

**FREE
TAKE ONE**

Volume 1
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December 2, 2008

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM CLEVELAND HEIGHTS AND UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS

Cleveland Violins moves to the Heights

Kim Steigerwald

Patience is a virtue in the development business. Patience paid off ten fold in the case of 2917 Mayfield Road, just west of Honda Motorcars. The building, vacated by In House Furniture a few years ago, sat forlornly, watching the thousands of cars make their daily commute downtown. Its patience was rewarded when Cleveland Heights resident Yanbing Chen purchased the building in January 2008.

Chen is the president of Cleveland Violins, formerly Goronok String Instruments. The full service violin shop specializes in the sales, rental and repair of violin family instruments and their bows. It carries a large selection of handmade instruments and bows. Cleveland Violins offers instruction space for budding and

experienced musicians, and carries a wide range of cases and accessories.

Goronok String had been an anchor on Magnolia Drive in University Circle for nearly ten years. Chen's clientele includes young students as well as musicians from the Cleveland Orchestra and beyond. As his business grew, Chen searched for opportunities to purchase his own building. His was one of those thousands of cars that passed 2917 Mayfield Road daily. Chen's patience was rewarded when he acquired the building.

As well as renaming the company, Chen had to reinvent the building and turned to the city of Cleveland Heights' Department of Planning & Development for assistance. He worked with the city's design consultant, Tim Barrett, throughout the spring on various façade elevations and sign designs. It was agreed that the building needed special awnings and signage to highlight Chen's unique business. Chen was also concerned about sunlight from the large windows along Mayfield Road negatively impacting his display instruments. The design team agreed that a window film with solar control would protect his instruments and still retain the storefront glass.



Yanbing Chen, owner of Cleveland Violins, is thrilled with his building's location and the community's response.

Armed with Architectural Board of Review and Board of Zoning Appeals approvals for the sign size, construction on the exterior of the building began in August. The city provided Chen with a storefront grant and zero-percent loan for the significant investment on the exterior, and he utilized his own equity for significant improvements on the interior.

The transformation of the building this fall is impressive. The renovations add vibrancy and interest to the street. Cleveland Violins' home is a statement

not only about what Yanbing Chen can offer his customers, but what he offered his community and home. He changed the image of the city along the western stretch of Mayfield Road.

Cleveland Violins' hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Visit online at www.clevelandviolins.com.

Kim Steigerwald is the assistant director of planning and development for the city of Cleveland Heights.

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Maintaining Cleveland Heights' roads is no easy task

Allan Kuntz

If you spend time in your automobile in Cleveland Heights, you may wonder how the city decides which streets to maintain and when. Carl Czaga, assistant to the city manager, capital projects, is responsible for any city project exceeding \$25,000. Czaga offers some enlightenment.

Sources of funding

No annual dollars are provided from the general fund budget to maintain our city's 128 road miles. Instead, funds from license plate and vehicle registration fees are designated proportionately by zip code. The amount has been consistent over the years at \$1.6 million, but this is expected to drop because of

declining population and the number of vacant homes. Funds collected through the state and federal gasoline taxes are allocated by the State of Ohio.

Another source is Community Development Block Grant funds. A citizens advisory committee reviews all requests for these funds and recommends disbursement through the approval of city council. The capital projects office often bids for some of these funds. If obtained, these funds are restricted to streets located in low and moderate income census tracts of the city.

Still another source is the State of Ohio Public Works Fund, through which the state annually makes millions of dollars available for bid by municipalities. The bid process must include all engineering studies and is very competitive.

Major road projects (such as the recent Fairmount Boulevard and Warrensville Center Road repavings) are funded by federal, state, and county

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CH offers down payment assistance

Heights Observer Staff

Cleveland Heights City Council passed a resolution at their Sept. 15 meeting to establish an Owner-Occupant Down Payment Assistance Program for the purchase of one- or two-family homes and condominiums in the city.

The program is funded in the amount of \$266,778 through an agreement with the Cuyahoga Housing Consortium and runs from Oct. 1, 2008 through Sept. 30, 2010. Applicants may receive up to \$15,000 for purchase of an existing home and up to \$20,000 for a newly constructed home. Pre-purchase counseling and maintenance training is required for participation.

For more information contact Lori Sanford, housing counselor for the city of Cleveland Heights, at 216-291-4869.

The city also offers a Lead Safe Program that offers a grant of up to \$9,500 for families with children under the age of six. Both new and existing homeowners are eligible. The program is federally funded and participants must meet low/mod income requirements, which are currently \$39,750 for a family of two or \$49,700 for a family of four. Contact the city for more information: 216-291-4444.

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Free lot to become green space

Deanna Bremer Fisher

An empty lot on Lee Road, will become green space until a new development project becomes available.

Situated between Meadowbrook and Tullamore roads, the empty lot was planned to be the site of the Terraces on Lee, a mixed use condominium and retail development, by Al Neyer, Inc. The project fell through when not enough condominiums were presold. The current housing slump and economic downturn makes finding a new

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New year, same struggles for CH

Tobias Rittner

With the new year fast approaching, Cleveland Heights leaders are once again facing the prospects of a tough financial year. The national economic crisis has wreaked havoc on local government budgets and the mortgage foreclosure challenges have further plagued many communities.

In March, Heights residents struck down Issue 29, which would have raised the city's income tax rate from the current 2% tax to 2.4%.

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HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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Heights High production of "West Side Story" showcases top notch talent of area youth

Michael Zapawa

I had the honor of attending the Height's High production of Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story" on Nov. 7 and 9. I came to the show to support my son in his first performance. My son attends Oxford Elementary School and was a member of the choir. The choir provided vocals for "America" and "One Hand, One Heart." I came expecting to see the typical high school play, what I saw was a Broadway quality production.

I work in the Military. As such, my nomadic lifestyle has allowed me to live all over this great nation. I have always been fond of attending plays. I have seen Broadway and off-Broadway productions. What the high school did was nothing less than spectacular! The orchestra was superb, the vocals were pitch perfect, and the acting was first rate. I was especially fond of the players who filled the roles of Tony, Maria, Bernardo and Doc. These fine people did more than act as players in their roles, they became them. In essence, their acting, singing and costumes teleported us all to 1950's New York. Tony's rendition of "Something's Coming" and the duet of Maria and Tony in "Tonight" were nothing less than Oscar worthy performances. It was poetry in motion.

After the play was complete, and after a 10 minute standing ovation, I was surprised to see the large cast of

supporters who made the production possible. As the director said, "It takes a village." It seemed like there were hundreds of parents and others dedicated to the arts on hand. These folks sacrificed their time and worked almost as tirelessly as the cast in ensuring everything was just right. The pageantry of the moment, the realistic costumes, the stage design and the meticulous nature of getting a hundred and one things to sync must have been a Herculean task for the director, cast and crew. It was the best \$40 I have ever spent.

The director left us with a message about the next generation of Americans: We often read or hear about kids who are not doing the right things. It is an odd custom that we judge entire generations by the most mislead young men and women. However, it was self-evident we lucky few saw some of the very best of then next generation. I am certain we are leaving the care of our future in very capable hands. It was, and will be, Cleveland Height's finest hour (or at least until next year's production).

Michael Zapawa is a 12-year member of the U.S. Coast Guard who moved to Cleveland Heights in July 2008. As a military member, he moves every four years. He moved to the Heights expecting to find a house and nothing else, but what he found here was a home and a community that he quickly grew to love.

ROADS continued from page 1

dollars with the city's portion normally 10% (sometimes raised by issuing bonds). Government-funded projects take a long time because EPA and engineering studies must be completed before final approval.

A look back

Back in the 1970s and '80s, the chip-and-tar method was used to pave residential streets. More recently, according to Czaga, the city switched to asphalt because of a rise in costs and the cleaner approach of asphalt. The chip-and-tar method allows covering a lot of pavement in a short time, but it can take some weeks for all the loose gravel to bond to the tar. The more time-consuming asphalt method allows repaving only the worst streets and applying cold patch, or just paving, the curb troughs of selected streets.

Other concerns

Some cities complete a road project city limit to city limit (for example, Lee Road in Cleveland and Shaker Heights). Lee Road in Cleveland Heights was planned as one project, but the plan was altered to accommodate the library renovation. Major streets may be done in segments due to budget constraints or to avoid mass inconvenience to merchants and residents. Few people are aware that a linear foot of curbing costs the same as a linear foot of

road, which is why, if the original stone curbing is intact it is not replaced.

In the pipe line

Repaving Taylor Road from Euclid Heights Boulevard to the East Cleveland line is planned for 2009. The concrete section along Severance Town Center will be reduced by one lane on the east side of the road. This will be a "green" project in which the existing concrete will be ground smooth, covered with two layers of membrane material, and topped with a final coat of asphalt. Monticello Boulevard is in the bid process and will be done in three phases beginning with the section from Noble to Taylor. Mayfield Road was on the docket for 2010, but ODOT removed it from the schedule.

Mayfield Road was last repaved in 1979 and 1994. In 1994 the concrete bus pads were added to save on maintenance costs. The jury is still out on how concrete and asphalt mix; concrete wears longer, but it costs more and takes longer to install, causing more traffic disruption.

Today, the intersections of Warrensville Center/Mayfield and Monticello/Noble both stand out for their smoothness and serve as reminders that street maintenance reflects on the condition of a city.

Allan Kuntz is a resident of Cleveland Heights.

Dominion East Ohio: an unwitting accomplice?

Anita Kazarian

Dominion East Ohio Gas is a trustworthy company. Do not be so sure when buying their water heater repair and replacement plan for \$4.95 a month. You may end up spending more than if you hired a private plumber.

The plan shows you receive \$750 of protection a year. But, when phoning to find out what "a year" meant, three different answers were given on three different phone calls: #1 said \$750 per calendar year; #2 said \$750 per year from the contract date and #3 said \$750 per occurrence.

Is this important? Dominion does not do the work, but contracts an independent company. The contract company will bill you when their labor and materials charges exceed the \$750 limit. Once over the \$750 limit, you are obligated to pay their rates.

This happened to a UH resident; be careful it does not happen to you:

You phone for service. The contract company plumber arrives and says he already checked your record. Since you had a service call over a year ago with a problem, they charged your account \$300. You used \$300 of the \$750 warranty leaving only \$450 in your account.

The plumber decides you need a new tank, which costs \$750 with installation. But, since your account has only \$450 left, you will have to pay the additional \$300 for the work to be completed.

You do not think the plumber is correct. You know you should not pay. But a hot water tank problem is an emergency. You are pressed for time, stressed, and finally assume Dominion East Ohio has correct information. So you write a check for \$300.

Regardless of how Dominion defines the "year," calendar or contract, you still have the \$750 in your account. You do not owe a dime. But you fell for it anyway. You were talked into giving away \$300.

The person this happened to questioned the plumber and would not agree to the additional \$300 bill by the contractor. But then, it was not an emergency. The plumber left and phoned back a few days later to say the customer was right.

A Dominion manager was eventually contacted. Dominion said the additional \$300 was related to something else, not the amount in the account. Dominion also explained as long as they replace the gas tank with a comparable size, they could do it with the cheapest tank made.

