



INSIDE



9 UH Memorial Day parade planning begins March 6



15 Heights High Swim Cadets present annual show March 7-9



21 David Budin looks back at legendary music club

FutureHeights
2843 Washington Blvd. #105
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

JCU joins North Coast conference

Mike Cook

John Carroll University (JCU) has announced that it will join the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) beginning Fall 2025.

The athletic conference change is the latest step in JCU's three-year, \$100 million strategy to bolster the student experience, grow the academic portfolio, enhance the campus, and expand the institution's reach.

The Blue Streaks will become the 10th member of the conference, which includes institutions from Ohio and Indiana that serve students from well beyond the Midwest.

"Athletics has been an integral part of the student experience at John Carroll for more than a century and we are pleased to accept the invitation to join the NCAC during a pivotal time in our history," said JCU President Al Miciak.

"Our board of directors and uni-



Goal! JCU is the newest member of the North Coast Athletic Conference.

versity leadership are committed to ongoing strategic investments that will ensure that the gift of a Jesuit education from John Carroll is available for generations to come," Miciak said. "We are pleased to align with a group of academically and athletically competitive partners in the NCAC who enjoy national reach and reputation as high-ranking liberal arts institutions."

Current NCAC full-time members include Denison University, DePauw University, Hiram College, Kenyon College, Oberlin College, Ohio Wesleyan University, Wabash College, Wittenberg University, and The College of Wooster. Affiliate members include Allegheny College, Earlham College, Transylvania University, and Washington & Jefferson

continued on page 2

Stone Oven's new owners promise more of the same

Bob Rosenbaum

On Feb. 1, the day Nick Kalafatis and Chris Compton closed on their purchase of The Stone Oven Bakery and Cafe, a longtime patron introduced himself with a warning: Don't screw it up.

Stone Oven's steadfast presence on Lee Road these past 29 years has cultivated a lot of loyalty, and the new owners want you to know they don't plan to change the formula.

"We wouldn't have done this if we hadn't seen what this place means to the community," said Kalafatis. "We don't want to mess with this too much; it's a great business as-is."

Kalafatis and Compton aren't new to the food business. Together, they've owned the Firehouse Subs franchise in Mayfield Heights for 11 years, opening a second location



Nick Kalafatis (left) and Chris Compton took ownership of Stone Oven on Lee Road on Feb. 1.

five years ago in Willoughby.

They were discussing further expansion of the franchise last summer when they met Stone Oven co-founder John Emerman at a community organizing meeting in their Severance-area neighborhood. Ready to retire, Emerman asked if they were interested in buying the business he and then-wife Tatyana Rehn opened in 1995 and have operated

continued on page 11

Library's eclipse-themed programs begin in March

Sheryl Banks

On April 8, North America will experience a total solar eclipse, and Northeast Ohio will be one of the best viewing areas in the country. Heights Libraries is getting ready for the once-in-a-lifetime communitywide event with programs, information, and viewing opportunities.

Heights Libraries will distribute a limited number of eclipse kits at each branch beginning in mid-March. Each kit includes eclipse activities, reading suggestions, and two pairs of eclipse glasses. Customers must register to receive a kit, which will be available at each library branch on the following schedule:

- Coventry registration begins March 1; pick up March 15-22.
- Lee Road registration begins March 8; pick up March 22-29.
- Noble registration begins March 15; pick up March 29 through April 5.
- University Heights registration begins March 22; pick up April 5-12.

Other special eclipse events are listed below. Free eclipse glasses will be provided to each event's attendees, provided they stay for the full program.

Total Solar Eclipse Preview, Wednesday, March 20, 7 p.m., at Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Road.

continued on page 12

Crowdsourced Conversations launches car-less-living survey

Sarah Wolf

The survey for 2024's first Crowdsourced Conversations topic, Living Less Car-Centric in the Heights, launches March 1 and will remain live through March 31. The survey, and additional information, can be found at www.futureheights.org/cc24-less-car-centric.

Crowdsourced Conversations is a forum series hosted by FutureHeights with the support of partner organizations Home Repair Resource Center, Cleveland Heights Green Team, Heights Libraries, and Heights



Building Community With Renters and Landlords was a 2023 Crowdsourced Conversation topic.

Biking Coalition, as well as many volunteers from across the community.

A community-building initiative, the series invites all Heights residents to the table to share their

experiences, with the aim of finding ways to take meaningful action and supporting the ongoing work in our neighborhoods and across Cleveland

continued on page 8

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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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 April publication must be submitted by March 11. We publish some articles online only.

Thank you to Stone Oven Bakery and Cafe

To the Editor,

This is a love letter and thank you note to John Emerman and Tatyana Rehn.

Thank you for creating a comfy gathering space where the food is healthy and sweet and multigrain. The soup is hot, and the delicious sandwiches have creative names. Children are always welcome.

When community members came to you asking for donations, you always helped. Your employees are kind and patient, and your bathrooms are clean.

I am sorry to see you retire, but as a retired person, I can tell you it's pretty great. I hope you both enjoy the next phase of your lives and find projects that will feed your souls.

Your Lee Road Stone Oven project is a real gem. Thank you for everything.

Joy Henderson
(who buys two loaves of multigrain bread, sliced, every week)
Cleveland Heights

Recognizing a CH employee's kindness

To the Editor:

I want to recognize a kindness shown to me on Jan. 16. On this very snowy day, while returning my recycling container to my backyard, I slipped and fell.

I wasn't wearing gloves and scooted myself to my picnic table. I was not successful getting up, because my boots kept slipping. My neighbors were not home, and I did not have my phone with me. I scooted to the car and tried to get in, but my boots kept sliding in the snow. At that point I was very worried as I did not know how I would get any help. My fingers had no sensation and were red.

When the Cleveland Heights refuse truck pulled up at the end of my drive, I called out. Luckily the gentleman heard me and came up the driveway. George helped me up and asked if I had my keys. I was so grateful for his rescue. I had already been out there in the 10-degree temperature for a half hour, and I was concerned that no one would hear me and wasn't sure what would happen. He made sure I got in safely. His thoughtful kindness will never be forgotten.

About an hour later my doorbell rang and on my porch was a police officer. She was directed by George to do a wellness call and inquired how I was doing. George had mentioned to her how red my fingers were from the cold, and I let her know they were warmed up and fine.

George went above and beyond to care for another. His follow-up

with the wellness check showed such a sense of community. I wanted to recognize and thank him, so I called the city and even the mayor's office to commend him for his kindness. If there were more people like George, we would have a very different world.

Patty Kelleher
Cleveland Heights

The face of a child

To the Editor:

On *The New York Times* website is the face of a young girl in a wheelchair. She has curly brown hair pulled back neatly, and wide, dark brown eyes. She is describing how she awoke from a coma to learn that her parents were dead. Her name is Dareen al Bavaa. She is 11. She is speaking to an off-camera interviewer from a hospital in Qatar. In bed nearby is her 5-year-old brother, Kinan. They are the only survivors of a bombardment that killed 47 family members. The video cuts to an image of rubble, with a caption that reads, "They were sheltering together in an area of Gaza the Israeli military had identified as a safe zone."

Even with her words rendered in English subtitles, throughout a three-minute video Dareen's voice and face express a lively intelligence and a wide range of emotions: incredulity and sorrow at the loss of her parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins; amusement as an uncle helps put on her socks; pain as a physical therapist gently manipulates her legs; tearful outrage as she demands, "I would like to understand why they do this to us."

Recently I watched in person, at Cleveland Heights City Hall, as a majority of city council members refused even to discuss a resolution calling for a negotiated ceasefire, the release of hostages and the provision of food and medicine to the victims of this devastation. I listened while neighbors, who I am sure love their own children more than life itself, argued for the continuation of the attacks. I heard one say, "collateral damage," referring to children and adults dead, maimed and orphaned by Israeli attacks in Gaza.

I need to believe that if each of these people could look into Dareen's face and hear her voice they would see that she is just like their own children. They would find it intolerable for even one more child to suffer as she does. If they were Jewish, like me, they would know the meaning of "Not in our name!" Those of other faiths or ethnicities would see beyond fear and indifference to our common humanity.

I need to believe these things, but I am still waiting.

Deborah Van Kleef
Cleveland Heights

JCU continued from page 1

College.

"I congratulate everyone at JCU for leaving their comfort zone and doing something bold," said University Heights Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan. "This will give student-athletes a chance to compete against regional schools and this competition will be strong on the fields of play as well as the classroom."

"I feel this is part of an evolution, and a great next step."

The Blue Streaks will depart the Ohio Athletic Conference (OAC), having been a member since the 1989-90 academic year. JCU also competed in the OAC from 1932-49. In between, JCU was a founding member of the Presidents Athletic Conference (PAC) in 1955, in which it competed for 34 years.

"We are grateful to the OAC and its partner institutions for more than 30 years of incredible rivalry and competition, and we look forward to maintaining our relationships with them both on and off the field," said Miciak.

"It is bittersweet to lose our OAC rivalries," said JCU Director of Athletics Brian Polian, '97, "and we will work to keep some intact. However, we are excited about developing new rivalries in this new era for JCU athletics."

"We work every day to attract the type of student who wants an exceptional Jesuit education and who wants to compete at the highest level of Division III athletics."

The NCAC sponsors championships in 23 sports—11 for men and 12 for women. The 12 women's sports are among the most offered by any Division III conference. NCAC member institutions have collected 71 national team championships since the conference's first playing season, 1984-85.

The decision to join the NCAC is another step in JCU's Inspired Futures strategy that includes the launch of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program—featuring two new nursing labs—and the debut of a College of Health.

JCU's investment in healthcare will also include new majors in Public Health (2024), Healthcare Administration (2025), and a Master of Science in Nursing (2025).

A three-year, \$100 million investment in campus facilities kicked off in 2022 with renovations to the D.J. Lombardo Student Center, the Grasselli Library and Breen Learning Center, and multiple residence halls, and the construction of a state-of-the-art 100,000-square-foot Athletic, Wellness and Event Center, scheduled to open in 2025.

"We are thrilled with the progress to date on the implementation of our Inspired Futures strategy," said Miciak. "These investments in our student experience signal our desire to innovate and evolve with the focus always remaining on successful outcomes for our students."

Mike Cook, communications and civic engagement director for University Heights, wrote this article with the collaboration of the JCU Athletic Department.

Noble Action Group forms to mobilize residents and businesses

Diane Hallum and Cynthia Banks

Cleveland Heights' city leaders introduced the Noble Road Comprehensive Planning Study to Noble Road residents during a meeting at Caledonia Elementary School on Jan. 24. This plan includes the entire Noble Corridor, from the Noble-Nela Business District (East Cleveland) to the Warrensville Center and Mayfield roads intersection. (The study can be viewed at www.cleveland-heights.gov/1680/Noble-Road-Corridor-Comprehensive-Plan.)

