinator, by e-mail (bbbailey@futureheights.org), or by phone (call or text 614-804-7604).

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.

Advertise in the Observer
We should not only be concerned about the maintenance of our yards, but also about the biodiversity of our landscapes. Letting the early spring wildflowers grow, which is important for the pollinators, provides good bio-habitat. Also, people will have a diverse landscape which provides good growing conditions for many plants.

The mayor previously hired Joe Sinnott as city administrator. But because Mayor Seren used him poorly, Sinnott was wasted. Sinnott resigned in April. Since then, the new form of government has not operated as designed.

Mayor Seren had kept Sinnott away from contact with city council and the public. The mayor proved unable to use, motivate, and retain a highly-qualified person. I wrote last month that I hoped his next hire would be more visible and more effective. That now may be the case.

I am a big fan of Williams. He is a gentleman. He has executive and government experience. He has the right skill set. Most importantly, he works well with others. I cannot imagine a better choice for city administrator.

As critical as I have been about Mayor Seren in the past, I believe he got something right this time.

At least I hope he got it right.

Cleveland Heights might now have a good city administrator

Alan Rapoport

Mayor Seren is making his second attempt to fill the position of Cleveland Heights city administrator. And he offered an excellent candidate—he nominated Danny Williams.

Mayo Seren allowed this position to remain vacant for much too long. Daily tasks of local government require supervision by a talented professional.

The mayor previously hired Joe Sinnott as city administrator. But because Mayor Seren used him poorly, Sinnott's talents were wasted. Sinnott resigned in April. Since then, the new form of government has not operated as designed.

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As critical as I have been about Mayor Seren in the past, I believe he got something right this time.

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Much will depend on whether the mayor uses this second city administrator better than he used the first one. Rumor has it that Williams extracted some promises from the mayor.

These promises might allow Williams to have reasonable interactions with department heads, council members, and the public. If that proves to be so, government in Cleveland Heights will work much better—provided Seren does not mess the situation up again by becoming a control freak.

At times, Williams may be ordered by the mayor to implement unpopular agendas. That could happen in a political system. The response to what is unpopular is called an “election.” There will be one in November for some members of city council.

Controversy about the mayor's management style probably will become an issue then. And eventually there will be another election for mayor. Hopefully, Williams will remain in his job despite any noise or drama.

In the meantime, we may see real improvements at City Hall. This is because Mayor Seren finally found a good man to do an important job there.

No Mow May raises awareness

Gerald Sgro

We will not really know whether we were able to increase the diversity and abundance of pollinators necessary for our plants to flourish this season by not mowing in May. This would make a good research thesis for some graduate student. But one of the main goals of the No Mow May movement is to get people thinking and talking about the maintenance of their yards from an environmental perspective.

In that respect, Mayor Seren's declaring Cleveland Heights a No Mow May community was a huge success.

Because of this movement, people around the country and here in the Heights have been made more aware of pollinator declines that will eventually lead to ecosystem collapse. Biodiversity loss is on the World Economic Forum’s Global Risk Report 2022 as one of the top three threats facing humans today.

Though not everyone will go all in with No Mow May, some will perhaps will embrace the concept of moving away from a monoculture lawn supported by fertilizer and herbicides and instead have a diverse landscape which provides good bio-habitat. Also, people better understand the importance of letting the early spring wildflowers grow, which is important for the pollinators.

We should not only be concerned with what we grow in our yards, but with how we care for our yards. Especially, we need to re-think our use of gas-powered equipment.

Climate change is an important driver responsible for the decline of pollinator species and abundance. Gas mowers contribute to this. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the typical gas lawn mower emits 88 lbs. of carbon dioxide added to the atmosphere in the U.S. by gas lawn equipment in 2018. A gas leaf blower puts out more hydrocarbons than a Ford F-150 truck.

There are a variety of non-gas alternatives to mowing and blowing lawns, from electric mowers and blowers to push mowers and brooms (the way everyone maintained their yards in the Heights prior to the 1970s). These alternatives will eventually pay for themselves with the savings gained from not using gas yard equipment, and will greatly reduce carbon dioxide emissions even when considering the energy used to recharge the battery for electric equipment. Plus, the neighbors will be happier because our peaceful “quiet” neighborhoods will actually be peaceful and quiet, and the babies can nap.

It’s Time to Plant the Seeds for Next Summer’s Lush & Beautiful Lawn!

Gerald Sgro is a longtime Cleveland Heights resident and a retired research biologist.

Lawn Lad

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Let's help you love your landscape!
Cleveland Heights is a tale of two cities

Tonya Horn

A tale of two cities will continue to be my tagline for and reference to Cleveland Heights until city council and the mayor take action on more equitable efforts, including Start Right CDCs infill housing project that will create a mixed-income neighborhood and increase home values; use federal community development block grants, if possible, to help struggling businesses with repair and external, unified facelifts; repurpose the old CVS; and recruit and support aspiring business owners to the area.

This Noble Station low-income project, which received tax credits through the Ohio Housing Financing Agency, is proposed to cost $14.7 million. If the city and the Indianapolis-based developer Together We Grow (TWG) are committed to building a multi-story complex, here’s a thought: I and perhaps others in the Noble neighborhood would welcome affordable housing for our low-income aging population. (I know the struggle in my attempt to relocate my 82-year-old father back home to Nebraska. We have been on several affordable housing waitlists for three years.)

The city administration has an obligation to DELIVER. We’ve waited far too long, with a lot of talk but no progress. We need this city to take action now, in our lifetime, to eliminate the long-term effects and ramifications of redlining and structural racism created decades ago.

Tonya Horn is a concerned Noble neighborhood resident and was a member of the Citizens for an Elec’ted Mayor campaign. She is a FutureHeights board member. The opinion expressed here is her own.

Hart gets things done for Cleveland Heights

Peter DeGolia

When considering candidates for Cleveland Heights City Council, we should look at what they have accomplished. Melody Joy Hart’s record over the past four years includes some impressive legislative successes for our city.

Among other things, Cleveland City Council President Hart collaborated with the Cleveland Heights court, prosecutor’s office, and Home Repair Resource Center to create a diversion program for homeowners with housing violations that keeps them out of court and helps them repair their homes.

She proposed and collaborated with her fellow council members to approve permanent exclusion from the city’s out-of-county registry and vacant building registry, giving [legislation] more teeth and adding a civil option for prosecution of fines; creating a Racial Justice Task Force to evaluate the impact of, and provide recommendations to address, systemic racism in our city; and mandating [that] infill housing agreements require the developer to not discriminate on hiring or selling properties to LGBTQ+ residents.

A CPA with an extensive finance background, Hart instilled a thorough budget process that ensures fiscal accountability of all departments. The distracting theatrics and finger pointing we are currently witnessing among some council members gets us nowhere. Hart has my vote on Nov 7 because she responds to citizen concerns and gets things done.

Peter DeGolia is a geriatrician with MetroHealth and a 33-year resident of Cleveland Heights.
The case for change on CH City Council

Tony Cuda

Things on CH City Council are not going well. The past 20 months have been marked by a constant struggle to get information from the administration, council’s failure to compromise on a replacement for Josie Moore, and council leadership’s inability to establish any rules or priorities after three retreats. The result has been a largely unproductive, unfocused, slow-moving, and sometimes adversarial city council.

