The Observer focuses on stories that are hyper-local and citizen-driven. “Anyone can write about anything that is important to them,” says Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. “Most of our writers are regular citizens with experience in every profession except journalism. They write because they care about what is happening in our community, and we take a light hand in editing to allow the author’s voice to shine through.”

“We’ve made plenty of mistakes this first year,” admits Bremer Fisher, “but that’s all part of the learning process.” The nonprofit organization launched the www.futurehearts.org Web site and newspaper to fulfill goals determined during a comprehensive strategic planning process. The group plans to be a catalyst for public discourse, to be a community advocate, to keep residents informed, to promote citizen involvement, to reflect diversity and to improve the overall quality of life for residents.

“We might not have 100,000 people reading the Heights Observer every week, but those who do are passionate about the issues,” Bremer Fisher says. “We want to know what’s going on and be an active participant in it.”

“We’re off to a great start and this is just the beginning,” she concludes. “We’re proud to present you with a great edition of the Heights Observer and look forward to reading it every month.”

FutureHeights will celebrate the project’s one-year anniversary at its upcoming annual meeting. Author and former senior editor for The New Binker, Charles Michener, will be the keynote speaker. Current and prospective members are encouraged to attend.

Free health care from RAM Ohio
Sam Heide

Cleveland boasts some of the strongest medical resources in the country but has thousands of residents who go without necessary medical treatment. Cleveland Heights resident Zac Ponsky is doing something to change that.

He is organizing many of the area’s Cleveland Heights is especially accommodating among Heights-area communities because residents place their trash on treetrunks in flimsy plastic garbage bags. “Feast for a king!”

Continued on page 3

Free health care
from RAM Ohio

continued on page 4

SkunkFest ’09 comes to Heights
Greg Donley

Greg Donley

It’s a tradition as old as the hills. Every year during the first week of April, the participants appear as if from nowhere to partake in that fabulously fragrant phenomenon known as SkunkFest.

“SkunkFest ’09 is kind of like our own version of Mardi Gras,” says Anna Roma, marketing coordinator for the festival. “It takes your mind off those long months of hibernation. It’s good to get out and just shake your tail a bit.”

“Anyone can write about anything that are hyper-local and citizen-driven,” saysBremer Fisher, author’s voice to shine through.

Goodwin help out in the office.

Continued on page 3
Clustered parishes are a new way for church

With the recent announcement of Catholic church closures and mergers splashed across the pages of local newspapers, we are all being forced to look forward to a new reality in our community. As members of the team of parishioners from Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland that submitted the recommendation to the Bishop, we have been in dialogue about these realities for more than a year and a half. These realities led us to recommend the creation of a single parish serving the area with two worship sites, one at Saint Ann in Cleveland Heights, and one at St. Philomena in East Cleveland. This decision, however, is much more than a destination, it is a journey for all of us. On Sunday, March 22, FatherWallach led a prayer and reflection service for approximately 250 parishioners from the four parishes involved in the merger of the Cleveland Heights and East Cleveland cluster. This discussion centered on death, grieving, letting go and rising to a new and resurgent life. We came together, we prayed together, we may have shed a tear or two together, and we broke bread together.

We shared stories of the importance of the Church as we grew up, how we received our Sacraments, buried loved ones, the happy memories, the sad ones, all of what it means to be formed as Catholics in an area from North Park Boulevard to the railroad tracks, from Lake View Cemetery to Green Road. The tears we may have shed are the realization that, as much as we cherish these memories, we have to let go of them if we are to reborn as a new and vibrant Catholic community in our neighborhood. If we are truly Catholic we have to think in a universal fashion, rather than parochially in isolated parish communities. We are challenged to utilize the formation and the gifts we were given to be a source of light to a neighborhood much different from the one where we grew up.

A common thread that weaves through all four parishes is the fact that the Catholic population has shrunk considerably and that portions of this area are home to pockets of extreme poverty and need. As we assembled to begin discussion of consolidation we remembered Jesus’ call to care for the poor and determined that there must be a Eucharistic presence in both cities. Our work has been a continuation of several efforts to bring about an effective Catholic Church, able to deal with the spiritual needs of its members as well as meet the needs of the poor.

Roughly 20 years ago Bishop AnthonyPilla began bringing communities together in his “Visions and Goals” initiative where parishes discussed ways they could work together. In 1993 the Diocese of Cleveland launched the “Church in the City” initiative, recognizing that many Catholics had moved from the central city leaving behind parishes that were ministering in increasingly impoverished neighborhoods with shrinking resources. The goal of this program was to link parishes in the suburbs with those in the city and to work together to build God’s kingdom in both areas. Following this the “Vibrant Parish Life” discussions began, thus, you can see this has been part of much longer journey.

Our cluster team began meeting in July 2007 and engaged in many monthly meetings. It examined the challenges and many options for moving forward. After much discernment, we arrived at a consensus that the best solution would be to form one parish with campuses at the present St. Ann and St. Philomena sites. The social justice and services to the poor currently being carried out at St. Louis and Christ the King parishes would continue from a base at the St. Philomena site, but also enhanced through the Saint Ann site. By making the best use of available facilities, this will provide expanded space for the St. Vincent de Paul neighborhood center where groceries and clothing are distributed to our sisters and brothers in need, as well as programs such as the Dorothy Day Community Supper.

The process of bringing together four parishes into one presents its own set of unique challenges, and many issues have yet to be discussed and resolved. With assistance from the Diocese, our cluster representatives and the leadership at the four parishes will be working together to sort through these various issues in the coming months. These matters include such things as the timeline for the formal process of merger, establishing shared governance of the new parish, parish naming and the creation of a shared identity, and the disposition of unused properties. Together, we believe we can navigate the challenges ahead to bring about a more vital Catholic community in these two cities. This message includes a call to action, a call to embrace our brothers and the Bishop, to accept God’s challenge to take part in shaping the reality of today and to make the most of this new reality. By going through a grieving process, we can come to accept God’s challenge to take part in a vibrant faith community that is going from mourning, to the morning.

St. Louis Church at 2475 North Taylor Road in Cleveland Heights will close.

St. Philomena Church at 13824 Euclid Ave. in East Cleveland will remain open as a worship site.

We all have memories that formed us and shaped us but we cannot live in the past, we cannot bring back that former life. As a people who believes in resurrection and the new life that comes to us daily, we are committed to accepting the reality of today and to making the most of this new reality. By going through a grieving process, we can come to accept God’s challenge to take part in a vibrant faith community that is going from mourning, to the morning of a new day.

ARDSLEY CATHOLIC CENTER

Ann Arbor, Michigan Heights Observer April 7, 2009

Vincent de Paul neighborhood center

Voted #1 “Best Place to Treat Your Body” in Cleveland Heights

All Levels Specialty Classes Great Student & Senior Rates

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Our Students Say: “No hype, no lycra.” “Life-transforming!”

info@atmacenter.com

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ATMA Yoga for Every Body

NOW in our 12th year!
Dear Editor,

After reading the Opinion piece, “Heights Community Congress still fighting” in the last issue of the Heights Observer, I decided Heights Community Congress (HCC) has lost touch with our community and is on the way to becoming irrelevant. Diversity is what HCC claims to honor and promote, and no doubt it did at one time. But HCC no longer does, as far as I can tell. HCC is stuck in the past and chastises our community on the grounds that we remain a horde of housing discrimination.

The study by Housing Research and Advocacy Center (HRAC), which was cited in the piece, trotted out the same statistics that have been analyzed in previous works by NEO CANDO at Case Western Reserve University and an expert on policing; Cleveland Heights Police Commander Brad Sudyk, and Councilman Mark Tumeo. The study by Housing Research and Advocacy Center (HRAC), which was cited in the piece, trotted out the same statistics that have been analyzed in previous works by NEO CANDO at Case Western Reserve University and an expert on policing; Cleveland Heights Police Commander Brad Sudyk, and Councilman Mark Tumeo.

Overall the audience felt positively about the police department, but raised questions about the following topics: poor condition of Miliken school, including broken windows; use of guns in crimes; empty houses; persistent disruptive behavior of kids running through the Regal Cinema during films; sagging pants; loitering; rules for bike riding, jaywalking and cell phone use; running red lights and general incivility.

The Police Department’s limited accessibility was also discussed: the department has no e-mail address for residents to use, and the phone number for the Police Chief has no voicemail.

Audience members were encouraged to contact the CH-UH school board to express their concern about Miliken School. Sudyk encouraged people to use the non-emergency police number (216-371-1234) and call about any suspicious behavior. He also explained that police would respond to calls about people walking in the middle of the street and groups of people loitering on sidewalks.

In response to concerns about gang-like activity inside Monticello Middle School, audience member Andrés González, Chief of Police for Cuyahoga County Metropolitan Housing Authority, described his department’s involvement in running the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program inside some of the Cleveland Public Schools. Sponsored by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, there is no cost for the program other than staff time. González offered to work cooperatively with Cleveland Heights Police Chief Martin Lentz on the G.R.E.A.T. program. Tumeo said he would follow up on these and other issues raised at the meeting.

Individuals interested in joining Severance Neighborhood Organization or leading a subcommittee are encouraged to call Fran Mentch at 216-381-5356, or visit www.severnanesno.org.