The study is described in greater detail in the Jan. 26 City News Update, on the city's website. Listed were a range of services, amenities, and essential needs we lack here, along with potential economic development related to commercial and residential structures.

The meeting was well attended by Noble residents. However, several residents expressed anger and frustration at having been in this situation before. In the past, city leaders said they would listen to residents and include them in the planning process. But, in every instance, residents' feedback was ignored and remained unaddressed.

We all want the same thing: a quality of life where we have well-maintained streets, sidewalks, businesses, and residential properties; numerous retail spaces to shop and visit safely, that supply our daily needs; green spaces and recreational opportunities for families, children, youth, seniors and the disabled.

Today is a new day! Noble Road residents are mobilized to hopefully prevent today's effort by the city from going the way of past efforts. A "Noble Action Group" (NAG) is how we hope to ensure that.

NAG will be structured in the same way as the city's comprehensive plan: multi-faceted and complex. Noble area residents and business operators will be

able to use this group to speak out and participate in each study area proposed by the city to improve or revitalize the 2.1-mile Noble Road corridor and its neighborhoods.

Fashioned loosely, at this time, on the Severance Action Group (SAG), NAG hopes to eventually bring in our own experts to assist in identifying and building our vision for revitalizing our community.

Fully open and honest communication is essential among residents, first and foremost. No one must feel excluded or disrespected. To that end, all Noble Road residents must be heard and have a meaningful seat at the table for this bold project being introduced by the city. We can do that through NAG.

Noble Road is not monolithic. The same is true for the issues and objectives residents have to obtain the quality of life we want, deserve and which match that described in the city's Master Plan. Separate groups already exist in the Noble area and must be a part of NAG for all of us to be heard and listened to, rather than competing forces clamoring for much needed attention.

Beautification, civic engagement, safety, problem properties, and other focus areas all are a part of the economic development needed by each Noble Road neighborhood and business district. It is our hope that the city will respect all of us by working in concert with NAG to create a meaningful and sustainable comprehensive plan for the Noble Road corridor.

Diane Hallum and Cynthia Banks are with Noble Action Group, an organization of Noble area residents, business operators and local community groups working to coordinate wide-reaching focus along the Noble Corridor on economic development and planning; problem properties (houses, apartments, commercial); and advocacy (renters, businesses, seniors).

Voters should choose candidates not parties

Alan Rapoport

In his opinion in the February issue of the *Heights Observer*, Edward Olszewski offered observations about partisan politics in Cleveland Heights.

He correctly stated that Republicans in the 1970s were first to make local elections more partisan. They used partisanship to obtain political control of CH City Hall. Democrats then became dominant with their campaigns in the 1980s. They took over political control and raised partisanship to an even higher level. (I admit I was as guilty of causing that to happen as Mr. Olszewski.) Ballot language might have made elections non-partisan. But members of the Cleveland Heights Democratic Club during and after the 1980s did not even pretend that they were. And their campaigning shows how effective partisan tactics can be.

The November 2021 election for the CH-UH school board is a good example. Democratic candidates accused their opponents of

being "MAGA." That was an easy way for them to ignore criticisms of the board's financial practices. Those criticisms merited reasoned responses. But none were offered. Partisan advertising was used as a tactic for impugning character and avoiding intelligent debate. And it may have succeeded in deciding the results of that election.

A non-partisan format should mean candidates will be evaluated for their policy positions. But many voters consider a party label as a valid shortcut to a comfortable understanding. Candidates advertising their party affiliations hope voters will join in a righteous cause. Those identifying their opponents by a party affiliation often use stereotypes to demean. All of this invites voters to become lazy and ignorant. They are urged to vote blindly for a party and not for a candidate. And that is exactly what many of them do.

Mr. Olszewski dislikes some present one-party monopolies. I agree with him. Partisanship helps


continued on page 4

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COVID-19

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What’s happening with Cleveland Heights’ Climate Action Plan?

Alice Jeresko

Last year, Cleveland Heights hired a Sustainability Coordinator and contracted with consultant Nutter Inc. to develop a Climate Action and Resilience Plan. Other than a few meet-and-greet events last October, the public hasn’t heard much regarding the plan, and there hasn’t been any public messaging on climate actions for individuals and households.

Climate change is a massive, global train wreck, happening in slow motion, that we can’t stop. But we can stop fueling it and lessen its power, allowing time to prepare and adapt; to minimize damage and suffering. Amid urgent reports, we hear nothing regarding our city’s climate action plan, and no calls to action.

In Cleveland Heights, many of us have resources to stay comfortable in the event of power blackouts or water and gas supply disruptions—for a few days. We’ve endured such inconveniences before—as recently as last August—but what if service outages become more frequent or longer lasting?

The city of Cleveland Heights’ website has a Disaster Preparedness page tucked under the Fire Department pages (www.clevelandheights.gov/167/Disaster-Preparedness), but those links are of little use in an actual power outage. Many residents are without options in an emergency. They can’t go to a relative’s house or stay at a hotel until power and water are restored. They can’t take off work to supervise children in an unheated or unpowered home if schools are closed.

We need to be aware of options in advance of an emergency. Routine communications about climate action and preparedness should be part of our community culture and identity—as much as being a tree city or home to the arts.

Residents concerned with sus-

tainability and climate change worked hard to get the city to agree to develop a climate action plan, but have been left in the dark on progress. The plan is a public project—residents are entitled to updates and some input.

The city is surely making progress on storm sewer upgrades, which will mitigate impacts of severe storms, but we’re not hearing anything framed in the context of climate action. Community engagement can’t wait indefinitely—the city should be advising residents on practical actions and protective measures NOW, through routine communications.

Community groups are free to promote or pursue climate-action projects and messaging with or without city endorsement or a plan. City collaboration, however, is key to getting grants and government funds for climate and preparedness-related projects involving the city or public property.

City departments, staff and council have limited time and resources. They have many pressing issues to deal with: domestic and youth violence, gun and traffic fatalities, empty storefronts and abandoned homes—all demand immediate attention. But available climate mitigation and green energy funds ARE tied to resolving issues of racial, health and economic inequities at the root of some of those problems.

In a sea of competing demands, our leaders can’t afford to ignore funding opportunities or the impending threats related to climate change. It’s already here, affecting some more than others. We need to hear from our city, we need our leaders to understand and promote citywide climate action NOW to reduce greenhouse gases, prepare for emergencies and make use of federal funding intended for those purposes.

Alice Jeresko is an environmental advocate who started Quiet Clean Heights to raise awareness of the health, hearing and environmental impacts of gas leaf blowers in residential neighborhoods.


VOTERS continued from page 3

perpetuate such monopolies. Having representatives of more than one party participate in governing and elections would offer more choices and more honest debates. What I hope Mr. Olszewski also inherently calls for is some restraint. Fewer ad hominem arguments directed against a person rather than against the position they are maintaining would be a good thing. Elections should be a competition of qualifications and ideas. I wish it was easier to make them happen

that way.

Voters often believe they vote for the “best candidate” regardless of party affiliation. Only time will tell if they occasionally are deluding themselves.


Alan Rapoport, a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, served on CH City Council (1980–87) and as council president/mayor (1982–87). He is presently a Republican candidate for election to the U.S. House of Representatives in Ohio District 11.



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Missed opportunities and untapped potential



HEIGHTS OF
DEMOCRACY

Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg

Cleveland Heights is a city rich in resources—residential and commercial, human, natural and historical. But to be home to a vibrant, flourishing community, a city needs leaders who will nurture these resources. This can mean anything from maintaining roads and sewer pipes, to restoring park habitats, to providing conditions that encourage residents to contribute and staff to do their best work. Tending to the needs of a city requires a balance between day-to-day attention and forward-looking imagination. In all realms, it requires constant effort to stay ahead of the forces of entropy, stagnation and decay.

At one time our housing preservation programs set the standard to which neighboring communities aspired. In a recent opinion, Tom Bier pointed out that, due to deteriorating housing stock, over the past 60 years Cleveland Heights has lost a billion dollars in property taxes. (“Housing inspection and code compliance should be top priorities,” *Heights Observer*, February 2024.) “The loss,” he stated, “is much the result of CH City Hall’s decades-long failure to recognize that housing inspection and code compliance are its most important functions.”

Bier writes with authority, but reading his modest bio (“Tom Bier has lived in Cleveland Heights for 50 years.”) you might not know the source of that assuredness. For all his humility, Tom Bier, Ph.D., is the retired director of the Center for Housing Research and Policy at Cleveland State University’s Levin School of Urban Affairs. He is a nationally recognized expert on housing markets, population movement, urban sprawl and urban development.

Cleveland Heights is home to many residents like Bier—retirees and mid-career adults with a wide variety of knowledge and experi-

ence. Some voluntarily serve on citizen boards and commissions, but many no longer feel welcome to contribute in a manner that suits their abilities and inclinations. Yes, our city’s commissions must be diverse, representative and productive; this should not mean discouraging those with subject-matter expertise.

The theme of wasted opportunities came up again as we watched on video a recent Charter Review Commission meeting. Commission members listened to South Euclid Mayor Georgine Welo describe her relationship with her city council. Now in her 21st year as mayor, Welo previously served on council. Frustrations she experienced during those eight years [of council service] have informed the way she leads.

In local government, Welo explained, “The biggest check and balance is that your council approves [the mayor’s] budget.”

For council members to use their power effectively, they must be thoroughly aware, in practical terms, of how the funds they have authorized are used throughout the year. Thus, said Welo, “they must have access to every one of my directors.” To this end, each South Euclid council committee chair meets monthly with the relevant department director and they communicate informally between meetings. South Euclid’s council members (four elected by ward, and three at large) also freely contact department heads to help resolve residents’ problems.

Welo’s approach contrasts sharply with that of Cleveland Heights Mayor Kahlil Seren, who, upon taking office in January 2022, imposed the requirement that council members request information only through him. Procedures have loosened up slightly since then, but council members still cannot meet regularly with staff or collaborate on generating ideas and translating them into legislation. We are all poorer for these restrictions.

Of all the challenges facing Cleveland Heights, the greatest ones right now are internal. Two imperatives are clear: Shake up the housing and building operations sufficiently to restore rigorous code

enforcement pronto; and create a welcoming culture which enables and trusts staff, residents and elected officials to give their best.

[Correction to our February column: In last month’s column, we incorrectly identified the director of Cleveland Heights’ Information Technology Department. He is Ryan Prosser.]

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

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Great process! Will achievable solutions follow?



THE COMMON GOOD

Susie Kaeser

On June 24, 1995, more than 100 alumni of the Heights High instrumental-music program and 75 former vocal-music students met at Cain Park to perform in Reaching Notable Heights. The concert was a fundraiser for the relatively new non-profit organization that I directed at that time, Reaching Heights.