Also unusual for Dominion, documentation or receipts for the work completed is not provided to the customer at the time of service, or in this case, ever. Without a receipt, the warranty on the tank is based on the date the tank was manufactured, not the date of installation in your home.

As consumers, we need to find out what the plan covers and how it works. And, Dominion may need to review how its contractors are actually implementing what, originally, sounded like a good idea for its customers.

Anita Kazarian is a resident of University Heights and enjoys being an active citizen.



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Don't miss the new web trend classes at the Lee Road Library

Tonya Gibson

The World Wide Web is a great source of information, entertainment and services to people of all ages. But the plethora of sites can make navigating it time consuming and confusing.

This winter the library is offering a series of programs designed to introduce you to some of the best services the web has to offer. The library's web trends classes highlight free services you might be curious about, including blogging, Wikis, digital photos and downloadable music.

In Blogging 101 you will be introduced to the world of blogs, or web based journals, that offer you a chance to discuss and share information on a wide range of topics and interests. Wikis are similar to blogs, but have a focus on collaboration. Wiki participants have an opportunity to add and edit the Wiki, contributing their ideas and thoughts to the community. Both tools are easy and fun to learn.

Do you want to do more than just snap a picture with your digital camera? The web offers several tools for you to enhance and manage all your digital photos. Flickr Photo Sharing will focus



Come to the Heights Libraries for Web Trends classes that highlight all the web has to offer.

on free and easy to use tools you can use to edit, store and share photos.

Almost everyone is familiar with Google! Did you know Google also offers free calendar and document services? Learn about all Google has to offer in Google Calendars and Google Docs.

If you like listening to music, then the web is the place for you. The web has become the most popular source to explore new genres of music, download your favorite artist and listen to your favorite selections. Attend Music Channel 101 to learn how to create your own music station, share music with your friends

and learn about music websites Pandora, Deezer and Last FM.

Not sure which of these services you may need or want to learn about? Join us for Best Free Stuff on the Web for a demonstration and discussion about many of the great free, useful and fun services the web has to offer.

To register for a class, call the Heights Libraries at 216.932.3600 or register online at www.heightslibrary.org.

Tonya Gibson is an employee of the Heights Libraries who enjoys writing and photography in her free time.

Heights Libraries web trend classes

All classes take place in the Lee Road Library's community office and require advanced registration.

Blogging 101:
Monday, January 5, 7 p.m.

Google Calendars:
Wednesday, January 14, 7 p.m.

Flickr Photo Sharing:
Monday, January 26, 7 p.m.

Wikis:
Wednesday, February 4, 7 p.m.

Google Docs:
Wednesday, February 11, 7 p.m.

Music Channel 101:
Wednesday, February 18, 7 p.m.

Best Free Stuff on the Web:
Monday, February 23, 7 p.m.

FREE LOT from page 1

developer unlikely in the near future. Since the project's demise, the semi-paved lot has become free parking used by workers and retail patrons. Meanwhile, a new \$6.2 million parking garage located behind the Cedar Lee Theater building, which the city had built to serve the new development, has remained underutilized since it opened in the fall of 2007. "Why would I pay to park in a far away garage, when the empty lot is much closer and is free?" said a free lot patron.

Cleveland Heights City Council voted to seed the lot with grass after considering other options according to Carl Czaga, director of public works. "The deciding factor," said Czaga, "was that Amtrust Bank could develop their new branch location on the half of the site that they own when their current lease at Lee and Washington expires. This possibility would prohibit the city from making the larger investment to pave the lot properly, restripe it and install meters."

Czaga said the city will shut down the lot in February 2009 and begin seeding as soon as weather permits. Costs for tear up and seeding were not available.

Short-term paid parking is available in the garage and in Lot #5 behind the Cedar Lee Theater building for \$0.25 per half hour. Lot #5 also contains some permit parking. "We could explore permit parking within the garage if the demand were there," said Czaga. The city currently offers permit parking for \$30 per month at the garages it owns on Coventry and at Surrey and Lennox in the Cedar Fairmount district.

Deanna Bremer Fisher has lived in the Heights for 15 years and is executive director of FutureHeights.



The empty lot between Meadowbrook and Tullamore roads on Lee is often full during the day.

Lights, brushes, action!

Judithe Soppel

Life upon the stage may seem glamorous, but life behind the curtains doesn't really look all that glitzy.

Volunteers spent the weekend of Nov. 15-16 reading Dobama Theatre's newly completed office space in the Heights Library's Activity Center. Grabbing paint brushes, left to right, are Library Director Nancy Levin and Dobama board members Spencer Caress and Sura Stevastopolous. They

were joined by Dobama Board President Bill Newby and his wife, Barbara, and Dianne Boduszek, managing director of the theater.

The change from 'naked' drywall to 'dressed' office walls is amazing. Dobama expects to take residency in their offices by mid-December. Dobama expects to begin performances in their new space in the fall of 2009.

Judithe Soppel is public relations coordinator for the CH-UH Public Library.



Nancy, Spencer and Sura are getting the job done at the new Dobama space

CH-UH Public Library Board

Meeting Highlights of October 20, 2008



MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2008
All board members present.

Dobama

A contract with Dobama has been signed. With a 6-1 vote (board member Kevin Ortner abstained) the board approved Julia Criscione, AIA, who worked on the Main Library renovation, to be the project manager of the Dobama project. Criscione will oversee the legal requirements of the building code, insurance and the guarantees of the contractors.

Opening on library board

Board President Gerald Blake's term expires this year. The Cleveland Heights-University Heights School Board will appoint his replacement. Blake asked board members to encourage anyone who might be interested to apply.

Portrait of Jennie Levey

A painting of former librarian Jennie Levey has been installed next to the meeting room named in her honor.

Video games

The library now has a selection of video games circulated through the Northeast Ohio Chapter of the Ohio Library Council on video games. The Technology Committee will set policy.

Reader's Advisory Team

Noble Library Manager JoAnn Vicarel spoke about the Reader's Advisory Team. The team fulfills the traditional role of librarian in helping readers find books. The team does book talks at retirement homes and has a blog that has been "hidden" on the website, but will be featured more prominently in the future. The blog has reviews, recommendations and pictures of librarians along with their subject specialties. From July 1 through Oct. 16, there were over 4,500 visits to the page. The team has received compliments from authors who are featured.

Library security

Board member Audrey Cole expressed concern that there is no security in the

branches on the weekends. Director Nancy Levin said that during the week there were police officers at Noble and University Heights and there had just been an all-staff training for dealing with incidents. The library suspends offenders from service. About 50 people are currently suspended.

LWV Observer: Anne S. McFarland.

Disclaimer: These reports contain member observation and selected highlights of public meetings and are not official statements of the League of Women Voters-Cuyahoga Area, Heights Chapter. This disclaimer must accompany any redistribution of these reports.

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Meeting summaries have been edited and prepared by Charlene Morse, Marilyn McLaughlin and Maryann Barnes.

Cleveland Heights City Council

Highlights of October/November 2008 meetings



MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2008
All council members present.

Tribute to Oliver Schroeder

Mayor Edward Kelley asked for a moment of silence for Oliver Schroeder, who passed away recently. Schroeder had served on City Council from 1956 to 1977, including one term as mayor. Kelley pointed out that Schroeder's leadership helped keep the city viable when it chose to be integrated and diverse.

Heights Youth Club

Council granted a request to change the original zoning permit for the Heights Youth Club to allow all students enrolled in CH-UH schools to join the club. Earlier in the meeting, Joel Borwick, owner of Seitz-Agin Hardware and Heights Youth Club board member, and Roscoe Morgan, Youth Club director, addressed Council extolling the club's successes. Borwick pointed out that 72% of club members who regularly participated in Project Learn, an academic program at the club, completed the final grading period of the 2007-2008 school year on the honor or merit rolls. Representing the club and its board, Borwick maintained that all students attending CH-UH schools should be given the same opportunity to join the club. [Under conditions of the original zoning permit, only students residing in Cleveland Heights had been permitted to participate.]

CDBG Funds

Council authorized the submission of the Community Development Block Grant application for the year beginning January 1, 2009. Should the application be successful, Council would apportion funds (\$1,550,893 for 2008) among community organizations according to recommendations of the Citizens Advisory Committee. Councilman Mark Tumeo advised nonprofits that block grants could be wiped out if the city's population fell below 50,000.

Boarded up houses

Council passed an ordinance requiring that boards on all boarded-up houses be painted in the color of the house or trim within five days. Tumeo noted that this practice made "a very big difference," leading Councilman Ken Montlack to comment, "There are times when you can put lipstick on a pig."

Federal foreclosure program

To address foreclosures and vacant housing, Congress passed the Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grant to distribute about \$3.9 billion to states and other local entities for housing rehabilitation and homeowner assistance. Councilman Montlack noted that the city would be working on this diligently and that Kim Steigerwald, director of planning and development for the city, had done a masterful job analyzing the criteria.

"Green" efforts

Councilwoman Bonnie Caplan pointed out that the city's efforts to be "green," by fitting diesel vehicles with pollution controls and implementing a no-idle policy for drivers, were rewarded with a \$5,000 grant from the Ohio Environmental Council to purchase Diesel Emission Controls.

LWV Observer: Kay Heylman.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2008
All council members present.

Dissolution of Cable Commission

Director of Finance/Clerk of Council Thomas Malone reported that the Cable Television Commission had submitted a resolution to dissolve itself, subject to reconstitution by Council should the commission's services again be required. Council later passed an ordinance dissolving this commission. Before the vote was taken, Councilman Dennis Wilcox explained that a state law now required that local cable programs be addressed at the state level. The commission delayed requesting disbandment until they were sure the State was responding well to local questions and complaints. Wilcox thanked Assistant Law Director Bill Hannah and commission members, Jonathon Goldman, James Castello, and Stephen Titchenal for their consistently excellent work. Councilman Ken Montlack thanked Law Director John Gibbon for the expertise in telecommunication that got the commission going in the first place. Council members unanimously expressed regret over shuttering the commission as, "an all-out assault on Home Rule."

Public Health Services

Council authorized the renewal of an agreement with the Cuyahoga County General Health District for public health services at an annual cost of \$184,845. This agreement provides residents with a wide spectrum of services including flu shots, health screenings, pest control and school health inspections.

Financial legislation requirements

Council approved two resolutions required annually. The first requested the County Auditor to advance taxes from the proceeds of the 2008 tax year collection. The second accepted the amounts and rates as determined by the Budget Commission, authorized the necessary tax levies, and certified them to the County Auditor.

Paper shredding and leaves

Councilwoman Bonnie Caplan announced that Paper Shredding Day scheduled for residents had been postponed until spring because the company contracted did not have a shredder available. Also, after November, leaves should be placed in yard bags for pick-up.

Congratulations to Delisle

Councilman Wilcox praised Deb Delisle, superintendent of the CH-UH City School District, for her appointment as Ohio's superintendent of schools and Mayor Edward Kelley wished her the best in her new position.

LWV Observers:

Carol Gibson and Blanche Valancy

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2008
Bonnie Caplan excused.

