Annual tour displays heritage and beauty of Cleveland Heights homes

Sue Pardee

The University Heights city council meeting on Sept. 15 will determine whether the city proceeds with a charter review that could eventually lead to a city manager form of government.

At issue is an ordinance establishing a commission to look into updating the city’s charter. Council members voted 7-2 in favor of the ordinance at the council meeting on Sept. 2. Mayor Beryl Roth-schild vetoed it the next day. It was, she said, only the second time she’d taken that action in her three decades as mayor.

Council members will decide whether to override or sustain that veto when they meet Sept. 15. If the ordinance continues on page 2

A MEMBER OF THE OBSERVER MEDIA GROUP AND AN OFFICIAL GOOGLE NEWS SOURCE A PROJECT OF

Future Heights

IN THIS ISSUE

Opinion                          2-3
City News                       4
Heights Library                 5
Heights Schools                 6-7
Heights Shops                   9-10
Community News                  11-12
Heights Neighborhoods          13
Heights Arts/Kids               14-15

Economic downturn?
Try economic opportunity in the Heights

Tobias Ritter

In the 1980s, homeowners saw real estate as a precious commodity. Double-digit interest rates were the norm and the prospect of getting into a home was a lifelong proposition. Achieving the American dream was not easy.

Something changed in the mid-1990s: incomes spiked, interest rates were the norm and the real estate changed. By the early 2000s we were headed for an inevitable increase regardless of current economic factors. And, despite those negative pressures, the economy still retains a sense of mystery. These are the places that we’ve always wondered about, be they a building, a home, a forest, or a field.

The 32nd annual Heights Heritage Home and Garden Tour will reveal the stories behind some of the city’s most interesting residences. The self-guided tour will be held on Sept. 21, from noon until 6 p.m. It is sponsored by the Heights Community Congress, a non-profit organization dedicated to social justice, fair housing and building community.

This year’s theme is “Back to the Future.” Six homes and three gardens are featured, along with the newly renovated Church of the Saviour at 2357 Lee Road. Each stop is an example of the rich architectural diversity found in Cleveland Heights.

Participants must purchase a ticket to tour the landmark homes. Each participant gets a souvenir book that includes a map, a description of each site, as well as information on its history. Souvenir books are also available at every stop.

Refreshments will be served at the Church of the Savior throughout the afternoon.

The weekend kicks off on Saturday, Sept. 20, with a preview party at the Oakwood Country Club, 1516 Warrensville Center Road. The evening’s activities include a sneak peak of selected homes during the Candlelight Preview Tour, dining, dancing, and a silent auction. Music will be provided by Cleveland Heights’ own High Society, Breandan Ring, the owner of Nighttown and honorary chair of the tour, will serve as host. The festivities start at 6 p.m. Dressy attire is required.

Tickets for the tour are $20 each, and can be bought at various locations in the Heights. Tickets for the preview party start at $5. Tickets for the tour and the preview party can also be purchased online at www.heightscongress.org. For group rates, call the Heights Community Congress office at 216-921-6775.

For more information on the Heights Heritage Home and Garden Tour and Preview Party, please call Heights Community Congress or visit the organization’s website.

John Satola is president of the board of trustees of the Heights Community Congress.
OPINION

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS Observer continued from page 1

it’s time we slow down.

UH charter review commission – why now?

Win Weizner

I got concerned when I first heard about the charter review commission for University Heights. I wanted to know where the idea came from. And more importantly, I wondered why now?

A partial answer comes from council members Steven Bullock, Frank Con- solo and Kevin Murphy when they said in the Sun Press that they are interested in a city manager form of government. This would require changing the charter. The review commission is the first step.

But their answer does not address a central question: why change the form of government? And their answer doesn’t give the public full disclosure.

The council has been discussing this topic since the beginning of the year, when it met for a retreat. But that fact has been lost out of releases about the need for a charter review commission. It is more than disingenuous just to present the commission as something that is necessary for the good of the city. It is an insult to the intelligence and the thoughtfulness of the residents of University Heights.

During the retreat, the council heard a presentation from Sy Murray of the Levin College at Cleveland State University. He is a nationally respected expert on governmental structure, and had been a city manager for many years.

But he did not recommend that form of government for University Heights. He rather suggested that the council instead have a city administrator, who would be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council.

After the retreat the council had a number of “council of the whole” com- mittee meetings to discuss these op- tions. These meeting apparently failed to achieve consensus among the council members. Now suddenly we find that it has become imperative to form a charter review commission.

If our council was not engaged in political maneuvering, it should have been willing to make its debate about this issue a lot more public. Having public hearings would be an appropri- ate way to determine whether the city’s residents want to hire a city manager, a city administrator, or leave the system as it is.

But council members seem to have chosen not to allow public discussion over the past seven months. While they have met the bare letter of the open meetings law, they have violated the spirit of that law, which lets citizens know what their government is doing.

For example, the Aug. 11 agenda of the council’s civic information commit- tee included the creation of the charter review commission with “change in form of government issues.” The announce- ment of this meeting was sent to the clerk of council on Wednesday, Aug. 6, too late for newspaper publication that could have informed the community about the meeting.

Even though council committee meetings traditionally do not have a mechanism for public comment, inter- ested parties could have become aware of what was happening. The tight lead time certainly prevented the full dis- semination of the committee agenda among the community.

Council persons present on Aug. 11 voted to prepare an ordinance to cre- ate the commission. They also debated how the commission would be formed.

On Aug. 13 (again a Wednesday preventing press notification to the community), Councilman Consolo requested a special council meeting be held on Aug. 19 to vote on this or- dinance. Apparently, the vice mayor’s insistence that changes be considered to the prepared ordinance led to a sud- den cancellation of that meeting and a transfer of the ordinance to the Sept. 2 meeting. On Sept. 2 council members voted in favor of an ordinance to create a review commission; and, the next day, the mayor vetoed it. What will happen next is unknown, but certainly the residents of University Heights deserve better of our representatives.

When we elect someone to “repre- sent” us, it implies that they are willing to listen to what we (those that they represent) have to say. Unfortunately, in this case few if any have been aware of the discussions to be able to give their input.

Win Weizner is a 27-year resident of Uni- versity Heights and a former member of University Heights city council.
School reform is alive and well

Suzy Kaeae

School reform isn’t new to the Cleveland Heights University Heights City School District. Over the last six years, district educators have been engaged in intensive reflection, research, planning and action guided by more than a dozen educational experts. The process has led to a powerful transformation in expectations and practices, right under our noses! As a result, the schools are on a course that is forward thinking, great for kids and empowering to educators.

Last spring, as part of its collaboration with the Wallace Foundation and Harvard University, district leaders put that course on paper for public awareness and reaction. Their document reveals high and hopeful expectations for public education, children and educators. They reclaim public education as a positive force in the lives of children. Their vision rejects the popular public underachievement. They are determined to interrupt patterns of underachievement.

That statement is elaborated by 11 bullets, including one that states: “Improved academic achievement is the result of the professional practices of our teachers and leaders, not the economic, ethnic or linguistic characteristics of students.”

This simple statement affirms the capacity of all children to learn and the power and responsibility of educators to make a difference. It rejects the deep-seated attitude that has permeated popular thinking that certain children just can’t achieve because of their background. This is critical in a school district where more than 55% of the student body is below the poverty line and 80% of students are African-American. Our teachers have taken ownership for the success of the students who we have entrusted them to educate. They are determined to interrupt patterns of underachievement.

ECONOMIC DOWNTURN continued from page 1

Economic downturn. Recall that course on paper for public awareness and reaction. Their document reveals high and hopeful expectations for public education, children and educators. They reclaim public education as a positive force in the lives of children. Their vision rejects the popular public underachievement. They are determined to interrupt patterns of underachievement. Their professional Learning Communities (PLC) innovation has taken hold over this five year transformation process. A recent conversation with the fifth grade team at my neighborhood elementary school about their PLC affirmed that their collaboration has helped their students meet the high expectations that have been set for them. They like their jobs and love their students. Collaboration has been the key to keeping stress at bay and focusing on serving their students.

And, unexpectedly, the real power of this strategy may be its effect on students. One teacher explained that her students have adopted her increased confidence in them. They no longer doubt the possibility of their own success. Success has become a new self-fulfilling prophecy. By writing down their vision, beliefs and strategies for all to see, district leaders have opened the door to public scrutiny and support. Take notice, learn more and get behind it. When the community joins forces with its educators, all kinds of dreams can become reality.

Suzy Kaeae is an advocate for public education. She founded Reaching Heights, a citizen advocacy organization for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools, in 1989 and retired as executive director last December. She is a resident of Cleveland Heights and her two adult children are graduates of the Heights schools.