The concert exemplified the power of music to celebrate public education and unite the community in support of its schools, and it also uncovered the loyalty that our district's music program inspires in its graduates—even 50 years later in some cases.

These alums were glad to travel

from as far away as California, at their own expense, to perform for their hometown in support of music in the public schools. Many had never attended a class reunion, but a music reunion was another story. They were paying back the community—big time!

Because of this experience, Reaching Heights made support for the school district's music program a new focus of its work. It has blossomed since then, resulting in several student performances at Severance Hall, 20 seasons of the Heights Summer Music Camp, music scholarships, instrument purchases and more.

Music matters to Reaching Heights and to our community. We are invested in a high-quality and engaging public-school music program because it enriches our students and develops wonderful skills that serve them in so many ways. For some it launches professions.

Ever since that concert, concerned parents and educators have directed their worries to Reaching

Heights, hoping it could fix the declining numbers of musicians, staff cuts that limit opportunities, the arts losing out to testing, and turnover of staff who feel unsupported or undervalued.

Last year, thanks to school-board and administrator interest in this issue, and lobbying by parents and arts-loving community members, Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby initiated a "root-cause analysis" of the issue. The district had previously used this process to address math achievement, sexual harassment and elementary- and secondary-school climate.

Student Services Director Karen Liddell-Anderson facilitated the meetings of the 17-member committee from November to January. Members included instrumental- and general-music teachers, parents and community members. Reaching Heights Director Krista Hawthorne participated, as did Board of Education President Jodi Sourini and Heights High Music Director Dan Heim. All three gave the process high marks. Hawthorne felt that the input by the music educators was especially helpful.

After generating possible solutions, committee members rated and prioritized their ideas. They used four criteria to rank each possible remedy: the likeliness of

achieving the desired outcome, along with whether it would be feasible, sustainable and measurable. The group voted on options and together created a priority list for action.

Sourini believes that COVID, which deprived two years of fifth-graders from starting an instrument, and the loss of funds to vouchers—and the resulting staff cuts—contributed to the decline in participation and opportunities. Because the analysis required the committee to focus on things that are within the control of the school district, she is hopeful that their work will lead to solutions the board will implement. Liddell-Anderson will report the committee's findings and recommendations to the board in April.

It's a relief to me that, after years of talk, worry and frustration, the school district has a vehicle for examining unsatisfactory situations and searching for achievable solutions. Let's hope this pragmatic process leads to what Heim described as "earnest and tangible follow-through on the solutions." Amen! Stay tuned!

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

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The story of our beautifully untidy yard

Fey Parrill

How did I come to have an untidy yard with beds full of leaves and a lawn sporting dandelions? It all started with violets . . .

We moved to Cleveland Heights in 2006, buying a house in the neighborhood between Cedar/Fairmount and Coventry. The house came with a lawn. Not knowing the options, we simply did what our neighbors did: hire a company to take care of it. They used riding lawn mowers and gas-powered leaf blowers. They sprayed herbicides and mulched. The aesthetic was what I'd describe as "tidy." Tidy beds with only a few neatly mulched plants, tidy lawn with nothing but grass, tidy pavements with no evidence of their work.

I began to feel a conflict between the way I understand ecosystems, and what I saw in my yard. I believe the interconnected systems (plants, animals, water, soil, microbes, fungi, minerals, air, etc.) around me deserve respect. If I do not respect them, I harm myself.

The first thing I noticed was that the violets edging our flowerbeds and scattered in the lawn were disappearing. The rabbits that particularly enjoyed the violets were going elsewhere. The red-tailed hawks that particularly enjoyed the rabbits were seen less often.

I also struggled with the noise generated by the equipment, how it shattered the calm of our street. I didn't want to disturb my neighbors (both older couples). When I had babies in the house, the noise ended the peace of many a nap. As a family trying to curb our CO2 emissions, we questioned the carbon cost of these big mowers and blowers, as well as the consequences for air quality.

We understood that the lawn-care company's economic model was driving its approach. The employees were wonderful people doing a job I wasn't able to do myself. I appreciated them. I asked the company to stop using herbicides, to leave grass clippings, to be more careful of small plants and to minimize the blowing. They did their best to accommodate us.



An untreated lawn and butterfly flowerbed.

Ultimately, the noise and the emissions were a part of their business model.

So, we took over yard care. We bought an electric mower, and we rake leaves, using an electric leaf blower only rarely. We leave grass clippings and mulch-mow leaves into the lawn. We leave the leaves in beds over the winter. We shred some leaves for our vegetable garden. Our 100-year-old oak trees sequester plenty of CO2 and their fallen leaves provide valuable dry carbon to balance our compost. We show our kids how their hard work emptying kitchen scraps and adding shredded leaves becomes beautiful soil that becomes cucumbers and green beans.

It's a lot of work. Not everyone has the privilege of doing this work, whether because of physical limitations or a lack of time. Yet, an ecological approach to yard care is a wonderful gift. Being in connection to nature has well-established benefits for physical, mental, and community health. I share this with students in a class I teach on nature connection and wellness. Students discover that being outside, looking at plants and trees, listening to Doan Brook, helps them feel more connected and ready to act.

Perhaps the actions described here are actions you're in a position to take. When we arrived in this community, we simply did what we saw our neighbors do. Now we hope that new neighbors might do what we do.

Next time, I'll share a story about another class, one in which we propose an interesting new lawn-care

idea. And I'll update you on those violets, rabbits and hawks.

Fey Parrill teaches at CWRU.

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9:30 a.m. Modern Worship
11:00 a.m. Sanctuary Service

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Free Community Easter Egg Hunt! Saturday, March 16 at 10:00 a.m.

Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

JANUARY 16, 2024 - regular meeting

Council members Tony Cuda (president), Davida Russell (vice president), Craig Cobb, Gail Larson, Anthony Mattox Jr., and Jim Petras were present; Janine Boyd observed virtually. Also present were Clerk of Council Addie Balester, Law Director William Hanna, and City Administrator Danny Williams. Mayor Kahlil Seren was not present.

City administrator’s report

A public meeting regarding Cumberland Pool will take place Jan. 17. The administration will release periodic written reports, probably in June and December.

Council actions

Council extended an agreement with Millennium Strategies LLC for grant-writing services, with expenses not to exceed \$60,000.

Council authorized purchases of a front-load autocar for \$518,860 and a rear-load truck for \$246,860.23 for the Public Works Department.

Council authorized a \$500,000 grant application to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ USDA Forest Service Ohio’s Urban Forestry Grant Program.

Council reappointed all members of the Citizens Advisory Commission (terms ending Dec. 31, 2024), Liza Wolf to the Board of Zoning Appeals (term ending Dec. 31, 2026), and Denver Brooker to the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) (term ending Dec. 31, 2026). Council elevated Kathryn Lester from alternate to full member of the ABR, term ending Dec. 31, 2026.

Council authorized application for a Water Pollution Control Loan Fund agreement with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for planning, design, and/or construction of wastewater facilities. The city has been selected for a principal forgiveness loan of \$4 million toward this project.

Council amended the zoning code and zoning maps to promote walkability and dense, mixed-use development along main thoroughfares, especially along South Taylor Road.

Council replaced the Transportation and Environmental Sustainability Committee with two new committees: 1) Transportation and Mobility, and 2) Climate and Environmental Sustainability, with members of both committees appointed for two-year terms.

Committee of the Whole

Council committee assignments are as follows. (The first name listed is chair; the second, vice-chair; and the third, member):

- Planning and Development—Russell, Cobb, Cuda
- Parks and Recreation—Mattox, Russell, Petras
- Safety and Health—Boyd, Larson, Cobb
- Housing—Petras, Larson, Mattox
- Finance—Larson, Mattox, Boyd
- Administrative Services—Cobb, Petras, Cuda
- Municipal Services—Larson, Boyd, Russell

LWV Observer: Blanche Valancy.



FEBRUARY 5, 2024 - regular meeting

Janine Boyd was not present. All other council members were present, as were the mayor, clerk of council, law director, and city administrator.

Public comment

Eight residents urged council to pass a resolution supporting a Gaza ceasefire and seven other residents urged council not to do so.

Mayor’s report

Mayor Seren noted that he had supported the October resolution in support of Israel after the Hamas attack but had cautioned against language that would support any actions a nation might [take] in response to such an attack. He expressed his willingness, depending on the specifics, to join council in a new resolution clarifying council’s stance.

City administrator’s report

The city garage at Lennox and Surrey roads (Lot 27) has been closed due to a danger posed by crumbling cement. The city is working to provide alternative parking and developing cost estimates for repair or demolition.

Council actions

Council appointed Gail Larson to the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership Board of Trustees, and Joseph Strauss as an alternate member of the ABR.

Council replaced city code Chapter 148, Youth Advisory Commission, with a new chapter: Parks and Recreation Youth Advisory Board.

Public session not authorized

In a 3-3 vote, with Cobb, Larson and Mattox voting no, council denied Council President Cuda’s request for council authorization for a public listening session at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school district’s DeLisle Options Center the following evening. This meeting, the second in a series of planned listening sessions, required council authorization [in order for it] to be covered by the city’s insurance—a board of education requirement for those using school district buildings. Cobb, Larson and Mattox said they had not been notified of either of the first two meetings, that public meetings held by council leadership should be open to all, and that reports of residents’ comments at such meetings should be provided to council.

Committee of the Whole

During discussion of crafting a new Israel-Palestine resolution, Larson noted the divergent views she’s heard from residents, questioned the effectiveness of a council resolution in achieving peace or supporting residents, and described her responsibility to focus on Cleveland Heights. Mattox urged consideration, contrasting the urgency with which council acted in October to the reluctance to speak now. Cuda reported resident views as equally divided between support for and opposition to a resolution. Petras, Russell, and Cobb offered no opinions.

LWV Observer: Jill Tatem.

Cuda and Russell to meet with Forest Hill residents



Davida Russell



Tony Cuda

Kim Sergio Inglis

Cleveland Heights City Council President Tony Cuda and council Vice President Davida Russell will hold a listening session on Tuesday, March 5, 7–8 p.m., at Forest Hill Church, 3031 Monticello Blvd., at the corner of Monticello and Lee Road.

Heights residents—and Forest Hill residents in particular—are invited to take this opportunity to meet Cuda and Russell, and let them know what is on their minds. The focus of the March 5 session will be on issues and concerns of particular interest to Forest Hill.

Cuda and Russell have previously hosted listening sessions for Taylor/Canterbury/Boulevard, and Coventry/Roxboro/Fairfax.

Plans are in the works for a similar event for Noble/Oxford/Caledonia.