There have, however, been moments when things have been calm and the business of the city moves forward without incident. But when it comes to council taking care of its own business—the clerk of council amendment, the memorandum of understanding, equal treatment inquiries—council’s failure to compromise when there was a stodgy dominant speaker, and sometimes adversarial city council.

There are, however, been moments where things have been calm and the business of the city moves forward as it should. The vast majority (98%-plus) of perfunctory legislation put forward by the administration moves ahead without incident. As a project director at Case Western Reserve University, he brings people together on a daily basis to collaborate to solve problems. He’s young, educated, perceptive, and a quick study. And he is the only challenger when we don’t agree, she is always collaborative and professional. Jim Petras is a consensus builder.

Jim Petras is a consensus builder. As a project director at Case Western Reserve University, he brings people together on a daily basis to collaborate to solve problems. He’s young, educated, perceptive, and a quick study. And he is the only challenger when we don’t agree, she is always collaborative and professional. Jim Petras is a consensus builder.

There are six candidates running for three CH City Council seats on Nov. 7. Larson and Petras are the only two candidates endorsed by the Cleveland Heights Democratic Club! For three CH City Council seats on Nov. 7. Larson and Petras are the only two candidates endorsed by the Cleveland Heights Democratic Club!

I encourage you to vote for her. Audrey Hudak is a young professional, homeowner, concerned citizen, and continuous improvement expert. Audrey Hudak has truly leaned into her position as city council president and has turned what is normally a part-time job into a full-time effort to successfully and gracefully lead our city through this time of change.

Being city council president is not an easy task! Under a lot of pressure, and sometimes provocation, Hart leads her colleagues on council forward to the betterment of Cleveland Heights. Being both a peer city council member and a leader is no easy task—when is the last time that you led a group of people with multiple motivations? Hart takes on this responsibility and tirelessly acts as a type of “referee,” maintaining the rules-based order of council meetings.

I admire Melody Joy Hart and I support her re-election to CH City Council this November. I encourage you to vote for her.

Hart is the council president CH needs

Audrey Hudak

The heart of a true public servant is hyper-focused on what is best for the people they serve. Melody Joy Hart is hyper-focused on the city of Cleveland Heights.

Hart has truly leaned into her position as city council president and has turned what is normally a part-time job into a full-time effort to successfully and gracefully lead our city through this time of change.

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I admire Melody Joy Hart and I support her re-election to CH City Council this November. I encourage you to vote for her.

Audrey Hudak is a young professional, homeowner, concerned citizen, and continuous improvement expert.
Heights voters make me proud

Susie Kaeser

I recently used this column to beseech readers not to sit out the Aug. 8 special election. Proponents of Issue 1, a constitutional amendment that would have made it more difficult to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot and then to pass it, hoped to sneak the noxious initiative through during a low-turnout summer election.

Cleveland Heights and University Heights voters, and others across the state, went to the polls in large numbers and defeated a bad idea. Nearly 19,000 Heights residents cast ballots. I can’t resist data. The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections website reports turnout numbers and the percentage of yes and no votes for every precinct. My dive into the data gave me a wonderful lift. Voters in the Heights came through big time and showed what democracy-loving towns we are.

At 38 percent, turnout in Cuyahoga County was considered strong. Slightly more than 44 percent turned out in both Cleveland Heights and University Heights. The turnout rate by precinct ranged from 27 to 69 percent. Participation rates in 26 of the cities’ 42 precincts (there are 33 in CH and nine in UH) were in excess of 38 percent, and in 13 of those 26 the rates exceeded 50 percent. This is a good record, but it points to the ongoing issue of differences in engagement. We need high levels everywhere.

Vote-wise, our cities outdid Cuyahoga County as a whole and made a significant contribution to the no vote. Statewide, 57 percent of voters said no, as did 74 percent in Cuyahoga County. In Cleveland Heights and University Heights, the percentages were 91.3 and 88.5, respectively, and 89.3 combined. In nine precincts in the Heights, more than 95 percent voted against Issue 1.

For me, a true believer in democracy, the victory at the ballot box was twofold. People participated, and they used their vote to protect their right to seek solutions when lawmakers don’t represent their interests.

Despite this win, the day was also a wake-up call for me. Being registered to vote is not enough! The state’s new voter-identification law means that people who don’t have a driver’s license can get a free state ID card at the local Department of Motor Vehicles office on South Taylor Road. Visit the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections website (https://boe.cuyahogacounty.gov/) for details on the documents you can use to prove your name, birthday, home address and social security number.

It’s a hassle, but please help spread the word so the voters you know are not surprised when they try to vote in the future. The elderly and the young are among those most likely to be left out without proper identification.

Democracy depends on us. We have to be vigilant and determined. I appreciate that our community is both. 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.
Who owns Cleveland Heights?
Deborah Van Klaaf and Carla Rautenberg

Who owns Cleveland Heights? A glob answer would be: homeowners, commercial and residential landlords and, to some extent, the city itself. But to whom does municipally owned prop-
erty really belong? We say it belongs to the people.

Much city government business involves controlling land use by modifying and enforcing zoning and building codes and courting economic development. Since the one-two punch of subprime mortgages and the foreclosure crisis starting around 2009, various Cleveland Heights administrations have grappled with the ongoing fallout.

Attempts to manage it have included contracting with two community-development corporations, FutureHeights and Start Right. Both have renovated and sold salvageable houses previously owned by the city. Start Right also is building new infill housing on city-owned lots in Caledonia. In 2015, the city created a community-improvement corporation to facilitate the management and redevelopment of property it acquires, primarily through tax foreclosure.

With skyrocketing home prices and rents, loss of low- and moderate-income housing, as well as essential amenities such as reasonably priced retail space, in perpetuity. A community land trust (CLT) has the potential to provide low- and moderate-income housing, as well as essential amenities such as reasonably priced retail space, in perpetuity. A CLT owns the land, leasing it to the homeowner and taking the land value out of the equation, thereby reducing the price of the home. The homeowner pays property taxes and may will the house to their heirs. If they sell, they reap some equity while agreeing to price restrictions that keep the house affordable for the next qualified buyer.

CLTs are not simple solutions, but they have a track record. According to the Center for Community Land Trusts, in Madison, Wis., the U.S. has 315 CLTs, up from 162 in 2006. Establishing a CLT might help Cleveland Heights to equitably redevelop Severance Center when the city finally gets site control.

We can’t count on City Hall to build community; that’s our job as citizens. Lots of us work on that in different ways. A community land trust could just be the next bold step Cleveland Heights needs. We hope to write more about this soon.

Note: Severance Action Group, a citizens’ initiative, wants to share its vision for Severance Center with neighborhood groups. E-mail info@severanceedycovered.org to learn more.

Deborah Van Klaaf and Carla Rautenberg are writers, editors and longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
University Heights City Council Meeting highlights
JULY 10, 2023 - special meeting

Council members present were Brian J. King, Terese Marshall, John P. Rach, Sheri Sax, and Win Weizer. Michelle Weiss (vice mayor) and Christopher Conney were not present. Also present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan, Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas, Law Director Luke McConville, Finance Director Dennis Kennedy, and City Engineer Joseph Cino.

Committee assignments
New council member Weizer will chair the Building and Housing Committee and become a member of the Community Outreach and Development and Economic Development committees. She will be an alternate on the Finance Committee.

Council Actions
Council appointed Shawn Beltri the Community Improvement Corporation Board, filling the vacancy created when Win Weizer was appointed to fill the council seat vacated by Barbara Blankfield.