Fran Mentch is a resident of the Severance neighborhood in Cleveland Heights.

So, I suggest that HCC reinvent itself and put its principals of social justice and diversity to the test: 1. Move HCC headquarters into an area of Cleveland Heights in economic decline; 2. Raise money or raise enough hell to re-open Denison pool, which would serve an area of Cleveland Heights with a large percentage of poor children; 3. Re-invent the Heights Heritage Home and Garden Tour to allow citizens to view neglected properties; 4. Invest in green space or a Cityfresh program that would benefit lower income families, and 5. Focus community attention on neglected properties to force homeowners and landlords to make much needed improvements.

HCC, stop blaming the community. Bring your helping hands and fighting spirit to my part of town. We would welcome you with open arms—just like we do with everyone else.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Haywood
Roanoke Road
Cleveland Heights

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Dear Editor,

The other day I was given a copy of the Heights Observer by Stan Soble of Nela Florists and was amazed at the wealth of information that was contained within. Having lived in Cleveland Heights since 1947 at my present address and received various publications, including for years the Sun Press, there has never been anything like the Heights Observer. The coverage of Cleveland Heights—University Heights is great and the articles are very well written. Because of the Observer I am joining Future Heights.

I wish that more people knew about you folks!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

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Severance continued from page 1

panel was composed of Jim Chiss, Ph.D., sociology professor at Cleveland State University and an expert on policing; Cleveland Heights Police Commander Brad Sudyk, and Councilman Mark Tumeo.

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I wish that more people knew about you folks!

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[Signature]
It’s about more than dining in style, though — SkunkFest is also a time for the display of high fashion, as coats in every stripe and spotted variation of black and white vie for attention and the air is perfumed with the delicate scents of this year’s latest fragrances. Indeed, the festival has garnered such buzz that the international edition of Suburban Mammal Vogue has reportedly sent at least three society reporters to mingle incognito among the throngs and offer ground-level reports on all the action.

Some worry that the festival has gotten a bit too popular. "It’s not the same as it was a few years back," says Urs Tench, a festival veteran. "Used to be it counted for something. Standards were higher. Everybody cared. That’s all changed now. Just a lot of carousing in the dark making a big stink about everything."

"Others worry about the younger set, as one anonymous female intimated. "You know these kids today; they got no scents.""

But most share the more positive outlook of Linnea Déguèot. "To me it’s just a reminder that spring is here and we can look forward to seven solid months of waddling around in the shadows."

Early organizers debated whether to hold the festival annually on the first day of spring or to tie it to the April 15 income tax filing deadline, but settled on April 1 as the official kickoff date. Since then, SkunkFest has grown in popularity every year, while staying true to its roots and grubs. "We may dress up fancy in black and white, but we don’t put on phony airs," Roma concludes. "We don’t need any glittery expensive kind of downtown convention center. We don’t need any induction ceremony. We don’t need a bridge named after us. We’ve got everything we need right here."

SkunkFest is free and open to the public. Reservations are not required. For more information about this year’s festivities, visit www.skunkfestohio.com or go out in the back yard just after dusk.

A belated April fools’

Greg Donley is a longtime Cleveland Heights resident.

We choose to educate our children in the Heights public schools

Dear Editor,

We have chosen to send our children to the public school. We want to share with you our reasons for making this choice and the experiences we’ve had in the school district. We are proud of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District and love our community.

Did you know that 96 percent of Heights High School students graduate? Did you know that 95.5 percent of our African-American males graduate? Do you know the colleges that our 2008 graduates were accepted to? They include Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Howard University, George Washington University, Cornell and so many more. Did you know the Heights High Class of 2008 was offered more than $5 million in scholarships to attend college?

Sending our children to our local schools has built community in our neighborhood. Our kids, ages 6 and 10, often stay after school and play on the playground. They have play dates with other children in the neighborhood. On nice days we walk on bike trails. We’ve made friendships with other parents on the playground before and after school.

Attending the Cleveland Heights-University Heights schools has meant providing a culturally rich education for our children. It is preparing them to go out into our diverse world community and be able to interact comfortably with a wide range of people.

We are thrilled with the academics, the music programs and the arts. We are proud of our children’s teachers and the other staff who ensure the positive educational experience our children are having. During these tough economic times, we feel fortunate to be able to enroll our children in such an excellent public school district.

Joyce Roper & Chris Ball
Scarborough Road, Cleveland Heights
State of the City? It’s about the recession, CH Mayor says

Bob Rosenbaum

At his State of the City address, Cleveland Heights Mayor Edward J. Kelley listed a series of city accomplishments from the past year. But the 75-to-10 people who came to hear his assessment were clearly more interested in the issues borne of recession: specifically road maintenance, and dealing with foreclosed and vacant homes.

Organized by FutureHeights, the event was held March 19 at the Cleveland Heights Community Center. Kelley was not the least bit defensive in taking questions about these prickly issues. His primary response was that all city departments are working on them despite a staffing level nearly 100 employees below that of a few years ago; and that the biggest need is the same as it is in other cities: money. "Bear with us," Kelley said. "We’re doing the best we can." Kelley’s prepared remarks lasted about 20 minutes, followed by an hour-long Q&A session and an audience.

The biggest issue, Kelley said, is dealing with the seven-year trend in which "the city began to experience reduced revenue." In the past few years, 91 full-time equivalent positions have been cut from the city government; service fees have been raised; and employees have started to pay a percentage of their health coverage. In 2009, there will be no raises for city employees—each of whom receives five and a half unpaid furlough days—essentially a four percent pay cut.

After a lengthy listing of other cuts, Kelley was asked to comment on the budget that tracking collection is going to be outsourced. "We’re not necessarily going to do that, but it has helped lead to $200,000 in cost reductions" by motivating the Public Works Department to figure out how to eliminate Saturday pickup. "You start rattling the cage a little bit and other things start to happen," Kelley said.

On housing:

Initiatives to deal with vacant and foreclosed homes include:
• Razing nine houses in the past five years.
• $8.3 million in federal Neighborhood Stabilization Funds to buy and dispose of vacant homes and deal with the attendant issues, such as crime and site maintenance.
• Purchase of 16 vacant homes for a dollar each through the federal program. The four have been razed, five transferred to nonprofits for rehab and resale, and the rest await disposition.
• Use of $500,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant funding to buy two three-family homes for conversion into townhouses; the goal, Kelley said, is to attract more owner-occupants into the neighborhood.
• Razing nine houses in the past five years.
• The planting of the Noble-Nela area complained that her home is surrounded by at least seven vacant properties. "The other day I heard gunshots. My house was broken into three weeks ago. I don’t feel safe. My question is: What are you going to do to beef up security?"

On road maintenance:

More than $1 million in city funds are allocated to 2009 road projects not covered by Cuyahoga County funding. These include repairing 96 federal roads, replacing Rock, Monmouth and Woodward roads, and completion of Superior Road. But one Atherstone Road resident asked when, after six years of promises, the city would get to that street as well.

Kelley responded that Atherstone also requires utility rehab under the road, meaning a larger and more involved project. "In an optimal world, we would spend $4.5 million a year to fix the roads. But other than [federal] stimulus money, our only source of funding is the gas tax. There is only so much that we’re able to do."

Other items discussed:
• City support of the school district’s efforts to bring the Cleveland Music School Settlement into the former Coventry Elementary School.
• The parking lot (and former gas station) at Meadowbrook and Lee roads that had been proposed for mixed-use development is being converted to a mini-park for the foreseeable future to improve the appearance of the intersection.
• The desire to revitalize the Taylor Road and Noble Road business districts by encouraging local merchants to open stores in the many vacant properties on those streets.
• Ongoing discussions about merging the fire department with those of Shaker Heights and University Heights.
• Negotiations with a technology provider to improve water delivery, and mitigate poor service provided by the City of Cleveland Water Department.

Cleveland Heights City Council Highlights of February/March meetings

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009
All Council members present

Oxford School honored

Mayor Edward Kelley welcomed “the most beautiful audience” of students, families and staff from Oxford School, where the school council had collected 2,000 Teddy bears for Providence House and area hospitals as a community service project. Council presented proclamations to Principal Stan Stahlhut, student council advisors Sean Sullivan and Karen Rigs, and more than 30 students. For Now the Oxford as the “Coolest School of the Week.”

Waste collection fee and service

Because of greater landfill and collection costs, council approved a fee increase for solid waste collection from residential properties, effective March 1. The new fee for single-family homes and each unit in a multifamily building will be $7 per month. Council Member Bonnie Caplan issued the reminder that there will be no more Saturday trash collections. When a holiday delays trash pickup, those with a Friday pickup day will have their trash picked up the following Monday.

Taylor Road study approved

The city manager was authorized to contract with Wade Trim Ohio Inc. for a $297,200 preliminary engineering study to plan to rehab Taylor Road north from Euclid Heights Boulevard. The study is necessary to qualify for state project funds.

Federal Neighborhood Stabilization

The city manager was authorized to apply for Ohio Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to deal with foreclosed and vacant property. These state-administered federal funds were approved last year to help communities facing foreclosure crises.