Anyone who didn’t make it to the listening session for their neighborhood, or who has ideas or concerns, is invited to contact Cuda (tcuda@clevelandheights.gov) or Russell (drussell@clevelandheights.gov).

Kim Sergio Inglis, editor-in-chief of the Heights Observer, compiled this notice from information provided by Tony Cuda and Davida Russell.

CROWDSOURCED continued from page 1

Heights and University Heights.

The other three 2024 Crowdsourced Conversations topics will be: Turning the Noble Neighborhood and Business District into a Destination; Our Public Parks; and Looking at Severance Town Center as a Case Study: How Can Residents Become Meaningfully Involved.

Each topic goes through two phases: a Heightswide survey, and a community conversation. Surveys are live for an entire month and are conducted electronically.

Once the survey closes, a survey-data report is generated and is made publicly available on the FutureHeights website. The data also is used to create action-oriented small-group discussion questions for the community conversation on the same topic.

At each Crowdsourced Conversations event, participants come together in small groups to spark ideas on how they can get more involved and take action in a way that feels meaningful to them.

Once the event is over, partici-

pants have the option to stay connected with other group members and even be reconnected with group members when they return for the next Crowdsourced Conversations event. Additionally, a resource page for each topic is generated and can be found at www.futureheights.org/our-community/ccresources/.

Any Heights resident who has questions, or wants to participate but might require assistance or needs access to a web-accessible device, should e-mail swolf@futureheights.org or call the FutureHeights office at 216-320-1423.

In 2023, Crowdsourced Conversations explored Our Public Schools, Traveling Around Town, Building Community with Renters and Landlords, and Planning and Development in the Heights. In 2022, the topics were Sustainability, Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, Community Safety, and Civic Engagement.

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

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Help plan now for the Memorial Day parade in UH



Artist Robin VanLear.

Mike Cook

University Heights is home to the oldest and largest Memorial Day Parade in Greater Cleveland. With planning for this year’s event kicking off in early March, it’s not too early to get involved.

The 2024 UH Memorial Day theme is “A Better Tomorrow.”

Artist Robin VanLear will once again offer workshops for parade participants who want to work on creative costumes or vehicle decorations. To get things started, VanLear will offer a free Information & Brainstorming Session Wednesday, March 6, 6:30 p.m., in her studio at Coventry PEACE Campus, 2843 Washington Blvd.

At the introductory session, VanLear will meet with group leaders to discuss themes, brainstorm ideas, and identify needed materials. Participants will also have the opportunity to sign up for future workshops, hosted by VanLear and her team of artists.

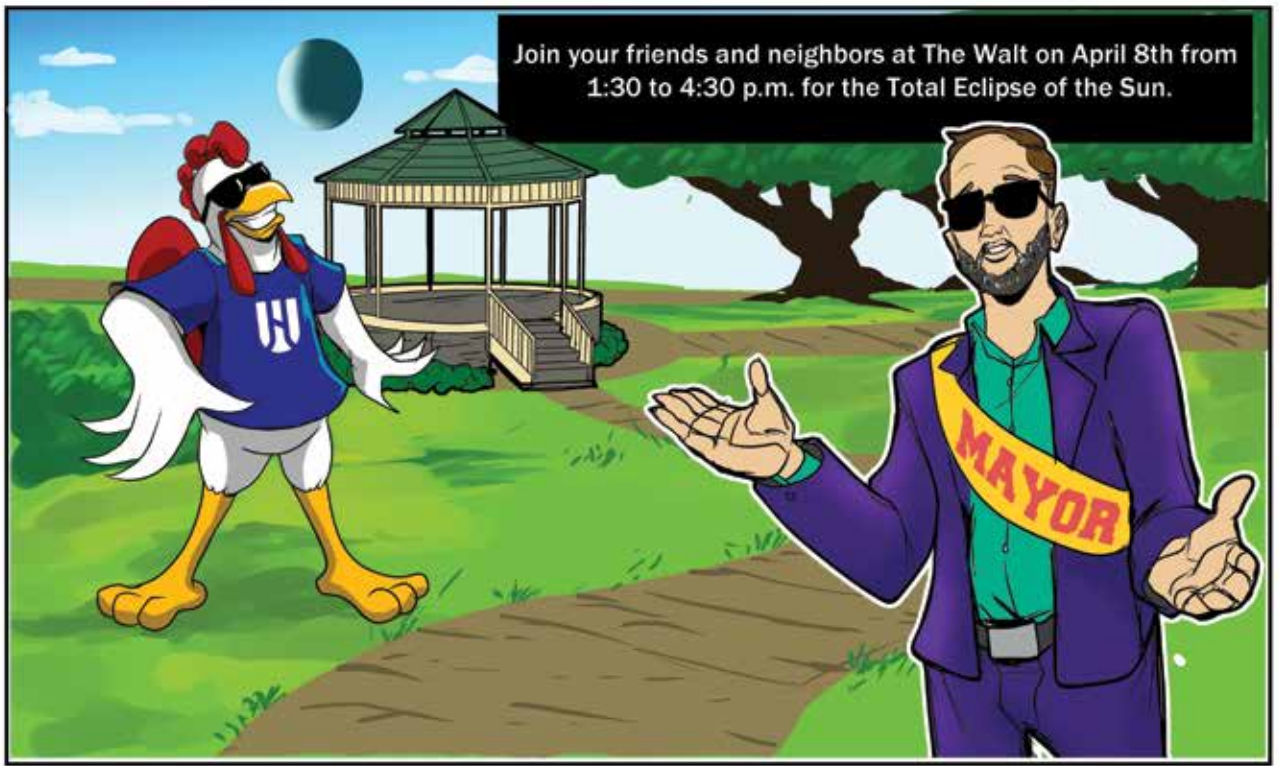
The workshops will cost \$25 per group, to help cover the cost of artists and materials, and are scheduled for weekday evenings and Sunday afternoons:

- March 6, 6:30–7:30 p.m., Information & Brainstorming Session
- March 20, 6:30–8:30 p.m., Teenager/Adult Workshop (15+ years)
- April 7, 2–3:30 p.m., Family Workshop (3+ years w/adult)
- April 10, 6:30–8:30 p.m., Teenager/Adult Workshop (15+ years)
- April 28, 2–4 p.m., Teenager/Adult Workshop (15+ years)
- May 5, 2–3:30 p.m., Family Workshop (3+ years w/adult)

For more information, visit www.universityheights.com.

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

Meet you at The Walt for the solar eclipse



Join Cooper the Brand Ambassador and Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan at The Walt for a Solar Eclipse Party. The city of University Heights is teaming up with Heights Libraries and Destination Cleveland to host an eclipse-viewing event at Walter Stinson Community Park on April 8. Details will be announced in early March.

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University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights



JANUARY 16, 2024 - regular meeting

Present were council members Michele Weiss (vice mayor), Christopher Cooney, Brian J. King, John P. Rach, Sheri Sax, and Win Weizer; Threse Marshall was not present. Also present were Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan, Clerk of Council Kelly Thomas, Law Director Luke McConville, and Finance Director Dennis Kennedy.

Mayor’s report

The first sustainable-home fair will be Sunday, April 31. It is aimed toward University Heights homeowners to [help] make homes more sustainable and reduce the UH carbon footprint.

The mayor will deliver the State of the City Address on Thursday, April 11, at 6 p.m.

Council and staff reports

Interim Building Director John Cheatham introduced Mark Patterson, the new building director.

Council actions

Council rejected an agreement with WallacePancher Group for engineering services, and expressed concerns that the mayor did not interview all three companies submitting bids. The mayor [said he] felt that WallacePancher had best bid and found issues with the other two. WallacePancher’s retainer was significantly higher than that paid to the city’s prior firm. Some city projects need to be addressed soon and require the services of a city engineer. Weizer noted that some projects can move forward, as the mayor has the discretion to advance any project costing less than \$15,000.

Council renewed the Human Resources Consulting Services Contract with Clemans Nelson for the year ending Dec. 31, 2024, for an amount not to exceed \$65,000.

Council amended city code Chapter 1424, Permits and Fees. The fee schedule had not been updated for some time and the revisions bring the rates more in line with those of other communities in the county.

Council approved a three-year extension of the current Minuteman Contract for service department temporary labor during leaf collection.

LWV Observer: Tanis Swan.

FEBRUARY 5, 2024 - regular meeting

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

Public comments

Three University Heights residents and two South Euclid residents spoke against the proposed Chick-Fil-A restaurant site plan at the current Waterstone Medical Building location.

Mayor’s report

Mayor Brennan, a member of the planning commission that approved the Chick-Fil-A project, said the proposed site is part of

the U-9 zoning that includes Cedar Center, where restaurant use is permitted without variances for drive-thru or patio. The traffic concerns are insignificant, as University Square was originally designed to handle more traffic than that generated by the redevelopment.

Because council did not approve the candidate nominated for city engineer, the Ohio Department of Transportation has postponed projects and the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency has expressed concern about the lack of an engineer for ongoing projects. The mayor is talking to two engineering firms and hopes to have a nomination by the next meeting.

Council actions

Council confirmed the appointment of Alix Ogilvie to the University Heights Architectural Review Board (ARB) for a term of three years. Prior to the vote, Rach commented on the remaining ARB vacancies. He said the mayor has created a pattern of harassing and removing members of the board who disagree with him. Weizer raised a point of order to say Rach’s comments did not address the issue before council. Mayor Brennan denied terminating a board member, but he did not renominate a member whose term was completed.

Council confirmed the appointment of Lily Huyen to the ARB. She noted the importance of having a full complement of ARB members, as well as an alternate.

Council approved the planning commission’s recommendation for a special permit to reopen and operate a day care center on Cedar Road at the site of La Petite Learning Daycare Center.

Council rejected the Chick-Fil-A site-plan application, which included a special-use permit for a drive-thru and patio and the granting of time-limited variances. The PEA Group, represented by attorney Anthony Coyne, and design team members were present. Prior to the vote, the applicant’s presentation said the restaurant was a permitted use and the traffic engineer, police department, fire department, and planning commission had no concerns. The ARB approved the site plan. Vice Mayor Weiss voiced appreciation for the effort but also concern that the overall project did not integrate into the community as a whole. King noted the mismatch between the proposal and the current zoning code, which emphasizes residential/retail mixed use to promote economic development and walkability. As more council members voiced concern, Coyne requested tabling the application for further work, but Weiss said council was ready to vote.

Council approved three items for renewal services for the police and fire departments.

LWV Observer: Marilyn Singer.

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Library revises PEACE Park budget and timeline

Sheryl Banks

At its Feb. 19, meeting, the Heights Libraries board of trustees approved an updated budget and timeline for the PEACE Park playground renovation.