After considering a contract with Terrace Construction for water main replacements at Saybrook and Northcliffe roads, council voted to authorize the Saybrook project and to defer the Northcliffe project. This was the second time the projects on Saybrook and Northcliffe were sent out for bids, as no bidders were received the first time. Terrace Construction was the only bidder and its bid increased from 2001—design costs by 8 percent and engineering costs by 5 percent. Cleveland Water will reimburse 100 percent of the engineering costs by 5 percent. Cleveland Water will reimburse 100 percent of the engineering costs by 5 percent. Cleveland Water will reimburse 100 percent of the engineering costs by 5 percent. Cleveland Water will reimburse 100 percent of the engineering costs by 5 percent. Cleveland Water will reimburse 100 percent of the engineering costs by 5 percent. Cleveland Water will reimburse 100 percent of the engineering costs by 5 percent. Cleveland Water will reimburse 100 percent of the engineering costs by 5 percent. Cleveland Water will reimburse 100 percent of the engineering costs by 5 percent.

Prior budget set-asides for trucks had been raised concerns about buying another truck because the last three budgets have included provisions and allow notice by e-mail. Council approved, on emergency, a special meeting ordinance to remove anachronistic provisions and allow notice by email.

Special meeting highlights
University Heights City Council
JULY 10, 2023 - special meeting

Artificial Intelligence: Advances, Questions, Regulations
Does the U.S. Supreme Court Have Credibility?
The Fifth Estate: 21st Century Watchdogs
Make Your Home More Comfortable, Eco-Friendly, Affordable
Exposing Kids to Gender Diversity
Ohio Post-Election Analysis

First & Third Sundays
Free and Open to the Public

CROWDSOURCED continued from page 1

Superman’s creators once lived in University Heights
Deanna Bremer Fisher

This fall, Cleveland will celebrate Superman, the world’s first comic book superhero, with Superman’s Cleveland, Sept. 6 through Nov. 2. Scholars, comic book lovers, and fans can partake of almost two months of Superman-focused book discussions, comics-making workshops, live interviews with creators, and more.

The city of University Heights shares in the legacy. Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel, Superman’s creators, moved from Glenville to University Heights in the 1940s, as they began to achieve some success.

Shuster and Siegel created Superman in 1933, as high school students in Cleveland’s Glenville neighborhood.

In 1938, their Superman story was chosen as the cover feature of National’s Action Comics #1.

In January 1939, Siegel and Shuster initiated a daily newspaper comic strip. A separate Sunday strip was added in November 1939. By 1947, the McClure Newspaper Syndicate had placed the strip in hundreds of newspapers. The strips ran continuously until May 1966.

In December 1941, the Shuster family purchased the perhaps un-finished house being constructed at 3866 Tylord Road.

Siegel and his wife, Bella, purchased a lot at 2402 Glendon Road in February 1940, as that neighborhood was being developed. Tax records indicate that they were the ones who built the house.

At its peak, the Superman comic strip appeared in more than 300 daily newspapers and 90 Sunday papers, with a readership that exceeded 20 million.

But, Siegel and Shuster did not profit further from their creation. As part of their 1938 deal with Action Comics, they had sold the rights to their Superman character for $300.

The Shusters lived in their University Heights house only until September 1943. In June 1943, Siegel, then 28, was drafted into the U.S. Army and stationed in Hawaii. His wife and son continued to live in the house until he and Bella divorced in 1948. The property was placed in a trust and purchased by Herbert Rehman, a photographer, in November of that year.

For more information, visit www.supermanleveland.com.

Deanna Bremer Fisher works in the mayor’s office at the city of University Heights.

First and Third Sundays • 9:00-10:00AM
2160 Shaker Blvd, Shaker Heights
Also on - ZOOM: https://bit.ly/UCFForumFall23 www.uucleveland.org • forums@uucleveland.org

Ohio Post-Election Analysis

Fall Forums That Matter
Thought-provoking presentations on important issues that affect our lives as individuals, the communities in which we live and the world beyond. Q&A sessions stimulate an exchange of views and create a stronger, more accountable, informed community.

Sept 17
Artificial Intelligence: Advances, Questions, Regulations

Oct 1
The Fifth Estate: 21st Century Watchdogs

Oct 15
Make Your Home More Comfortable, Eco-Friendly, Affordable

Nov 5
Exposing Kids to Gender Diversity

Nov 19
Ohio Post-Election Analysis

Dec 3
First and Third Sundays • 9:00-10:00AM
2160 Shaker Blvd, Shaker Heights
Also on - ZOOM: https://bit.ly/UCFForumFall23 www.uucleveland.org • forums@uucleveland.org

Deidre McPherson speaking at Crowdsourced Conversations “Traveling Around Town” in June 2023. “Our Public Schools” (April 2022), “Traveling Around Town” (June 2023), and “Building Community with Renters and Landlords” (August 2022). Crowdsourced Conversations 2023 is a program planned in partnership with FutureHeights, Reaching Heights, Home Repair Resource Center, Heights Libraries, elected officials, and dozens of volunteers. To learn more about the program send an e-mail to swolf@futureheights.org, or visit www.futureheights.org/programs/speakers-series-and-public-forums/. Sarah Wolf is the community-building program manager at FutureHeights.
Carlos Jones headlines back-to-campus concert

University Heights City Hall and John Carroll University (JCU) are separated by only a few blocks. Sometimes, though, the distance can feel like miles. UH City Hall staff and DJs at the campus radio station are looking to do something about that—with a little help from a group of Cleveland reggae legends. Carlos Jones and the PLUS Band will perform at the inaugural University Heights Back to School Concert on Thursday, Sept. 21, 6:30 p.m., on the JCU campus. Weather permitting, the show will be held outside at the Hamlin Quad. If it rains, the concert will take place indoors at Kulas Auditorium. All are welcome.

“Our concert is a way to bridge the gap between JCU students and their city government, as well as the rest of University Heights,” Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan said.

Representatives from the city will host information tables at the event. The Police Department will present information on community policing and parking, while the Fire Department will share materials on fire safety. The Service Department will promote recycling, while Economic Development staff will help share materials from local businesses—including coupons, menus, and more.

The first 200 students at the event will receive University Heights promotional items. When July’s Summer Concert Series show with Carlos Jones and the PLUS Band was rained out, City Hall staff decided to turn lemons into lemonade.

“We were disappointed that our July concert with Carlos was rained out,” explained Deanna Bremer Fisher, the city’s executive assistant to the mayor on special projects. “But this gave us the opportunity to host a concert on campus after the fall semester began.

“This is our first ‘Town and Gown’ event, and I think students and the entire University Heights community will benefit from it.”

Not only is Carlos Jones and the PLUS Band popular among concertgoers in Northeast Ohio, they are darlings of music critics as well. Sirius XM Reggae DJ Dermont Hussy said, “Carlos Jones is a great band, one of the best in America.”

Cleveland Scene magazine reported, “With Jones at the forefront of the scene for more than 25 years, this city’s reggae following was practically built on his back. The band’s soulful rhythms and heartfelt vocals have made it one of Cleveland’s top draws.” Mike Cook is the communications and civic engagement director for University Heights.

Free books mailed to your young child!

If your child is 4 years old or younger and lives in Cuyahoga County, please register online at:

ImaginationLibrary.com
FutureHomes announces partner in Noble home renovation

The home at 901 Englewood Road will be completely renovated and then offered for sale.