City Web site

Improvements to the city Web site are on-going. A new new look will include online projects can be viewed and community business, including permits, applications, and payments, can be conducted online.

Snow removal and landscaping fees

Introduced for a first reading was a city ordinance amendment calling for a $30 registration fee for snowplow operators; $50 fee for landscapers; and $75 fee for any operator offering both services. The amendment also prohibits depositing snow and plant material on public rights of way. Public comment was invited.

Proposal for building permit fees

Public comment is sought on a proposed ordinance to change the fee system for building permits from one based on square footage of the project to one based on cost. An additional $5 would be charged for every $1,000 of project cost after $7,000. The revised building permit fee would be raised from $25 to $35.

Workshops for future homeowners

Prospective homeowners were encouraged to enroll in financial wellness workshops offered by the Home Repair Resource Center. Classes are held weekly, Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. Interested residents can call 216-381-6000.

Message to HUD

Motion approved to urge the Department of Housing and Urban Development to use its funds to demolish abandoned and distressed properties that it owns, so cities like Cleveland Heights can use federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to address other properties.

Words of appreciation

Vice Mayor Phyllis Evans expressed appreciation to city staff for their hard work through tough times and to council for their dedication. Council Member Mark Tomes thanked City Housing Director Rick Wagner and Service Director Alex Manlove for their efforts to bring the Cleveland Music School Settlement into the former gas station. The city owns, so cities like Cleveland Heights can use federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to address other properties.

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Anita Kazarian

Interview with Mayor Beryl Rothschild on February 23, 2009.

Anita Kazarian: How does the current University Heights government work? Beryl Rothschild: City council enacts the laws and the mayor is the administrator of the laws. It is patterned after the federal system outlined in the United States Constitution. The mayor answers to the voters and may be voted out of office every four years if the voters are not satisfied.

AK: Why do you think some council members want to change? Is there a problem with the current system? BR: I don’t know. They have not yet answered how this will benefit the residents of the city. There is no problem with the current system. Voters can vote out the mayor or council members at each election. Changing the system will only serve to put the administration of UH in the hands of the council. If the change is made, there will be no elected administrator.

AK: What is wrong with that? BR: The Founding Fathers specifically separated the powers of the legislative branch from the executive branch to protect against the corruption of power in one branch and provide accountability of elected officials. If our Charter is changed, it will be the mayor, not the council, who will make the vote, not the mayor, who will make the final decision.

AK: Is an alternate plan possible? BR: Yes. If the Charter Commission is truly working in the best interest of the citizens, they will make it a City Code change, not a Charter change.

Rental permit fees
An ordinance was approved to reduce the house rental permit fee from $300 to $100 per year, due to the size of the home and a reduced size of the home. This fee will be in line with the fees charged in neighboring cities.

Recruitment fees increased
Recommendations were adopted to increase recruitment fees to cover rising costs. Pool passes for senior citizens will be $15, up from $10, and a tennis/Racquet permit will increase to $25; a tennis fee of $20 will be charged.

Apartment building permits and fees
The Building Committee is considering apartment rental permit fees of $150 per unit and up to 10 units with a maximum rental permit fee of $3,000. Currently, unlike neighboring cities, apartment building permits in University Heights pay no fees for rental permits. The committee is also considering fees for multiple renovations and to allow families who rent to their children to sign a family affidavit and not pay a rental permit fee. The family would have to pay the fee if the family did not rent out the property. Residents have been asking to have the fee reduced.

Use of Thornton Park
Mayor Beryl Rothschild reported a deal has been negotiated with Shaker Heights, allowing UH residents to use the Thornton Park co-skiing rink at a reduced fee.

Q&A: Mayor Rothschild states case for proposed UH charter changes

Anita Kazarian

Highlights of February/March meetings

University Heights City Council

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009

All council members present.

Vacant residential Property Fund

A professional services agreement was authorized with GT Environmental Inc. to evaluate and prepare the fund. A professional services agreement was authorized with City Engineer Joe Ciuni’s firm covering the cost of opening the bids. The RFP will be readvertised.

Sewer Repairs due to discrepancies on the time schedule.

Emergency sewer repairs

Council rejected bids for the 2009 Municipal Sewer Repairs due to discrepancies on the time schedule. The RFP will be readvertised.

University Heights News

Join the conversation at www.heightsobserver.org

Q&A: Mayor Rothschild states case for proposed UH charter changes

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AK: Why do you think some council members want to change? Is there a problem with the current system? BR: I don’t know. They have not yet answered how this will benefit the residents of the city. There is no problem with the current system. Voters can vote out the mayor or council members at each election. Changing the system will only serve to put the administration of UH in the hands of the council. If the change is made, there will be no elected administrator.

AK: What is wrong with that? BR: The Founding Fathers specifically separated the powers of the legislative branch from the executive branch to protect against the corruption of power in one branch and provide accountability of elected officials. If our Charter is changed, it will be the mayor, not the council, who will make the vote, not the mayor, who will make the final decision.

AK: Is an alternate plan possible? BR: Yes. If the Charter Commission is truly working in the best interest of the citizens, they will make it a City Code change, not a Charter change.

Rental permit fees
An ordinance was approved to reduce the house rental permit fee from $300 to $100 per year, due to the size of the home and a reduced size of the home. This fee will be in line with the fees charged in neighboring cities.

Recruitment fees increased
Recommendations were adopted to increase recruitment fees to cover rising costs. Pool passes for senior citizens will be $15, up from $10, and a tennis/Racquet permit will increase to $25; a tennis fee of $20 will be charged.

Apartment building permits and fees
The Building Committee is considering apartment rental permit fees of $150 per unit and up to 10 units with a maximum rental permit fee of $3,000. Currently, unlike neighboring cities, apartment building permits in University Heights pay no fees for rental permits. The committee is also considering fees for multiple renovations and to allow families who rent to their children to sign a family affidavit and not pay a rental permit fee. The family would have to pay the fee if the family did not rent out the property.

Use of Thornton Park
Mayor Beryl Rothschild reported a deal has been negotiated with Shaker Heights, allowing UH residents to use the Thornton Park co-skiing rink at a reduced fee.
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009
All board members present.

Budget work session.

P.A.S.S.A.G.E. and the budget

Interim Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack and Treasurer Scott Gainer presented “Aligning our Budget, Challenges and Opportunities, Positioning our Schools for the 21st Century Teaching and Learning.” It discussed funding the district’s P.A.S.S.A.G.E. initiative (Position All Students for Success in a Global Economy), which is detailed on the district Web site (www.chuh.org). Aligning it with a five-year financial forecast will require discussions on cost control and academic initiatives.

Financial outlook

Property taxes provide 72 percent of district income; the state 24 percent, the fees about one percent. Achieving the academic results and fiscal accountability expected by the community must be a department of the five-year forecast, possibly including a 7-mill levy in 2010. Also to be discussed are mandated costs such as insurance benefits, labor contracts, special education services, utility costs, liens and the impact of the federal economic stimulus package.

CH-UH Board of Education

Highlights of February/March meetings

Budget meetings
Three budget meetings were planned. March 17 for a presentation of options, April 7 for the board’s reaction; and April 21 for the board action.

Field trips
Five trips were approved for the high school boys’ track team, and a trip for marketing students to attend a Downtown Education Clubs of America state competition.

Great presentations
The board approved an application to U.S. Bank for $2,000 for “Our Growing Family Mosaic.”

Mural Project
Also, an application for $25,000 to the Discovery Center at Miami University (Ohio) for “Discovery Project.”

Astrid students
Dr. Jeffrey Johnston, coordinator of school support programs, updated the “pupil of support” for at-risk students. Middle school has an Alternative Learning Environment – a separate classroom where disruptive students can stay in action and complete their assignments. Girl Circle provides help to girls with problems. Dr. Julie McCune, school based and multi systematic therapy program manager, will work with students on probation from the county.

Budget

Interim Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack was asked to present a budget shadow cut of the March 17 work session to achieve a $2 million budget reduction – to be evaluated by the Lay Foundation.

Hisights High dumbiper
A bid to replace and move the trash compactor from the back entrance of the high school to the southeast corner and to add a window was accepted – paid for from permanent improvement funds.

LWV observer: Adelle Cohn

The March 17 board work session on the budget, administrators presented two budget cut options. One cut $2,173,800; the second $2,624,000. Both options cut $15,000 worth of salary and wages, $30,000 worth of supplies and $44,000 worth of purchased services.

The second option takes $450,200 more in personnel – 10 additional full-time positions and five half-time. All cuts would be permanent, said Interim Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack.

Both options cut two administrators at the board of education building; two district administrators; two full-time and one half-time secretarial positions at the board of education building; three secretarial positions, one full-time and one half-time secretary at the middle school level; one full-time and one half-time counselor at the high school; seven instructional coaches, program specialists and media specialists district-wide; two full-time and one half-time specialty teachers district-wide; two elementary teachers; three high school teachers; two security monitor positions; the high school’s executive assistant and one position at the district copy center.

The second scenario eliminated more at the high school: three full-time and one half-time positions in the Transition Program and two half-time teacher leaders. The middle school would lose three guidance counselors, effectively eliminating the Transition Program and having only one counselor at each of the district’s three middle schools.