Looking for a church home?
Wondering what goes on inside of that brick church on the corner of Monticello & Lee?
COME AND SEE!
All are invited to Worship at 11:00 am with us.
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216-321-2660 www.fhcpress.org

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Cleveland Heights City Council
Highlights of July 2008 meetings

Monday, July 7, 2008
(All Council Members present)

Special Improvement Districts
Council passed public services plans for the Cedar-Lee, Center-Lee, and Heights Special Improvement Districts. For 2009-10 the Cedar-Fairmount budget will be $51,000, and the Cedar-Lee budget, $25,000, both with a 4% annual increase through 2013.

Replacement of garbage trucks
Council authorized the purchase of two refuse collection trucks from Bell Equipment at a cost not to exceed $44,000. Councilmember Bonnie Caplan explained that, because two trucks were destroyed in a fire on June 9, this was an emergency situation and did not allow time for a lengthy bidding process. Mayor Kelley thanked the city of Lyndhurst for helping Cleveland Heights maintain its garbage collection schedules during the emergency.

Tax abatement
Council voted for two resolutions asking for increased tax abatements in residential construction projects. The first, which revised the terms of tax exemptions granted in 2003 and 2005, called for a seven-year, 100% abatement of assessed property taxes for Bluestone Development, the Courtyards of Severance, and 500 Severance Place. The second resolution expanded the Community Reinvestment Area, established by resolution in 2003 and known as Boulevard Townhomes (at Euclid Heights Boulevard), and called for 100% abatement of assessed property taxes for seven years. Councilmember Tumeo commented that these measures abate only the increased value of improved property. The owners still pay taxes on the land and the schools don’t lose money. Councilmembers also pointed out that although the city has a substantial supply of housing, as evidenced by the number of foreclosed homes, new condos are far more likely to attract buyers. Councilmembers also pointed out that Cleveland Heights development must compete with new housing developments in Cleveland and University Circle, which are offering generous tax abatements.

LWV observers:
Kaye Heyman and Kaitnora Solder
July 21, 2008
(Bonnie Caplan excused)

2009 tax budget
In a hearing held prior to the regular meeting, council reviewed the 2009 tax budget. Revenue was estimated at $42,983,219 and expenditures at $42,974,988. Council will revisit the budget in the fall and make any necessary adjustments for next year. Moody’s has issued a Standard & Poor’s have confirmed the city’s AA rating. There were no comments from council or the public during the hearing.

Council passed the budget during the regular meeting. Councilmember Ken Montlack noted that city hall staff will receive no salary increases and that two major bond issues were going on the market on July 22.

Vice City Manager Ruane retiring
Vice City Manager Kenneth Ruane will retire at the end of July after more than 20 years with the city. [League reporters learned after the meeting that Susanna Niemann O’Neil, director of community services, would absorb Ms. Ruane’s duties.]

Community Center and park
Council amended the use regulations and rates for administration of park service for the Community Center and park for fall and winter 2008-2009. Some of these were read into the record at the July 7 meeting and can be read online in the minutes of that meeting at www.clevelandheights.com.

Business loan
Under the Revolving Loan Fund Program, council authorized a loan to Auburn Partners, Ltd. for the purchase of inventory to open an Elfin Furniture store at 2040 Lee Road. The ten-year loan is for $250,000 at 3.5% interest. Opening is planned for October or November.

HUD One-Dollar-Home Program
Council approved the sale of owned property at 3119 Edison Road, 1175 Quilliams Road, and 1429 Westover Road to the Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) for rehabilitation and resale to an owner occupant as part of the HUD One-Dollar-Home Program. HRRC will pay all closing costs. The city owns 15 such homes, which will eventually be sold for renovation.

Earlier in the meeting council authorized the city manager to advertise for bids for the demolition of some city-owned HUD properties. Council member Mark Tumeo commented that house demolition bids should include recycling of house parts salvaged from the teardowns.

The HUD One-Dollar-Home Program allows local governments to purchase for one dollar homes owned by the Federal Housing Administration due to foreclosure and not resold within six months of foreclosure. Local communities can then fix up and resell the properties in an effort to revitalize neighborhoods.

Traffic light removal on E. Lookout
Council authorized an agreement with CIT Consultants (engineering services to conduct a signal removal analysis for the East Overlook/Coventry intersection.

LWV Observers:
Blanche Valancy and Carol Gibson
This summary of the League of Women Voters Cuyahoga Area Heights Chapter reports of Cleveland Heights City Council meetings contains member observations and selected highlights and is not an official statement by the League of Women Voters. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of this report.

The tragedy reverberated through the community and was widely covered in the print and broadcast media. People stood in line for hours at the wake, and the following Saturday morning brought a steady procession of bicyclists on Music Street, clearly paying homage.

The extent and depth of feeling were a direct result of the way Miles Coburn lived his life, with a rich variety of involvements that exemplify what living in the Heights can be. The many hundreds of people who attended the wake at John Carroll University on the Wednesday evening after the accident represented a striking range of connections.

There were the colleagues from John Carroll, where he had been a professor of biology since the early 1980s. There were current and former students. Fellow environmentalists. Family members. People from the arts community, who knew Miles as the quiet, friendly husband of Heights Arts director Peggy Spachet — a guy who would gladly had chairs around for a cookie or two. Bicycling companions. Neighbors from Kensington or Owlington or Princeton road. Other families whose kids attended Canterbury Elementary, Wiley Middle, or Heights High schools. Scouts and leaders from Boy Scout Troop 34, where his son Kevin had become an Eagle Scout. The jazz band director from Heights High, where Kevin played, and his daughter Rosey still does. Kids from Project Qual, a program
Libraries who enjoy writing and photography in their free time.

**New Macs for Lee Road Library**

The board considered a request to purchase $8,000 worth of hardware and software, including a number of Macintosh computers. Director Wood made several points justifying the purchase of new Macs: 55 library computers are six years old, the Mac graphic capabilities are attractive, and the schools are using Mac laptops in the “1 to 1 program” a learning program offered by Apple, Inc. Because it is easier to network and update like computers the new Macs would all be placed in the main library on Lee Road. None would be in the branch libraries.

Several board members engaged in a discussion about the merits of the proposed computer purchase. Board member Eric Silverman questioned the library enabling video game playing on high-graphic computers. Director Wood countered that gaming can be a draw to involve teens in the library, but both Silverman and board member Glenn Billington asked if there was evidence for that premise. Director Wood further noted both educational (gaming enhances development of cognitive skills) and PR advantages (teens are future voters who will decide whether to support libraries) advantages. Board member Jim Posch agreed with the director that allowing and providing gaming was good customer service. Director Wood agreed to have the staff further evaluate the issue.

**New director search**

Board President Gerald Blake reported that interviews of final candidates for Director Wood’s replacement would take place in early August. The board expects to announce the new director at the August board meeting.

**Librarian contributes to publication**

The Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing will include a chapter on American police procedures created by Noble Branch Librarian Joanne Vicarel.

**Program on Middle East conflict**

Director Wood announced that programming continues for a program about the Middle East conflict with the Anti-Defamation League called “The Middle East Conflict: an Historical Perspective.”

Join us for our first Tech Expo on Saturday, November 1, 12 p.m. - 4 p.m. at the Lee Road Library. You will get the opportunity to interact with some of the most innovative technologies from organizations all over Northeast Ohio including demonstrations from the Bio-robotics Lab at Case Western Reserve, super cars by R/T Auto Evolutions and the latest gear from stores like H.H. Greg, Best Buy and lots more.

**Heights libraries digital photography contest**

As a lead into Tech Festival, the Heights libraries have partnered with the Cedar Center MotoPhoto to help organize the first annual Heights Libraries Digital Photography Contest. Shoot your way into digital stardom by sending us an entry! Submissions will be accepted at the Lee Road Library and learn how to view and save your photographs and delete the shots that are not so good. This will be held this month, on Saturday, Sept. 13 at 1 p.m.; and on Saturday, Sept. 27 at 6 p.m. Registration is required. Call 216.932.3600.

Whether you participate in one or all of the contests, you’re sure to have fun and learn something new! Three classes will be held this month, on Saturday, Sept. 13 at 1 p.m.; on Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 6 p.m.; and on Saturday, Sept. 27 at 10 a.m. Registration is required. Learn about memory cards, proper shooting skills, flash settings, battery consumptions, and resolution. Also learn how to view and save your photographs and delete the shots that are not so favorable. We will briefly cover the many ways of transferring your images to your computer and teach proper archiving so they can be cherished for future generations. The last part of the course talks about the creative side of digital photography. We will introduce the many ways to manipulate photographs into the masterful works of art that you will want to hang on the wall.

Tonya Gibson is an employee of the Heights Libraries who enjoys writing and photography in her free time.
CH-UH Board of Education
Highlights of July 15, 2008 meeting

(All Board members present)

Laptop computer grants
The board approved the grants of laptop computers to teachers and middle school students. A policy for acceptable use of the laptops was given first reading.

Lunch fees increased
Type A lunches will increase by twenty-five cents next year to cover costs.