Hilary Schickler
FutureHomes and Revitalization director for FutureHeights Inc.

FutureHomes has entered into a partnership with Yosemite Construction and Management to renovate the home at 901 Englewood Road.

FutureHeights established its FutureHomes program in 2009 to promote fair housing practices and increase owner-occupancy rates. Since its inception, and with the generous support of the city of Cleveland Heights, the program has been able to renovate more than 20 vacant homes in the city, and make them available to owner-occupants.

The property on Englewood Road has been vacant for an unknown number of years (some neighbors say as long as 18) after reviewing several proposals to renovate the home, FutureHeights opted to partner with local contractor Yosemite.

The property will undergo a complete renovation, from the roof down. This three-bedroom home with an attached garage will be outfitted with all-new mechanical systems, a new roof, and a new kitchen and bathrooms. Once complete, it will be available for sale to an owner who will be required to occupy the home.

As part of updating and re-launching its FutureHomes and Revitalization Program, FutureHeights will be identifying areas of opportunity that support both existing efforts and new activities, where the nonprofit can work to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for the community.

If you are interested in getting involved with FutureHomes, or interested in purchasing the home at 901 Englewood at the end of the renovation process, send an e-mail to hschickler@futureheights.org or call 216-320-1423, ext. 104.

Hilary Schickler
Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

AUG. 7, 2023 - regular meeting

Council members present were Melissa Joy Hart (temporary), Craig Cobb (permanent presi - dent), Janine Boyd, Tony Cuda, Gail Larson, and Anthony Matthew Jr. Daniel Russell was not present. Also present were Mayor Kas - lil Seren, Clerk of Council Addie Baleske, and Law Director William Hanna. Public comments

Several people commented in opposition to Noble Station, a proposed low-income housing development on Noble Road, claiming that the project has been fast - tracked to take advantage of federal Low - Income Housing Tax Credit. Mayor Seren said the neighborhood is lower income and has a dearth of shopping and other essential services. They also characterized the design as "bland block" construction and "too concentrated." Noting that the area was "historically redlined" and had plenty of af -fordable housing available, they expressed preference for mixed-income housing, rehabilitated existing structures, and new building. Mayor Seren said the project will be presented to the city's Planning Commis - sion and the Architectural Board of Review before it comes to council.

Many current and former Coventry Vil -lage Business District members, including Steve Presser, Tom Fello, Kathy Blackman, Ask O'Connor, and Suzanne DeGaetano, expressed support for the district, includ - ing numerous (18) vacancies and the condition of the parking garage. They read a statement from the executive director of the Coventry Village Special Improvement District (CVSId) requesting active interven - tion and resources from the city, including full - service parking in the city's garage. They said they had a lack of charity about what they could request and expect from ARPA funds. Several speakers maintained that the Jewish Orthodox community of Kaparos, the ritual slaughtering of chicken in atonement for sin, was a public health concern that was "solved" and that ARPA funds for businesses and neighborhoods are his priorities. Anthony Matthew Jr. reported that the Planning and Development Committee me - t July 17 to discuss Dennisson Park, the Noble Road Corridor, and other concerns about Noble Road. He also said he objected to public comments (suggesting that a major - ity of people were against the plan) and that ARPA funds for businesses and neighborhoods are his priorities.

Council member comments

Melissa Joy Hart spoke about a council resolu - tion, saying that all members are working together for the residents. Tony Cuda said he was moved by a room packed with passionate people, that he had heard something that was not "complimentary" and that ARPA funds for businesses and neighborhoods are his priorities.

Public comments continue

Several speakers maintained that the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer Dis - trict (NORSD) requested that Cleveland Heights make a community decision regarding primary elements and amenities for the Brook Keesman restoration project, as combin - ing these with NORSD's planning process would save money. Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance proposed a program with a public health approach to gun violence, working with 14- to 24-year-old clients in the community, courts, and hospitals.

Several speakers maintained that the Cleveland Heights Music Society has transformed the entire building into flexible space to accommodate a diverse array of art experiences.

Amanda Powell, CAC's community arts liaison, noted, "I’ve been surprised at the immense need for affordable space and am delighted that our building is a space for many organizations.

CAC offers individual studio classroom space, a 500-capacity fully ADA-accessible performance hall, portable Marley dance flooring and mirrors, an intimate, 20-person performance space, an inclusive children's library, and more. It has hosted educational organizations such as The Center for Arts Inspired Learning, Roots of American Music, Lake Erie Ink, and Djapo Cultural Arts. It offers community classes in yoga, samba, and African drumming, as well as music lessons, and has hosted rehearsals and performances by organiza - tions that include the Cleveland Chamber Music Society; Les Délices orchestra; Blakk Jakk Dance; Local 4 Music Fund; The Cleveland Orchestra Chorus; ChamberFest Cleveland; and Willow's Edge Creations, a LGBTQ+ -theater company. Upcoming 2023-2024 concerts and events include:

- Nine performances of "Jesus Christ Superstar" by Willow's Edge Cre - ations
- Performances of "The Wizard of Oz" by Agape Theatre
- Cleveland Chamber Music Society concerts

Leagues of Women Voters

A group came to council with the same agenda for University Heights, read a letter from Rachel Presser, a board member of Spaces Cultural Arts—a new non -profit dedicated to youth arts pro - gramming in the building

Development and fundraising sup - port

People of all faiths or no faith are welcome to participate and volunteer in all that CAC offers. CAC welcomes all to its inclusive space.

To tour the building, become a volunteer, or host an event, contact Amy Campbell, office manager, at info@discipleschristian.org. For ad - ditional information, and a list of upcoming arts events, visit www. discipleschristian.org/about.

Ronald Werman is an elder at, and com - munication chairperson of Disciples Christian Church.
Tackling climate change— one tree at a time

Heights Tree People volunteers planting trees with students from Caledonia Elementary School on Arbor Day.

Last summer, Susan Miller, a longtime Cleveland Heights resident and environment advocate, gave the Cleveland Heights Green Team (CHGT) an infrared thermometer. “She asked us to measure the mid-day temperature at some of the city’s heat islands, such as Severance, and neighborhoods north of Mayfield Road, and compare them to temperatures in parks and neighborhoods with significant tree coverage,” recalled Catalina Wagers, CHGT’s co-founder. “She wanted us to see both the inequality and the need for better tree canopy distribution across the city.”

A study published by the research institution Resources for the Future indicates that highly developed urban areas can experience mid-afternoon temperatures 15–20 degrees Fahrenheit higher than surrounding vegetated areas.

The Cleveland Neighborhood Progress Resiliency Plan reports that climate change in our region will manifest as an increased number of heat waves, floods, and storms of greater frequency and intensity. “Addressing climate challenges will require significant infrastructure upgrades, which will take time and money,” said Miller. “However, there are things we can do now by building on what we already have: trees, green spaces, and gardens.”

The 2019 Cuyahoga County Urban Tree Canopy Assessment found that 53 of the 59 communities in the county showed a decline in tree canopy from 2011 to 2017, with nine losing more than 10% of their canopy. These include Cleveland Heights (-17%) and University Heights (-11%). Factors such as disease, clear cutting, and weather events have played a role in this trend, as have general misconceptions about the value and benefits of trees, which leads to fewer new and replacement trees being planted.