“These aren’t numbers, these aren’t dollars, they are people,” says Board Member Mike Cicero. “I want everyone to know we understand that, and we know we’re talking about how people are going to lose their jobs.” He then added, “I am willing to cut more administrators than cut more programming for the kids.”

The board took no action and on the budget cuts, they were just presented with options. Fowler-Mack said no action has been taken and that further discussion will take place at the April 21 meeting. “I want to be clear that everything we have is important, and this [what to cut from the budget] is always a difficult decision.”

Simone Quartell

Despite the passage of a levy fewer than two years ago, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Board of Education is aiming to cut $2 million from the budget. Due to the “unpredictable” nature of the U.S. economy and the economy, board and administration are “examining the budget,” says Board President Kal Zucker.

Collections for the schools are down and less money is coming in, says Zucker. They’re very concerned about preserving the programs already in place. We always want to do what is best for the students; we want to save money without making programs suffer in the process.

The $2.7 million levy passed with a 55 percent majority in November 2007. A similar levy will be on the ballot in November 2010, and the board will have to cut even more if that levy fails.

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Simone Quartell

Read the full story online at www.heightsobserver.org.
CH-UH video podcast part of Ohio iTunes U Project

Michael Dougherty

Alongside the nation’s bestselling music and movies, iTunes users anywhere in the United States can now find something just as exciting: a video podcast straight from the Cleveland Heights–University Heights City School District.

This exciting opportunity is possible thanks to the Ohio iTunes U Project, a platform from iTunes and the State of Ohio that showcases the state’s educational resources, professional development materials, best practices, and student samples that have been produced by members of higher education, the K-12 community, and a variety of Ohio content providers.

“We greatly appreciate the opportunity to be part of the Ohio iTunes U Project and contribute content that highlights the enhanced educational practices occurring in our state,” Interim Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack said. “Our video podcast, Focusing on the Future, allows us to share our vision for the future of this district. It shows initiatives that are designed to help our students prepare for college and success in the global economy.”

The CH-UH podcast details three ways in which the district is working to prepare all students for the jobs of the future, including a new technology program to provide middle and high school students with Apple® laptops to learn in a wireless environment, a partnership with neighboring John Carroll University to create professional development schools at Geary Elementary and Wiley Middle, creating a Pre-K to 16 learning community, and a planned Chinese immersion program which will ultimately be an elementary international academy.

To access and download the free CH-UH video podcast, open iTunes and search key words: “Focusing on the Future Cleveland Heights” in the search bar. For PC users, a free iTunes software download is available at www.apple.com/itunes/download/.

C-SPAN Honors Heights High for student videos

Michael Dougherty

Two student-produced videos from Cleveland Heights High School are among 75 being honored nationally in the 2009 C-SPAN StudentCam competition. Nearly 5,000 videos were submitted for consideration and students Tammy Tran, Luke Gould and Kim Wilkins received honorable mention for their critical thinking, writing and editing. They are the only Ohio students to be honored.

Senior Luke Gould was honored for his submission, Where the Money Should Go: On the Allotment of Bailout Funds, and seniors Tammy Tran and Kim Wilkins received recognition for their video, Where’s Education?

Monticello eighth-grader earns state’s highest score on math exam

Michael Dougherty

Finding a career where he can employ his math and computer programming skills is a long-term goal for Gordon Gustafson, an eighth-grade Monticello Middle School student. Gordon’s skills were recently put to the test on the rigorous AMC 8 exam, where he exhibited a mastery of the material and earned the highest score in Ohio. Gordon has attended CH-UH Schools since kindergarten and is also enrolled in honors pre-calculus at Cleveland Heights High School.

The AMC 8, a timed 25-question exam created by the American Mathematics Competitions, is known for its complex set of problems to be solved without a calculator to promote the development and enhancement of problem solving skills. This is not a standardized test, but schools in Cleveland Heights–University Heights use it to encourage growth in mathematics among their students.

The following students were AMC 8 national award winners as a result of their high scores:

- Gordon Gustafson (eighth grade – Monticello) – National Honor of Distinction
- Peyton Hastings (sixth grade – Monticello) – National Achievement Roll
- Britanny Rubio (sixth grade – Monticello) – National Achievement Roll
- Trevor Cohl (eighth grade – Roxboro MS) – National Honor of Distinction
- Thomas Pharis (sixth grade – Roxboro MS) – National Achievement Roll
- Evan Radiovoyetch (sixth grade – Roxboro MS) – National Achievement Roll
- Emma Whiting (sixth grade – Roxboro MS) – National Achievement Roll
- Abraham Mendes (sixth grade – Roxboro MS) – National Achievement Roll
- Stephen Bell (sixth grade – Roxboro MS) – National Achievement Roll
- Demario Mason (sixth grade – Roxboro MS) – National Achievement Roll
- Thomas Frederick (eighth grade – Wiley) – National Honor Roll
- Sean Kramer (eighth grade – Wiley) – National Honor Roll
- Ann Zicari (sixth grade – Wiley) – National Achievement Roll
- Tiere Walker (fourth grade – Canterbury) – National Achievement Roll
- Christina Wynne (fourth grade – Noble) – National Achievement Roll

Students S.T.R.E.T.C.H. over summer

Michael Dougherty

“Amusement Park Physics,” “Digital Communication and Production,” and Forensic Science 101 are just a few of the courses available this summer through a special learning program. CH-UH students entering grades 6-12 in the 2009-2010 school year will have the chance to stretch their minds with the Summer S.T.R.E.T.C.H. program (Stretching Through Enrichment, Thinking, Challenges and Hands-on Investigation), held at Cleveland Heights High School from July 27 through August 7.

The program has been designed to provide enrichment and targeted preparation and support for students preparing for college and success in the global economy.

 Spell well, do good, in Reaching Heights bee

Joy Henderson

Spellers from across the community will strut their word worthiness at the 18th annual Reaching Heights Adult Spelling Bee. Last year’s champion team from Case Western Reserve University Upper Case will defend its title and attempt to take home the coveted Big Plastic Bee Trophy again. Other returning teams include last year’s second place team, the SMRT team, a Simpsons-themed team of Heights High students. Every CH-UH school has a team of parents or staff competing this year. New teams include New Community Bible Fellowship and a team in memory of former community activist (and bee speller) Kay Heyman.

Each team donates a $500 entry fee that funds Reaching Heights grants to teachers. Last year, 18 teachers received grants totaling nearly $19,000 to support creative projects designed to improve student achievement. The bee is on April 23, 7 p.m. in the Heights High Auditorium. Admission is free.

Joy Henderson is the assistant director of Reaching Heights and a naive and mediocre speller.
Students from Roxboro, Monticello and Wiley Middle Schools participated in the 25th annual Middle School Science Olympiad Regional Championships.

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Heights Science Olympiad participants are rock stars

Jim Posch

Clevelanders have strong tradition of rooting for their underdog sporting teams. As a Heights parent, this is how I felt at the 25th annual Middle School Science Olympiad Regional Championships at the University of Akron on March 14. Out of 22 competing teams, only eight would qualify for the state meet at Ohio State University in April.

Typically in a Science Olympiad competition, there are approximately 20 nationally sanctioned events. Each event has detailed criteria that change periodically. Events include: team problem-solving exercises, controlling self-built robots, model airplane flight, launching eggs in rockets so they don’t break, and others. There’s even a balsa wood bridge building event, where the lightest bridge that can hold the most weight wins.

And how cool is this? One of the events is the “trajectory.” It’s a catapult that kids build prior to the event that launches tennis balls. At the event, participants are given two targets they need to hit; but they don’t tell you the distance to the targets until you’re ready to fire your catapult. So you have to be able to aim and calculate various forces required to land a tennis ball within inches of the target. Not easy.

This is the first year any of the CH-UH district middle schools have participated in the Science Olympiad. Our Heights kids comprised an eclectic mix. They didn’t have the matching lab coats or t-shirts. But they had spirit. A redhead from Monticello got the waiting crowd going with his juggling act. Between the events, Wiley kids got the other waiting crowd roused up by playing a huge collective game of duck-duck-geese. Corporations pay big bucks for this kind of positive team building.

Many schools – like Solon, Beachwood and private schools – have built Science Olympiad into their core science curriculum. Most public schools can’t afford to do this. But the Solon team has been able to get to Nationals with this strategy. For most districts, it takes years of practice and many competitions just to qualify to get to States. When they handed out winning medals for the events, you heard the names Roxboro, Monticello and Wiley as much as the names for Shaker and the other leading schools. Shaker has been doing this for years; this was all new to us.

In most public school districts, the extra work required for this is uncompensated. Our teachers – Paige Baublitzer-Watkins, Deb Frost, Janet Lechleitner and Kathy Pahys – do it because of their dedication to the kids. But even with all the hard work and preparations, it would be nearly impossible for first-year teams, like the Heights middle schools, to get to States.

When they announced the teams going to the State Championships in Columbus, the first seven were those you might expect, including Shaker. There was a lot of excitement among these top teams. But when they announced that Roxboro got the eighth and final slot, it was almost as if they had won first place. It was the perfect reward for their hard work. It was as if they had won the Super Bowl, NBA Finals and World Series all rolled up into one.