The new budget is \$3.2 million, up from an estimated \$2.5 million. The new construction timeline has moved the park's completion date to early December 2024, from the original estimate of summer 2024.

"Our board wants to ensure that the new PEACE Park fulfills our mission to provide safe, welcoming spaces with equal access to services for all of our residents," said Heights Libraries Director Nancy Levin. "The PEACE Park is an extension of the Coventry Village branch, so we have added features and services that have increased the price tag, but that are necessary, such as Wi-Fi that extends to the entire park, more lighting, security cameras, and construction of a retaining wall by the building."

As of February 2024, the Fund for the Future of Heights Libraries (FFHL), a separate 501(c)3 organization that raises money for Heights Libraries, has raised roughly \$800,000 for the project. That amount includes \$300,000 from the city of Cleveland Heights' ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. FFHL anticipates receiving another \$100,000 in Community Development Block Grant money, bringing the total raised close to \$900,000 so far.

Roughly \$400,000 of the project's budget addresses accessibility improvements to the park, such as leveling some of the park's steep hills to accommodate walkways, seating, and storybook loop and play equipment that are compliant with the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968, which requires structures built by government agencies to be accessible.

The leveling and construction of ABA-compliant walkways required



The latest PEACE Park drawing by landscape architect Andrew Sergeant. New trees are designated by circles.

the removal of 18 trees at the top of the park, along the rim where the new walkway will be. The trees were taken down in February to avoid bat nesting and maternity season, which runs roughly May through August.

"If we had waited much longer, we would have run the risk of having to leave the trees up until August, which would have delayed the project even more," said Levin. "The bats can nest in the trees on the east side of the PEACE building, which will remain undisturbed."

The removal of the 18 trees will be counteracted by the planting of 100 trees in and around the park area, with planting scheduled to begin in the fall.

The park's adjusted timeline is the result of additions such as the retaining wall and increased lighting, and also due to mundane yet unavoidable issues including shipping delays for play equipment and a longer-than-anticipated schedule for the construction of the park's centerpiece, the cardinal play structure, which now has an estimated

installation date of October 2024.

The new timeline, subject to change, is as follows:

- Late June 2024: Construction barriers go up, and leveling begins
- July 7, 2024: Groundbreaking ceremony
- August 2024: Construction of pavilion
- September 2024: Installation of playground equipment
- October 2024: Construction of half-court basketball, installation of cardinal structure
- October to November 2024: Land-

scaping

- December 2024: Construction finishes, park opens

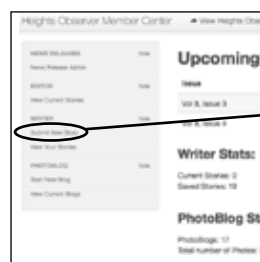
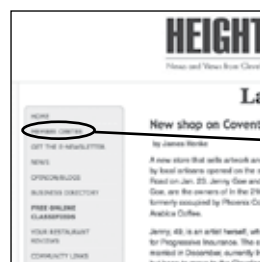
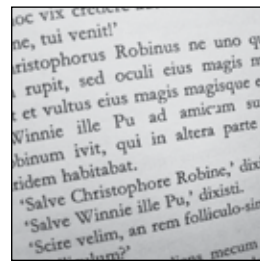
Heights Libraries will hold an official groundbreaking on Sunday, July 7, at 2 p.m., and hopes to open the park in early December with a winter-themed party.

More information, including a detailed FAQ, can be found at heightslibrary.org.

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

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STONE OVEN continued from page 1

together ever since.

Emerman announced the deal in late January in a letter to the editor, which he submitted to the *Heights Observer* just as the February issue was going to press.

Over the years, Emerman and Rehn expanded with a second location in Woodmere and a commercial-baking operation that still distributes bread to stores and restaurants across the region. In the past few years, they sold off those extensions of the original business and returned to their roots—baking small batches of bread in the Lee Road store.

The new owners promise to keep it that way, and the old owners are staying on for several months to help in the transition.

"The team here is phenomenal. We're in awe at how they do their jobs," Kalafatis said.

"The bakers make such phe-

nomenal things. They're creative and passionate," added Compton, who enjoys making bread at home, and looks forward to being part of the baking team.

Compton grew up in Newbury Township in Geauga County. A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art, he's worked at Progressive Insurance for 17 years—first as a designer and, for the past decade, as a training and development consultant. He'll work regularly at Stone Oven on weekends.

Kalafatis will work in the business full time. He grew up in Southern Ohio and has lived in Cleveland Heights for the past 20 years. He has always worked in food service and hospitality.

Cleveland Heights resident Bob Rosenbaum is responsible for the Heights Observer's advertising sales and market development.

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March 10 talk explores efficacy of deer sterilization

Tom Gibson

Is deer sterilization an effective way to reduce deer populations humanely?

On March 10, Sunny Simon, chair of Cuyahoga County's Education, Environment, and Sustainability Committee, will speak on the topic at 3 p.m., at the University Heights Library, during a meeting of Green Noble, a Cleveland Heights environmental activist group.

Simon has led an experimental effort in South Euclid to capture and sterilize deer with the help of a private contractor, White Buffalo Inc. The five-year program, now in its third year, tranquilizes some does and removes their ovaries. The deer then are released back to the neighborhood. Other female deer serve as a control group and are merely captured and tagged, left intact reproductively, and then released.

Both groups are tagged for easy recognition. The area of deer capture

extends north of Mayfield Road up to Bluestone, and west to the border of Cleveland Heights.

Study results are complicated by the fact that South Euclid also culls deer with the help of sharpshooters. Together, however, the deer-reduction programs have had a noticeable impact on South Euclid neighborhoods.

Debbie Wright, a South Euclid resident, said, "I love deer, but there were too many. They ate all my flowers. The herd that gathered in my yard would not move when I would return home from a walk. They would stamp their feet at me when I got close, even if my dog was with me. Now I still see deer but not as many and they are more apt to move away from me."

Tom Gibson, a Cleveland Heights resident since 1980, is the leader of Green Noble and principal of Green Paradigm Partners, a community organizing and landscape design firm.

LIBRARY continued from page 1

Learn what to expect on the day of the eclipse, get tips on how to view it safely, and explore its history and science. Chris Mentrek, nature educator, will lead the program.

Science Cafe: The Eclipse, Tuesday, March 26, 2 p.m., at Lee Road HKIC, 2340 Lee Road. A Nature Center of Shaker Lakes educator will answer questions about what an eclipse is, what makes this eclipse special, and more. Registration begins March 12.

Skywatchers Story Stop, Friday, March 29, 10:30 a.m., at Disciples Christian Church, 3663 Mayfield Road. Get ready for the eclipse with sun-, moon-, and star-themed stories, songs, and rhymes. For preschoolers; registration begins March 15.

Solarprinting: UV-Dyed Pencil Pouch, Tuesday, April 2, 2 p.m., at Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Road. Wield the power of the sun by exploring the process of

solar printmaking. Participants will learn how to make a sun-developed print on fabric, and print on a pencil pouch to take home. No experience is required; all materials will be provided. Registration begins March 19.

Blackout Party, Thursday, April 4, 6 p.m., at University Heights Library, 13866 Cedar Road. Join us for glow-in-the-dark fun and games in celebration of the eclipse.

Explorastory: Eclipse, Friday, April 5, 10:30 a.m., at Coventry Village Library, 1925 Coventry Road. Join us at the library for stories, an open-ended play, and exploration inspired by the upcoming eclipse. For ages 2-5.

Additional programs can be found online at heightslibrary.org.

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

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A goodbye to Lee Road legend Chuck Preisch



Charles "Chuck" Preisch

Adam Dew

For those who haven't heard, I'm sad to report that Charles "Chuck's Diner" Preisch passed away recently. This is an excerpt from his obituary, reprinted with his family's permission:

Charles "Chuck" Preisch, age 74, passed away Jan. 29, 2024, after a short hospitalization following a car accident.

Chuck was really looking forward to 2024. He would have been 75 years old in May, 45 years sober in June, and 50 years married in November. He hoped to celebrate with a visit back to Cleveland to eat at his favorite restaurants and play

poker with some of his favorite people.

Chuck grew up in Lockport, N.Y., and dropped out of high school in May of his senior year. After a stint in the Navy, Chuck returned to school and earned an education degree, working primarily with children with special needs.

He met his future wife, Halle, while they were both counselors at a camp for disadvantaged and/or disabled kids. They raised their three children, Sada, Genie and Will, in Cleveland Heights.

After a few years of teaching, Chuck realized he wanted to be his own boss. With two maxed-out credit cards, a lot of enthusiasm, and little practical experience, he opened Chuck's Breakfast & Lunch on Larchmere in November 1981. The tasty food, low prices, and Chuck's infectious personality proved to be a winning combination.

He went on to own and operate greasy spoons in several locations, the most beloved of which was Chuck's Diner in its two spots on Lee Road. Many of the diner's regulars were part of the local recovery community, of which Chuck was an active member.

The diner employed high schoolers, the newly sober, and the recently released from jail, among

others. Chuck was generous to a fault, handing out large Christmas bonuses, and giving employees second, third, and sometimes fourth chances. The diner made him a local celebrity in the Heights, recognized every time he was out.

After 30 years in Cleveland, Chuck and Halle moved to Portland, Ore., to be closer to their kids. Chuck was thrilled to be a grandpa. He never missed a chance to tell his family that he loved them.

Adam Dew is a proud member of the Heights High Class of '94. He owns Dew Media Inc., a video production company.



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CH-UH kindergartens host info nights

Cathan Cavanaugh

Beginning March 6, each Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District elementary school will host a Kindergarten Information Night for incoming and prospective families. Attendees will have an opportunity to meet school principals and teachers, ask questions, and take tours of the buildings.

To find the school that corresponds to your address, use the district's online interactive boundary map, at www.chuh.org/Interactive-BoundariesMap.aspx.

Each information night will run from 6 to 7 p.m., on the following dates:

- Boulevard:** Thursday, March 14
- Canterbury:** Wednesday, March 13

- Fairfax:** Tuesday, March 12
- Gearity Professional Development:** Wednesday, March 13
- Noble:** Tuesday, March 12
- Oxford:** Thursday, March 14
- Roxboro:** Wednesday, March 6

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

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

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

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Cleveland Heights – University Heights Board of Education

Meeting highlights



JANUARY 23, 2024 - work session
Board members present were Jodi Sourini (president), Gabe Crenshaw, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis, and Phil Trimble. Also present were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

The meeting focused on social-emotional/mental-health support for students and families that aligns with Ohio's Whole Child Framework.

SEL model and curriculum

A Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum models ways of understanding emotions and "zones of regulation." Included in SEL support services are counseling, mindfulness, restorative practices, and the Responsive Classroom. Collaboration with partners and community agencies provide added services and support.