Laura Marks, founder of Heights Tree People—a nonprofit group that has planted more than 1,000 trees in residential front lawns across Cleveland Heights and University Heights, at no cost to residents—noted, “Trees play a critical role in creating healthier, safer, and more connected communities. They clean our air, filter our water, lower our electrical bills, and increase property values.”

Studies by the USDA Forest Service have found that trees properly placed around homes and buildings can reduce air-conditioning needs by 30% and save 20–50% in energy used for heating, and that healthy, mature trees can add an average of 10% to a property’s value.

“Another important benefit of an expansive tree canopy is slowing down storm surge and flooding in our cities,” said Miller. “Torrential rains overwhelm our aging infrastructure, and the excess runoff will find its way into our streams and rivers, polluting Lake Erie, our most valuable natural resource.”

The fall tree planting season starts in September. To request a free tree, reach out to the CH Forest Department (tree-lawn trees) or Heights Tree People (front-yard trees). The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes can provide information about tree care and the benefits of native trees. For links and additional information, visit www.chgreenteam.org.

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

Natalie Elwell
FutureHeights benefit raises funds, honors Zagara

Despite the threat of storms, and a power outage just hours before the event, guests enjoyed a beautiful evening under the stars celebrating and raising funds for the community-building work of FutureHeights at the nonprofit’s annual benefit party, “A Summer Night’s Dream,” on Saturday, July 29, at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

The evening included live orchestral music from Opus 216, musical stylings by DJ Neilism, costumed performers from Robin VanLear and company, and a delicious selection of food and drink from The Fairmount, Quintana’s, and CLE Urban Winery.

During the program, guests heard remarks from Kristine Pag-suyoin, FutureHeights’ new executive director. John Zagara, FutureHeights’ “Person of the Year,” was honored for his commitment to Zagara’s Marketplace, and he spoke of his love for the Heights community.

Auctioneer Michael Berland engineered another spirited live auction—including several bidding wars!—as guests competed to have the winning bid on items such as Guardians/Dodgers tickets, local date-night packages, and naming rights for a new Heights Observer mailbox on the Coventry PEACE Campus.

“FutureHeights is so grateful for the support that we receive to continue our programs and serve the communities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights. I was so inspired to meet many new supporters and happy to connect with long-time friends” said Pag-suyoin.

As Cleveland Heights’ and University Heights’ community-development corporation (CDC), FutureHeights’ mission is to facilitate an equitable, prosperous and vibrant future for the two communities through economic and social development, and the meaningful engagement of residents.

Outside of the annual benefit, which raises much needed operating funds for the organization, there are many ways for residents to get involved with and support the work of FutureHeights year-round: Join a committee (there are many) or volunteer, write for the Heights Observer, attend one of FutureHeights’ free community programs.

continued on page 23
Heights Libraries preps for mini-forest installation

Kaela Sweeney

Beginning this fall, Heights Libraries will partner with Heights Tree People to build a mini-forest behind the Coventry PEACE Building. The Heights Libraries Urban Mini-Forest project is supported, in part, by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public tree planting and maintenance grant from Cuyahoga Healthy Urban Tree Canopy. The mini-forest will comprise the planting of 62 large canopy trees and 150 understory trees and plants, prioritizing native species to help expand Cleveland Heights’ tree canopy.

“The urban mini-forest is a unique library project that allows us to expand our services beyond the walls of the library buildings,” said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. “We are excited to offer a space for environmental programming. This is an opportunity for us to model environmental stewardship at the PEACE Park.”

Preparation for the forest, including mulching and selective tree removal based on recommendations from a certified arborist, began in August. To prepare the site, seven trees will be removed, including a dead pin oak, invasive Norway maples, and a hollow red maple. A portion of the existing asphalt area will be removed and reforested. Tree planting will begin in spring 2024.

The project is a partnership with trained forestry professionals and Heights Tree People, a community-based volunteer group that specializes in tree planting and has planted more than 950 new trees in Cleveland Heights and University Heights since 2019. “The Coventry mini-forest will grow to shade and cool the area, freshen the air, provide habitat for other species, build connections among neighbors, and give space for children and adults to spend time in the woods. This project is a step toward healing the Earth,” said Heights Tree People co-founder Laura Marks.

Submit New Story
2. Register/log in at the Member Center (www.heightsobserver.org).
3. After logging in, click the Submit New Story button in the lefthand column (Don’t see it? It’s nested under “Writer”). Then follow the prompts. Hint: keep your original file open so you can easily copy and paste into the text box.
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.

The mini-forest is part of Heights Libraries’ overarching urban forestry goals to expand and maintain the urban tree canopy to promote biodiversity and canopy health, offer free outdoor programming that encourages community stewardship of trees, and support workforce development opportunities in the PEACE Park. “We are thrilled to partner with Heights Tree People to promote community forestry,” said Levin. “The library is committed to responsible stewardship of the PEACE Park, and the urban mini-forest project is the start of many improvements to this important green space.”

Community members who are interested in volunteering or learning more about the mini-forest project can visit www.heightstreepeople.com.

Sarah Wolf is the strategic projects manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
The late summer and early fall season brings a chorus of singing insects. That thrumming hum is the music of nature, as described by Lisa Rainsong, a longtime music theory professor at Cleveland Institute of Music and a professional naturalist who specializes in the music of Earth’s first musicians: birds, insects and amphibians.

On Sept. 18, 6:30–8 p.m., Quiet Clean Heights will host a free public program presented by Rainsong, "Birds and Insects are Listening,” to kick off a public awareness campaign across Cleveland Heights and its surrounding communities. The program will take place at the Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Road in Cleveland Heights.

Rainsong, a longtime Cleveland Heights resident, is an active field naturalist who makes her own recordings of bird, insect, and amphibian songs. She seeks to inspire an understanding of, and appreciation for, the oldest music on earth, and the protection of the avian, insect, and amphibian musicians and their concert venues at a time when their music is in danger of being silenced by climate change and habitat destruction.

Join QuietClean Heights at the Sept. 18 event to learn how crickets, katydids and other insects create and receive sound—and why. Learn to recognize insects by sound in this engaging program that will feature photographs, sonograms, and practical advice on how to invite a chorus into your own backyard.

Rainsong has presented programs at numerous park systems and for organizations across Northeast Ohio. QuietClean Heights is proud to sponsor Rainsong’s first presentation in her home community. To learn more about her work, visit www.listeninginnature.com.

Alice Jeresko is an environmental advocate who started QuietClean Heights to help raise awareness of the health, hearing and environmental impacts of gas leaf blowers in residential neighborhoods.
Cleveland Heights – University Heights Board of Education
Meeting highlights

AUG. 1, 2023
Board members present were Beverly Wright (president), Dan Hantz, Malia Lewis, James Pasich, and Jodi Sourini. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

Recognitions and awards
District staff and community partners who provided activities and services for summer student programs received awards.

Holocaust education
Heights High Administrative Principal Patrick Tomves initiated an event to commemorate 50 years of Holocaust education at Heights High. He introduced ninth-grade teacher Patrick Fisher, who explained how social studies teacher Mark Sack initiated the project by discussing a student-designed mural with Nancy Rich, Heights High art teacher. She then coordinated with art teacher Sara Cooper and art instructor Nancy Schwartz-Kas (a Heights High alumna) to create the mural. More than 100 Heights High students participated in designing and painting the large mural. The mural will be used for education and continued awareness of the Holocaust.