Tribute to Marjorie Wright

Mayor Edward Kelley asked for a moment of silence in honor of Marjorie Wright, who died Oct. 23. A member of City Council from 1966 to 1981, Wright served as mayor from 1976 to 1979 during

which time Cleveland Heights won an All-American City award.

Barriers installed by businesses

A citizen communicated her concern with the various types of barriers installed by businesses for protection. She claimed that they suggested criminal activity and did not send a good message.

Natural gas supplier

City Manager Bob Downey urged all residents to consider the options in choosing a natural gas supplier. Because the city had to commit to a supplier during the summer months when rates were higher, the city's aggregation program may not provide the least expensive option.

Yellowstone Road water main

Council authorized contracting with Mackay Engineering & Surveying for services associated with the Yellowstone Road Water Main and Resurfacing Project at a cost not to exceed \$17,911. The entire cost would be paid through the city's block grant fund.

Zoning code amendments

Ordinances amending the city's zoning code were introduced. Public hearings on these ordinances will be held at 7 p.m. on Dec. 8 and at the Planning Commission meeting at 7 p.m. on Dec. 10 in council chambers. Two of the proposed amendments call for specifying minimum yard requirements for free standing air conditioning and other machinery in multiple family districts and for limiting the size of instructional signs to 10 feet. Another seeks to amend the zoning code to designate automobile sales and rentals and gasoline stations as conditional uses in C-3 Districts and to prohibit automobile rentals in C-2 Districts. Another proposes a new subsection to permit occasional garage and yard sales, a maximum of two a year, lasting no more than three consecutive calendar days, and restricted to 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. with only one sign advertising the sale.

LWV Observer: Kay Heylman

See disclaimer on page 3.

Looking for a church family?

We invite you to worship with us this Sunday at 11:00 am.

Look for one of these people who will be sure to greet you!




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* **Noun 1.** energy derived from the heat in geothermal energy **the interior of the earth**



CITY OF CLEVELAND HEIGHTS DECEMBER 2008 MEETINGS

MEETINGS ARE HELD AT CITY HALL, 40 SEVERANCE CIRCLE, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Mon	1	5:45 pm	Council Committee of the Whole	Executive Conference Room
Mon	1	7:30 pm	City Council Meeting	Council Chambers
Tue	2	4:00 pm	Architectural Board of Review	Council Chambers
Tue	2	5:30 pm	Landmark Commission	Superior Schoolhouse ¹
Mon	8	5:45 pm	Council Committee of the Whole	Executive Conference Room
Mon	8	7:00 pm	Public Hearing	Council Chambers
Wed	10	7:00 am	Administrative Services Commission	Executive Conference Room
Wed	10	7:00 pm	Planning Commission	Council Chambers
Mon	15	5:45 pm	Council Committee of the Whole	Executive Conference Room
Mon	15	7:00 pm	Public Meeting	Council Chambers
Mon	15	7:30 pm	City Council Meeting	Council Chambers
Tue	16	4:00 pm	Architectural Board of Review	Council Chambers
Wed	17	8:00 am	Financial Institutions Adv. Committee	Executive Conference Room
Wed	17	7:30 pm	Board of Zoning Appeals	Council Chambers
Fri	19	9:00 am	Commission on Aging	Senior Activity Center ²
Thur	25		Christmas - City Hall & Community Center Closed*	
Mon	29	5:45 pm	Council Committee of the Whole	Executive Conference Room

¹ The Superior Schoolhouse is located at Superior Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard.
² The Senior Activity Center is located inside the Community Center, Monticello & Mayfield.

*Refuse & recycling collection will be delayed by one day following the holiday.
Visit www.clevelandheights.com for any changes or additions. For more information on the above meetings, call 291-4444.

University Heights City Council Highlights of October/November 2008 meetings



MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2008
Council members Peter R. Bernardo, Frankie Goldberg, and Kevin Patrick Murphy excused.

Quorum

Law Director Ken Fisher noted that four members of council were sufficient to do business and could vote on items that required a simple majority.

Appeal to deny fence permit

The bulk of the meeting involved an appeal of a fence permit, granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals on Oct. 8 for a John Carroll University (JCU)-owned property at 2580 South Belvoir Boulevard.

Mike Kirincic, of Carroll Blvd., filed the appeal claiming that erection of a fence by JCU across the backs of properties would have an adverse effect on his property. He asked that Council take action for the good of the neighborhood. He complained that the university was land-banking, neighbor-

hood property values had fallen and JCU renters were not neighborly.

Councilman Steven Bullock noted that he expected university representatives to "sit down with us," but in the meantime, "we have to live by our own rules."

Patrick O'Shaughnessy, a Kerwick Road resident, applauded City Council for forming a committee to talk with JCU but implored Council not to "forget the residents." O'Shaughnessy said that putting a moratorium on fence building would send a message to the university. Bullock appealed for patience to allow Council to address this with the process that had already begun.

Several other residents extolled the neighborhood openness. Behind the homes, property lines were not closed in creating an open space where children played and moved freely from yard to yard.

Both Mayor Beryl Rothschild and Councilman Steven Sims expressed sympathy for the residents who were appealing the fence with the mayor suggesting that a moratorium on fences may be a good idea.

Sheila Hubman of Ashurst Road felt that the denial of a backyard fence elsewhere in University Heights could interfere with her right to erect a fence.

Lisa Barrett, representing JCU, said that the university was looking forward to working with Council on the task force. However, she noted that the fence in question was code compliant and consistent with other fences. Denial of the fence solely because it was JCU that asked for it would constitute an "arbitrary and capricious" ruling.

Maria Alfaro-Lopez, JCU employee and renter at a property named in another fence dispute, claimed adverse effects from the absence of a fence when children at play invaded her privacy. She further emphasized that the area to be fenced in was not a common area; it was private property.

Councilman Sims made a motion to postpone the decision in order to study further the situation and JCU's actions. The motion failed with both Councilman Bullock and Councilman

Frank Consolo voting no. They felt that postponement would only prolong the dispute without learning much more.

On the first vote Vice Mayor Adele Zucker voted for the appeal and Sims passed. Since three votes were needed for a majority vote and resolution of the issue, Sims relented and voted to deny the appeal. Thus, the appeal was denied with a 1-3 vote.

Ordinance to repeal moral claims

Without discussion, Council voted unanimously to repeal the section of the city code granting moral claims.

LWV Observer: Maryann Barnes.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2008
All council members present

Road salt

A resolution authorizing the city to participate in the NEO/SO's 2008-2009 salt program passed at an earlier meeting. NEO/SO, the Northeast Ohio Sourcing Office, pools the orders of municipalities, county government, schools and universities to obtain favorable contracts. Due to road salt scarcity, NEO/SO was unable to secure a contract this year. University Heights is attempting to negotiate its own contract, a challenging task because of the relatively small amount of salt University Heights needs. To further reduce salt usage, Service Superintendent Christopher Vild reported that the Service and Utilities Committee was discussing the use of a "sensible salting" policy.

Waterline replacements

City Engineer Joseph Ciuni reported that waterline replacements on University Parkway, Silsby and Groveland were to have been completed by Oct. 14 and contractor Noce Enterprises was incurring daily late charges. The Cleveland Water Department will test water on Silsby Road before hooking up residents.

University Square garage

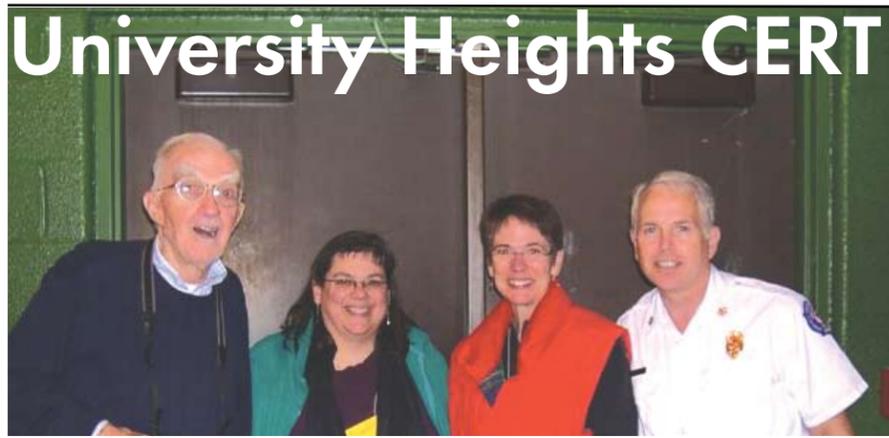
Ciuni said that critical supports for University Square garage have been repaired and less critical supports were now in the process of being fixed.

City Watch

Fire Chief John Pitchler described City Watch as a reverse 911 service. City Watch will inform residents of emergencies, evacuations, and non-emergency information by telephone (both land line and cell), fax or email. Residents can sign up on the University Heights website.

LWV Observer: Sue Pardee

See disclaimer on page 3.



Walter Stinson, community coordinator of University Heights, two CERT volunteers, and Fire Chief John Pitchler.

Anita Kazarian

The Community Emergency Response Team, CERT, was used to conduct a flu vaccination clinic at Wiley Middle School on Sunday Nov. 9. The city's annual senior flu shot program vaccinates a few hundred people per year.

CERT teaches resident volunteers to understand potential disasters in their area and trains them in basic response skills. When an emergency happens, professional responders may not immediately be available. When they are, they may need assistance. University Heights CERT volunteers are an organized group, trained for such an event.

The flu vaccination clinic used the national CERT protocol as a drill to ensure its team is prepared. University Heights Emergency Response Organization, under Fire Chief John Pitchler, performed flawlessly. Peter Bernardo, president of the CERT team, calls periodic meeting for ongoing training.

The CERT concept was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985. Since 1993, CERT training has been available nationally by FEMA. The uniform protocol ensures professional response teams from any place in the United States will find a uniform and effective community organization to offer support.

University Heights residents are welcomed to apply as volunteers to CERT. Anyone 18 years old and older may apply by contacting City Hall.

Anita Kazarian is a resident of University Heights and enjoys being an active citizen.

❄️ December Community Calendar ❄️

View and submit community events anytime FREE at heightsobserver.org, your online community newspaper.