Direct support partners and services

LaShonda Abdussatar, director of SEL & Academic Supports, said today's presentation highlights a small sampling of the partners helping the district promote Ohio's Whole Child Framework, which includes two domains: 1) direct support provided by Bellefaire JCB and MetroHealth, and school social workers and counselors; and 2) indirect support provided by the community organizations Lake Erie Ink, Students of Promise, and Universal Love.

The SAY (Social Advocates for Youth) Program, a prevention program for middle- and high-school students, is grant-funded and underwritten by Bellefaire JCB.

MetroHealth's School Health Program provides primary care in-school clinics and the mobile-unit clinic for integrated physical and behavioral health. School nursing and emergency services will be provided to students, whether or not parents choose to take part in the added service. The program screens students over the age of 12, provides team-based care, and supports the Whole Child Framework. Parents can opt out of specific services they do not want for their child.

Nancy Peppler, supervisor of community and school partnerships, discussed how families still do not understand that providing consent for their student to receive MetroHealth services does not compete with their family's established health care.

Indirect support partners and services

Lake Erie Ink supports SEL through creative expression with a writing space for youth.

The Students of Promise program's goals are to close the achievement gap and expose students to college and other career path opportunities. At-risk ninth- and tenth-graders participate.

Universal Love is a nonprofit that mentors young people through arts education and programs that promote healthy relationships and leadership development.

Superintendent Kirby noted that district community-of-care meetings bring all the partners together, clarify key policies, and coordinate the work.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

FEBRUARY 6, 2024 - regular meeting
Dan Heintz was not present. All other board members were present, as were the superintendent and treasurer.

Board actions

The board approved membership in the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA). Lewis noted that recent Ohio legislation regarding trans students conflicts with OHSAA policies.

The board approved the calendars for

the 2024–25 and 2025–26 school years.

New math curriculum

Michael Jenkins, director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Joyce Bukovac, instructional specialist for mathematics, presented the proposed K–12 math curriculum, which has been piloted this year. Full adoption is recommended. This was a first reading with no vote. The curricular materials align with the district's strategic plan, as they use evidence-based instruction and materials and encourage mastery of grade-level expectations to close achievement gaps. Adopting a single math program for all grade levels would align rigor and smooth grade transitions.

Superintendent comments

Juniors and seniors participating in DECA competed in the District 8 DECA winter competitions in January. They will advance to the state DECA competition in Columbus in March. DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management in high schools and colleges around the world.

In January, the cell-phone-safety symposium, held at the high school, focused on awareness of crimes against children.

The board will receive Incident Command System training, which provides an organizational structure for responding rapidly in an emergency and a common language for all emergency responders.

Treasurer's report

Treasurer Gainer reported on 1) interest on investments—the use of interest from investment of funds are authorized under board policy 6144; 2) blanket purchase orders—blanket orders to purchase various items are authorized according to the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Section 5705.41(D); and 3) board member remuneration—members receive \$125 for attending a public meeting where roll is called, with a maximum remuneration of \$5,000 per year, per member, according to the ORC Section 3313.42.

Music program root-cause analysis

Sourini thanked Karen Liddell-Anderson and Toia Robinson for leading the music program root-cause analysis, which identified causes and solutions for declining involvement in district music programs.

LWV Observer: Rosemarie Fairman.

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.

Going shopping?

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3. They support local causes and institutions
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Heights Swim Cadets ‘live the teenage dream’ March 7–9



The 2024 Swim Cadets team (left to right, top to bottom): Gwendolyn Kinsella, Josephine Norton, Emily Barr, Sophie Petersal, Samira Sisson, Maeve Hackman (advisor), Ella Bain, Celia Pentecost, Amelia McCann, Addison Hart, Celia Lyford, Harper Walker, Polly Routh, Clara Walker, Lucia Mitchell, and Tasha Bell.

Sarah Routh

The Cleveland Heights High School Swim Cadets will present their 85th annual show—Swim Cadets Live the Teenage Dream!—March 7–9.

The 15-member synchronized swim team will perform three shows, Thursday through Saturday, March 7–9, at 7 p.m., at the Heights High Natatorium, 13263 Cedar Road. (The entrance is on the west side of the building, door #8.) Tickets are \$12 and available in advance from Swim Cadet members. A limited number of tickets will be sold at the door. The Friday-night show will also be live-streamed on the district’s YouTube channel.

The show is a product of four months of 12- to 15-hour practice weeks, and the cadets are responsible for all aspects of the show, including choreography, costumes, and fundraising.

Synchronized swimming in high school is rare, and Heights Swim Cadets is the oldest student-run club at the high school. The club’s traditions span decades, bonding the girls to the generations before them. It is not uncommon for the members to be second- or even third-generation Swim Cadets (daughters, sisters, and nieces of former cadets). Many current and past members have participated in or coached the synchronized swimming program at Cumberland Pool over the summer, emphasizing the continuity between the community pool and the public school.

Maeve Hackman, in her second year as the team’s coach, is herself a

former cadet (2014–17).

“Having been a part of almost five shows, I continue to be in awe of the incredible dedication and hard work shown by the girls as they come together to bring the show to life,” said Hackman. “Team officers write and choreograph their routines months in advance and team members shoulder the responsibility of memorizing each routine, all while managing their regular school and workloads. This . . . is a significant undertaking for anyone, let alone teenagers.”

Polly Routh, this year’s team co-president and a member since her freshman year, said, “Swim Cadets has prepared me for my future in more ways than I could have ever expected. Because of this team, I have a sense of leadership and responsibility, and have also gotten great experience working with others. I have really loved seeing every member’s hard work come together while preparing the show, and am really excited to perform it for everybody.”

The 2024 Heights Swim Cadets are: Seniors Polly Routh (co-president), Harper Walker (co-president), and Lucia Mitchell (secretary); juniors Josephine Norton (treasurer), Samira Sisson, and Gwendolyn Kinsella; sophomores Ella Bain, Emily Barr, Addison Hart, Celia Pentecost, Sophie Petersal, Clara Walker, Celia Lyford, Tasha Bell, and Amelia McCann.

Sarah Routh is mother to swim cadet Polly Routh.

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Heights Observer March 1, 2024

15

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Event connects potential employers with students

Krista Hawthorne

Do you need to hire employees for summer 2024? Would it help if those new employees arrived with some preparation and compensation? The Heights CTE Consortium and Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Y.O.U.) are ready to help connect businesses with talented young people who need work experience.

On Feb. 1, 40 people gathered at the Deborah Delisle Options Center to attend Heights High’s Business Connection event. A collaboration of Reaching Heights, FutureHeights, the Heights CTE Consortium, and Y.O.U., the event brought business owners, managers and community leaders together to learn about high school career and technical education (CTE) programs and youth career-development programs.

Carmen Daniel, Heights CTE Consortium’s business and community engagement specialist, highlighted the wide variety of programs offered to high school

juniors and seniors in the five-district consortium comprising Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Shaker Heights, Warrensville Heights, Maple Heights, and Bedford. Daniel explained how the programs prepare students for entry-level positions by imparting the technical skills and soft skills of a valued employee.

Eric Dillenbeck, Y.O.U.’s director of work experience programs, described the Y.O.U Summer Youth Employment program, which helps prepare, place, support, and compensate students, ages 14–19, who live in Cuyahoga County. This summer, approximately 1,800 students will be paid \$13.50 per hour for six weeks of part-time (20–25 hours per week) work experience. The deadline for students to apply is May 1.

After each presentation, attendees had the opportunity to meet and talk with one another. Bryan Barrett, owner of Bryan’s Marathon, was impressed with



Business owners and hiring managers joined community members, educators, and students to learn more about making business connections that lead to employment at the Heights High Business Connection event on Feb. 1.

the evaluation system for student employees that included soft skills such as arriving on time, dressing appropriately, and expressing a ready-to-work attitude. Another attendee mentioned the value of students receiving exposure to a variety of work environments to learn which fields were or were not of interest.

Sally Kramer, a Reaching Heights board member and parent of two Heights graduates, was happy to hear that every CTE program has college credit associated with it. “Most people know about college credit from Advanced Placement (AP) and College Credit Plus (CCP),” said Kramer. “This event was a great reminder that students also can earn

CTE college credit.” Y.O.U and the Heights CTE Consortium hope to employ 150 rising Heights High juniors and seniors this summer, providing work experience at various sites in and near Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

Interested employers are asked to complete an interest form by April 1. To learn more about the Y.O.U. Summer Youth Employment program, visit www.youcle.org/syep. To register as a work site, contact Carmen Daniel at c_daniel@chuh.org.

Krista Hawthorne is the executive director of Reaching Heights.

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Upcycling leads to new business for Heights duo



Dori Nelson-Hollis and Jessica Schantz at their workshop in Cleveland Heights.

Catalina Wagers

Many of us, at some point, have dreamed of finding the courage to leave our jobs and careers and reinvent our lives.

Cleveland Heights residents Jessica Schantz and Dori Nelson-Hollis are next-door neighbors who, unbeknownst to each other, decided to leave their jobs—as CSU lecturer and HR executive, respectively—around the same time. Both sought more personal balance and alternative ways to channel their creativity.

By pure chance, they bumped into each other while shopping for tools needed for their own home-restoration projects.

“Dori was refinishing a dresser

cabinet, and I was trying to re-do my kitchen without buying all new materials,” Schantz recalled. “We realized we had a common interest in DIY-remodeling projects, and we both had supplies we could share. After that we started helping each other as we taught ourselves how to fix things.”

According to Nelson-Hollis, “A couple of months before the pandemic shut everything down, we saw our neighbor leaving several antique chairs by the curb for trash pickup. They were old yet beautiful and full of potential, and just like that our collective lightbulb lit up.”

As residents sheltered in place and tree lawns filled with unwanted furniture, the two went treasure

hunting, looking for discarded real-wood objects and furnishings with interesting craftsmanship, textures and details. Together, they founded Upcycle Design, and are breathing new life into pieces once destined for the landfill.

Their first commissioned project, in summer 2020, was designing and constructing a large conference table for a law office out of a dining room table found at a flea market. Since then, old doors, frames, wood boards, windows, trims, and all sorts of furniture and textiles have been re-imagined and transformed with new purpose and rediscovered beauty.

The duo’s design ethos is simple: re-imagine instead of buying new—an attitude that extends beyond physical space. On their website, www.upcycledesigncle.com, they note that Americans discard more than 11 million tons of furniture each year, according to Waste360.

“It is about cultivating a mindset of appreciation for the things we already have, valuing their history, and embracing the potential for transformation,” Nelson-Hollis explained. “In re-imagining their spaces, people can discover not only the joy of creativity but also a deeper connection to their environment and a more sustainable way of living.”