Heights School Foundation update
Laura Loebl, executive director of the Heights School Foundation, and Wesley Williams, marketing and development associate, presented the past year’s progress. The foundation presented $45,000 in scholarships on Senior Awards Night.

Superintendent announcements
Superintendent Kirby announced that five teachers had participated in AVID (Advance ment Via Individual Determination) training to gain new teaching strategies and resources that will provide in-school academic support to prepare students for college readiness and success.

Students in grades 10, 11, and 12 participated in a transition activity for ninth-graders to provide a bridge from middle school and an orientation for the class of 2027. GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) partners assisted with supplies.

Ninth-grade Principal Lisa Kohn-Perry attended the three-day National Council for Community and Education Partnerships/GEAR UP Annual Conference on “The Power of Possibility,” which was held to celebrate successes and to find solutions for education’s most pressing problems.

Libby and Bob Swaggard, director of college and career readiness, for writing the GEAR UP grant to provide educators with these opportunities.

Equity work continues following the ICS (Integrated Children’s System) for equity approach.

Treasurer’s report
Gainer (said she) is waiting to see how changes in the Ohio State Board of Education will affect education funding. She will not be able to make firm predictions until October, when the first payment is distributed. He also said that the state department of education is requiring school boards to supply more details when applying for grants.

Wright (said she) attended a meeting on racial justice.

Haven encouraged people to vote on Aug. 8 and encouraged University Heights voters to check their polling stations because some had changed.

The board encouraged the community to read “When Did We Take the Wrong Road to Education Reform and Where Has It Taken Us?” by Jon Riebens, a Cleveland Heights resident who writes about education. It was posted on her blog (https://jonriebens.wordpress.com/on Aug. 3).

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

Documents for all board meetings can be accessed at www.chubs.org/BoardofEducation.aspx. Board meetings are livestreamed at www.youtube.com/CHUHSchools, and recorded for later viewing.

Homecoming parade route extended

Krispy Dietrich Gallagher
The 2023 Heights Homecoming Parade, set for Friday, Sept. 22, is on track to be bigger than ever, with a parade route that has been extended thanks to the construction on Lee Road.

The parade will begin at 5 p.m. on Scarborough Road, near Fairfax Elementary School, and head north through the Lee Road business district. Instead of ending on Tulamore Road, as in the past, the parade will continue north, crossing Cedar Road—where police assistance, and only when the traffic light is green—then turning onto Washington Boulevard, behind the high school.

Lee Road will be closed to northbound traffic from Clarendon Road to Washington Boulevard 5:30 p.m. Scarborough Road will be closed between Stratford and Lee roads 4:30–5:10 p.m., and Washington Boulevard will be closed to traffic between Lee and Goodnor roads 4:30–5:30 p.m. (approximately).

Spectators can line both Lee Road and Washington Boulevard to cheer on the parade’s athletes, singers, marching band, and students. There will be space for folding chairs and mingling along the route, especially in front of the Lee Road Library and near the high school football field.
Register now for Open Doors after-school programs

Daa’yyah Rahman

Open Doors Academy (ODA) has partnered with the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District for more than three decades, offering a wide range of activities and support services. Its programs aim to provide young scholars with the tools they need to thrive academically, socially, and behaviorally.

Registration is open now for ODA’s upcoming programs, which begin Sept. 5. Programming takes place at Roxboro and Monticello middle schools, and Heights High. Middle-school and high-school students enrolled in ODA’s after-school enrichment program gain access to a supportive community that is committed to their growth and success. The program comprises mentoring, homework support and tutoring, and character development; as well as enriching activities, including service learning and field trips.

Other key components of the program are:
• A family department that provides resources to strengthen connections between families, schools, and the program.
• A free summer camp, offering fun and educational activities during summer break. Families that participate in ODA’s programs throughout the year receive early access to camp registration.
• A daily snack is provided, to ensure students have the nutrition they need to succeed.

Upcoming fall activities include an International Festival and a Night at the Museum.

LEI announces its fall lineup

Maya Watkins

As kids head back to school this fall, Lake Erie Ink (LEI) is creating opportunities for youth to have happy and meaningful interactions with words.

LEI’s programs encourage creative expression in an environment designed to bring out the fun. One student, who attended LEI’s Dungeons & Dragons program, said, “It was a really fun experience. It made Friday my favorite day of the week.”

This fall’s theme is Words Shine Bright, emphasizing the power of students’ words to have a positive impact on the world. LEI’s programs are centered on the voice and expression of youth. Students learn to write and perform poetry, craft comics, and tell stories that are meaningful to them.

LEI’s fall programs begin on Sept. 11 and the lineup includes an evening writers’ club, comic storytelling, and pop-up poetry workshops. Weekend programs include Comic Fest and Stories of Suspense in Public Square.

Participants will have opportunities for exploration and experimentation that encourage them to find empowerment and joy through creative expression. Many students return to LEI because of connections made during previous sessions. “I met new people like me,” said one past participant of LEI’s Young Novelist Summer Camp. Another commented, “Other kids would like LEI because it’s fun experience and helps build personalities, and show you things you like.”

LEI is excited to see students shine this fall. For more information on its fall programs, visit lakeerieink.org/fall.

Maya Watkins is a Lake Erie Ink staff member.
Meeting highlights

JULY 17, 2023
Board members present were Pati Carlyle, Dana Flecklin, Annette Iwamoto (secretary), Melissa Soto-Schwartz, Tyler McTigue, and Vi Dana Fluellen, Annette Iwamoto (vice president). Max Gerbec was not present.

Technology presentation
Information Technology Manager Matt Hoffman presented data on public computer usage in each library branch for the first half of 2023. Waiting time for computer use is minimal because most computer areas do not reach enough use to start a waiting list. The suggestion was made to consider changing some 30-minutes computers to 60-minutes computers.

Noble library building
Work during July consisted of construction of a reinforcing retaining wall, demolition of lower level under slab and then steel addition, excavation of site, and foundation work. First Energy needs to schedule installation. Steam pipe installation is ahead of schedule.

Board actions
The board:
• Approved a contract with Regency Construction Services Inc. as construction manager at risk for the PEACE playground renovations.
• Tabled the vote on changes to the service and administration policy until the next board meeting.
• Approved an after-the-fact purchase order and payment to the city of Cleveland Heights for the Noble Neighborhood Library branch project building permit.

Director’s report
The University Heights branch is now fully open. Crosswalk safety remains a priority. Pylons have been placed on Lee Road in front of the library and have slowed the traffic. Continued monitoring will evaluate speed and driver attention to the crosswalk.

Coventry PEACE Building is 30 percent occupied. The management company is showing the space to prospective occupants. Improvements to the building continue. Persons seeking a single use of the building space will need to be sponsored by an occupant who will monitor use, cleanup, etc.

The theater pavilion to be placed in PEACE Park has been approved by the donor. A video of the demolition was viewed. Photos of the demolition are on the library’s website: https://heightslibrary.org.

Board actions
The board:
• Approved a contract with Regency Construction Services Inc. for pre-construction services.
• Approved 2023 amended Service and Administration Policies of the CH-UH library board.
• Approved an after-the-fact purchase order and payment to Gable Elevator for emergency repairs to the elevator in the Heights Knowledge and Information Center (HKIC) building.
• Approved a contract for painting the HKIC Knowledge and Information Center (HKIC) building. Signs have been posted for customers to enter the Lee Road Library and take the elevator to the HKIC building. The date for completion is not yet known.
• Approved the expenditure for replacement of fencing behind the HKIC parking lot and payee parking lot on Lee Road. The plan is to replace those fences and install a guardrail along part of the HKIC parking lot.
• Approved a contract for painting the HKIC building exterior, including tower, dormers, roof skylights, windows, window trim, and main doors.
• Approved additional design fees to Batwick Design Partnership for changes to interior office windows and reconfiguration of fixtures in the family bathroom at Noble Library. This money will come from the available contingency fund.