DATE	TIME	EVENT	ALL ABOUT	WHERE
Dec 4	4:45 PM	Yoga Demo	Relieve holiday stress with beginner's yoga. FREE	Atma Center - Yoga for Every Body, 2319 Lee Road, CH
Dec 4	7:00 PM	"University Circle: Building the Knowledge District"	Chris Ronayne, University Circle, Inc. will speak. A League of Women Voters Community Forum. \$5 general/\$3 student door.	Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Ave., Cleveland
Dec 4	7:00 PM	"Real: The Truth about Being Single" with Kelly Chapman	Book signing. FREE	Borders, Severance Towne Center, CH
Dec 6	9 AM-1 PM	Advent Festival Benefit	Gift, food, crafts, music. Admission free with canned food for Cory Hunger Center. Bring mittens, gloves, scarves and socks for donation to West Side Community Center.	Church of the Saviour, 2537 Lee Road, CH
Dec 7	10:15 PM	Festival of Lessons & Carols	Enjoy your favorite Christmas music in a Sanctuary decorated with traditional evergreens and red poinsettias. FREE	Church of the Saviour, 2537 Lee Road, CH
Dec 7	1:00 PM	Ringin' in the Holidays	Holiday concert by the River Valley Ringers, an auditioned community hand bell choir. FREE	Judson Manor, University Circle
Dec 8	7:00 PM	Preventing Plumbing Disasters	FREE workshop for CH residents. Reserve: 381-9560	Home Repair Resource Center, 2520 Noble Rd., CH
Dec 12 & Dec 14	7:30 PM	Amahl & the Night Visitors	Arts In The Cathedral presents Amahl and the Night Visitors by Gian Carlo Menotti on December 12 at 7:30 p.m. and December 14 at 3:00 p.m. Tickets: \$8 adults and \$4 youth.	Church of the Saviour, 2537 Lee Road, CH
Dec 12	7:30 PM	Ringin' in the Holidays	Holiday concert by the River Valley Ringers, an auditioned community hand bell choir. Canned food collection.	Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Mayfield Road at Crest, CH
Dec 12 & Dec 13	8:00 PM	Handel's Messiah	Apollo's Fire performs. For tickets call 216.320.0012 or visit www.apollofire.org .	St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2747 Fairmount Boulevard (at Coventry), CH
Dec 13	9 AM - 12 PM	Breakfast with Santa	A morning of food, crafts and fun! Santa will arrive promptly at 9:45 a.m. \$5 per adult; \$3 per child; Children 2 and under FREE. Maximum \$20 per family (includes grandparents) All are Welcome. Reservations and payment by Dec. 5th to Mary Ebner: mebner@beaumontschool.org 216-321-6265 X242	Beaumont School Dining Room, 3301 North Park Boulevard, CH
Dec 13	2:30 PM	Ringin' in the Holidays	Holiday concert by the River Valley Ringers, an auditioned community hand bell choir. FREE	CHUH Main Library, 2345 Lee Road, CH
Dec 14	7:30 PM	Holiday Concert	Western Reserve Chorale performs Choral works with brass accompaniment. FREE	Grace Lutheran Church, 13001 Cedar Road, CH
Dec 17	8:00 PM	Oddy Fest December: The End	Four short dramatic works performed. Adult content. All tickets \$10	Heights Arts Studio, 2340 Lee Road (on the west side of the CH Library), CH

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Alumni return to their roots

Graduates go away to great things, but many come back

Lita Gonzalez



Steven Haynie '91 always had fond memories of Cleveland Heights even when his family moved to Cincinnati after he finished fourth-grade. Indeed, after eighth-grade he asked to move back to attend Heights High. "It was almost as if I had never left," says Haynie. "I walked through the doors and so many people came over to say hello." He went on to study mass communication at the University of Cincinnati ("Dick Goddard was my idol") but his career path took a major turn when he took part in the summer re-shelving program at the university's library. "Library Science became my new love," he says.

He obtained a Masters in Library Science at SUNY Buffalo, did an internship for the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda Maryland, and then landed back in Cleveland. "It was a twist of fate," he says. "I was coming back to Cincinnati for a job but had to stop in Cleveland to attend a funeral and ended up getting a volunteer job doing outreach with elementary to high school-age youngsters. I guess I always knew this was home—where I wanted to grow old and raise my kids." Today he is the young adult services coordinator at the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

The CH-UH Public Library has welcomed teens by designating a space called the Spot (open from 2 to 5:30 p.m.), hosting the annual Poetry Slam, helping teens with homework, and developing intergenerational programs. Haynie observes that "for every one kid who isn't behaving, there are 10 who are busy doing homework and taking part in programs."

He is looking for volunteers to mentor the teens that come to the Spot. "Retirees or college students can help build these important relationship bridges between generations." Interested? Contact him at 932-3600 x 292 or shaynie@heightslibrary.org

Allison Byrd '95 went through the CH-UH school system—Belvoir, Wiley, and Heights. In her sophomore and junior years at Heights she worked as a junior instructor for the IMOTEP program (Instructional Mathematics Helping Our Teens Excel Program), the brainchild of Heights' math teacher Mark Wessels. It was this experience that inspired her to become a math teacher. She graduated from Florida A & M with a BS in mathematics.

Like many alumni who leave for college, she was sure she would only come back for visits. She was teaching in Tallahassee when she received a call from Wessels. Was she interested in teaching for the expanding IMOTEP program? In 2000 the onetime National Merit and Presidential Scholar found herself back at her alma mater. "IMOTEP had been such an important part of my life that it just felt natural to come back to Cleveland, to work with the program and teach math," Byrd says. She became involved in the recent transformation to five Small Schools and attended the First Ring Leadership Academy at Cleveland State where aspiring administrators could earn a Masters in Education Administration in nontraditional situations.

Today she is the assistant principal at Roxboro Middle School. She admits to missing teaching at times. "Teaching is special. You can see the moment when your students get it, the instant when you know you have made a difference." Alison credits her appreciation of education to the support and motivation of her family and Wessels. "They never expected anything but the best from me and believed in me even when I didn't." This is the message that she now brings to her job every day, because "you never know what type of impact you will have on a child." Like many graduates, she found that moving away led to an appreciation of what Cleveland has to offer. Reach her at A_Byrd@chuh.org.

Keep that information about our Heights graduates coming! Email me at lita@valancy.com.

Lita Gonzalez, a long time community volunteer, lives in Cleveland Heights with her husband Mark. Both her daughters are Heights High graduates.



Miles Walker with his Japanese host family. Left to right: Obaasan (grandma), Okaasan (mom), Miles, Otoosan (dad), Hiro (cousin).

Heights Students on Cultural Exchanges

Joy Henderson

Heights High has a successful American Field Service (AFS) program that offers summer, semester, and school year exchanges to over 50 countries for high school students and recent graduates. AFS is a 61 year old program with over 30,000 volunteers worldwide and has a goal of "building a more just and peaceful world through international student exchange." Recently, two Heights students went on AFS foreign exchanges. Senior Miles Walker went to Japan for a six-week summer program. Hannah Kohr graduated one year early to attend school in Germany.

Miles lived with the Nawa family just outside of Nagoya, the fourth largest city in Japan. He slept on a futon and rode his bike past rice patties to catch the train to school, which was located in a skyscraper.

Miles' host mother and father took him to several public baths—one, natural hot springs on a cliff and the other, a green tea bath. One of the most exciting moments for Miles was a ceremony where families carry a rock and place it at a mountain top shrine. Each family also placed a flag with the names of their family members. The Nawa family included Miles' name on their family's flag.

"My Japanese parents were very loving and kind," Miles said. "I saw many unique things about another culture but also saw how similar people are."

Miles plans to study electrical engineering or computer science at MIT, Boston University, or the University of Maryland.

Hannah Kohr lived with the Hameister family in the port city of Hamburg. When she first arrived, Hannah spoke little German. "It was so hard!" she said. While everyone was polite, it was difficult to make friends when she could not communicate well. After three months, her German was strong enough to engage and connect with other students. "I met

and became friends with amazing people, both German and other exchange students," Hannah said.

"My German family was very patient with teaching me vocabulary and the ways of German society," said Hannah. "The most exciting thing for me was



Hannah Kohr with her host sister Jana Hameister in Hamburg with the Lemon Lady statue. According to a German legend, if you rub the statue's finger it will bring good luck.

when people would ask me what part of southern Germany I came from. They could hear a slight accent but did not think it was American."

Hannah is currently working and plans to major in international studies at Long Island University in the future.

The AFS program doesn't just send students to other countries. The program also allows students from other countries to experience American culture at Heights High. Six exchange students from Ghana, Japan, Hong Kong, Italy, Sweden, and Turkey participated in the program this year.

For more information about AFS, visit afs.org or call Krista Hawthorne at 216-932-4081.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.

Heights students rake leaves for senior citizens

Joy Henderson

Thirty three Heights High students spent the morning of Saturday Nov. 1 raking leaves for Cleveland Heights senior citizens.

The city of Cleveland Heights identified 15 senior citizens who needed their leaves raked and the six groups of Heights students, rakes in hand, rang doorbells ready to help.

Lillian Kotoch was delighted to have five strong swim team members clearing leaves from her yard. "The kids were so fast," she said. "I thought I should bake cookies for them to show how much I appreciated it." However, the students were not working for pay or cookies. Swimmer Torria Bowling said that it

was a good feeling just to be able to help someone else.

Joy Henderson is the parent/community liaison for Heights High.



Front row, left to right: Darell May, Lillian Kotash, Torria Bowling, Kenneth Blair. Back row: Noah Echols, Shoun Pate.

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CH-UH Board of Education



Meeting Highlights of October/November 2008

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2008

Five-year forecast

Scott Gainer, district treasurer, presented the five-year forecast. The 7.2 mill operating levy that passed in November 2007 will not bring in the anticipated amount. Real estate property tax collection rates dropped from a typical 97% to 92%. In addition, a 5% decrease in state funding was assumed for the purposes of this forecast.

Coventry School building

Director of Business Services, Stephen Shergalis, reported on the following letters of interest for the Coventry property: Day Cares R Us, Little Italy Preservation Partners, The Cleveland Music School Settlement, and The Intergenerational School. None of the groups supplied all the necessary information. Shergalis will inform the respondents that the rest of the financial information must be submitted by Nov. 17. The Lay Finance Committee will then meet to examine all of the information and present their findings to the school board at the Dec. 16 meeting.

LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2008

Merit scholarship awards

The National Merit and Achievement Scholarship Semifinalists were honored. Also, Commended Students of these tests were recognized.

Alumni to restore clock tower

Eric Silverman, Alumni Foundation president, informed the board of the foundation's plans to raise money to restore the clock tower on Heights High.

Administrators endorse Fowler-Mack for superintendent

James Reed, principal of Renaissance School, presented the board with a letter signed by many administrators praising Superintendent Deborah Delisle and asking the board to consider Assistant Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack as her replacement.

Board President Michael Cicero stated that the board would decide on an interim superintendent by the end of November; that person would not be a candidate for superintendent. When it is time to choose a permanent replacement the community would be involved.

Student field trips

The board approved the following trips:

- The High School Varsity Basketball Team to Dayton,
- The Monticello seventh/eighth graders' African American Experience Tour to Atlanta, Georgia,
- The High School Spanish Students to Spain, and
- Sixth-grade Wiley Middle School Outdoor Education to Malabar Farm and Mohican State Park.

Cisco Academy

The Computer Networking Technology (Cisco Academy) course of study was approved.

One to One computer instruction

Joseph Micheller, director of education services, gave an update on the One to One (computer) teaching and learning at Monticello. There has been great support from Apple® for professional development. The teachers are using the technology in more ways than planned.

Deferred compensation

The government made changes in how school districts handle deferred compensation. Consequently, the board approved a resolution adopting a plan and appointing the treasurer to administer it.

Coventry School building

The Lay Finance Committee will meet on Nov. 25 to go over the proposals for Coventry.

LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.

See disclaimer on page 3.

Where will you be this Christmas Season?

We invite you to join us... all are welcome!