So now, our big decision: Do the parents get the team matching tie-dyed lab coats? As for the kids, they’ll be fine-tuning their catapult, working on a stronger-lighter bridge and a better airplane. They want to win – but they also want to have fun doing it.

Jim Posch is co-president of the Heights PTA Council.

Forum on substance abuse

Joy Henderson

The Heights High Parent Connection Council will host two simultaneous talks for families about alcohol and other drugs on April 30, 7 p.m. at Heights High. Please come to the Social Room by 7 p.m. for a brief overview, then students about their concerns.

Parents and guardians will hear “The Invisible Thief - The Truth about Alcohol and Other Drugs” by Jim Joyner, Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Board of Cuyahoga County. The presentation will focus on when and how parents should talk to their kids about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, how, when and where are teens using; how drugs affect the brain and why kids are at greater risk.

Students will hear “Cleaning Up the Mess” by Lewis Burrell, prevention specialist. When the party is over, students often are left to clean up the mess. It can get old and can interfere with a student’s plans for the future. Lewis gives an exciting presentation and wants to talk to students about their concerns.

Joy Henderson is the parent and community liaison for Heights High School.

The beer is on you!
Show-and-tell at Boulevard: Teachers use video to learn new teaching process

Susie Kazer

The staff at Boulevard Elementary School in Cleveland Heights teases first-grade teacher Christine Snowden. “Her stardom has gone to her head,” jokes Shirley Gallagher, the school’s administrative assistant. Snowden’s new celebrity comes from a seven-minute video that features her and several other Boulevard teachers applying the key elements of a discipline called High-Quality Instruction Process.

The video was shown at a recent staff meeting so teachers could see what it looks like in practice. It reveals a significant change in teaching practice. “When teachers saw the video they really got it,” says Beth Rae, Boulevard’s literacy coach, who along with math coach Candace Summers leads much of the locally designed professional development that is changing the school’s culture and teaching.

Rae cites research that teachers can increase student achievement by one standard deviation simply by explaining what they are learning. So now, teachers are encouraged to break down a state standard or any significant learning goal into “learning intentions” that are the size of a single lesson. Each lesson’s goal is clearly stated.

Also necessary is some kind of simple test to show within the course of the lesson whether the students are learning what is being taught. Saving time for re-teaching is vital, Rae says.

In the video, Snowden states the learning intention for a math lesson and then asks the first-graders to say the intention out loud with her and write it down. Then she demonstrates the idea.

After working with the class on several problems, she asks them to complete a problem on their own and to put the answer on a sticky note. The notes are collected and put into two groups: right answer and wrong answer.

“Let’s see how Miss Snowden did at teaching,” she says, turning to the two groups of notes, clearly taking responsibility for the results. Those who got the right answer are given time to practice “on their own. To the others she says, “I need to do a better job of teaching. So let’s work together some more.”

This formative assessment is critical to helping teachers produce results. Rae reports that Boulevard’s third-grade teachers have taken the process a step further; they all teach the same math lessons and use the same formative assessments. At lunch, they review results from the morning lesson and divide up the children for part of the afternoon for the appropriate re-teaching.

While it sounds intuitive, it’s part of a big change in the district over the past few years. The district now monitors its success by the success of students, and teachers are devoting attention to classroom processes that get results.

It can be daunting for teachers to expose the results of their work and take public ownership of student achievement. But Snowden’s local celebrity is just one public demonstration of a school-wide effort to better meet the needs of students through improved teaching.

Susie Kazer is an advocate for public education. She founded Teaching Heights, a citizen advocacy organization for the CH-UH schools, in 1989 and retired as executive director in December 2007. She is a resident of Cleveland Heights and her two adult children are graduates of the Heights schools.

Forensics academy for area youth

Anita Kazarian

The Ohio Board of Regents Summer STEM Academy will host College Science Investigation, a forensics academy, at Baldwin Wallace College and Cleveland State University for high school sophomores and juniors in June. Students may earn high school and college credit at no cost to the student. They will discover the role of chemistry, physics, biology and geology in solving crimes and examine potential careers in science and teaching science.

Students must be nominated by a science teacher. Applications submitted prior to April 11 will be given highest priority. For more information go to www.bw.edu/csi.

Anita Kazarian is a freelance writer and University Heights resident.
Celebrate TV-Turnoff Week at your library

How can you help your children develop positive viewing habits?
• Limit their “screen time” (TV, videos and computer games) to no more than one or two hours per day. Plan this time around your family’s schedule.
• Choose programs ahead of time and watch TV together whenever possible, this will make TV watching a social experience and provide opportunities for discussions.
• Help your child find other options: hobbies, sports, playing an instrument, art, reading or playing with friends.
• Balance the time spent watching TV with other activities such as: bike rides, walks, board games or shopping.
• Set a good example by limiting your own TV watching in front of your children.

Turn off your TV and come to the Lee Road Library on April 22 for Family Game Night and celebrate TV-Turn-Off Week! Join us for an evening of fun-filled games, activities, and refreshments in the Children’s Department from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

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

Library parking lot is one way

Tonya Gibson

The Lee Road Library asks all patrons to honor the one way traffic pattern in the parking lot, min pedestrian while searching for a parking space, and avoid stopping your car in the Fire Lane.
Get free advice from a wide variety of local home remodeling experts at this year’s Community Home Remodeling Fair on Saturday, April 18 at Cleveland Heights City Hall. Sponsored by the Home Repair Resource Center and the City of Cleveland Heights, the fair will open at 9:15 a.m. and will feature presentations from 9:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

The fair will focus on "big" projects, where it is particularly important for homeowners to get the best quality for their remodeling dollar. Homeowners can meet with an architect for a free 25-minute consultation. (Register for “Ask an Architect” by calling 216-691-6100, but hurry—slots fill up fast.) Contractors, product suppliers, architects and city representatives will also be on hand to share their knowledge in various workshops and at “advice tables.”

In light of rising energy costs, several workshops will focus on ways to help homeowners reduce their gas bills, such as choosing a high-efficiency heating system, retrofitting an old house to reduce energy usage and using an energy audit to determine winterization strategies. Other presentations will cover remodeling kitchens and bathrooms, controlling basement water, incorporating accessibility into remodeling, and getting ideas about flowers for their gardens. Representatives from the Cleveland Restoration Society and the city’s historic preservation planner can help homeowners research the history of their houses, choose attractive paint colors, and preserve their homes’ architectural style when renovating.

Cuyahoga County Auditor and County Recorder representatives can check for any liens filed against your house, provide information about deeds and living wills, and verify property taxes. The Home Repair Resource Center’s repair instructor will answer questions about repair projects, and the city’s Building and Inspections Department representative can provide information on code requirements. Handouts, books, videos and contractor evaluations are available through the center’s resource library. The fair is free and open to residents of all communities. So grab a friend or neighbor and come to City Hall on April 18!

Bucky Stager has been the repair education programs coordinator for Home Repair Resource Center since 1989.

Community Home Remodeling Fair
is April 18

Rebecca Stager

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**Community Home Remodeling Fair Schedule**

- **9:15 a.m.**
  - Registration & Coffee
- **9:30 – 1:30**
  - **Advisory Tables**
    - **Ask an Expert**
      - (individual advice – drop in)
      - Rick Wagner, Director of Housing Programs; Bill Knop, Rehab Specialist, and Tony Carbone, Building Commissioner, City of Cleveland Heights; Jim Korneck, Repair Inspecotor, HRRC
      - **Talk with a Lender about Financing Your Project**
        - Alison Perry, KeyBank
        - Representatives, Charter One Bank
      - **Historic Preservation/Exterior Paint Color Choices**
        - Brigitte Bertram, Cleveland Restoration Society
      - **Ideas for Northeast Ohio Yards**
        - Vicki Mentick, Heights Garden Center
      - **Ask about Lead-Safe Renovation**
        - Jeff Hamaker, Lead Prevention Program, Cuyahoga County Board of Health
      - **Ask about Deeds, Living Wills, Property Taxes and Other Issues**
        - Representatives from the County Auditor and County Recorder Offices
      - **Repairing Wooden Porches**
        - Bill Logan, Simple Solutions, & Bill Knop, Rehab Specialist, City of Cleveland Heights
      - **Ask about Budgets, Credit, and Other Financial Matters**
        - Gail Jackson and Kimberly Dominique, Financial Counselors, HRRC
- **9:30 - 10:45**
  - **Session 1: Workshops**
    - **Council Chambers**
      - **Kitchen Remodeling: Quality & Planning Considerations**
        - Sally Buchman, Design Consultant, Home Depot
      - **Choosing a High-Efficiency Heating System**
        - Jim Ellis, Efficient Heating & Cooling
      - **Repairing Wooden Porches**
        - Bill Logan, Simple Solutions, & Bill Knop, Rehab Specialist, City of Cleveland Heights
    - **Conference Room**
      - **Energy Audits: A Tool to Help Reduce Heating Costs**
        - Wesley Walker, Certified Energy Auditor
      - **Bathroom Remodeling**
        - Jim Korneck, HRRC Repair Inspector
      - **Roof Replacement & Repair**
        - Scott Bradley, S. Bradley Roofing
- **11:00 – 12:15**
  - **Session 2: Workshops**
    - **Council Chambers**
      - **Retrofitting Old Houses to Lower Energy Use**
        - Mandy Metcalf and Matt Berges, Environmental Health Watch
      - **Basement Water Control: Interior vs. Exterior**
        - Steve Allen, Integrity Waterproofing
    - **Conference Room**
      - **Home Remodeling to Accommodate Changing Needs**
        - Frank Kuhar, Jr., Revived Housing Developers, and Jane Dailey, AAHID, Home Safe Home
- **12:30 – 1:45**
  - **Session 3: Workshops**
    - **Council Chambers**
      - **Choosing a High-Efficiency Heating System**
        - Scott Allen, Integrity Waterproofing
      - **Roof Replacement & Repair**
        - Scott Bradley, S. Bradley Roofing
- **All day**
  - HRRC’s Resource Library (videos, handouts, etc.) in atrium; vending machines on lower level of City Hall