DEI plan
The DEI (Diversity, equity, and inclusion) plan continues to progress. The parts of the plan include:
1. Developing inclusive services and programs.
2. Recruiting and retaining diverse staff.
3. Creating a healthy environment that supports positive professional relationships.
4. Integrating DEI as an ongoing focus in all areas of the organization.
5. Fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion.
6. Seeking opportunities to promote an environment of safety and security for the community.
7. Being proactive in facilitating communication and being a bridge builder for community concerns.
8. A bedrock for community workforce development.

Public service report
Summer Reading Program participation is quite good.
Three STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) programs were well attended.
Youth Services staff collaborated June through Noble’s Fun Friday event and at Oxford Elementary School.
University Heights Youth Services staff have provided 16 programs at Walker Street Park, with a total attendance of 451.

DEV Observers: Judith Beeler and Elizabeth Frisco.
AUG. 7, 2023
Board members Max Gerbec and Melissa Soto-Schwartz were not present.

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**HEIGHTS BUSINESS**

**Sauce the City Express opens at MetroHealth CH**

Angela Townsend

For the past month, Victor Searcy Jr. and his staff have been helping to feed employees, patients, and visitors at MetroHealth Cleveland Heights Medical Center at 10 Severance Circle.

Searcy’s Sauce the City Express opened July 31 on the second floor of the medical office building, offering a different featured menu item, and a selection of gourmet coffees, each weekday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Searcy is a graduate of Benedictine High School and Kent State University, where he honed his entrepreneurial skills.

Sauce the City is known for its chicken and flavorful sauces. Since February 2022, Searcy has operated a takeout-only spot in the Cedar Green shopping center, at 14480 Cedar Road in University Heights.

Before that, he operated out of a multiple-restaurant complex in Ohio City for several years. Sauce the City also is a fixture at First Energy Stadium and Rocket Mortgage Field House during football and basketball seasons.

Sauce the City Express operates out of the kitchen area on the medical building’s second floor. Because the building doesn’t have a full kitchen, Searcy and his staff cook and prep all food items at the University Heights location—just over three miles away—and transport everything to the Cleveland Heights campus.

The public is invited to stop in for takeout, but Searcy sees feeding the employees who work at the medical center as his top priority.

Searcy and MetroHealth have history together. In the spring of 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Searcy organized a “Feed the Nurses Challenge.”

“All of the medical people were getting worn out,” Searcy said. “We established a plan that we would do pop-ups at the different hospital systems.”

The challenge paired donors and local restaurants via social media, enabling them to provide lunch for health care workers at other local hospital systems, in addition to MetroHealth.

“Ever since then, we’ve had an open-door relationship with MetroHealth,” he said. “Everyone from the administration on down knows who we are.”

For the past three years, Searcy has occasionally provided catered meals for MetroHealth staff and has been a featured guest vendor in MetroHealth’s main campus cafeteria.

Recently, Searcy started getting more feedback from employees based at Cleveland Heights. They told him they wished they could enjoy Sauce the City, too.

That feedback made its way to MetroHealth’s Dining and Nutrition Services Department.

“They told me that they really needed some help with expanding the food options out at Cleveland Heights,” Searcy said. “I’m not going to say no. I love a challenge.”

To accommodate the new MetroHealth location, Sauce the City in University Heights is now open from 5 to 9 p.m. on weekdays. Weekend hours remain the same.

Angela Townsend is a senior writer in the Department of Marketing and Communications at The MetroHealth System.
Heights Arts steps into the surreal

As a nonprofit arts organization, Heights Arts has long helped facilitate programming across disciplines, from music to writing to visual arts. Now, visitors to the Heights Arts gallery can experience an exhibition that entwines the three into one, with Collaborage.

Open through Oct. 15, the show celebrates surrealism at its purest; it’s a celebration of expression. “It’s a great time to explore surrealism,” said participating artist Lacy Talley. “Surrealism sought to overthrow the oppressive rules of modern society by demolishing its backbone of rational thought. I believe the art scene in Cleveland continues on page 23

Dobama announces new season

Madeline Jarosz

Dobama, Cleveland Heights’ own off-Broadway theater, kicks off its 64th season this fall.

Between October and May, Dobama Theatre will produce five plays by American playwrights in its Lee Road venue.

The new season begins on Oct. 6, with Dobama’s production of “Make Believe,” written by Bess Wohl, and directed by Nathan Motta, Dobama’s artistic director. “Make Believe” tells the story of siblings who use a popular childhood pastime, a game of make-believe, to recreate and reveal their family’s everyday lives, and the dark secrets that lie beneath the surface, as they grow up together.

December brings a fresh re-imagining of the classic story “Little Women,” adapted by Heather Chisler. With an attic as the setting, and a focus on family, love, and loss, Chisler explores the ever-changing road that is life as each March sister faces joy and disappointment in the journey from childhood to womanhood.

Starting off 2024 is the dark comedy “At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen,” by playwright Terry Guest. Onstage from Jan. 26 through Feb. 18, drag queen Courtney Berringers welcomes you to her wake. In this witty combination of drag and drama, the play will keep feet tapping and eyes glued to the stage.

In March, Dobama will present “Something Clean,” by Selina Fillinger, directed by New York-based Shannon Sindelar. The play follows the story of Charlotte, a working mother who struggles to cope with her guilt and grief after a family member commits a violent crime.

Dobama will wrap up its season with “Significant Other,” written by Joshua Harmon and directed by Colin Anderson. Harmon’s play premiered off-Broadway in 2015 before moving to Broadway in spring 2017, to rave reviews. The comedy follows Jordan Berman who would love to be in love, but, until he meets Mr. Right, wards off lonely nights with his trio of close girlfriends. As singles’ nights turn into bachelorette parties, Jordan discovers that the only thing harder than finding love is supporting the loved ones around you when they do.

Memberships for Dobama’s 2023-24 season, $180, or $150 for young professionals under 40, are on sale now at the box office (216-932-3396) or online at www.dobama.org.

Single tickets for the upcoming season are also available, and range in price from $35 to $42.
New theater company stages ‘Jesus Christ Superstar’ in CH

Deanna Bremer Fisher

Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice’s “Jesus Christ Superstar,” which debuted in the 1970s, portrays the final days of Jesus of Nazareth as told through the eyes of Judas Iscariot, one of the 12 apostles. Judas worries that Jesus’ followers are heading in the wrong direction, and his movement will be destroyed by the Romans, and his message will be forgotten. The work was known for its contemporary attitude, use of contemporary slang in its lyrics, and ironic allusions to modern life.

A new production of this long-running rock opera will debut in Cleveland Heights this fall.

In a production by Willow’s Edge Creations, a new Cleveland-based theater company started by longtime friends and creative partners Mary Miller and Denise Astorino, the show speaks to our current age. It describes a world in which those in power drive civilization apart through hate, violence and oppression. Those who defend personal freedoms and human rights begin to mobilize amidst the growing chaos and fear. They search for something more to guide them, and find it in the form of one who had been walking among them.