Coventry School
The board heard a presentation for proposed use of the former Coventry School. The board would like to rent out the building on a long-term, perhaps five-year, lease. According to the proposal the lease would be required to bring the building to good condition, including putting on a new roof. Further proposed conditions of the lease would include having at least $1,000,000 available to cover costs of renovation and upkeep. The board engaged in considerable discussion about whether this too large a sum and would frighten away potential lessees. Annual rent was not specified, but the board considered whether this should be highly negotiable since the lessee would maintain the building. Mr. Shergalis, director of business services, urged general agreement so he could advertise the building’s availability for the fall. When the building is rented, the board will no longer have the expense of heating and maintaining it for the period of the lease.

LWV observer: Anne Cook
See disclaimer on page 4.

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“All About Heights High”
A welcome for new parents

Joy Henderson
A newly organized parent group at Heights High wants to make incoming parents feel welcome and informed about opportunities and options for their students. The Parent Connection Council (PCC) is a new version of the PTA and will host a New Parent Welcome on September 16, 7:30 p.m., at Heights High. The group began meeting last spring and heard a common concern from parents—they felt disconnected from the school. “From those initial conversations, we decided that one of our first priorities should be to welcome and orient parents who are new to the school,” Andrea Freeman, co-President of the Parent Connection Council, said. The event will include information about extracurricular activities, college readiness, and community resources for teens. Current Heights High parents will share their experiences and offer suggestions for the incoming new parents.

Principal Marc Engoglia (Legacy School) said that student achievement improves when parents know more about their student’s school and connect with teachers and other parents. “We’re so happy to partner with the PCC on this event,” he said. “Current parents of upperclassmen have experiences that will be helpful to new parents.”

The event is for parents of freshmen students and parents of incoming older students.

For more information, contact one of the PCC Co-Presidents Andrea Freeman at 312-8840 or freedennel@aol.com or Sheronda Hunter at 311-9767 or ssi-hunt@sbglobal.net.

Joy Henderson is the Parent/Community Liaison for Heights High.

BEST OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS AWARDS - Celebrate the Best in Local Business
Sunday, September 28, 3 p.m.
Nighttown, 12383 Cedar Road
Free and open to the public

Heights Observer: Anne Cook

Lita Gonzalez

Keep that information about our Heights graduates coming! I would love to hear from more Cleveland Heights and University Heights families about what their graduates are doing now. Email me at lita@valancy.com. Here’s just a sampling of what some of our graduates have been up to.

Class of 1976
Clifford A. Zucker earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in accounting and finance, magna cum laude, from Boston University’s School of Business, 1976. In 2002 he became a partner with J.H. Cohn’s Business Investigation Services Group in New Jersey, and represents financially troubled companies, unsecured or secured creditors during workout, turnaround and bankruptcy situations. He specializes in working with companies in the retail, transportation, warehousing, distribution and healthcare industries. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants, as well as the Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Advisors, American Bankruptcy Institute, and the Turnaround Management Association. Cliff and his wife, Lori, live in Westfield, NJ.

Class of 1999
Shannon Borden owns and operates a tree service business in the Heights called Nature’s Beauty Tree Service.

Class of 2001
Brendan Knoblauch completed five years in the Marine Corps as an electronics technician with service in Okinawa, Japan; California; North Carolina and Iraq. Brendan is a dean’s list double major in economics and philosophy, and is in his senior year at John Carroll University.

Abi Bardon is in her second year as a school psychologist at Maple Heights High School.

Class of 2003
Prince Williams is the new Ohio State University representative working with counselors, students and parents in the Cleveland area. While at Heights High School, he was a member of the National Honor Society and participated in the track, cross country, wrestling, and football teams. Prince is an alumnus of the Fisher College of Business, and was president of his fraternity and a varsity athlete at The Ohio State University.

Leah DeGolia received her teaching certificate for elementary education from DePaul University in Chicago last year. This summer she served as associate project director for the Amigos de las Americas Program in Nicaragua, helping to supervise 75 volunteers living with families and engaging in community projects. Leah was first recruited to volunteer with Amigos when she was 16 after hearing a presentation at Heights High from students who had previously participated. She was a supervisor for Amigos in Honduras in the summer of 2005 and has been gratified to learn that former Heights High students she helped recruit are also continuing to participate in Amigos.

Class of 2005
Elliot Barden is a senior at Miami University in Oxford, OH majoring in sports studies with a minor in business.

Lita Gonzalez, a long time community volunteer, lives in Cleveland Heights with her husband Mark. Both her daughters are Heights High graduates.
New Saint Ann principal means business for education

Stephanie Applegate

According to American author and philosopher Richard Bach, we are all learners, doers and teachers. “Meg Cosgriff, the new principal at Saint Ann School, certainly epitomizes this notion in that she has been all three at one point in her professional life: novice, practitioner and educator.

Cosgriff officially joined the Saint Ann community on July 1, but the buzz surrounding her new position commenced well before she moved into her office. In April, after extensive consultation, the principal search committee made its recommendation to Father Jim Singletary, pastor of Saint Ann Parish. “Ms. Cosgriff brings to us all the academic and professional requirements we desired in a candidate. These include a master’s degree in educational administration from Ursuline College, elementary principal license, ten years elementary teaching experience, catechetical leader certificate, an understanding of the philosophy of Catholic education, evidence of continuing education, five years experience as a principal and two and a half years as an educational consultant. As a practicing Catholic who is a collaborator, she personifies all of the qualities desired from the surveys of students, faculty, parents, parish council and finance council, including an excellent and approachable communicator, knowledgeable in technology and experienced in marketing and development practices. That’s why we hired her.”

Cosgriff grew up in Euclid and attended St. William School and Regina High School before attending Ursuline College. She has been a teacher at Saint Christine in Euclid, St. Clare in Lyndhurst, and St. Mary Magdalene in Willoughby. She taught third grade and junior high math and religion. However, sensing that she could better affect the lives of more children, Cosgriff sought her master’s degree in educational administration. In 2000, she became the principal of St. Jerome School in Cleveland. When asked about her most valuable contribution to St. Jerome School, Cosgriff cited both the increase in test scores and the raised academic standards of the school.

So why leave? It would seem that the personal philosophy of affecting the lives of more students drove her to seek out an even larger audience. Working as both principal and a chairperson for the Ohio Catholic Schools Accrediting Association in 2005, Ms. Cosgriff realized that she could further expand her personal philosophy. So in that same year, she launched her own business, Principal Support Services, which eventually led to a consulting position with the nonprofit Spirit Services, Inc. An organization that serves and supports Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Cleveland, Spirit Services, Inc. provides educational and technological assistance to improve learning and enrollment in Catholic schools. It was while she was with Spirit Services that Cosgriff acquired the skills that further advanced her talent in leadership, multitasking, marketing and grant writing. Consultant for fourteen schools in the diocese, Cosgriff enjoyed her work and the visible improvements she accomplished, but consulting allowed for only limited contact with students; Cosgriff wanted to be back where her heart was. And so when the position opened up at Saint Ann, she leaped at the chance.

Upon arriving at Saint Ann, Cosgriff called a faculty meeting to determine a framework for the upcoming school year. And, since the Saint Ann curriculum includes a legacy of faith development and service to others, both Cosgriff and the faculty decided upon the theme, “Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.” This philosophy echoes that of children’s rights activist and author, Wright Edelman, who affirms that Christianity requires service to others and that the purpose of education is to leave “your community and world better than you found it.”

With a resolute goal in mind, Cosgriff’s next task is two-fold: marketing and academics. “I’d like to get the word out about Saint Ann School,” Cosgriff maintains. “It’s a hidden gem, the best-kept secret in the Heights.” Touting high test scores and graduates who get into the top high schools in the Cleveland area, Cosgriff hopes to further cement Saint Ann School as one of the best in the diocese by establishing both a Junior National Honor Society and a National Elementary Honor Society in the near future.

These challenges pale in comparison, Cosgriff jokes, with her first challenge upon becoming principal at St. Jerome. There was a fire in the gym/cafeteria. The lesson learned? “I’m glad I’m not in the construction business,” she laughs. The parents and students of Saint Ann School are, too. We’d rather she stay in the education business.

Stephanie Applegate is a life long resident of Cleveland Heights and the mother of two boys. She also currently serves on the board of Heights Community Congress.

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Ruffing Montessori Intergenerational Project becomes a national model for volunteerism

Carol Provan

As part of a national effort to encourage youth philanthropy, Ruffing Middle School teacher and Cleveland Heights resident Cary Seidman was invited by the Independent Schools Network and its partner, Learning to Give, to submit a description of the Intergenerational Project conducted with the support of Judson Retirement Community. Learning to Give has a website to encourage youth philanthropy and offers specific lesson plans to independent schools and youth groups, as well as parents, to promote service learning and volunteerism

Cary’s detailed explanation of the annual project’s philosophy, methodology and learning objectives will enable other schools and groups to follow the Ruffing model, now honed by years of practice into a successful and meaningful experience for both students and older participants. To see the Middle School’s step-by-step lesson plan, go to: www.learningtogive.org/independent_schools/resource22.html

Ruffing views service learning and community service as critical parts of the school curriculum. Such activities educate students about philanthropy, develop behaviors and skills and encourage voluntary citizen action throughout life.