Their work has had a positive effect on the community. Residents contact them to have furniture repaired, refurbished, and re-imagined, enabling them to find new purpose for forgotten

or unwanted pieces. People alert them when potential treasures are spotted on tree lawns, and call to offer excess or discarded building materials. (For the latter, Schantz and Nelson-Hollis often suggest the materials be taken to Rebuilders Xchange in Cleveland, a circular-economy hub and architectural salvage business for builders and designers.)

In the near future, the two plan to offer workshops for those who want to learn how to repair or repurpose their own pieces.

“As we look forward to spring cleaning, rather than succumbing to the constant urge to buy new things to refresh our homes, try shopping in your house first,” suggested Nelson-Hollis. “There is no need to buy new furniture to refresh a living space, especially here in the Heights where 100-year-old homes are filled with wonders that only need to be seen with different eyes in a different space and with a breath of creativity.”

Readers can find Nelson-Hollis and Schantz’s designs at Made Cleveland on Coventry (where Schantz also works in the office part time), and by visiting their website and following them on Instagram @upcy.cle.design.

Catalina Wagers is a resident of the Fairfax neighborhood. She supports causes and programs focused on the advancement of NEO through better access to education, policy advocacy, and environmental protection, and is co-founder of Cleveland Heights Green Team.

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Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board

Meeting highlights 

JANUARY 19, 2024

Board members present were Vikas Turakhia (president), Annette Iwamoto (vice president), Patti Carlyle (secretary), Dana Fluelen, Tyler McTigue, Melissa Soto-Schwartz, and Hallie Turnberrez.

Oath of office

Mark Musson, assistant Cuyahoga County prosecutor, administered the oath of office to new Board Member Hallie Turnberrez and new Board President Vikas Turakhia.

Sustainable Libraries Initiative

Under the direction of Youth Services Manager Sam Lapides, Special Projects Manager Kaela Sweeney, and Librarian Steve Saunders, Heights Libraries is now a member of the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI), a global network of library leaders who want to create more environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible libraries. The initiative is designed to provide the tools and resources library leaders need to incorporate sustainability as a core value in their work, just as the American Library Association has adopted sustainability as a core value of the profession. A plan was shared that will guide Heights Libraries to achieve certification by 2025.

Financial report

Fiscal Officer Deborah Herrmann reviewed the history of General Fund major revenue sources. Property taxes bring in the most revenue, followed by the Public Library Fund and property tax rollbacks, in that order. She reviewed the expected 2024 major expenditures. These include salaries and benefits (63 percent), purchased services (21 percent), materials (11 percent), and other (5 percent). December 2023 ended with a positive balance.

Board actions

The board:

- Approved an additional payment of \$8,790 to C&J Contractors for additional work required to remove two unexpected layers of gravel and bricks [found] while scraping out asphalt behind the Coventry PEACE Building.
- Accepted donated funds received in 2023. The Memorial Fund received \$2,000, and PEACE Park received \$150,000.
- Approved a contract with Algebra Engineering to design an outdoor Wi-Fi service for PEACE park.
- Approved purchase of furniture for the Noble Neighborhood Library.
- Approved an agreement with The Centers for Families and Children to continue providing social-work services through a resource specialist at the Lee Road Library, at no cost to the library.
- Approved the 2024 salaries of the director and fiscal officer.

Director's report

Preparations are being made for programming before and during the April 8 eclipse. Eclipse glasses will be distributed to attendees of eclipse-related programs. Eclipse planning is in process, with the participation of cities, schools, Noble Neighbors, police, parks and recreation, and FutureHeights. The *Heights Observer* will be listing all eclipse-related activities that it receives.

Emergency manuals are being updated to provide better guidance for in-charge staff to manage staff expectations.

More than 100 trees will be planted in the new PEACE Park starting this spring. In order to install an accessible path and re-grade the land, 18 trees will be removed, including a number of ash trees, which are subject to disease.

March primary elections will be held at the University Heights and Lee Road libraries.

The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) posted the January 2024 Public Library Fund distribution of \$35,451,717, which is \$4.5 million (11.9 percent) below ODT's original estimate, which was issued in July 2023; and \$7,569 (2 percent) below ODT's updated estimate issued in December 2023.

Coventry PEACE Park fundraising updates from 2023 were reviewed, as were fundraising opportunities for 2024.

Public service report

Study rooms at Lee Road Library were refreshed with repainting and installation of whiteboards.

Youth Services Associate Angela Whiteley successfully launched a new children's culinary literacy class, Tiny Tasters, at Coventry Village Library.

Customers of Noble Neighborhood Library have been very appreciative of the alternative library site during the library's reconstruction.

Customers at University Heights Library enjoyed winter-crafting fun, e.g., winter wreaths, cocoa mugs, and gingerbread houses.

Youth Services at the Lee Road Library organized a Kwanzaa celebration, which was well attended.

Total circulation for 2023 for all branches was 1,643,147 items.

Computers are well used in all branches. Walk-up use is greater than reserved use. Most computer areas do not reach enough use to go to a waiting list.

LWV Observer: Judith Beeler.

Information about the board, board meeting minutes and audio recordings of board meetings can be found at <https://heights-library.org/locations/heights-libraries-board>.

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Heights Observer March 1, 2024

18

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'Something Clean' gets its regional premiere at Dobama



Emily Polcyn

March 8-30, Dobama Theatre will present the regional premiere of "Something Clean" by Selina Fillinger, directed by Shannon Sindelar.

Described by *The New York Times* as "a beautifully observed, richly compassionate new drama," the play is both suspenseful and stirring. It follows Charlotte, a devoted mother, wife, and respectable member of the community, who struggles to make sense of her own grief, love and culpability when an act of violence

is committed by a family member.

The inspiration for "Something Clean" was an article about Brock Turner, the Stanford University swimmer from Ohio who sexually assaulted a woman behind a dumpster. Fillinger, the playwright, said, "I was following that story, and I saw a photo of him walking to court holding his mother's hand. It was an incredibly domestic and maternal image. She looked stoic and warm; she looked almost like she was taking him to his first day of school. If you saw the photo out of context, you wouldn't have known she was walking her rapist son to court. I couldn't stop thinking, what is the cognitive dissonance you have to do every single day when you're a woman whose son was seen raping another woman? To me, it was fascinating, and I wanted to see if I could write about sexual assault without giving voice to a rapist character or depicting a rape on stage."

This production will continue Dobama's Full Circle program, which

continued on page 23

Chorale presents a 'human requiem' by Brahms

David Gilson

Western Reserve Chorale's (WRC) performance of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* (A German Requiem) this month represents the return of the ensemble's mission to offer music to various audiences, and presents—perhaps for the first time—the "chamber version" of this masterpiece, created in 2010 by German flutist Joachim Linckelmann.


WRC will perform the *Requiem* on Friday, March 8, 7:30 p.m., at Lakewood United Methodist Church, and Sunday, March 10, 3:30 p.m., at Church of the Saviour in Cleveland Heights. Both concerts are free and open to the public; donations are encouraged and will support WRC's ability to present quality

choral music to the community.

Linckelmann utilized string quartet, double bass, woodwind quintet and timpani (to which the WRC is adding the original part for organ) to craft an arrangement that allows for smaller forces without sacrificing the grandeur of the full orchestra.

Whatever the nature of his own beliefs, many have noted that, unlike traditional requiems, which offer prayers for the souls of the dead, Brahms's *German Requiem* is more concerned with offering comfort to the living. His remark, "I would very gladly omit the 'German' as well, and simply call it a 'Human Requiem,'" suggests that he wished to offer this solace to all listeners, regardless of their religious beliefs

continued on page 23




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Collaboration is the theme at Heights Arts

Greg Donley

When Heights Arts was founded in 2000, the new organization's name included the word "Collaborative." Despite later shortening that to "Heights Arts," the nonprofit has continued to value collaboration as an ongoing inspiration—as evidenced by partnerships with No Exit New Music Ensemble and The Music Settlement that, in March, will bring several unique experiences to the community.

First up is the exhibition *Irrational Objects: Looking Back into the Future*, opening Friday, March 15, at 5 p.m., and running through May 12.

Heights Arts and No Exit have collaborated for more than a decade, with Heights Arts hosting several of the ensemble's concerts each year. Last year's *Collaborage* exhibition at Heights Arts was the kickoff event to No Exit's 2024 celebration of surrealism, and now No Exit's foray into the visual arts expands to fill the entire Heights Arts exhibition space, which will be transformed into a surrealist

environment with *Irrational Objects*.

No Exit's Artistic Director and Composer Timothy Beyer describes his vision for the exhibition: "We're devoting our entire season to surrealism. We wanted to move beyond the purely musical and present surrealism as it is expressed in different artistic mediums, including visual art."

Two musical events conceived by No Exit, both free and presented at Heights Arts, complement the March exhibition in the spirit of surrealism. Aether Eos, a duo performance featuring violinist/composer/visual artist Leah Asher and pianist/composer Christopher Goddard is planned for Sunday, March 3, at 3 p.m., and Piano Dada with Shuai Wang will be performed on Saturday, March 16, at 7 p.m.

On Wednesday, March 20, 7 p.m., Heights Arts will host a free Close Encounters open rehearsal, in partnership with The Music Settlement (TMS). At this event, the general public and students from TMS have the rare opportunity to experience a rehearsal by Cleveland

Orchestra members Katherine Bormann, Eliesha Nelson, Maximilian Dimoff, Frank Rosenwein, Afendi Yusuf, Barrick Stees, and Nathaniel Silberschlag, as they prepare for a Close Encounters concert to be performed the following Sunday, March 24, at the Dunham Tavern.

Heights Arts Executive Director Rachel Bernstein, who has a long relationship with TMS, noted that she has worked to find authentic ways in which both organizations could work together. "One of those ways," said Bernstein, "is providing students with a glimpse of how top professional musicians work together to create a chamber music performance."

TMS Center of Music Chair Matthew Charboneau is eager to provide this unique experience to TMS students. "The partnership with Heights Arts is exciting for The Music Settlement," said Charboneau, "as it allows our private-lesson students to have behind-the-scenes, close-up access to how world-class musicians approach



A sculpture from the *Irrational Objects* exhibition, opening March 15.

rehearsal and creative expression as an ensemble."

More information about these and other Heights Arts programming can be found at www.heightsarts.org.

Greg Donley is chair of the Heights Arts Exhibition Community Team.

Register now for free spring-break art classes



Blakk Jakk Dance Collective at DCC.

Ronald Werman

During this year's school spring break, on Tuesday, March 26, and Thursday, March 28, the Cultural Arts Center at Disciples Christian Church (DCC) will offer free art classes for kids in grades one through four and grades five through eight.