- December 7 + 11 am Service & Lunch, Craft Workshop
- December 14 + 11 am Service & 10,000 Villages Shopping
- 4 pm Ohio BoyChoir Advent Concert
- December 21 + 11 am Service of Lessons & Carols
- December 24 + 5 pm Family Service
- 11 pm Candlelight Service & Reception
- December 28 + 11 am Informal Service

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A dog's best friend Gravity is her best friend



Missy's glamour shot doesn't due her justice! She lights up the room at Abstract. (More photos online.)

Fran Mentch

The little shi-tzu was only supposed to stay with Cindy Jahn for a weekend. But that was two years ago. Now "Missy" is very much a part of Jahn's life.

A visit to Jahn's salon, Abstract on Fairmount Boulevard, shows just how the dog has affected Jahn. In addition to shampoos and products for humans, the salon now features a grooming line for dogs and cats along with pet apparel and fashion accessories like jewelry. Jahn has had displays at the Bark in the Park, Woofstock at Holden Arboretum, and held a cut-a-thon to raise funds for the Geauga County Humane Society.

One might say fate joined the two. Missy was wandering around in Shaker Heights, when she was almost hit by a bus. One of Jahn's friends saw the frightened dog and rescued her. The friend called the authorities, who told her to take the dog to a shelter or the APL. Instead, she brought the dog to Jahn.

Missy needed a bath; she reeked of urine and her fur was badly matted. Eight shampoos and four conditionings later the dog still smelled, so Jahn cut the animal's hair.

That's when she noticed the red, irritated skin. Missy's nails were badly overgrown, pulling her toes over to one side. Over the weekend, the dog drank water and asked to go outside several

times an hour. By Sunday evening Missy was at a veterinary emergency clinic and was diagnosed with a bladder infection she apparently contracted from being confined in filthy quarters.

Jahn has a theory about the first six years of Missy's life. She thinks her dog had two previous owners. The first one made her into a well-mannered and wonderful companion. That owner taught Missy to sit, and to shake. She was housebroken and knew how to walk on a leash.

Something happened, however. Missy ended up with another owner who fed her, but kept her confined in small quarters. Jahn thinks the second owner neglected the dog, and finally dumped her.

With Jahn, Missy has gone from an abandoned pet to an adored companion who brings joy to others.

Every Monday, Missy volunteers as a greeter dog at the Cleveland Clinic. Jahn feels the greeter dogs add a lot of pleasure and comfort in that environment—to the staff and families, as well as the patients. She also has plans to train Missy to become a certified therapy dog.

"People light up when they see Missy," Jahn said, adding folks often stop to talk. "Everyone has a story."

Fran Mentch is a resident of the Severance neighborhood.



Helene Morse mends broken hearts in her studio.

Tricia Springstubb

Helene Morse once found a box on her Ormond Road front porch. Taped to the top was the note, "I hear you mend broken hearts." Inside was a porcelain figurine, in pieces.

"Every broken thing, whether it's a turkey platter, a grandmother's vase, a souvenir of a honeymoon—it has a story attached," says Morse, founder of H.S. Morse Conservation Services. "I listen to a lot of wonderful reminiscing."

Morse grew up in Shaker and Cleveland Heights, and began learning restoration while still in high school—not that this was her idea. She comes from a long line of eccentric artists and entrepreneurs, and was only helping out with the family business, Senders Gallery.

After receiving her B.F.A. in sculpture from the Tyler School of Art, a division of Temple University, in Philadelphia, she returned to Cleveland. During the '80's, while raising two daughters, she began doing some restoration work on her own. As her reputation spread among antique dealers and private collectors, she soon found herself with as much work as she could handle. It wasn't long before she received her first really big commission: repairing the china and personal effects of President Garfield for the National Historic site at Lawnfield.

"I told my friends, 'guess what I've got down my basement? President Garfield's toothbrush holder!'"

She's got stories, all right. On assign-

ment from the Cleveland Play House, in conjunction with the Cleveland Police Museum, she restored the death mask of a victim of the infamous Torso Murders. Another job was a pair of Tang Dynasty burial horses that fell off the back of a get-away truck during a robbery. A five foot tall Chinese vase once lay in her bathtub for safe keeping.

All the objects she repairs, Morse says, are very valuable, either monetarily or sentimentally. The holidays are an especially busy time, as people want to use or give family keepsakes and heirlooms that have been damaged. Working with a two part resin that is moldable but hardens like porcelain, she's able to fill cracks and create missing pieces. She applies a combination of oil paint and lacquer, and over nearly 30 years has learned to finesse the look of any glaze, antique or new. Morse uses only professional, conservation-grade materials. A common challenge of her job is restoring things that people have repaired with hardware store glue, which can actually absorb clay. Often she has to re-break something in order to fix it right.

"Sometimes people bring me china that is still being manufactured, and could easily be replaced," says Morse, who works out of her home studio. "But if I suggest that, they look at me. 'It just wouldn't be the same,' they say."

Morse is a fixer, but also a creator. She makes unique clay sculptures of people in their favorite settings. Working by commission, she conjures whimsical yet detailed and unique portraits, catching happy moments forever.

By the way, she mended that broken keepsake she found on her front porch. And, she hopes, the heart, as well.

To reach H.S. Morse Conversation Services call 216-371-4758 or e-mail helenemorse@yahoo.com.

Tricia Springstubb is a librarian and writer. Her book reviews appear regularly in the Plain Dealer.

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2008 Holiday Gift Guide

Deanna Bremer Fisher

The holiday shopping season is upon us, and I asked some of our local merchants to share their ideas for my extensive gift list.

FOODIE

Gift certificates to any of your favorite local restaurants. The city of Cleveland Heights just came out with an updated restaurant guide in October. Find a copy at City Hall or visit <http://www.clevelandheights.com/publications.asp>.

ECO-CONSCIOUS

Arbonne certified vegan herbal foot and hand creams (Salon DM, \$16)

Earth Elements eco yoga mats by Hugger Muggger (Atma Center, \$41.95 - \$44.95)

local zine Green Light (Mac's Backs, \$2)

Envirosax shopping totes (Simply Charming, \$8)

Recycled banner totes (Simply Charming, \$40)

Gift certificate to eco-conscious auto repair, the Lusty Wrench (any denomination or to cover a particular service, such as an oil change)

SPORTS ENTHUSIAST

Yoga gift certificate (Atma Center)

Classic Browns: The 50 Greatest Games in Cleveland Browns History by Jonathan Knight (Mac's Backs, \$16.95)

Football Guys. Used by coaches for training, the set's 30 plus pieces include two football teams, refs, goalposts and felt playing field in an easy carry storage box. (Sunbeam Shop, \$22.00)

PET LOVERS

Dancing Paws Nutritional Supplement products for dogs & cats. (Atma Center, \$11.20 - \$25.40)

Dewey: The Small-Town Library Cat Who Touched the World by Vicki Myron (Mac's Backs, \$19.99)

Donnamarie Brown's homemade dog biscuits. Stop by for vegetarian and meat recipes and gift wrap, then buy the ingredients at Zagara's and box them up for a unique gift (\$3-\$4 per box to make).

Biodegradable pet waste bags available with holders in many styles and colors that attach to your leash so they're ready when you need them. (Abstract Hair Salon)

ART LOVER

Check out the Heights Arts Holiday Store, 2173 Lee Road next to the Cedar Lee Theater for many one-of-a-kind items by local artists.

Beautiful Peace Dove vase, Tapio Wirkkala, Rosenthal, 1070's (BOOM Modern)

COWORKER/NEIGHBORS

Sarva Soaps handmade botanicals made in the Heights (Atma Center, \$5 - \$9)

Fun Luggage Tag (Simply Charming, \$6-\$10)

Luxurious vegan bath bars. Choose from two special holiday scents, Black Orchid Cassis or Star Jasmine Tuberose (Salon DM, \$20 for a set of two)

Decorative Kitchen Towel with cake/cookie mix (Simply Charming, \$20)

COLLEGE STUDENT

Yoga gift certificate (Atma Center, student discounts!)

Tutela Fabric Purse (Simply Charming, \$38)

Hoyden backpack (Simply Charming, \$29)

SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Yoga gift certificates for healthy New Year's resolutions! (Green Tara Yoga & Healing Arts)

One-of-a-kind scarves hand made in the Heights from "up-cycled" vintage linens (\$18 each, <http://hiannie.etsy.com>)

German Bar Cart, 1950's, great for holiday entertaining! Happy New Year! (BOOM Modern)

Antique jewelry box (Abrash, \$250)

BEST FRIEND

Beautiful, modernist enamel pendant any modern girl would love by Miriam Peck. (BOOM Modern)

Rescued and Re-loved jewelry by Shannon Morris. Hip and affordable (HeightsArts Holiday Store, \$18-60)

Fun Lipstick, Pill or ID Cases (Simply Charming, \$12-\$17)

A Ticket to Ride by Paula McClain (Mac's Backs, \$24.95)

MOM

Handmade sweater (Abrash, \$390)

Some Things That Stay by Sarah Willis (Mac's Backs, \$15.00)

First Darling of the Morning and *A Space Between Us* by Thrity Umrigar (Mac's Backs, \$14.95 each)

'Bout Time by Joan Southgate (Mac's Backs, \$14.95)

Trollbeads or Chamilia Charm Bracelet (Simply Charming, starts at \$23 per sterling bead)

DAD

ZenR clocks (Atma Center, \$109.95 - \$119.95)

King of the Holly Hop by Les Roberts (Mac's Backs, \$24.95)

Knoll's Chicklet Chair, Santa would be soooooo comfortable! (BOOM Modern)

KIDS

Gift membership to Heights Parent Center's Toy Lending Library. Over 500 toys for newborns up to age 7. (\$40 for a full year)

Annual pass to Heights Parent Center's drop-in Play and Learn sessions. (\$75 or 12 coupons for \$40)

Boys of Steel: The Creators of Superman by Marc Tyler Nobleman illustrated by Ross MacDonald (ages 10-14, Mac's Backs, \$16.99)

Elf on the Shelf, keepsake book and toy. This retro elf can sit on any shelf or perch in your house to watch over your family and report back to Santa every night about who has been naughty and who has been nice. (Sunbeam Shop, \$32)

Penelope Peapod. A tiny baby nestles in a colorfully lined wicker basket. When you flip up the cloth sides and pull the drawstrings the doll bed becomes a purse! (Sunbeam Shop, \$44)

New Playsam toy cars from Playsam, Sweden. Big and small kids love them! (BOOM Modern)

TEEN

VIVA clay bracelet; unisex bracelets & necklaces; Charm It bracelets with charm (Simply Charming, \$7.50 - \$48)

Lego style IPOD speaker. Plug any style IPOD into this lego style brick and share your music with your friends. (Sunbeam Shop, \$24)

Shiny, sparkly lip glosses in six sheer shades (Salon DM, \$10 each)

Sugar scrubs in four scents to match your personality - Vivacious, Mysterious, Ambitious and Flirtatious (Salon DM)

SENIOR CITIZEN

Yoga gift certificate (Atma Center, senior discounts!)