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**Participating Architects:**
- Michael Benjamin, Bob Blatt Architects
- Kerin Hengst, Steven Kordalski, Kordalski Architects Inc.; Charles Miller, Doty & Miller Architects
- Jeff O'Donnell, Alex Pesta, City Architects

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**Presented by Home Repair Resource Center and the City of Cleveland Heights**

Saturday, April 18th  –  9:15 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.  – Cleveland Heights City Hall

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**Contact Information**

- **Home Repair Resource Center**
  - 13429 Cedar Rd.
  - (the block west of Taylor)
  - Cleveland Heights
  - 216-397-7671
  - Mon-Fri 9-6
  - Sat 9-5

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**Revived Housing Developers**

Home Remodeling to Accommodate Changing Needs

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**HEIGHTS OBSERVER APRIL 7, 2009**

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT WWW.HEIGHTS OBSERVER.ORG
Top five activities for a healthy lawn

Douglass Freer

Ah, yes, springtime—lush lawns and gorgeous gardens. Your spring cleanup is a vital first step to good lawn health. Removing all of the leaves, sticks, nuts and other debris out of the lawn will help the grass to breathe. Once you’ve raked over the yard, take the next steps to build a healthy lawn. It’s the best defense against pest-related problems and it will reduce the need for pesticides.

Top five healthy lawn-building activities this spring:

1) Aerate: Lawn aeration is the mechanical process of removing soil cores from the lawn. The holes open up the soil and allow the roots to get more oxygen and make fertilizing, watering and other lawn applications more effective. Aerating helps to build stronger roots, making your lawn more drought- and pest-resistant. You can aerate from mid-April to late May, when the soil is moist.

2) De-thatch: Some thatch is good, but more than a half-inch of thatch diminishes the effectiveness of watering and lawn applications. Most heavy lawn renovations involve extensive work to remove or aggressively manage thatch. De-thatch or verti-cut your lawn to remove some of this thatch on a regular basis and your lawn will be grateful. You may need to spot-seed afterwards, so de-thatching earlier—if possible by end of April—will give your new seed a chance to germinate and grow in before summertime heat arrives.

3) Fertilize: Nutrients are essential for lawn health. There are organic or traditional fertilizer products that will deliver the proper amount of nutrients to your lawn. Consistent application of fertilizer in the right amount is critical to the long-term health of the grass. Get your first application of product down early, before the forsythia blooms drop. Plan on four to five applications through the season, timed generally about five to eight weeks apart with the major holidays. Your second application falls on Memorial Day; third around Independence Day; fourth on or about Labor Day and your fifth and last application prior to Thanksgiving. The products will change based on the application and the current weather—so consult with a professional service provider or someone knowledgeable at the local garden center.

4) Add Organics: Build soil health by applying or top-dressing your lawn with organic material. Products like Milorganite, leaf compost and Sweet Peat are all good ways to get organic material into the lawn. Organics will help to break down thatch, improve the soil composition and structure, and ultimately improve the health of the soil by creating a better environment for microbial activity, which is vital to the health of your lawn.

5) Spot-seed: Thin or bare areas should be spot-seeded to prevent weeds from getting a foothold in your lawn. For best results, the new seed needs to be in contact with the soil. Either scratch the surface of the soil, top-dress with new soil, seed or aerate the lawn twice and then spot-seed thin and bare areas. New seed will not begin to germinate until soil and air temperatures are over 50 degrees. Even so, early spring seeding now is okay as the spring rains will begin to prepare the seed and make it ready to pop when the temperatures warm.

Spring is the ideal time to get your lawn in shape for the season. The combination of these activities is sure to improve your lawn and get it ready for the summer season. For additional free information about lawn renovation activities, e-mail info@lawnlad.com with “Lawn renovation” in the subject line.

Spring hours

Simply Charming
Rubbles, Biju & Misteller
2265 Lee Rd. – Cleveland Hts. (next to The Stone Oven)
(216) 932-2500 ~ www.simplycharmingboutique.net

“Great gifts for the women in your life!”

Evelina DiFranco

Spring can be one of the most damaging seasons in Northeast Ohio. Mother Nature’s melting snow and heavy rains occasionally overpower existing storm sewers, causing messy backups that are impossible for even the most committed DIY enthusiast to repair. Properties in Heights neighborhoods are especially vulnerable to water problems due to the age of homes and their sewer pipes, as well as the large trees with established roots that can break into the sewer system. Sergio DiFranco, president of Adelio’s Contracting (a local family business started by his father Adelio in 1970) offers answers to some common questions about home foundations.

What is the root cause of wet basements? In most cases, clogged downspouts fail to carry runoff water away from the home. If not clogged, downspouts may be cracked or have leaky joints. When this happens, water should go into the drain tile, a special pipe below the footing of your basement, which will carry it to the storm sewer. A broken or clogged drain tile (due to soil or root invasion) will leave water with no place to go but into the basement, enter ing where the floor and wall meet.

How detrimental is a cracked foundation wall to my house? Most basement walls have cracks in them. Vertical cracks are more common, occurring when the footer has settled a bit. As long as the crack doesn’t continue to widen it usually doesn’t require repair. Horizontal cracks, however, are caused by the exterior pressure of soil expansion. Horizontal cracks are more serious and require professional attention to relieve pressure from the outside walls and add necessary reinforcements to protect the walls from further damage. If not addressed in its early stages, the wall can “buckle” and will need to be rebuilt from the footer to the top of the basement wall.

What preventive steps can a homeowner take to keep water out of the basement? Start with the gutters, making sure they are free of debris and properly sized and installed so that they do not dump water against the foundation. Also check that the grading outside is sloped away from the house. Make sure downspouts are working both above and below ground.

It only takes a hairline crack in the foundation, or a deteriorated exterior seal, to let water enter from overflowing downspout pipes. Experienced owners can rent a “snake” from a hardware store to clear clogged downspouts. Stubborn clogs can be simultaneously massaged by running a garden hose into the same downspout. Downspouts can also be inspected with a sewer camera to check for cracks or breaks in the pipe.

Evelina DiFranco recently returned from the East Coast and is proud to call Clevel and Heights home. Her brother Sergio is president of Adelio’s Contracting Co., which has been operating in the Heights area for over 30 years.

Keep your basement dry during the rainy season

Evelina DiFranco

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Low interest loan program helps residents restore old homes

Jamie Bertram

Elaine Price bought a 1920s Cleveland Heights double in 1993 which provided her with a home, a spare rental unit, and a lengthy “to-do” list. So last fall, she took advantage of the Cleveland Restoration Society’s Heritage Home Program and tackled several maintenance and repair issues commonplace in older homes. While she called in contractors for more specialized jobs, Elaine and her partner George also undertook many of the projects themselves.

The Heritage Home Program, which is made available to Cleveland Heights residents by the City of Cleveland Heights and Cuyahoga County Treasurer Jim Rakakis, provides a 5.5 percent APR, seven-to-10-year loan for home repair and restoration projects. To be eligible for the loan, a house must have been built prior to 1960 and retain character-defining elements such as the original exterior cladding and wood or steel windows.

Price used the program to fund plumbing and electrical updates, repairs to her gas line, and the installation of a space-saving closet lift system which required vaulting the ceiling for additional height. The new ceiling exposes original, unpainted beams. She also refinished the hardwood floors, stripped the original copper-plated steel door hinges and knobs to reveal their natural patina, restored her historic wood windows, installed updated lighting fixtures and opened up some knee-walls for additional square footage on her third floor.

Price also used the program to make some “green” renovations, including converting the heating system from radiators to a heat pump and high efficiency air handler. She used Sherwin-Williams’ zero VOC Harmony interior paints throughout and installed insulation on the second and third floors for increased energy efficiency.

Price’s home improvement project is typical of the issues owners of historic homes encounter. The Cleveland Restoration Society’s Heritage Home Program can provide technical assistance and financing to enable homeowners to tackle these upgrades and repairs.

To find out if your home is eligible for the program or to take advantage of the society’s free technical assistance, visit www.clevelandrestoration.org or call 216-416-3106.

Jamie Bertram is a historic preservation specialist with the Cleveland Restoration Society.