The classes—in which everyone who registers will take part—will comprise circus arts, taught by WIZBANG Circus School; dance, from Blakk Jakk Dance Collective; and art activities from the Center for Arts Inspired Learning.

The classes will be held 1-4 p.m., on Tuesday, March 26, and Thursday, March 28, and will take place at DCC's Cultural Arts Center, 3663 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights.

All three arts organizations regularly offer programs, for young people and adults, at the Cultural

continued on page 23

Pauline has always been passionate about educating and giving people the tools needed to succeed. As a professor, analyst, Certified Financial Planner and recent *Crain's* Eight Over 80 honoree, she has impacted many and continues to inspire and inform as a volunteer and philanthropist.

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SONGS AND STORIES

David Budin

I won't see you at the B-Side on March 16, when Mac's Backs presents a book discussion and signing with Steve Traina, celebrating the release of his book *La Cave: Cleveland's Legendary Music Club and the '60s Folk-to-Rock Revolution*. I'll be out of town that day. But I'm in the book. So, it will almost be as if I'm there. Kind of.

Anyway, I'm mentioned and quoted a few times in Traina's book. I spent a lot of time at La Cave, Cleveland's major venue for presenting national and local folk musicians, and then also folk-rock musicians, and then also rock musicians, from 1962 to 1969. I performed there a few times and attended hundreds of shows there. For about the last eight months before I left Cleveland, in February 1968, I hung out at La Cave almost every night.

I usually walked from Coventry to La Cave, which was at E. 107th Street and Euclid Avenue, just west of University Circle. It was kind of a long walk, especially in the winter, but it was always worth the effort. The cave-like, fairly unadorned base-

ment club hosted a very long list of now-legendary performers, and also kept a roster of the best local talent working.

In the mid- and late '60s, you could see most of the top singer-songwriters there, like Phil Ochs, Tom Paxton, Bob Gibson, Gordon Lightfoot, Arlo Guthrie, Tim Buckley, Tim Hardin and Eric Andersen; and the great folk interpreters, like Judy Collins, Tom Rush, Richie Havens and the duo Ian and Sylvia. And also the top blues-rock bands, including the Paul Butterfield Band, the Blues Project, the Siegal-Schwall Blues Band and Lynn County. Then came the then-new rock artists, like Neil Young, the Velvet Underground, Jeff Beck, Blood, Sweat & Tears and Cleveland's James Gang.

Everyone who was there remembers the artists they saw there. Many remember it so well that they even remember seeing performers there who never played the club—like Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell and Jimi Hendrix. There are more than a few people who “remember” seeing them at La Cave. I guess that's one of the reasons the place is legendary.

Since I won't be there on the 16th, here's a story you won't hear me tell: Soon after I quit high school, in the summer of 1967, I got



La Cave's Stan Kain (left) with Steve Katz, who played at La Cave several times with two popular bands, the Blues Project and Blood, Sweat & Tears. This picture is from a few years ago, taken at a concert venue in Cleveland Heights, where Katz performed his solo show.

hired by La Cave to open for someone named Jim Hendricks, a semi-well-known folk musician who had been in a folk group with “Mama” Cass Elliot. Then they told me that he had cancelled, so I would, instead, be opening for the Stone Poneys, which I did. But it turned out that the guy who cancelled was not Jim Hendricks, but Jimi Hendrix, who was still unknown—till that June when he appeared at the Monterey Pop Festival, and then in August, when his first album came out. And when I opened for the Stone Poneys for five nights, it was just as their first hit single, “Different Drum,” was climbing the charts, and beginning

to make a star of their young lead singer, Linda Ronstadt. Linda and I exchanged phone numbers and then we both hit the road. I never heard from her.

There is at least one good story about Linda in Traina's book, as told to Traina by Stan Kain, the person who made La Cave legendary. But I'm not going to tell you that story right now. Kain, who was La Cave's manager and part-owner for much of its existence, was a Heights High graduate who had worked several summers at Cain Park.

About 20 years ago, Kain became friends with Steve Traina, who

continued on page 23

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PEACE Pops kicked off quarterly series with January event



Dancing and singing at the January PEACE Pops.

Brady Dindia

Coventry PEACE kicked off its 2024 PEACE Pops series on Friday, Jan. 26, with its annual Art of Community event. The event drew well over 400 attendees who were able to view the Art of Community exhibit, participate in hands-on art making, enjoy the sounds of live music, dance with a giant puppet, and visit working artists in their studios.

A quarterly experience of art and community, PEACE Pops is a

free, family-friendly event held on the last Friday of January, April, July and October. The 2024 PEACE Pops series will continue on April 26, July 26, and Oct. 25.

Coventry PEACE hosts the quarterly event in collaboration with several of the other nonprofit organizations located in the Coventry PEACE building. Each event features an art exhibit, a workshop, music, giant puppets, food, vendors and open studios. Run entirely by volunteers and supported solely through donations

and a grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, the event series demonstrates the commitment these organizations have to the Heights community.

January's Art of Community exhibit was curated by ARTFUL artist Jacqui Brown, who worked with more than 70 local artists, several of whom were showing their work publicly for the first time. The exhibit prides itself on being open to anyone in the Greater Cleveland community, and aims to provide a safe, welcoming atmosphere to those who are new to sharing their work.

Also at the January event, ARTFUL artist Amy Neuman led a hands-on painting workshop in which adults and children alike worked on canvases that Neuman had pre-printed with outlined imagery, similar to a page from a coloring book, that novice painters could easily complete. Lake Erie Ink (LEI) hosted a hands-on writing workshop, "It Starts with Me," that asked the question, What do we do to beautify and strengthen the world and our community? Raja Belle Freeman, a teaching artist at LEI, encouraged participants to respond through poems and other creative outlets.

Throughout the evening, attendees were entertained by the sounds of Etiquette Band. Lead singer, Tamar Gray—pastor of Grace Communion Cleveland, located in the Coventry PEACE Building—led the crowd in dance moves while churning out the sounds of Tina Turner. Costumed dancers and one of Robin VanLear's giant puppets joined in the dancing, creating a fun, colorful scene.

Upstairs, many ARTFUL artists welcomed visitors into their studios. NJM Ceramics studio was humming with activity, including live demonstrations by ARTFUL artist Andy Denney.

A native of Shaker Heights, Brady Dindia now lives and works in University Heights. Dindia serves on the boards of ARTFUL and Coventry PEACE.

Orchestra covers French favorites



Matthew Salvaggio

The Cleveland Repertory Orchestra will present a concert featuring music by favorite French composers. The performance will be held on Saturday, March 9, 7 p.m., at Disciples Christian Church in Cleveland Heights.

The concert will feature pianist Corey Knick, performing Francis Poulenc's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, Maurice Ravel's *Pavane for a Dead Princess*, and Camille Saint-Saëns's *First Symphony*.

Cleveland Repertory Orchestra performances are free and open to the public, but tickets should be requested online, in advance. To reserve tickets, and for more information about the music featured in this performance, visit www.clevelandrepertoryorchestra.org.

Matthew Salvaggio is music director of the Cleveland Repertory Orchestra and the Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestra in Seattle.

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DOBAMA continued from page 19

connects audiences with organizations relevant to each production. Because "Something Clean" deals with themes of sexual assault, Dobama is partnering with the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center (CRCC). A representative from that organization will participate in the rehearsal process, literature will be available at every show, and panel discussions are being planned to follow select Saturday night performances. Donations to CRCC will be collected throughout the play's run.

Fillinger is an award-winning, internationally produced writer and performer. At 28, she became one of the youngest female playwrights to be produced on Broadway, and at 29 she was named to the *Forbes* 30-Under-30 list for Hollywood/Entertainment. "Something Clean" was commissioned by Chicago's Sideshow Theatre Company and made its New York premiere at Roundabout Theatre Company in 2019.

Dobama's production will feature Derdriu Ring*, Robert Ellis*,

Isaiah Betts, and Doug Sutherland, with scenic design by Naoko Skala, lighting design and technical direction by Jeremy Paul, sound design by Angie Hayes, costume design by Lainey Bodenburg, props design by Andy Zicari, intimacy direction by Casey Venema, and stage management by Katherine Swartzbeck*. (*Denotes Actors' Equity Association members.)

Dobama is a union, professional theatre dedicated to producing important new plays that have yet to premiere in the region. The theatre offers a need-based Pay What You Can program for all performances—simply show up to the box office one hour prior to curtain, and any available seat may be purchased for \$1 or more.

For a complete performance schedule, ticket prices, and reservations, call the Dobama Theatre Box Office at 216-932-3396, or visit www.dobama.org/something-clean.

Emily Polcyn is a resident associate director in arts administration at Dobama Theatre.

WRC continued from page 19

or backgrounds.

Musically, the requiem was a major milestone in Brahms's career. Indeed, it would be the longest and most grandly scored piece he would ever write. More notable than its dimensions, however, is the way it engages with musical tradition. One perceptive contemporary noted that, "The music of the future, for others a vogue, is for Brahms already a music of the past." Few of Brahms's works display their influences as openly as

the *German Requiem* does. Numerous passages clearly evoke the music of Schumann, Beethoven and Bach. At the same time, every measure is unmistakably Brahms. With this *Requiem*, Brahms created an innovative work that emanated the grandeur, authority and solemnity of music that had withstood the test of time—even though it was completely new.

David Gilson is the artistic director of the Western Reserve Chorale and director of the Church of the Saviour Chancel Choir.

FREE ART CLASSES continued from page 20

Arts Center. The Center hosts art education programs and performances throughout the year, including classical music and musical instruction, community theater, circus skills, and dance and drumming.

The spring-break classes are

free, but space is limited. Register using the QR code on page 20. For additional information, call DCC at 216-382-5344.

Ronald Werman is an elder and communications chairperson of Disciples Christian Church.

SONGS & STORIES continued from page 21

had also attended many La Cave shows (though maybe a bit underage for some of that time) and has hosted the local radio show *Steve's Folk*, currently on WRUW-FM 91.1, for many years. Traina put together a La Cave Reunion in 2010. The three-night event, at a downtown club, featured national and local artists who had performed at La Cave. Subsequently, Kain gave Traina all of La Cave's files (including contracts, ads, articles, receipts, etc.). Later, La Cave's second manager, Larry Bruner, also handed over his La Cave archives to Traina, who then started this book, which took years of sorting through all of the papers and conducting interviews.

The book tells not only the color-

ful story of La Cave and its performers, but also the history and culture of the wild era in which the story is set. Mac's Backs, one of the longest-operating businesses on Coventry Road, often holds its book signings up the street at the B-Side, which is below the Grog Shop, at 2785 Euclid Heights Blvd. This one, which will include light appetizers, will take place 5-7 p.m. on Saturday, March 16. For tickets, go to macsbacks.com/event/la-cave-steve-traina.

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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