Frame kid art, family photos, memorabilia, and more. A 5" x 7" piece can be framed into a finished size of 8" x 10" for under \$75, including a rag mat and ultra violet (non-fading) glass, which includes a wide range of frame choices. (Wood Trader)

Make a Plate, a family classic since 1969, comes with special art paper and felt markers for your child to create artwork that is returned to the manufacturer and made into a sturdy, dishwasher safe plate. (Sunbeam Shop, \$16.50)

UNDER \$25

Salon DM manicure gift cards (\$19.40 tax included) and French Manicure gift cards (\$21.55 tax included)

Pre-packaged Arbonne Ginger Citrus body scrub and body butter (\$15, Salon DM, \$15)

OM T-shirts, Atma Center T-shirts, imported OM scarves (Atma Center)

Desk or Wall Calendars (Simply Charming, \$16-\$25)

Floral print EMB sling bag from India (Revive Fair Trade, \$22)

Tin Jack-in-the-box, just like the one you had when you were a kid (Big Fun, \$25)

UNDER \$10

OM stickers, Hindu comic books, or OM coin purses (Atma Center)

Bendini (Simply Charming, \$7)

Koonin Pet Keychain (Simply Charming, \$10)

Hand-blown glass ornaments from India (Revive Fair Trade, \$9)

Paddle ball, Jacks (made in Vienna, OH), Pick Up Sticks, and Duncan Yo-yo's (Big Fun, \$2.50-\$5)

Silly Christmas hats; get in the spirit! (Big Fun, \$7.50 and under)

PERSON WHO HAS EVERYTHING

"Smoke" series vessels by Rene Culler Glass, LLC. Each one-of-a-kind object begins with a plate of fused glass that is rolled up and sealed to make a bubble, which is then twisted to give a smoky effect. (Heights Arts Holiday Store, \$600-\$625)

Punk Rock and Trailer Parks by Derf (Mac's Backs, \$15.95)

Students for a Democratic Society by Harvey Pekar (Mac's Backs, \$22)

Awake at the End: A Heights Poet Laureate Anthology (Mac's Backs, \$14.00)

With all of these wonderful gift ideas, maybe you still can't find what you're looking for? Give FutureHeights gift certificates this season. They are available in \$5 to \$50 denominations and can be used at over 100 local merchants. Purchase at Zagara's, Mac's Backs, Heights Arts Holiday Store, the FutureHeights office, 2163 Lee Road, 216-320-1423.

Shown right, top to bottom:

1. Glass blown ornament from Revive
2. Weller coppertone vase from BOOM Modern
3. EMB Sling Bag from Revive
4. Culler Mosaic vases at Heights Arts
5. Lip gloss by Salon DM
6. Handmade sweaters from Abrash
7. German bar cart from BOOM Modern



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Taste: an inventive addition to Lee Road menu

Christina Klenotic

Taste, Lee Road's newest restaurant addition in Cleveland Heights, has masterfully revamped the former Wine Room space as a swanky bar and dining area that serves fresh French fusion dishes.

Helmed by French executive chef, Anthony Vicente, who brings extensive pastry training to the kitchen, Taste offers an inventive menu with locally sourced ingredients.

Our party was delighted with the prix fixe menu option, which includes choice of appetizer, entrée, dessert and two glasses of wine for \$45...a good value. On the contrary, we thought the four pieces of bread (\$1.50), was a bit much to ask.

The table's ringing endorsement for an appetizer included the chilled, glazed chicken spring rolls (\$9), which embodied a soft, crepe exterior and a crispy center. The red beet carpaccio salad with goat cheese crumbs, mini prosciutto crisps and curry dressing (\$8) also was quite good.

The staff-recommended rack of lamb with cumin mashed carrots (\$22) was a perfect pairing. The lamb was tender and succulent, and the carrots carried a hint of spice. However, of the two people in our party who ordered this entrée, one had a normal portion and the other longed for more than three forkfuls of meat from the bone.

The veggie *chausson* (French for "slipper") with balsamic sauce (\$15) provided a deliciously flaky crust. And, the



Taste revamped the former Wine Bar space on Lee Road.

scallops were beautifully presented over leeks and a creamy roasted red pepper coulis (\$18).

Vicente's pastry expertise shines through expressive desserts such as the surprising mildly spiced red bell pepper cheesecake (\$9) and the pistachio *flot-tante* (\$7), which featured delicious meringue fluffs in a soupy pistachio cream with a caramelized sugar drizzle.

Servings were more European portion-sized, than small plates. After sampling an appetizer and entree each, we still had room for dessert.

Taste offers a nice selection of wines

by the glass and bottle. The restaurant utilizes a wine preservation system to serve wines by the glass, which eliminates spoiling.

Staff was very knowledgeable about the menu's offerings, however, timing was very slow...more than 2.5 hours for the prix fixe option, which we'll chalk up to opening week kinks. We did notice that other tables were turned far more quickly and made note of our table's timing on the survey form provided with our check.

On a snowy Friday night, a mix of clientele filled the restaurant, and an



The chef's pastry expertise shines in expressive desserts.

TASTE
2317 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights
216.932.3170
Closed Monday
5 p.m. to 1 a.m. Tuesday-Sunday
(Kitchen open until 10 p.m.)
<http://www.tasteofwines.com/>

interesting selection of music provided a nice backdrop, without overbearing our table's conversation.

Per our server, Taste has no immediate plans for lunch. The menu is expected to rotate every one to two months to highlight seasonal dishes.

Taste is open for dinner Tuesday through Sunday, and the bar offers extended hours until 1 a.m. Parking is provided in the back of the restaurant. On chilly nights, the rear entrance is particularly convenient.

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.

The donut man, Tom Sperl



Every year, Tom Sperl, bassist for the Cleveland Orchestra and Scarborough Road resident, invites several hundred of his closest friends, associates and absolute strangers to a donut party on his front lawn. Orchestra folks, church friends, Oberlin bass students, neighborhood pals and an occasional politician turn up to enjoy hot, fresh donuts with delicious toppings, hot cider and coffee. Sperl's donut machine makes approximately 400 donuts per hour. Photographer Jay Levan took these photos of the Sperl family's annual gift to the community. More photos at phodoz.com.

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Whole Foods offers free events throughout holiday season

Jared Earley

Whole Foods Market, proud winner of the 2008 Best of the Heights Award for “Favorite University Heights Business,” has announced a calendar of community events for December at its Cedar Center location. All of the events are free.

On Saturday, Dec. 6, from 1-4 p.m., Whole Foods will host “Festive Flavors: Wintertime Edition.” It’s a storewide sampling of seasonal products, from hot cocoa and holiday hors d’oeuvres to traditional dishes and freshly baked desserts. Live cooking demonstrations and holiday entertainment will also be provided. No registration is required.

“Quest for Cooking” will be held every Tuesday throughout December from 7-8 p.m. This weekly cooking class is a way to freshen up old holiday traditions. With entertaining instruction and free samples, each class offers a different menu. On Dec. 2, Guest Chef Eric Colby, from the Osteria, will lead “Holiday Entertaining 101.” On Dec. 9, actress Elizabeth Ann Townsend, from the Cleveland Play House production of “A Christmas Story,” will join Whole Foods’ “Demo Dave” for “Christmas Feasts.” “Hannukah Feasts” will be featured on Dec. 16, and “Kwan-

zaa Feasts” is the menu for Dec. 23. Reservations are recommended.

On Wednesday, Dec. 17, from 7-8:30 p.m., budget-conscious quality-minded shoppers can attend the “Holiday Value Tour.” This event offers tips for bargain hunting and discovering high-quality specials, store brands, and seasonal savings at Whole Foods Market. Attendees receive complimentary samples and a free goodie bag. Reservations are recommended.

To make reservations, visit the store’s customer service desk, or call 216-932-3918. For more information visit www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/cleveland/storecalendar.php.

Jared Earley is a marketing specialist at Whole Foods Market, located at 13998 Cedar Road in University Heights.



Customers enjoy popular seasonal samples at Whole Foods Market’s store-wide event.

COURTESY OF WHOLE FOODS MARKET - CEDAR CENTER

Rare holiday film screening to benefit families in need



Dick Van Dyke and Norman Fell star in United Artists’ FITZWILLY.

COURTESY OF UNITED ARTISTS

and Dec. 7 at 7 p.m.

In this charming film, Van Dyke stars as Fitzwilly, the dedicated butler of a philanthropic widow. His employer’s generosity is causing Fitzwilly tremendous grief, however, as she doesn’t realize that she has no more money. Each time she writes a check to a charity, it’s up to Fitzwilly and the house staff to pull off a scheme to get the cash to cover the expense. Fitzwilly coordinates one final heist to rob a department store on Christmas Eve before he turns over a new leaf.

“This is a truly rare chance to see this film since it’s not available on DVD,” says Ken Young, Cleveland Cinemas director of operations. “Not only will people get to see a classic film but they’ll also be helping out families in need this holiday season.”

Admission will be \$5 or the donation of a new winter hat, scarf or pair of gloves. All donated clothing will benefit the Center for Families and Children’s Adopt-a-Family program. Donated items must be new with tags.

The Cedar Lee Theatre is located at 2163 Lee Road. Tickets and more information are available at www.clevelandcinemas.com. Donated clothing items can be exchanged at the Cedar Lee Theatre box office for tickets to either showing now.

David Huffman is director of marketing for the Cleveland Cinemas.

Journey to Bethlehem

Ronald Werman

On Sunday, Dec. 14, continuously from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., Disciples Christian Church will present Journey to Bethlehem, a walk-through drama that recreates the sights and sounds of Bethlehem’s marketplace at the time of Christ’s birth.

Before you enter Bethlehem, have an audience with King Herod and then be counted in the census. Once in Bethlehem, interact with street merchants as well as view some animals. Watch craftsmen at their work and be prodded along by Roman guards. Listen while townspeople, shepherds and other biblical characters set the stage for the discovery of the newborn baby in the stable. As you wait your turn to enter Bethlehem, you could be entertained by the No Strings Attached puppets. You could also listen to performances by the church’s Chancel Choir or soloists and participate in a Christmas carol sing-along.

Disciples Christian Church, 3663 Mayfield Road (at Yellowstone across from Severance Town Center), has offered this free gift to the community since 1981. For more information, visit www.discipleschristian.org or call 216-382-5344.

Ron Werman is a Cleveland Heights resident and member, elder, choir member and communications chairperson of Disciples Christian Church.

Heights Youth Club is a Good Time for Kids

Tylynn Alexander

The Heights’ Youth Club is a place where younger and older kids can expand their mind. The Heights’ Youth Club means a lot to a lot of children of all kinds. One of the directors that makes sure most kids are involved is Mrs. Williams. For me, basketball was my escape - that’s when I met another director, Jeff Haynes, who told me about the new basketball team they were beginning to start. I slowly made my name to the top of the ladder. Sometime in the future I would love to play for Roscoe Morgan’s team - Mr. Morgan is the club’s director. So really if not for the Heights’ Youth Club I probably would be incarcerated somewhere doing things that would never cross my mind.

So, the experience that I’ve had with the Heights’ Youth Club has always been brilliant. In ending, the Heights’ Youth Club means so much for me and more than likely a lot of other kids who are trying to have a good time.

Tylynn Alexander is 14 years old and a member of Heights Youth Club.

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Ringing in the holidays



River Valley Ringers perform at the 2007 CircleFest.

Mazie Adams

Ring in the holidays with the River Valley Ringers! River Valley Ringers is an auditioned community handbell choir of ten accomplished musicians with long histories of performing throughout the area.