Noble Road center supports mental health

Belinda Wilson

On the outside, 2300 Noble Road appears to be typical Cleveland Heights family home. Inside, it’s a different story. For more than 20 years, it has been the home of LINKS EAST, a drop-in center for persons living with mental illness.

The center is staffed not by physicians or psychologists, but by people who know first-hand about living with mental illness: each member of the staff has had schizophrenia, bipolar disease, or major depression.

Certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and funded by the Cuyahoga County Community Mental Health Board, LINKS EAST is officially called a consumer-operated adult drop-in center. It provides what is termed “peer support and socialization,” a warm, welcoming place where persons with mental illness can come and be with others who share their challenges.

LINKS EAST was founded in 1987 by a group of parents who wished to establish an outlet for social activity for their young adult children. At the time, nothing of the sort existed in the Heights area. Longtime member Barb Barnhouse sums up the role of the agency—anyone with relevant information is urged to contact LINKS EAST today. LINKS EAST is a nonprofit corporation whose board of directors is made up of mental health consumers, family members and representatives from the communities of Cleveland Heights, Cleveland and the eastern suburbs. Cleveland Heights board members include Robin Castagnola and Holly Pangrace (who is on the editorial board of the Heights Observer). Daniel Davison, a former mayor of Bedford is the current president.

LINKS EAST is open evenings and on weekends when traditional service providers are closed. Its members are a diverse group: some live in group homes; most live independently. Education levels range from GED to college graduate. Only a few members are employed full-time because the treatment for mental illness often involves medications with side effects so severe that full-time employment is not an option.

Conversation has always been the central activity. Removing the stigma of mental illness is paramount among those who live with these diseases. Member Andreas Moshigianes affirms: “LINKS is a very positive social place. I value the friendships I’ve made there.”

If you or a friend or family member would like to join LINKS EAST, drop in anytime the doors are open, which is Tuesday from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. LINKS is closed on Mondays. New people are invited to visit three times before becoming a member by paying a $12 per year membership fee (though no one is ever turned away for financial reasons). LINKS EAST also would welcome Heights area persons who have an interest in mental health to consider joining its board of directors. For dates of board meetings call 216-381-4851.

Belinda Wilson is the executive director of LINKS EAST. She is a former Cleveland Heights resident who now lives in the Ohio City neighborhood of Cleveland.

Side by side: Doing the right thing for your relationship

Kathy Dawson

Love is blind. Or is it? When you met your mate, he or she had idiosyncrasies. Whether your mate flossed his teeth with a piece of his own hair, or he hit her cuticles into the shape of Disney characters, your partner eventually exposed his or her quirks.

In the beginning, you overlooked your mate’s “flaws.” Now you’re married or in a committed relationship and things aren’t going so well. Your day-to-day conversations are short, you argue more frequently, and you can’t remember the last time you touched, other than by accident. To top it off, your mate’s once inconsequential quirks are driving you crazy.

You may not realize it, but you are at a crossroads in your relationship. Although you may have reached a point when you need to consider hiring a professional, there is something you can do immediately to avert what could be a relationship train wreck.

Each day force yourself to notice something your mate is doing “right” and record it in a notebook. At the end of the week, you will have a list of many things your mate isn’t doing wrong. Make this a daily ritual and your relationship will begin to turn course.

Many relationships go sour in large part because of how partners view each other over time. You’ve heard the expression, “Do you want to be right, or do you want to be happy?” In this case right 18 happy.

Kathy Dawson is a Cleveland Heights-based relationship coach and author. Visit www.kathybeacon.com to learn more about Dawson.
Leadership is something we sometimes lack in Northeast Ohio. Faced with problems this generation has never seen before, we are looking at a possible void of effective leaders who can take hold of the many issues and lead us far into a prosperous future. In the late 1990s, to try to counter this, a group of civic-minded young professionals had a vision to help foster communication and collaboration between aspiring leaders and established leaders in Northeast Ohio.

That vision became Cleveland Bridge Builders. CBB is now part of Cleveland Leadership Center, which formed in 2006 and includes four other programs: Leadership Cleveland, Cleveland Executive Fellowship, (C)leveland, and Look Up To Cleveland.

The Bridge Builder program identifies rising leaders from our communities and puts them through an intensive leadership course designed to inspire the civic engagement in the region. Participants in the program interact with others from a wide variety of backgrounds, including business, academics, religions and socio-economic status to tackle some of the region’s most pressing problems.

Team-based Leadership Action Projects (LAPs) are designed to engage participants with organizations and civic leaders in our community to solve particular problems. Graduates of the Cleveland Bridge Builder program join a long line of successful civic-minded people who are making things happen in their communities. A number of University Heights and Cleveland Heights residents have been through the 10-month course. All of them have committed themselves to contributing to the growth, development and prosperity of Northeast Ohio and especially the city they live in. Each of them has a vision of their community and is working in one way or another to realize that vision.

These are a few of the Bridge Builders graduates who live in Cleveland Heights and University Heights:

Kurt Ringenbach – CBB ’04 (University Heights) Kurt is the president of Ringenbach Financial Partners LLC, a personal financial planning and investment management firm in Cleveland Heights. As a result of his CBB experience, he joined the board of directors for Shaker Lakes Nature Center. He sees the biggest challenge in University Heights as the “high property and local income tax rates relative to suburbs with which it is competing for residents without any superior services, schools, parks, roads, or recreational facilities, etc. to justify it.” He agrees that collaboration with other cities to cut unnecessary costs is something that should be looked at further.

Annmarie Grassi – CBB ’08 (Cleveland Heights) Anne-Marie has dedicated her life to improving the experience of middle school students. As the executive director of Open Doors Academy in Cleveland Heights, she sees some of the solutions to improving our education system as enhancing technology, extending the school day and re-creating social and emotional development back into the curriculum.

Jennifer Vinson – CBB ’05 (Cleveland Heights) Jennifer works in Cleveland Heights as the vice president of operations for Allied Advertising. She has volunteered with HeightsArts and with the Cleveland Heights–University Heights schools. She says she “strongly feel[s] we need to find a way to make more of the families who live in the Heights embrace the public schools for their children and stay in the Heights.”

Wesley Gillespie – CBB ’07 (Cleveland Heights) Wesley, a senior vice president and area retail manager for KeyCorp, says his decision to live in Cleveland Heights was strongly influenced by its vast diversity. Since participating in the CBB program he has increased his leadership roles on two nonprofit boards, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Cleveland Heights, and Clothes for Kids. His biggest concern for Cleveland Heights is maintaining and improving educational benchmarks set by the state.

Bill Hubbard – CBB ’07 (Cleveland Heights) Bill is an associate at Thompson Hine LLP. He is involved with the Cleveland Restoration Society and serves on the boards and grounds committee of Saint Ann Church. Bill is committed to Cleveland Heights and says its best attributes are its walkability and the quality and variety of housing. He is concerned about the poor reputation of the school system and believes that “recent progress needs to continue,” but he also thinks that “creative ways need to be found to support and maintain the city’s services and aging infrastructure without increasing taxes imposed on residents.”

Cathy Carter – CBB ’06 (Cleveland Heights) Cathy is the director of development and communications for Greater Cleveland Community Shares. As a result of her experience with Cleveland Bridge Builders, she joined the board of directors of Reaching Heights, the Cleveland Heights–University Heights Public Schools Foundation.

As a trustee, she works to approve school and community grants that will provide the enrichment programs that are needed by our youth, such as the Summer Music Camp and the recent Heights High history documentary on CH-UH military veterans.

As the premiere leadership development organization for mid-career to senior level professionals, the Cleveland Bridge Builder program is ideal for those who want to increase the level of their civic leadership in their community. For more information, visit the Cleveland Leadership Center Web site at www.clevelandleaders.org or call Hannah Beluso, the program director, at 216-592-2280.

I BUY NEO is a resident of University Heights and a member of the Cleveland Bridge Builders Class of 2007.
Nighttown launches “Hungry First Monday”

Bruce Hennes

Beginning on Monday, April 6, Nighttown will donate $5 for every meal served at the restaurant on the first Monday of each month to Harvest for Hunger and the Cleveland Foodbank. This “Hungry First Monday” promotion will continue throughout the year on the first Monday of every month.

“We are going through extraordinary times and those who have should help out those who have not. Even in this down economy Nighttown is doing well. Giving up a little of our profit just seems like the right thing to do,” said Brendan Ring, owner of Nighttown, who estimated that the nine-month “Hungry First Monday” promotion could net as much as $15,000 “if people come out in droves,” for the Cleveland Foodbank.

“I recently read an article in the New York Times that said working-class people who suddenly lose jobs or homes often find themselves at sea, unsure how to navigate the system or ashamed to seek help. It is those people who, over the last several months, (have) started arriving in growing numbers at food pantries, which are often the first tentative step for those whose incomes are too high to qualify for government assistance. We must all step up to the plate,” said Ring, who became an American citizen last summer. “Besides, everyone’s heard of Fat Tuesday. Now, we’ll have Hungry First Monday once a month.”

Nighttown’s business neighbors are also chipping in. The Cedar Fairmont Merchants Association will join Nighttown in donating to the Cleveland Foodbank from April 1 through December 31. As of press time, the following businesses will contribute $5 for every sale over $10 on the first Monday or first Tuesday of each month (some are closed on Mondays). Appletree Books, Abstract Hair Design, C.L. Barber Salon, and Hang It Up Archival Framing. Other shops are expected to soon join in.