Carol Provan is director of development for Ruffing Montessori.

Citizen journalism is spelled Y-O-U.

Every article you read in the Heights Observer is written by a volunteer. Join local grassroots support of a strong and vibrant Heights by writing your neighborhood and group’s news, issues, and events for the Heights Observer.

The Heights Observer is looking for people, ages 1 - 100, to get involved.

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### Shops in the Heights

**i Buy NEO presents: Shop Local Share Local**

Attract new customers. Be included in our online directory. Increase your sales frequency and average transaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shop Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Makes Vacuum</td>
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<td>Atma Center</td>
<td>2319 Lee Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Busseys Upholstery</td>
<td>2311 Lee Road</td>
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<td>Central Health</td>
<td>2199 Lee Rd</td>
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<td>CUT Hair Studio</td>
<td>2254 Lee Rd</td>
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<td>Big Fun</td>
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<td>Fast Eddy's Chop Shop</td>
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<td>Fowler Fashions</td>
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<td>Catch-a-Critter</td>
<td>3131 Whitehorn</td>
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<td>Diamond's Men's Store</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Above Boutique</td>
<td>1783 Coventry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hang It Up!, Archival Framing</td>
<td>2450 Fairmount Blvd.</td>
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First Watch Daytime Café serves up a smile

Christina Klenotic

Until a friend invited me there for a breakfast meeting, I thought First Watch was a medical supplies store. Tucked in the back of Cedar Center near Whole Foods, First Watch is actually a café that serves up breakfast, brunch and lunch…and wonderful customer service.

The restaurant’s name is inspired by a nautical reference, referring to the first shift of the day (Ohia, now I get it.) Service was exceptional both times I visited. I actually remember my server’s warm smile as much as the tasty espresso French toast on sourdough from my first visit ($6.49 daily special).

On a Saturday morning while my husband and I waited to order for a table, we overheard a customer complimenting his server to the cashier as he paid, setting the tone for our meal. Our server greeted us with warmth and knowledge about the menu. She steered us well when we sought her suggestions. For example, the cranberry nut pancakes are available in stacks of one, two or three (love that!). When I asked how many I should order if I wanted a home fries too, she was right on the money with a recommendation of one ($2.79), which was the size of a 10-inch dinner plate. The home fries were seasoned, not too salty, and grease-free.

First Watch offers guests’ other hospitable touches like free coffee, newspapers and Wi-Fi. There’s a nice amount of space between tables to permit private conversations, and booths are roomy. The décor is as friendly as the staff with warm colors and cheery breakfast artwork.

I’m the kind of girl who can eat pancakes all day, so I was pleased there wasn’t a breakfast cut-off. Other breakfast items include omelets and “crepeggs” (crepes combined with whipped egg).

Lunch options include salads, wraps and specialty sandwiches like the BLT, a BLT plus fried egg, cheese and mayo ($6.59).

“The Healthier Side” of the menu features dishes that are lower in fat like fresh fruit crepes ($6.59) and a turkey and egg- white power wrap ($6.99). No trans-fats are used in any menu item, and low-carb and gluten-free options are available too. Nutritional information for every dish is available online, although I was shocked when I read that my one cranberry nut pancake contained 31 grams of fat!

In addition to the two-year-old University Heights café, First Watch has Rocky River and Westlake locations.

Per her grandmother, Christina Klenotic is a “good eater” who never met a carb she didn’t like. She enjoys sampling our area’s eclectic restaurants, galleries and neighborhoods.

My heart goes BOOM!

Pam Neides

I spend a lot of time thinking about my house (call it a mild obsession). I try to concentrate on the space at large; the rooms, the flow, etc. but often find my attention alighting upon my things, my quirky chairs and odd sculptural objects or upon the vacancies where I want to put new things.

The most recent object of my desire is a Danish rosewood credenza, circa 1966, from BOOM Modern on Lee Boulevard. One of the reasons I love this piece is that, like so many of the good pieces at BOOM, it blends easily with what I have from other eras and of other styles be they traditional - a round foyer table, or more modern - an oddball, Jetson era plaid chair - think George Jetson’s version of the La-Z-Boy, also from BOOM.

I have been living with the credenza in my head for several weeks now, envisioning it with the proper lighting, surrounded by art, work, for use as a bar or server, or with a flat-screen television atop its lustrous surface. If I squint really hard, I can even call it a sculptural object. Because the credenza has already passed the “It’s gorgeous, but do I need it?” test, I go to BOOM to visit it.

First, as always, I do a tour of the store’s exterior windows because at these large 3D compositions b) they have really cool stuff in them, and c) they are so inspiring! I walk through the door and before I am greeted by Deborah Edwards, owner and operator, I have a yank because hanging vertically just behind it is a fabulous George Nelson desk/table (with a totally cool leather covered insert which, when opened, reveals hidden storage for files, etc.) are a series of miniature animal heads that look as if they’d been taken from the hunting lodges of hobbits. It is such a funny juxtaposition and charming contrast to the style of the Nelson desk so sleek and cool. And it is so BOOM to mix the styles like that.

Before I can work my way over to Deborah, I dart around like a fish in search of food so that I can be sure to take in everything new in the store since my last visit (former obsession. Nelson desk). Hat blocks, an elegantly low and long coffee table, a Miriam Peck painting draw me hither and thither and at last I am standing in front of the credenza.

Deborah and I begin processing the ‘wheres’ and ‘hows’ and uses for the piece and inevitably, like in any good therapy (retail and otherwise), I am led to a life-changing conclusion: the piece is really too large scale for my home.

I am crestfallen. Oh, the loss! After living with this piece in my head for weeks, my household spaces revert to vacancies. “But I thought… Perhaps it could… Maybe…” I whimper grasping for possibilities.

And at that moment of despair, in reaction to a glint of sun that catches hold of the tear of disappointment in my eye, my face turns toward the light. Behold, it is in fact a glint of light from above, but itbeckons from a smaller, more whimsical source than the sun (yet no less essential, mind you). Heavenly.

A rush goes through me as the image of the most charming, looped, lacy 1960’s Lightolier chandelier comes into focus. Balls of light burn atop sticks perched upright on a pinwheel of brass and painted metal.

I blink flirtatiously. “Have we met?”

The dialogue begins again.

First Watch Modern: 2499 Lee Boulevard, University Heights, OH 44118
www.firstwatch.com
Open daily from 7 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Carry out available

First Watch features breakfast and lunch daily.

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CIM welcomes new president Joel Smirnoff and introduces a new series. Internationally acclaimed artists will perform in the intimate, acoustical elegance of Mixon Hall. Tickets are $40 each.

Saturday, September 28 at 4:00
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NEW SITES, NEW LEADERSHIP, AND A NEW SEASON!

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Weeks Automotive, the new face of auto repair

Neil Weeks

Weeks Automotive, a new auto repair shop, has taken the place of Quick Copy at 1503 Warrenville Center Road. Weeks Automotive repairs both foreign and domestic vehicles, offering fair, competitive prices and service that sets a new benchmark for the auto repair industry. Tim Weeks, owner and active manager, has 35 years of experience. Working at a wide range of auto repair shops, from places like Sohio and Dowd Oldsmobile to his latest residence at Alternative Solutions, Tim has gained a name for himself both in the Heights and neighboring communities. He has helped to pioneer the repair of many automotive makes and models.

Weeks Automotive is a family operated business with a focus on meeting the needs of the local community. The Weeks family decided to locate their business in the Heights because of their passion and love for the neighborhood. Both Tim and his wife Deidre grew up in the Heights, and it was only natural for them to continue in the area that means so much to them. From the arts to beautiful homes, friendly people, and a thriving local economy, Cleveland Heights is the ideal place to start a business. Tim knows this first hand, having worked in the Heights for many years, and understands the loyalty and diversity that comes through such a strong clientele base.

From one generation to another Tim is carrying out the rich history of the Weeks name and legacy. His great grandfather, Harry F. Weeks, was a principal in the famous Walker and Weeks architectural firm, which designed places like Severance Hall and Cleveland Municipal Stadium. Walker and Weeks helped to revolutionize Cleveland and its surrounding communities, both with their designs and their ideas of progress. Tim’s late father, Richard Weeks, continued the Weeks name as a mechanical engineer at National Copper, a backbone of Cleveland’s industry at the time. Tim brings both worlds together in his mechanical abilities and desire to help bring progress to Cleveland and surrounding communities. The Weeks legacy is continued in the quality of craftsmanship, service, and community. Several of the Weeks’ seven children work in the business.

With a clean and inviting shop you are guaranteed to be comfortable as you wait for your vehicle to be serviced. Weeks Automotive’s friendly service and expert knowledge, will leave you with a sense of satisfaction and a better understanding of your vehicle and the repairs that were made to it. The Weeks family look forward to welcoming you and your family on your next visit. (See ad on page 15).