Miller, a singer-songwriter and performer who grew up in South Euclid and now makes her home in Chicago, had auditioned to play Judas several times in Chicago, had auditioned to play Judas, but also has Miller not only has fulfilled her dream to play Judas but also has never landed the role because she was known for its contemporary attitude, use of contemporary slang in its lyrics, and ironic allusions to modern life.

“Willow’s Edge seeks to celebrate authentic voices beyond stereotypes, spotlighting performers in roles they traditionally may not have been considered for, due to more conventional, binary casting,” said Miller. “We especially hope to provide opportunities for cis and trans women (queer and allies), trans masc and genderqueer folks, and BIPOC and QPOC performers.”

While Astorino has been involved in theater for more than 30 years and has an MFA in directing, this is the first major show that she is producing. “While I’m not one to think that what we are doing is going to shake up the world, theater enables people to express themselves. Human life—all human life—is reflected on stage. Some people may feel authentically represented for the first time. That is a powerful moment,” said Astorino.

“With all of the ugliness that is going on today—and has been for so long—if we can play even a small part in combating this by helping people feel that they are seen, respected and celebrated, then we did our jobs, and I couldn’t ask for more.”

Performances are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, 7:30 p.m., from Sept. 21 through Oct. 7, at the Cultural Arts Center at Disciples Christian Church, 3663 Mayfield Road in Cleveland Heights. Tickets, $25, are available online at https://willowedge_superstar.eventbrite.com.

Fundraising for the production continues through a GoFundMe campaign at: https://gofund.me/2a4jcz6y.

Deanna Bremer Fisher works in the mayor’s office at the city of University Heights and is the proud stepmother of Mary Miller.

Going shopping?

Here are 4 reasons to buy from local small businesses:

1. They’re part of the community’s character
2. They recirculate more of your money locally
3. They support local causes and institutions
4. If you don’t support them now, they may not be around later

Fall Show opens at St. Paul’s gallery

Robin Outcalt

The Fall Show at The Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church will open on Sept. 8, featuring the diverse work of three Cleveland Heights artists—Robin Murrell, Brian Sarama, and Martha Shiverick.

The community is invited to the opening reception on Friday, Sept. 8, 5–7 p.m., featuring live music by Forest City String Band.

The show, on view until Sunday, Nov. 26, will feature handmade quilts, oil and acrylic paintings, and sculptural ceramics. The artists’ themes include neighborhood and family, nature and the environment, and food and consumption.

St. Paul’s Church, at 2747 Fairmount Blvd. in Cleveland Heights, welcomes the community to its events and services throughout the year. For more information, visit www.stpauls-church.org.

Robin Outcalt is co-chair of The Nicholson B. White Gallery at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.
School. Again

David Budin

School has already started here in Cleveland Heights and University Heights. I think I might write this every September, but, if so, here it comes again: I hated the opening of the school year. Every year. Right from the start. I didn’t want to go to kindergarten. Or any grade thereafter, in all my years at Coventry Elementary, Roosevelt Junior High and Heights High.

My granddaughter, who’s starting third grade in a CH-UH school, loved kindergarten, and first and second grade. Which is wonderful. Her brother did kindergarten last year. I think he thought it was okay. Tolerable, at least. Which is better than my situation. I just wanted out. Most of the other kids seemed like babies to me. I was already listening to rock ‘n’ roll records and radio (mostly made possible by a record-distributor uncle; plus, the advent of early rock radio DJs like the Mad Daddy on WJW-AM).

I had very little to talk about with the other kids. Though I did make a few friends in kindergarten, some of whom I’m still friends with, like Sandy, Barry and Murray. I’d still be friends with a couple others, too, if they hadn’t died.

So, I was mainly bored and felt isolated in kindergarten. The next two school years, first and second grades, were also boring, and I never wanted to be there. I thought those teachers were okay—nice enough, if kind of bland and boring—and I didn’t blame them for my not wanting to be in school; I just didn’t want to be in school. But the beginning of third grade was a big turning point for me. The first minute of that grade, I took an instant dislike to my teacher.

I’m not sure why that happened so fast, though I learned over the course of the year that there was a lot to dislike about her, so my initial reaction must have been instinctive. She was backward in many ways. She was painfully old-fashioned, and blatantly, shockingly racist, even for those times.

She brought out in me things I hadn’t seen in myself before. Like outright defiance. I remember that on one of the first days of the year, she took the class out into the hallway to get a drink at the water fountain. She told us to get in a single-file line, not to get out of the line, and not to talk. There was something I wanted to talk about to my friend, Kathy, who was right behind me. So, after a few minutes, I stepped out of line and stood facing Kathy and started talking—quietly—to her. The teacher flew into an actual rage and started yelling at me, creating much more noise than I had been making. That gave me some satisfaction. And I continued that behavior with her, and almost every other teacher, from that point on.

Third grade was a terrible year. I couldn’t wait to get a new teacher, so, for that reason, I was looking forward, a little, to starting school the next year. The first day of fourth grade, we reported to our third-grade room, which was the custom, and our old teacher announced, “Your teacher for the new year is going to be . . . ME!” For some reason, we were getting her for another year. When she said that, my friend Freddy, sitting next to me, and I both spontaneously slid way down in our seats and audibly wailed, “Oh, no!” That didn’t exactly help my relationship with her. It did set the tone for the year, and the rest of my school 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.
FUTURE HEIGHTS continued from page 13

All are great ways to make new friends, learn something new, and make your city a better place in which to live.

Cleveland Heights and University Heights are unique cities, beloved by many. By investing in and supporting FutureHeights, residents are investing in and supporting the future of the Heights community.

For more information on ways to volunteer and get involved, visit the “volunteer with us” section of FutureHeights’ website, at www.futureheights.org.

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academic assistance.

The registration process for ODA’s free after-school enrichment program is straightforward and user-friendly. Parents and guardians can visit the program’s official website, www.opendoorsacademy.org, and click “enroll” to register. Early registration is encouraged as spaces are limited, and the program’s popularity is steadily increasing, due to its success.

Daceyah Rahman is the marketing and advancement manager for Open Doors Academy. Out of work she spends the majority of her time performing with Blakk Jakk dance collective, attending shows in Càin Park, and enjoying her three dogs and fiancé.

HEIGHTS ARTS continued from page 20

and across the world in a renaissance. Living artists are receiving more appreciation for their works, and the avenues to explore artistry are endless, especially with the evolution of technology.”

A joint effort between Heights Arts and No Exit New Music Ensemble, Collaborage helps kick off No Exit’s “Year of Surreality,” a year-long exhibition, each piece will be auctioned off—the perfect ending for a show about the slipperiness of reality.

Touring artists are creating the perfect ending as a collaboration among artists. Each piece will be auctioned off—the perfect ending for a show about the slipperiness of reality.

I was excited to participate in this project,” said artist Catherine Butler. “Never knowing what I was going to get from [my teammates] to continue was exciting and pushed me to work in images and materials that I don’t normally.”

“I loved seeing how our different artistic backgrounds and practices meshed together! One of my favorite parts about the whole process was the switching of the artworks,” Talley said. “I am amazed how we built off each other’s works.”

Showcasing everything from sculpture to mixed media, Collaborage aims to open minds. At the close of the exhibition, each piece will be auctioned off—the perfect ending for a show about the slipperiness of reality.

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