Founded in 2006 by Artistic Director Elizabeth Lucas, the River Valley Ringers have performed at Severance Hall, CircleFest, the Jennings Center, the Cleveland Clinic and a variety of churches in the Heights area. Ringing three octaves of handbells and handchimes, the ensemble creates wonderful music throughout the year.

Join the River Valley Ringers during their 2008 Holiday Concert series. The group will be ringing holiday favorites familiar to all and beautiful pieces new to many. You have three opportunities to catch the holiday spirit. RVR will be "Ringing In the Holidays" on Saturday, Dec. 7 during CircleFest at Judson Manor at 1 p.m. and again at 3:15 p.m.; on Friday, Dec. 12 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church (3740 Mayfield Road, at Crest) at 7:30 p.m. (please bring a canned good); or again on Saturday, Dec. 13 at the Lee Road Library at 2:30 p.m.

For more information or additional concert dates, contact Elizabeth Lucas at 216 321-2528 or rivervalleyringers@sbcglobal.net.

Mazie Adams is a member of the River Valley Ringers and a Cleveland Heights resident.

Advertise in the Heights Observer
216-320-1423

Celebrate the holidays at CityMusic, Cleveland's free concert

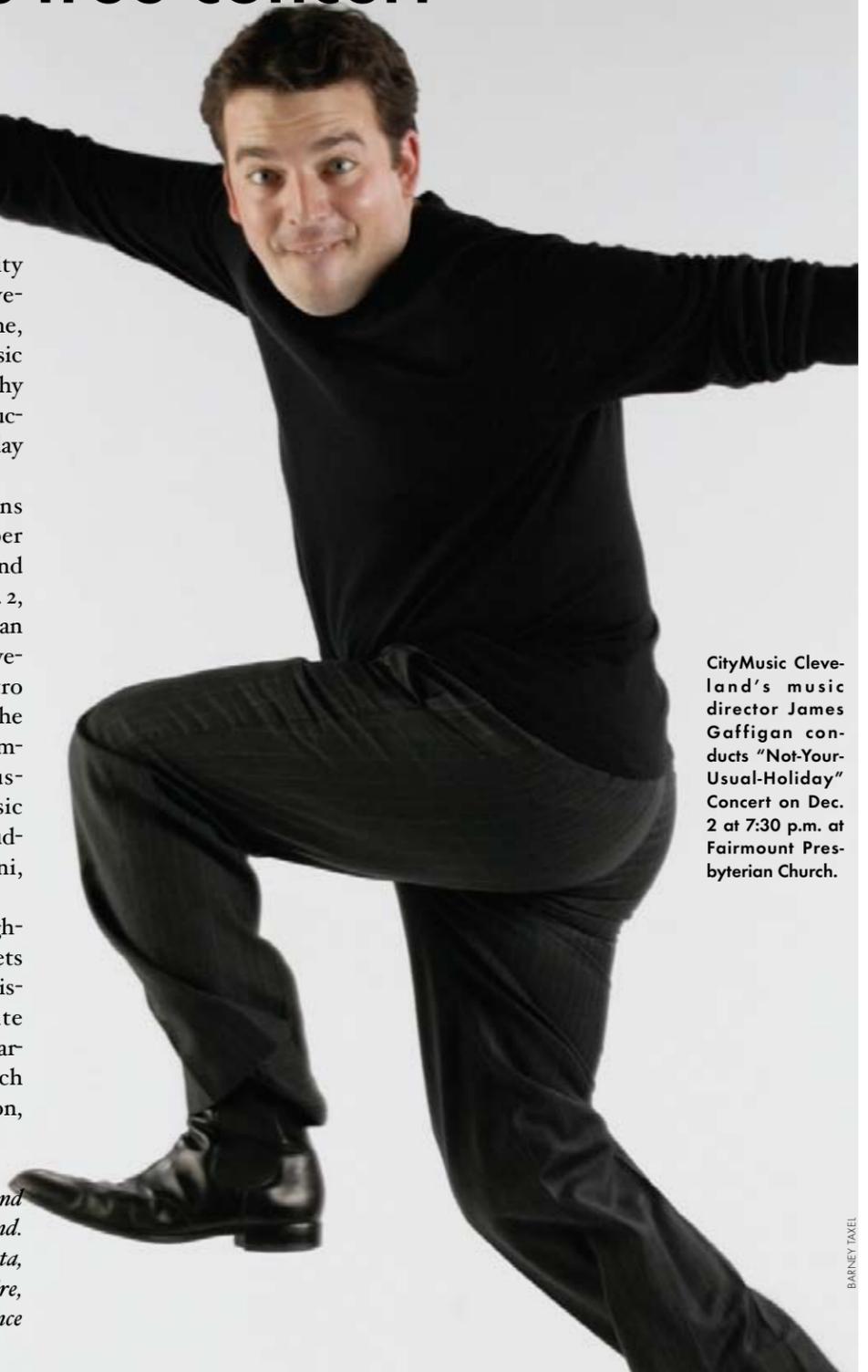
Beverly Simmons

With a mission to build community through the arts, CityMusic Cleveland offers music to please everyone, whether you're new to classical music or a seasoned concertgoer. That's why CityMusic's annual wintertime production is called "Not-Your-Usual-Holiday Concert."

Join the high-energy musicians of CityMusic's professional chamber orchestra to enjoy delightful music and meet your neighbors on Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 7:30 p.m., at Fairmount Presbyterian Church (2757 Fairmount Blvd., Cleveland Heights). Prize-winning maestro James Gaffigan, who, according to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "mixes uncommon sensitivity with spontaneous-combustion energy," conducts music by a wide range of composers, including Lully, Gounod, Corelli, Rossini, Beethoven, Schubert and Sibelius.

Bring children, family and neighbors. Everyone is welcome; no tickets are required. And during the intermission reception, enjoy the exquisite photography of Diane Schwartz. To arrange for free childcare, call the church at 216-321-5800. For more information, visit citymusiccleveland.org.

Beverly Simmons is marketing director (and one of the founders) of CityMusic Cleveland. She is half of the cabaret duo Rent-a-Yenta, sings with Quire Cleveland, Apollo's Fire, and Bethaynu Synagogue, and is a free-lance graphic designer.



CityMusic Cleveland's music director James Gaffigan conducts "Not-Your-Usual-Holiday" Concert on Dec. 2 at 7:30 p.m. at Fairmount Presbyterian Church.

New book reveals one woman's journey through pain, abuse and suffering



Kelly Chapman found joy and inner peace.

Kathleen Larue Dorsey

Cleveland Heights resident and national recording artist Kelly Chapman began her journey as a young teenager "hookin' up" in a Detroit hotel room, followed by single motherhood interspersed with terminated pregnancies, irresponsible use of drugs and alcohol, poor judgment and abusive men. Now, Chapman is a beautiful, highly successful business executive who follows her faith, not her heart, in choosing the path to healthy relationships.

Her recently released book "Real, The Truth about Being Single with Kelly Chapman" and companion debut CD, have captured the hearts of singles across the US with its personal recounting of her painful experiences with sex and relationships resulting in a profound personal transformation. In this highly impassioned account, Kelly reveals how singles can find joy and inner peace in their lives despite longing for an intimate relationship.

Chapman shares her journey with candor, humor, and relentless faith. She does not preach abstinence, but shares the pitfalls of physical intimacy, as often

it is not linked to emotional intimacy or lifetime commitment. Focus on getting right, with yourself, she urges, rather than getting right with a man.

Filled with personal examples of her challenging relationships, some readers will identify with every word. For others, it will be a source of hope and encouragement, regardless of age or situation in life. For all, it will compel us to examine the perils of our own human longings and understand that our deliverance lies in a faith greater than ourselves.

"This is not a book for those who are blessed to be able to call themselves a 'satisfied single,'" says Chapman, "this is a book for those who are struggling with the wait."

Chapman will sing and sign books Thursday, Dec. 4 at Borders in Cleveland Heights, 3466 Mayfield Rd., from 7 to 9 p.m. She will also be in concert Friday, Dec. 26 at Nighttown, 12387 Cedar Rd. The concert begins at 8 p.m. Please visit her web site at www.kellychapman.net.

Kathleen Larue Dorsey is a marketing communications professional who resides in University Heights. She is single.

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Stan Soble



Handel's Messiah with Apollo's Fire, the Cleveland Baroque Orchestra

David Budin

In the past 16 years, how many Cleveland orchestras have performed all over this country and have been heard regularly on four countries' national radio networks? One. And it's not the Cleveland Orchestra. It's Apollo's Fire.

Since its inception in 1992, the Cleveland Heights-based Apollo's Fire, this region's Early Music ensemble – specializing in music of the Renaissance, Baroque and early Classical periods – has appeared in nearly 15 major North American cities and has been heard on National Public Radio, Britain's BBC, Canada's CBC, and European Community Radio. (The Cleveland Orchestra, which gets around, too, performs frequently in Europe, but in this country, outside of Cleveland, it plays mostly in Miami and New York.)

Apollo's Fire has also recorded and released 13 CDs, including a 1996 recording of Handel's Messiah that was recorded in 1994 and 1995. Founding musical director and conductor Jeanette Sorrell will lead Apollo's Fire in the Messiah, Parts I, II and III, again this month, in performances that will be recorded for a new CD. This year will mark the 13th time Apollo's Fire has performed the full Messiah. This year's concerts feature the four nationally known soloists who performed the Messiah with Apollo's Fire in 2006: soprano Amanda Forsythe, tenor Ian Honeyman, mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Shammash and baritone Jeffrey Strauss.

Apollo's Fire's Messiah may be unlike any you've heard before because it probably approaches the original in its size, scale and timbre. Its authenticity provides a unique opportunity in this region.

"In the two-and-a-half centuries since Messiah was written," says music director Sorrell, "it has become a monument of western civilization – a musical icon of Anglo-American culture. The aesthetic of 'bigger is better' has colored our impression of Messiah for nearly 200 years now. In 1859, for instance, Messiah was performed with a chorus of 2,765 and an orchestra of 460. The coldness and anonymity of the high-tech age have made their mark on our soci-

ety, leaving many of us with a longing for intimacy and individual personality. The fact that Apollo's Fire performs Messiah on period instruments is not what matters. But if we can move you to tears – if we can make you see 'All Heaven before you, and the great God himself' – then we will have achieved real authenticity."

"The Pittsburgh Post Gazette called Apollo's Fire's version 'The Messiah we've been waiting for.' The Sun Press said, 'This Messiah sparkled. It danced. It moved. And it brought the sold-out crowd to its feet.'"

David Budin is a freelance writer living in Cleveland Heights.

The Messiah schedule is:

Tuesday, December 9, 7:30 p.m.
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1361 West Market Street, Akron.

Wednesday, December 10, 7:30 p.m.
Christ Presbyterian Church
530 Tuscarawas West, Canton.
(Call 330-456-8113 for tickets for this performance.)

Thursday, December 11, 7:30 p.m.
Trinity Cathedral
2230 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland.

Friday & Saturday, December 12 & 13, 8:00 p.m.
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
2747 Fairmount Blvd., Cleveland Heights.