Neil Weeks is Tim Weeks’ son and a student at Cleveland State University, majoring in communications and journalism and minoring in international politics. Upon completing his studies he plans to write on an international level.

Former Beaumont School leaders launch SDG Advisors

Mary Patton

Integrating business principles is essential for Catholic schools to operate successfully today. To guide schools and nonprofits with this integration process, former Beaumont School leaders Sister Ritamary Welsh, OSU and Stacey Picard have launched SDG Advisors LLC, a consulting firm that works primarily with Catholic K-12 schools, to help them strengthen their infrastructure so they can better fulfill their mission.

Based in the historic Rockefeller Building in Cleveland Heights, SDG Advisors provides professional guidance in all areas of administration, including board governance, planning, resource development, financial management and marketing.

The firm is a unique partnership of forward-thinking women with complementary strengths. Serving as co-founders and partners, Sister Ritamary and Ms. Picard have more than 50 years of combined experience in these areas.

Sister Ritamary said, “Catholic schools have long been the most effective source of quality education in our communities. Today, Catholic education is in transition. Demographics are changing, and schools are reorganizing. We are committed to creative, inspired responses to these changes so our children are best served.”

“Catholic schools that have had professional guidance have benefited greatly, but there has been an unmet demand for these services,” Ms. Picard added. With the launch of SDG Advisors, school administrators now have greater access to this kind of expertise.

Anne Unverzagt, director of The Edward and Betty Slott Foundation based in Cleveland Heights, said, “This is a phenomenal combination of experience and expertise. They have the complete picture of the educational and business aspects of running a school, plus the faith. They firmly believe in Catholic education and know it can work. They offer an outstanding range of services.”

A resident of Cleveland Heights, Stacey Picard brings more than 15 years of senior level management experience in both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. Most recently, she served as the finance director at Beaumont School in Cleveland Heights. She has served on the boards of numerous schools and other organizations throughout the Cleveland Diocese in the areas of strategic planning, fund advisory and board governance. She earned a B.A. from Notre Dame College, an M.B.A. from John Carroll University, and a C.N.M. from Case Western Reserve University.

Sister Ritamary Welsh, OSU of University Heights brings more than 40 years of experience to Catholic education. As president of Beaumont School, Sister Ritamary grew the school’s enrollment, increased annual giving, doubled the size of the endowment, and successfully completed a number of capital fundraising initiatives that resulted from her comprehensive planning with the school’s board. She has served Cleveland diocesan schools as the superintendent of the urban region and as a teacher and principal at various schools. Sister Ritamary earned a B.S.E. from St. John College of Cleveland and an M. Ed. from the University of Akron. She is a 1999 graduate of Leadership Cleveland.

Peggy Connell, principal of Beaumont School remarked, “Sr. Ritamary and Stacey view issues and problems from various perspectives. They can walk in someone else’s shoes and think from another’s perspective. They are honest, respectful and mission-driven.”

For more information, visit www.sdgadvisors.org.

Former Beaumont School leaders launch SDG Advisors

These former Beaumont School leaders have formed a Cleveland Heights-based consulting firm called SDG Advisors. Mary Patton is a public relations consultant and a longtime resident of the Heights. She currently lives in University Heights with her husband and daughter.
FutureHeights gift certifi- cates, keep wealth local

Greg Coleridge

What is money? It’s a ridiculous ques- tion. Right? It’s the bills and coins in our pocket.

Money has many functions. It’s a me- dium of exchange, dollars in the US, and euros, yen or other currencies elsewhere. Money is a means of transferring value from place to place, replacing the need to carry a bag of rice to the local hardware store to trade for a gallon of paint.

An economically healthy commu- nity is not defined simply by how much money is present within it, but how often that money circulates. The more times a unit of currency is exchanged before leaving a community, the more people are employed and the more con- fidence and faith its residents possess.

For every $100 spent at a locally owned business, $68 goes back into the com- munity, strengthening the tax base. For every $100 spent at a chain store, only $43 returns to that community. (Learn more at newrules.org)

Current economic conditions are causing great hardship to many indi- viduals, families and communities. Less money is being circulated. Much of what is spent goes to large chain stores, a portion of which ends up as profits to out-of-town, if not out-of-country, shareholders or CEOs.

If keeping wealth local is an impor- tant step to keeping local communities vibrant, then one action we can all take is to buy and use gift certificates from FutureHeights. These certificates are “money,” an accepted currency by over 100 local businesses offering a variety of goods and services.

By converting dollars to Future-Heights certificates, you’re rooting money in our community FutureHeights certificates are perfect for shopping lo- cally, which helps our economy. They are also the perfect gift for a teenager, parent, cowoker, friend, or teacher. Giving a FutureHeights gift certificate keeps money circulating at the local level twice: for the gift giver, and again as the recipient redeems the certificate.

FutureHeights certificates are avail- able in $1, $10, $25, and $50 denomina- tions. They are treated just like traveler’s checks by merchants, with change given when the purchase is less than the face amount. Certificates may be purchased at Mac’s Backs Paperbacks, Zagara’s, and FutureHeights. In 2007 sales of certificates were $10,000, all of which was spent in the Heights supporting local businesses.

During the Great Depression, Cleveland, East Cleveland, Maple Heights, Shaker Heights, University Heights and many other Ohio commu- nities issued their own currencies, or “script,” to facilitate transactions when dollars were in short supply. Many commu- nities today are once more issuing their own script.

It may be soon time again for community script in our area. In the meantime, we can do our part to help our local economy by buying and using FutureHeights certificates.

Greg Coleridge lives in Cleveland Heights and works for the Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee.

Join your Cleveland Heights neighbors in celebrating fair trade

Dorothy Nobakibi at her craft.

Manjula Boyina

It’s early fall and time for a celebration of culture and color! Ten Thousand Villages Cleveland (TTVC) is celebrat- ing its five-year anniversary by throw- ing “One Fabulous Fiesta,” a birthday party at Trinity Cathedral in downtown Cleveland from 6 to 10 p.m. on Friday September 19. TTVC is an inde- pendently operated nonprofit organization and a member of the oldest and largest fair trade organization in the world, lo- cated in the beautiful Trinity Commons.

The nonprofit store features unique handicrafts from 36 different develop- ing countries, including jewelry, home decor, stationery, musical instruments, toys, garden accessories and more. It also offers stories of the artisans’ lives and the hidden spirit with which they manifest their hardships into something that vivifies our lives.

When asked how fair trade has im- proved her life, Maya Halder, a woman who lives in Agailjhara, Bangladesh and makes palm leaf star garlands for TTVC said, “We are poor distressed women working at Keya Palm to build our lives. By working together we are able to overcome our problems. We become united in one mind. We will send our children to school with our earnings. From our profits, we grow our gardens and cultivate crops, we repair our houses and plant trees.”

Cleveland Heights resident and TTVC Director Julie Verdon, said, “Ten Thousand Villages Cleveland depends on operational support from volunteers, many of whom are Cleveland Heights residents. The volunteer board and staff care about the welfare of people and fairness in business practice.”

Peruse artisans’ spirited creations during the celebration. The event will feature Reggae music by Carlos Jones along with international music, Bhan- gra dance, and other entertainment provided by Passport project. Event proceeds and product sales help pay for food, education, healthcare, and hous- ing for artisan partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East who would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed.

Advance tickets are available for $15 at TTVC or by calling 216-577-1058. Free event parking is available in the Trinity Cathedral Lot. For more information, contact Julie Verdon, at 216-577-1058 or visit www.cleveland.tenthousandvil- lages.com.

Manjula Boyina is a Cleveland Heights resident who works as an urban planner with D.B. Hartt, Inc. and volunteers for Ten Thousand Villages Cleveland.

Coventry P.E.A.C.E Cleanup October 4

Joanne Campbell

The Coventry P.E.A.C.E Garden and Playground needs volunteers to help with the fall clean-up of the gardens and repair of the equipment on Saturday, October 4, beginning at 9 a.m.

This has been a community and Coventry PTA (in virtual existence only now) project since 1993.

Join your friends, neighbors and oth- ers in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights community who gather to work, eat and catch up on the news while pull- ing weeds or fixing equipment.

Don’t worry about not being a gardener or a hammerer. We will have leaders available to help you identify what is a flower and what needs to be pulled. There are other tasks also. Sign-in is at the top of the hill by the big slide. Coffee and munchies will be available. Every little bit of help keeps this a sparkling place to be.

Joanne Campbell has been a Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Garden and Playground partici- pant for the last 12-plus years.

Michael and Molly Radke, with their daughter Fiona, of University Heights and Patricia Preisel cheer on walkers.

Lita Gonzalez

Supporters lined Coventry Road Friday, August 22 cheering on participants in the nationally sponsored Breast Cancer 3 Day walk to benefit the Susan G. Ko- men for the Cure.

Michael and Molly Radke, their baby daughter Fiona, and their friend Patricia Preisel were there to support Patricia’s daughter Connie, a speech pathologist who had once worked at Ox- ford Elementary School and Roxboro Middle School. Connie was walking for her cousin.

Cleveland was one of 14 cities across the country hosting the three day walk this year. Participants, many of them sporting pink hats, scarves or tee shirts, started their 60-mile journey at 6 a.m. with an opening ceremony at Thistle- down Race Track in North Randall and slept in tents at the Cuyahoga County Airport that evening.

Patricia handed out candy to the smiling walkers while Michael and Molly cheered.

As the walkers waved to Fiona she raised her little arm. Tied around it was a satin pink ribbon.

To learn more about what you can do to save lives and end breast cancer forever, go to www.komen.org. Dona- tions support breast cancer research, education, and community outreach.

Lita Gonzalez is a community volunteer.
Cyclists learn to share the road

Joy Henderson

I have been riding my bike for over 30 years – commuting, touring and even a brief stint as a racer. In July, I joined six other people for an eight-hour cycling class. The class was taught by League of American Bicyclists certified instructors Ann Whalen and Mike Sherman. The course included classroom instruction, bike skills in a closed parking lot and road riding.

I was not sure if I would learn anything new; but, I did, including confirmation that Ohio law gives cyclists the right to ride on the road. The law strongly supports bicycles as vehicles on the road. For adults, riding on the road, with an established set of rules is usually the safest place to ride.

Our instructors used the phrase “driving your bike,” creating the image of bicycle as vehicle. Ohio law provides cyclists with the same rights as other vehicles on the road.

Most people who don’t ride their bike cite fear of traffic as the main reason. Taking a cycling class can give cyclists the confidence and skills needed to ride a bike more often.

Cleveland Heights resident Linda Rasmussen took the class with her new bike. “The instruction made me much more confident on my bike,” she said. “I’ve been riding more already.”

Statistics about frequency of bicycle accidents reflect a common sense fact: Educated, experienced cyclists are the safest. Children, especially those who have had no instruction, have the most accidents.

The League of American Bicyclists offers classes for adults and children. For more information about classes, sharing the road, and safe bicycling, see the League of American Bicyclists website: www.bikeleague.org/ and Ohio Bike Laws at www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Local/Projects/Bicycle/Pages/BikeLaws.aspx.

BICYCLING TIPS

For Cyclists:

• Ride with the flow of traffic.
• Ride 2-3 feet from the curb leaving room to maneuver away from hazards such as glass, potholes, gravel, and grates.
• Use secondary roads when possible.
• Park your ID card on the door. It will help if a passerby needs to contact you.
• On narrow roads or lanes, ride in the right tire track or near the center of the lane. This will prevent cars from passing too close.
• Signal when you plan to turn.

For Motorists:

• Leave at least three feet of space when passing a bicyclist.
• Reduce speed when passing.
• When turning left at an intersection, yield to an oncoming bicyclist, as with any vehicle.
• When turning right, do not turn in front of a cyclist who is on your right.
• Do not honk your horn at cyclists.
• Look for cyclists before opening your car door.
• Don’t underestimate the speed that bicycles can travel. Most riders travel at 10-20 mph.
• Ohio law allows cyclists to ride two abreast.

Joy Henderson is an avid cyclist who rides for fitness and is trying to change her habits to include cycling for transportation. She dedicates this article to the late Miles Coburn, cyclist, educator and advocate for reducing our carbon footprint.

Open Doors Academy students make a difference for the poor in Harlan, KY

Annemarie Grassi

It has become an annual tradition for the alumni of Open Doors Academy to leave behind their televisions, cell phones, and video games and give up a week of their summer to venture down into the heart of the Appalachian Mountains to Harlan, Kentucky. There they spend a week working long hours in the hot sun, helping people less fortunate than they are.

This year, Open Doors took 14 of its alumni (now freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors in high school) down to Harlan, where they worked for a week from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., rehabbing a damaged roof, digging trenching for new plumbing and tyeeking (sheet that is laid on the outside walls before siding is placed up) a new home.

For many of the students, this was their fourth year in what many of them call “their favorite place in the world.” Maybe it is the small town feel, or the beautiful mountains, or maybe it is being able to step out of a world that is so familiar, into one that is so different. With Wal-Mart as the central hangout for the people of Harlan, and a trip to movies costing $3, there is a sense of simplicity that can bring peace to a 16-year-old from a busy urban environment.

But the primary purpose of this service learning trip is to expose students to rural poverty and help them understand a different culture. In our week in Harlan, students talked openly about their reactions to seeing people live in these conditions. The collection of materials on people’s property, the physical living conditions, the hoarding and neglect of pets, the lack of racial diversity, the limited resources, and some apparent complacency were some of the issues the students struggled with.

This year the teens returned to Cleveland proud of their hard work and committed to learning more about the greater Appalachian community.

Open Doors Academy, a Cleveland Heights middle school enrichment program, seeks to nurture, protect, inspire and challenge adolescents to reach their full potential. Open Doors Academy receives funds from the city of Cleveland Heights via Community Development Block Grant funds, private foundations (including the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation) and private contributors. To learn more, contact us at 216-229-1900 or visit www.opendoorsacademy.org.

Annemarie M. Grassi is the executive director of Open Doors Academy, enjoying her 9th year traveling to Harlan with the alumni of Open Doors Academy.

Summer festivals make us smile

Coventry Street Arts Festival.

Heights Observer Staff

During the summer Heights residents hit the streets to celebrate. This year, seven street festivals were hosted by the commercial districts of Cedar-Fairmount, Cedar-Lee, Coventry and Noble-Nela. Each fair showcased the unique character and style of its neighborhood and attracted a multi-cultural, multi-age audience to enjoy free entertainment just a short walk from many of their homes. From sidewalk sales to culinary treats, from local bands to area nonprofits, from a pet parade to a fire juggler, Heights summer festivals offered an authentic experience like no other.

Says Myra Orenstein, executive director of the Coventry SID, “the street arts fairs are proof positive that multi-cultural neighborhoods can and do work…that people of different races, creeds and colors can come together and enjoy each other and have a fabulous time.”

Thanks for making us smile!

See more photographs online at www.heightsobserver.org.

Disciples Christian Church Celebrates New Name

Ronald Werman

Disciples Christian Church is celebrating its name change and a bright vision for the future. The church, at 3663 Mayfield Road (corner of Yellowstone) in Cleveland Heights, is celebrating its new name with a Transformation Celebration on Sunday, September 14. The community is invited. Worship will be at 11 a.m. (music Prelude at 10:30) followed by barbeque and entertainment from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.

There will be food and fun for all. The fun will include live music, face painting, gourmet foods, tailgates and a bounce house. There will also be tours of the church’s new freestile library as well as a display of historical memorabilia to celebrate the church’s past as Euclid Avenue Christian Church.

For more information, contact Disciples Christian Church at 216-928-5344.
What happened to my lawn this summer?

Douglas Freer

This is the time of year that the true health of a lawn is exposed. If your lawn is a little sassier than you want it to be, fear not! Fall is the ideal time to rejuvenate it. Heights’ yards are often saddled with shade from mature trees. However, turf grass needs at least four hours of sunlight to be healthy. Shade also impacts available moisture, gener- ally contributing to increased drought conditions. Rain and proper cultural practices will have the biggest impact on the health of your lawn. Here are some tips to keep in mind.

Mowing

Mow your grass tall. Raise the mowing height to three inches or taller. Skip a mowing or two if the lawn doesn’t need it. Don’t cut the lawn too short. This only encourages weeds and reduces the health of your existing grass. Sharpen your mower blades at least twice a year, if not more.

Aerating

Lawns benefit tremendously from aeration at least once per year in spring or fall. This process encourages the pores of soil allowing air to get to the roots. It helps to alleviate compacted soil and encourages better surface drainage. You can rent an aerator or hire a service provider to do it for you. Shady lawns that have moss, or those that have not been aerated recently, will benefit tremendously from aeration twice a year. The soil should be slightly moist for good penetration. Aerating the lawn twice in two directions will not hurt it.

De-Thatching

Thatch is a layer of dead bio-mass that has not decomposed between the turf grass plant and the soil. It occurs in lawns that are actively growing or have been undermaintained over the years. It builds up and creates an imperme- able layer that prevents moisture and fertilizer from getting to the soil and roots. Some thatch is good as it helps to stabilize and cool the soil, but more than one-half inch of thatch is prob- lematic. To remove thatch, simply use a rake and lots of effort or rent a power de-thatcher or verti-cutter. Aggressively removing thatch may require some spot se- eding over that thatch is thin. Not all lawns need to be de-thatched, so check it first.

Top Dressing

Healthy soil is the building block for a lush, full lawn. Any lawn can be improved by top dressing with materials like compost or leaf humus. Since area lawns have heavy clay with little or- ganic content, adding organic matter like compost improves the soil composition, which results in healthier grass. Grass thatch. When top dressing, a little bit goes a long way. Plan to buy material in bulk quantity if possible. Measure your lawn area and determine the square footage (length x width x square feet). One quarter inch of compost spread out over 3,000 square feet will require approximately three cubic yards of ma- terial (or about 45 two cubic foot bags of product). Instant cures are for late night infomercials. Please remember, good maintenance practices applied over time will provide the best results. The work you put into your lawn this fall will pay big dividends next year and help your lawn survive next summer’s heat. For fact sheets on lawn care, visit http://webgarden.osu.edu.