Sunday, December 14, 4:00 p.m.
Rocky River United Methodist Church
19414 Detroit Road, Rocky River.

Tickets, \$25-\$60, are available at 216-320-0012, 800-314-2535 and www.apollofire.org. Discounts are available for students, seniors and adults under 30.

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Left to right: Cleveland Heights residents Tamar Flesher, Sofie Madorsky, and Alee Sonkin, rehearse with JCC Playmakers Director Sherri Gross for *The Sound of Music*. Performances are Dec. 11-14 and 18-21. For tickets, please call the box office at 216-831-0700, x1230. \$10 General, \$8 JCC Members, Seniors and Students.

Heights History: Picture This!



Did you know that John D. Rockefeller's summer estate, called The Homestead, stood in what is now Forest Hills Park (right at the top of the great sledding hill)? Find out more at www.chhistory.org. The Cleveland Heights Historical Society promotes the history of our community through public programs, an informative website and fact-filled newsletters. Join today!

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CH revitalization effort seeks to stabilize neighborhood

Deanna Bremer Fisher

The city of Cleveland Heights has chosen a troubled section of East Derbyshire Road, one block between Lee Road and Cottage Grove Road, as the focus of a housing initiative that will convert existing two-family homes into renovated condominiums.

The innovative concept converts sturdy, well-built 1920s duplexes of approximately 2,500 square feet on each side and transforms them to modern condominiums without losing their historic charm.

The goal is to create a broader mix of incomes and a higher concentration of owner-occupied homes on the street. Currently, only 12 of the 46 homes on the block are owner-occupied.

Offering \$20,000 in down payment assistance to qualified buyers, and 100% tax abatement, the city is also offering \$5,000 for landscaping improvements in the target area.

“Since 1998 with the introduction of Section 8 [the federal housing program now known as the Housing Choice Voucher Program], this section of East Derbyshire became primarily low-

income rental housing,” explained Rick Wagner, housing manager for the city of Cleveland Heights during an October FutureHeights tour of its first completed unit. “We saw a marked increase in drugs, violence and police reports.”

Decreased housing prices due to the current economic downturn has enabled the city, with a budget of \$750,000 in Community Development Block Grant Funds, to purchase three of the two-family properties and begin renovation and remarketing to owner-occupants.

The condominium agreement worked out when the First Suburbs

Consortium converted an up and down double into side by side condos on Beachwood Avenue a couple of years ago gave the city a legal model for condo conversion of its duplexes.

When the city sells its first renovated unit, the proceeds will be recycled into the program enabling the purchase of additional homes on the block.

Cleveland Heights has 13,000 single family homes within its boundaries, 1,260 doubles and 386 apartment buildings.

According to Wagner, currently 150 housing units are in active foreclosure, 200 or more have no recorded deed and 373 are bank owned.

The city hopes that concentrated programs like the East Derbyshire initiative will turn the street around. If it is successful, there are other areas the city would like to target.

“We’ve already seen improvements,” said Wagner. “Police calls are down by half.”

For more information about this and the city’s other housing programs, call Lori Sanford, housing counselor for the city of Cleveland Heights, at 216-291-4869.

Deanna Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights and a 15-year resident of Cleveland Heights.



Most of the homes in city’s target area are two-family structures.



CH Housing Director Rick Wagner leads a tour of city-owned condo conversions on East Derbyshire.

NEW YEAR from page 1

Given this rejection, City Council has been forced to make numerous cuts. Councilman Mark Tumeo has been actively involved in the budgeting process.

“The tough economic times have hurt many people. We’ve been forced to cut non-essential government activities, including crossing guards and a reduction in leaf pick-up,” said Tumeo.

The city eventually worked out a compromise with the schools to maintain the crossing guards as an issue of public safety. Council has also stopped pay raises for city employees and increased many fees throughout the city.

City Hall employees are bearing the brunt of difficult times. Many are carrying two job duties, including the current assistant city manager. Council has combined the jobs to help save on salaries. To their credit, city employees are doing their part to keep the city strong, but this model is not sustainable as the city risks employee burn out.

Dozens of other cuts have been made throughout city departments. Nevertheless, these cuts may only be

the tip of the iceberg. Council estimates that city revenues will once again be flat and perhaps even down in 2009.

Over the past several months Council has worked to shore up the budget. Expenditures appear to be less than income for 2009 with some caveats. Fewer resources will be spent in 2009 on purchasing, as larger items will be put off until revenues become available. In addition, the city will be looking into more joint-cooperation models with surrounding communities, including University Heights.

On the positive front, City Hall continues to look to the future. Tumeo indicated that Taylor Road will see improvements and paving in 2010 and 2011. These projects had been in the pipeline before the economic meltdown and are scheduled to be executed as planned. Future capital improvement projects are also planned for Monticello and other portions of the city’s infrastructure.

In addition, the city continues to work to address the foreclosure crisis. Councilman Dennis Wilcox indicated that the city has been working to ac-

quire vacant properties and is partnering with the Home Repair Resource Center to rehabilitate and sell them. This will strategically impact areas with high vacancy rates.

Council will focus more intently in 2009 on redevelopment of the “top of the hill,” an economic artery for Cleveland Heights. Much of the city’s efforts will go towards developing a plan for this area. Other economic development activities continue.

2009 will be filled with many of the same struggles of this past year. City Hall will once again be forced to make tough budget decisions.

“This has not been a positive experience for Cleveland Heights and has involved too much pain for residents with the loss of homes and jobs. It has been very traumatic for many. However, when this is over, Cleveland Heights will be able to come out of this downturn quickly and strongly and we will be a stronger community in the end,” said Tumeo.

Toby Rittner lives on Coleridge Road and is an active community volunteer.

Surprise Visit!



On Nov. 21, the students of Open Doors Academy were stunned by the arrival of a surprise guest, movie star Will Smith.

The students had been told that a very special guest would be visiting them, but had no idea who it might be. A hundred students and alumni of Open Doors gathered in the basement of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, with cameras poised, ready for anything.

Read the whole story and see more photos online at www.heightsobserver.org.

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Reds, whites and rosès

Finding quality wines at affordable prices

Loren Sonkin

Good wine doesn't have to be expensive, and you don't have to go far to find it. In this tough economy, who doesn't want to indulge in an inexpensive luxury. Recently I found the following at my neighborhood grocer:

2007 RUFFINO ORVIETO CLASSICO

Orvieto is the name of a style of wine from the Italian province of Umbria. It is also the name of a medieval hilltop town between Florence and Rome. Wine has been made here for thousands of years. At one time, this was one of the most famous wines in all of Italy. Ruffino is one of the largest and oldest producers in Italy having celebrated their 130th anniversary in 2007. They have been making their Orvieto Classico wine since the 1950's. It is a blend of the following grapes: Grechetto 50%, Procanico 30%, Verdello 10%, and Canaiolo Bianco 10%.

Ruffino's Orvieto is light green/gold in color, clear and bright. It has clean cit-

rusy scents. This is easy to drink. It has a refreshing lime essence and a slightly acidic character that makes it light and spry. While it is nice to drink on its own, don't be afraid to match it with food too. This would be good with pasta primavera or risotto con calamari.

2007 BODEGAS ATECA GARNACHA DE FUEGO

This slickly packaged wine comes from Catalyud in the region of Aragon in north central Spain. It is the project of leading Spanish importer Jorge Ordóñez and the Gil family of Spain, famous for great values. The wine is made from gnarly Garnacha grape vines that are between 60 and 80 years old. This is a grape that is indigenous to Spain. It has spread around the world where it is called Grenache.

Garnacha de Fuego is an inky purple color in the glass turning magenta at the rim. It has scents of raspberries with a

dusting of cocoa powder. This is smooth and easy to drink. The wine is produced without oak and is made to be drunk young. Yet, because these grapes came from older vines, the wine has a layered complexity that makes its low price surprising. It has flavors of raspberries with some tart cherries especially on the



finish. An almost, but not quite, candied aspect to this wine makes it great for sipping alone. This is not a heavy wine and would pair well with chicken or perhaps vegetable lasagna. It is another example of the incredible quality value priced wines that has made Spain the hottest wine producing region on the planet!

Both of these wines were purchased at Zagara's on Lee Road and each cost \$8.99.

Loren Sonkin is an attorney in private practice and dreams of traveling the world visiting wineries. He lives and works in Cleveland Heights and is a regular contributor to www.IntoWine.com.

Offerings from Home Repair Resource Center

Rebecca Stager

Home Repair Resource Center offers free home repair workshops, with "hands-on" practice using tools and techniques. Most classes will be held at HRRC's Teaching Center, 2520 Noble Road (two blocks north of Monticello, at the corner of Oxford). The workshops are limited to Cleveland Heights residents and reservations are requested; call 381-9560 to save your spot.

Intro to Electricity: What electricity is, how it comes to your home and is distributed to your appliances, how to compute the load on your circuits and how to work safely with electricity (this lecture class must be taken before other electrical workshops). **MON., JAN. 5, 7 - 9 P.M.**

Basic Electrical Repairs: How to replace single-pole switches and outlets (including GFCIs) and install simple fixtures. **MON., JAN. 12, 7 - 9 P.M.**

Intermediate Electrical Repairs (2-part class): How to run wires

through finished walls, add or change circuits, install more complex fixtures and three-way switches, and correct overloaded circuits. **TUES., JAN. 20 AND MON., JAN. 26, 7 - 9 P.M.**

Advanced Electrical Repairs: How to update your service panel (and replace your old fuse boxes with circuit breakers) and install 220-volt lines and outlets for appliances. **MON., FEB. 2, 7 - 9 P.M.**

Doorbells & Other Low-Voltage Systems: How to install and repair low-voltage systems (like doorbells, telephone wiring and landscape lighting), easily and safely. **MON., FEB. 9, 7 - 9 P.M.**

Wet Basements: How water can enter a basement, and how you may be able to keep it out – without an expensive dig-down around the foundation or channels through your basement walls. **MON., FEB. 23, 7 - 9 P.M.**

During January and February, HRRC will hold two of its interactive financial fitness classes through the city schools. Residents of Cleveland Heights and University Heights who

are interested in attending **Power of a Personal Budget** or **Improving Your Credit** are invited to call 216-381-6100 for dates and locations.

HRRC's House Mender University series is open to residents of all communities. RSVP to 216-381-9560:

Repairing Special Features in Older Houses: How to find products and specialized craftsmen who can help preserve the unique details of an older home. Jamie Phillips-Bertram, Cleveland Restoration Society. **THURS., JAN. 29, 7 - 9 P.M.**

Tips from a Handyman: Suggestions from a handyman with decades of experience. Speaker, Jack Kleinman. **THURS., FEB. 26, 7 - 9 P.M.**

Becky Stager has been the Home Repair Education Coordinator at HRRC since 1989. Visit Home Repair Resource Center's website at www.hrcc-ch.org or call 381-6100 for more information on programs and services.

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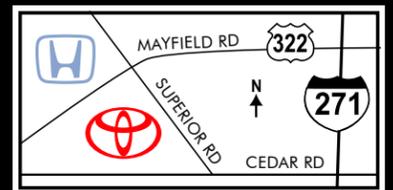
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