Douglas Freer is a Cleveland Heights native and is the owner of Lawn Lad, Inc. which provides residential landscape services in the Heights area. Find him at 216-371-1935 or www.lawnlad.com.

HRRC provides money management resources

Gail Jackson

“Penny pinching” and “dollar stretch- ing” are terms once often laughed at. But, now as daily expenses are rising, many are taking these sayings to heart and putting them into practice. Most residents are concerned with expected increases in food, transportation, home heating, mortgage/rent payments and other expenses. Are you prepared?

The Home Repair Resource Center (HRRC) offers monthly classes on budgeting to help you develop a monthly spending plan and find ways to save for unexpected expenses. Having a bud- get will also help you identify whether your income is sufficient to cover all of your expenses. If not, you can learn to develop a plan to reduce expenses and/or increase your income.

Improving Your Credit is a class that will help position you to be a pre- ferred customer. Preferred customers often receive the best services from lenders, as well as lower interest rates on car and home loans. This two-hour class is packed with information you probably don’t know about the credit industry. The next class is scheduled for Tuesday, September 16 at the HRRC, 3260 Noble Road in Cleveland Heights, 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

If you find that it may be difficult to make upcoming mortgage payments please call the Home Repair Resource Center and inquire about our Foreclosure Inter- vention Program. Homes can be saved from foreclosure with early intervention strategies and communication with your lender. Don’t hesitate, call the HRRC for this confidential service.

Having healthy finances may mean putting penny pinching and dollar stretching strategies into practice. Re- sults may vary; however, doing nothing will keep you just where you are now. HRRC provides confidential one-on-one financial counseling to Cleveland Heights residents free of charge, call 216-381-6600 to schedule your appoint- ment or sign-up for classes.

Douglas Freer lives on East Derbyshire and works for the Home Repair Resource Center, which is a HUD-certified housing agency that provides a full range of services to home- owners and homeowners. Visit the website www.hrrc-cb.org or call 381-6600 for more information on programs and services.

Free High Definition TV! (almost)

Mace Mentch

Beginning February 9, 2009, all local television channels must broadcast exclusively in high definition (HD). This will cause problems for many people who do not have an HD television, tuner, or converter box. To make the channel more palatable, you can apply for a $40 coupon for up to two analog televisions that don’t have digi- tal capability. The converter boxes will retail for about $50, so getting the coupon is worthwhile. If you have cable or satellite, or even an analog TV, you will not need a converter box. (Check with your provider for details.) However, as broadcasters are mak- ing the transition to HDTV you can receive it over the air on a regular an- tenna. You can do this whether or not you have cable or satellite as you can access both.

What are the advantages of getting HD over the air? First, even if you have cable or satellite, the HD signal is being compressed so that it can be transmitted more efficiently. This means the signal is somewhat degraded. Over the air, on an antenna, the signal is full strength, so that you are receiving full HD. Second, while cable and satellite provide HD, they do not provide all local channels in HD all the time.

You can get HD off the air right now with a UHF/VHF antenna which costs around $25. If you already have one, and your TV has an HD tuner in it, you’re all set. Caution: Some places will try to sell you a special HD-enabled antenna, when any UHF/VHF antenna will work. The best place for an antenna is on the roof, but some people get ex- cellent reception with an attic antenna or even “rabbit ears.” Most local broadcast- ers in Cleveland transmit from the southwest, so you will need to point your antenna in that direction.

Right now I get 17 HD channels off the air using my $25 antenna. The picture is excellent and it works with my satellite DVR. Yours can, too.

Mace Mentch is a 20-year resident of Cedar-Fairmount who assesses, evaluates, and researches learning technologies for Case Western Reserve University.

Cedar-Fairmount sports new street sign design

Michael Weil

The elegant Tudor architecture of the Cedar-Fairmount retail neighborhood is accented by a new street sign post into Cleveland Heights. It is also among the most recognizable aspects of the unique and vibrant collection of stores, restaurants, galleries, and offices that are unique to the area. To enhance and celebrate this one-of-a-kind neighborhood, Friends of Cedar-Fairmount, the Cedar-Fairmount Special Improvement District (SID), and Heights Arts have combined forces to create elegant new street signs that celebrate the area’s distinct beauty and more clearly direct visitors to their arrival in the neighborhood.

The signs were designed by Clevel- and Heights artist Raymond Bugearsi and inspired by the graphic motifs of yet another renowned Heights artist, Cathie Bleck. Friends of Cedar Fair- mount hopes to place the signs along Cedar Road from the top of Cedar Hill at Harcourt Road to the beginning of Fairmount Boulevard. A fundraising campaign is underway to secure the $5,700 needed to produce the 20 signs. The Cedar-Fairmount SID paid for the signs’ design.

Friends of Cedar-Fairmount is ask- ing neighbors to sponsor their street’s sign, at a cost of $170 each, or to spear- head street-wide campaigns to raise the money. Donations, payable to Friends of Cedar-Fairmount, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, are tax deductible. To support the Cedar-Fairmount street sign initiative, send a check, made out to Friends of Cedar-Fairmount, to Michael Weil, 2301 Chalford Dr. Cleveland Heights, OH 44118. For more information, contact Michael at 932-4956 or 216-320-1423.
CityMusic: Homegrown in the Heights

Laura Taxel

CityMusic Cleveland, a professional chamber orchestra that gives free concerts in communities around Northeast Ohio, has deep roots in the Heights. The idea of taking classical music to people where they live, dispensing with all the formality usually associated with it, and eliminating the ticket price that keeps many away began as a conversation in a Fairlawn Backyard. Many of the fast growing organization’s participants, founders, musicians, members of the board, artistic advisory council, community outreach committee, host families, volunteers, and donors, are Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights residents. Fairmount Presbyterian Church, a neighborhood landmark for more than 30 years, provides rehearsal space, and the sparse but elegant stone sanctuary known for its concert hall acoustics, is one of CityMusic’s regular performance venues. Locals fill the pews and shout “Bravo! Bravo!” every time they play there.

This traveling orchestra has gotten the enthusiastic and unbridled response of Slavic Village, Elyria, Willoughby, and all the other places they perform. Critics and experts have been equally impressed. The Plain Dealer’s Donald Rosenberg typically has high praise, writing that the group delivers “music-making of delightful verve and sensitivity,” and “ultra-articulate and smoothly integrated playing.” Peter Salaff, director of String Chamber Music Studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music, says, “Not only does this group of talented musicians play at a very high technical level; but, in part thanks to conductor James Gaffigan, they communicate with inspiration. In my opinion, CityMusic is competitive with the best chamber orchestras around today.” Reviewing one of the group’s CDs for tasteful, Steven Ritter called their interpretation of Mozart’s Symphony No. 39 “breath-taking,” their sound “full and robust,” and an original piece written for CityMusic by composer Margaret Brown “a marvel to hear.”

From the start, the creation and operation of CityMusic has been a team effort. Executive Director Eugenia Strauss credits the passionate commitment and relentless hard work of “a quintet of women” as the driving force. The mission, to nurture and expand audiences for classical music while contributing to community vitality and development, took shape around the dining room table in the Heights home Eugenia shares with her husband Dr. Ronald Strauss, who serves as board president. Their house continues to serve as command central for the organization, and each performance season ends with a celebratory gathering there. Until now, the core administrative staff has worked pro bono. Two will be compensated in the coming year. The musicians have always been paid with private foundations, individual contributors, and each host city, which becomes not merely a venue but a full-fledged partner.

“We’re proud to be their host,” says Robert Moncrief, minister of music at Fairmount Presbyterian, “and think of them as our own orchestra-in-residence. And we truly believe in their outreach efforts to open hearts and minds to this music by presenting it in a relaxed, accessible, informal, audience friendly way.

Although Cleveland is a town rich in musical talent, no other group can claim the same reach or impact. CityMusic launched their first season with eight concerts. In 2008-09, their fifth anniversary, the orchestra will give 27 performances.

While major musical institutions in Northeast Ohio and around the country wonder how to attract audiences, CityMusic Cleveland has found the answer. Based on past attendance records, they expect near capacity crowds for every one, and more communities are interested in working with them.

Laura Taxel, local journalist and the author of Cleveland Ethnic Eats has been a Heights resident for 35 years and a CityMusic supporter since the group played their first concert.

2008-09 Fifth Anniversary Season

As always, it’s Free For All! Children are welcome at all performances, and childcare is also provided.

September 2008 Performances:

Danaich Ravich, guest conductor
• Richard Strauss: Prelude to “Capriccio”
• Franz Joseph Haydn: Symphony No. 101 in D Major (“The Clock”)
• Johannes Brahms: Double Concerto for Violin & Violoncello with Kyung Sun Lee (violin) and Edward Arron (cello)

Tuesday, September 23, 7:30 p.m., Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Cleveland Heights

Oddy Festival brings new, original theatre to Cleveland each month

Matt Greenfield

On Wednesday, September 3, “The Oddy Festival” premiered to Cleveland Heights audiences in Coventry’s Historic Centrum Theater. The play was “Vestibule,” written, directed, and performed by Oddys Festival founder and Cleveland Heights native Matt Greenfield. The plot and setup of the play was appropriate for Oddy Fest: one man, alone, waiting for a blind date to show up. Just like in “Young Man,” in “Vestibule” Greenfield and other members of the new Oddy troupe (Peter Nalepa, Justin Watters, Lajan Foist and others) have searched and waited for theatrical opportunities outside Cleveland, only to return to their hometown. After three years in South Florida, Greenfield returned this summer to tap into Cleveland Heights’ burgeoning theatre scene and produce his own work.

“The Oddy Festival” is a troupe named after the Greek wanderer Odysseus, and re-unites “Oddys” returning back home after a few years off the literal or artistic map. Their goal is to produce odd theatre every odd Wednesday at different venues throughout Cleveland. On Wednesday, September 17, Greenfield and the Oddys take “Vestibule” to Cleveland Public Theatre Church on West 65th Street and Detroit Avenue.

The goal of Oddy Festival is not to produce just one show, but as the name suggests, a whole series of original works, written by Greenfield and others. October’s feature stars Greenfield and Peter Nalepa (who just returned from the bustling Chicago theatre scene) in the former’s play, “Coffee, Tea, Tepid Interlocutor.” On October 1, the group plans to premiere “Coffee, Tea, Tepid Interlocutor” on their return to the Historic Centrum. Every first Wednesday of the month will feature a premiere, with the group producing a brand new play every time.

The schedule not only keeps the troupe on its toes, Greenfield says, but serves as a TV-esque schedule for theatre-goers, as opposed to the traditional theatre season of half a dozen or so shows a year. “To my knowledge, nothing like this has been done in the Cleveland area, taking a brand new script and pulling off a full-fledged production every month,” said Greenfield.

“I’m just grateful to the Historic Centrum and the community of Cleveland Heights for giving us the space to do this bold theatrical experiment. Now all we need are the test subjects coming back again and again!”

All shows cost $10 and start at 7 p.m. (doors open at 7:30 p.m.).

Show schedules:

“Vestibule”: Wednesday, September 17 at Cleveland Public Theatre Church (6415 Detroit Ave.)

“Coffee, Tea, Tepid Interlocutor”: Wednesday, October 1 (tentative), Historic Centrum Theater, 2nd floor (2578 Euclid Heights Blvd.)

“Klutz”: Wednesday, November 5 (tentative), Historic Centrum Theater

Please call Oddy Festival at 216-926-8841 to confirm dates and times. Visit oddyfestival.com or email: oddyfest@gmail.com.

Matt Greenfield, born and raised in Cleveland, attended Solon High School, Case Western Reserve University (major: history), John Carroll University (M.Ed.), and then moved on to a three-year teaching stint in South Florida where he started the Boca Raton Theatre Troupe. He now teaches 10th grade English and history, in addition to founding...
Toy Lending Library shares the fun

Lynn Grimm
It was April of 1998 when I discovered Heights Parent Center (HPC). My daughter, Erin, was eight months old and we attended the Baby & Me group. By November of that year, I was asked to join HPC’s Toy Lending Library (TLL) as a volunteer.
I wasn’t quite sure what to expect.
TLL is a program run only by volunteers; dedicated parents who count, clean and care for hundreds of toys. Instead of finding chaos, I found a well-oiled machine. Each toy being checked in or out gets counted, every toy gets washed upon return, and volunteers keep tedious track of the broken and missing pieces. Amazing!
Well, it’s ten years later and I’m still working at the Toy Lending Library and still loving it!

Judson Choristers Sing for the soul

Music lifts the spirit and brings people together. But for some Judson Park residents, listening to music and reminiscing was not enough to express their passion for opera and operetta. So, they began to learn choruses from some of the world’s most famous works, including “The Barber of Seville,” “Die Fledermaus,” “The Pirates of Penzance,” and “Carmen.” “It’s a joyous thing. Singing together has become an essential part of our lives at Judson,” said resident Ilse Strnisha and Wilmah Lapham, who with others have been participating in the Judson Chorister program for more than five years.
Dedicated and diligent, the Judson singers enjoy rehearsing together. They listen to recordings to understand each piece’s musical shape and become comfortable with the words—some of which they move along at a furious pace! Chorister opera rehearsals culminate in exciting performances with elementary students at Judson and in area schools. Judson’s resident life director, Lin Bartel and in area schools. Judson’s performances with elementary students opera rehearsals culminate in exciting performances with elementary students. Their reward is seeing the arts contribute to education. “(I’m) amazed that the young students sing as much fun as the bright shiny toys advertised in the media.

Judson resident Jay Calabretta, who sings with the Judson Choristers, mingles with students from the H. Barbara Becker Academy in a performance of the opera “Carmen” for classmates, teachers, parents and friends.

Judson resident Ilse Strnisha and Wilmah Lapham, who with others have been participating in the Judson Chorister program for more than five years.

The activities of the group continue to grow, as does the range of music: from classical opera and concert music traditions, to favorite popular tunes from every corner of American music. Singing with the Choristers inspired Jay Calabretta to lead a series of music information sessions open to all Judson residents, many of whom attend Metropolitan Opera simulcasts and other University Circle performances. Martin Simon, former cellist with the Cleveland Orchestra, joined Ms. Ryder for Beethoven’s charming “Magic Flute Variations for Cello and Piano,” as the chorus learned the opera in preparation to see a Cleveland Institute of Music performance of it and the Ingmar Bergman film.
In other sessions, Ilse Strnisha and others join in to many songs with their harmonicas; songs like “Over the Rainbow” and “We Shall Overcome,” which was part of the group’s Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. Planning for next season’s repertoire and partnerships has already begun as the Choristers learn music from Carl Orff’s “Carmina Burana” before observing a Blossom Chorus rehearsal and preparing a special Judson Chorister program for Cleveland Cerebral Palsy Center students. So, if you find yourself at Judson Park on a Monday morning at 11, come to the auditorium and join the merriment. You’re guaranteed to leave with a smile.

Judith Ryder, musician and longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, recently won the award-winning director of Cleveland Opera on Tour for 15 years and is the new manager of the Cleveland Arts Education Consortium.

Catch us on the radio!

The TLL stocks old and new toys, either donated or purchased, carrying all of the popular toy brands. Because of our unique storage arrangement, we have created catalogs that are organized and designed by children’s ages and interests. Much thought and care has gone into our toy selection and program. My family’s personal favorites are the Fisher Price Little People sets.
Several years ago a couple of moms created “play kits.” Play kits were developed to add a literacy dimension to the TLL collection. The themed kits might include: toys, puzzles, costumes, books, and point painters. Play painters give parents and caregivers extra ideas about how to play around the theme expressed in the kit, including activities, songs and crafts that incorporate skills learned through play. Currently we are expanding our play kits selection.
Parents who participate in the TLL program find that it provides a very important opportunity to teach children about caring for toys and sharing with others, practicing an environmentally friendly approach to toy selection and recognizing that a wide range of borrowed toys can provide just as much fun as the bright shiny toys advertised in the media.

Last month we celebrated Toy Lending Library’s 25th anniversary! TLL has undergone physical changes and has seen many families come and go, but our heart is still strong thanks to participants, volunteers and a generous community. Come check us out!
Hours: first and third full week of each month – Tuesdays 6:30 - 8 p.m. and Fridays 10 - 12:30 a.m. For the full schedule, please visit our website at www.heightsparentcenter.org.

The Toy Lending Library is located in the Activity Center in the CH-UH Main Library on Lee Road (across the bridge in the “West Wing”).
Annual membership fee: $40. Members can borrow up to three toys for a two week lending period and take advantage of the Stay & Play Program during each session. This provides an opportunity to interact with other families and to see and play with additional TLL toys from our inventory.
TLL is in need of volunteers and volunteers get a free membership! Call us at 216-321-0079 and ask for Lynn if you are interested.

Lynn Grimm is a program assistant at Heights Parent Center and oversees the operations for the Toy Lending Library. Lynn lives in Cleveland Heights with her two children, Erin and Jack.

Advantages of using TLL:
- Parents who participate in the TLL program find that it provides a very important opportunity to teach children about caring for toys and sharing with others, practicing an environmentally friendly approach to toy selection and recognizing that a wide range of borrowed toys can provide just as much fun as the bright shiny toys advertised in the media.
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Judith Ryder

Judith Ryder

Judith Ryder, musician and longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, recently won the award-winning director of Cleveland Opera on Tour for 15 years and is the new manager of the Cleveland Arts Education Consortium.

Catch us on the radio!

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