Cedar Fairmont Special Improvement District President Sal Russo said, “These are hard times for everyone. Our association, merchants, and professionals will do what we can to support the needy of the Greater Cleveland area.”

As the need for food continues to increase in our area, a promotion like this is a wonderful, grassroots effort to get the community involved. Hunger is a serious and urgent problem in our community,” said Anne Goodman, executive director, Cleveland Foodbank. “Thankfully, kindness and compassion are hallmarks of Greater Clevelanders.”

The foodbank’s distribution for the first three months of our fiscal year was up 23 percent.

All Hungry First Monday donations go to Harvest for Hunger, an annual, 21-county food and funds drive that takes place each March and is organized by the Cleveland Foodbank. Dollars donated through Harvest for Hunger make food available to local hunger centers for free. A $5 donation provides enough food for four meals, or $20 can provide a week’s worth of food for a hungry family.

As a parting thought, the discussion examined the question, if traditional gender differences were ever to disappear, would we miss some of the roles and behaviors that separate men from women?

The discussion was guided by a panel including Amanda Shaffer, interim faculty diversity officer, Case Western Reserve University; Sarojini Rao, Zonta Club of Cleveland Foundation; Dr. Dorothy Miller, director, Flora Stone Mather Women’s Center and clinical associate professor, Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences; community activist Miriam Wilson; and Manuela Boyino, senior planner, D.B. Hartt, Inc.

If you enjoy honest talk on other hefty topics, HCC will host three additional spring forums focusing on re-engaging the American Dream, and examining topics including the American national identity, as well as America’s vision of itself and how the vision intersects with race, class and diversity. HCC forums will be held on April 30, at 7 p.m. at the Garfield Heights Performing Arts Center, at 4000 Turney Road, Garfield Heights; on May 9, at 1 p.m. at the Dolan Center, John Carroll University, University Heights; and on June 18, at 6:30 p.m., at the North Olmsted Public Library, 2543 Lorain Road, North Olmsted.

Nancy Dietrich is a trustee of the Heights Community Congress and serves on Cleveland Heights City Council.

Group offers ethical leadership series

Marcia Mauter

The Institute for Creative Leadership will offer a series of classes on ethical leadership on Thursday evenings, April 16, 23 and 30, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Case Barlow Farmstead in Hudson, Ohio. Using the institute’s experiential model, sessions will be facilitated by Benjamin Forbes, professor emeritus of management at John Carroll University, and the institute’s director Marcia Mauter.

Designed to help participants develop ethical practices for their organizations, this original series will link current events and historical patterns of organizational culture, challenging participants to develop new frameworks. Participants will grapple with questions such as how leaders face and resolve ethical dilemmas, and how ethics should inform organizational practices.

The program will allow participants to consider and discuss the ethical implications of individual and organizational decisions made within the context of extreme outdoor pursuits. They will derive insights, and apply the new knowledge to present-day challenges in business and personal fronts. The program is organized around a selected reading, “Thin Air,” by acclaimed journalist, author and mountaineer Jon Krakauer.

The cost of the course is $750, plus the cost of the text. To register, call 216-931-3785.

The Institute for Creative Leadership is a nonprofit organization located in Greensboro, North Carolina. It is one of Northeast Ohio’s oldest training organizations. It has pioneered and developed experiential learning on topics related to leadership, team development, diversity and personal or group effectiveness. The institute has served more than 70,000 people from more than 500 different organizations.

More information is available at www.mcit.instituteforcreativeleadership.org.

Marcia Mauter is the director of the Institute for Creative Leadership.
Gesu Parish group leads mission to Honduras

Anita Kazarian

In the still dark hours of a cold February morning, 38 people gathered at Hopkins Airport to start their journey to Honduras. A group organized by Gesu, a Catholic church in University Heights, were beginning a week-long mission trip “in hopes of alleviating some of the many needs of the Honduran people.” Sometimes something more happens to the people who go to help. Volunteers participating in these trips often come to understand the “relative unimportance of things in our lives. It is a reverse mission where we learn some of life’s most important lessons from the poorest of the poor.”

Pharmacist Dale Lewis was in charge of the nearly 50 suitcases of donated drugs we carried to Honduras with us. The medical brigade was made up of people of all faiths who came to help. Torres, Matty Walters and Donna Calanog met all 1,400 patients as they took adults’ blood pressures. On the last day, these nurses took the readings in the hot sun outside the clinic, while over 530 patients waited to be seen. Heights residents included Marty Walters, Dale and Jane Lewis, Katie Holzhheimer, Anita Kazarian, Pat Coburn, Marna Dacey and Brother Denis Weber.

- Anita Kazarian is a freelance writer and University Heights resident.

Science Café Cleveland

Darin Croft

Science Café Cleveland.

Anita Kazarian

Ever wanted to ask a scientist your very own question and get an answer in plain English? How about speaking your mind? At Science Café you can, even while holding a pint of beer.

So, what is so unusual about the Science Café? Croft, who is the Science Café coordinator, calls it an “inverted talk.” Say what? A scientist gives a brief presentation, about five minutes, and the rest of the time is spent answering questions from you, the audience. There are only three guidelines: 1) raise your hand to speak 2) you may ask a question or make a statement 3) no jargon allowed, plain English please.

The March topic was “Intelligence Begins at Infancy” and the scientists who led the forum were Dr. Joseph Fagan from Case Western Reserve University and Dr. Cindy Holland from University Hospitals. The evening’s discussion included an hour’s worth of questions on expanded topics such as: “culture free, culture fair” testing, the role of genetics, different schools and methods of IQ testing, what intelligence means and whether men are smarter than women.

This free public forum receives financial support from Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society, and radio station WCQN 90.3 FM WCQN airs an audiotape of the Science Café at 9 a.m. on the second Monday of each month. Darin Croft’s family chose Cleveland Heights when they moved here from Chicago, because “we really like the feel of Cleveland Heights, it’s an inclusive community, and we love the old architecture, the old houses and neighborhoods. And it turns out our great neighbors validate our decision.”

The topic for the April 13 Science Café is “Drug Resistant Bacteria” featuring Dr. Robert Bonomo from CRWRU and Dr. Louis Rice from Cleveland VA Medical Center. For more information go to www.cscafe.org/sigmaxi/.

Anita Kazarian is a freelance writer and University Heights resident.

Help cleanup Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park

Joanne Campbell and Diane Mogren

Volunteers are needed to spruce up the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park, located at the intersection of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Coventry Road, on Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Each spring and fall Coventry P.E.A.C.E. organizes a day to clean the grounds and repair the playground equipment at the park. The nonprofit organization stands for People Enhancing a Child’s (now a Community’s) Environment and evolved from a Coventry Elementary School PTA group charged with rebuilding the Coventry School playground in 1991.

The group raised the funds to build the playground and organized hundreds of parents, teachers and neighbors to construct it in 1993. They have continued to enhance the school grounds over the years, including subsidizing the playing field and building the P.E.A.C.E. Park in 2001. The P.E.A.C.E. Arch, installed in 2003, was Heights Arts’ first public art project.

“The park is a jewel of Cleveland Heights,” said Coventry P.E.A.C.E. President Erick Kauffman. “With help and with patience we improve the grounds, and we will continue to do that for a long time.”

Tools, gloves, lunch and guidance are provided. RSVP’s not required. Come for an hour or the whole day.

E-mail pc32@roadrunner.com for more information.

Joanne Campbell has been a Coventry P.E.A.C.E. garden and playground participant for over 15 years. Diane Mogren is a supporter and former Coventry P.E.A.C.E. playground president.

Coventry Crippers returns to Coventry Village April 17

Myro Ornstein

Blue birds, squirrels, skunks, turkeys, green frogs and bats...oh, my! Yes, Dorothy, the Coventry Crippers will return to Coventry Village on April 17 and 18 as part of a collaboration between the Cleveland Institute of Art’s Visual Arts and Technology Environment, Kacalieff Visiting Artist Lecture Series and the Coventry Village Special Improvement District.

Designed to stimulate awareness and advocate creative solutions for a sustainable ecology, Coventry Crippers is being coordinated by CIA’s Environmental Sculpture Class. Numerous events are planned to educate the public about the various critters that have roamed the Coventry area.

The Coventry Library will kickoff the program, beginning April 13, with an informational exhibit providing easy and practical ways to promote sustainable living. On Friday, April 17 from 6 until 9 p.m., the public is invited to a reception for the exhibit “Imagining a Sustainable Life,” displaying the CIA students’ work, on the second floor of

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Blue birds, squirrels, skunks, turkeys, green frogs and bats...oh, my! Yes, Dorothy, the Coventry Crippers will return to Coventry Village on April 17 and 18 as part of a collaboration between the Cleveland Institute of Art’s Visual Arts and Technology Environment, Kacalieff Visiting Artist Lecture Series and the Coventry Village Special Improvement District.

Designed to stimulate awareness and advocate creative solutions for a sustainable ecology, Coventry Crippers is being coordinated by CIA’s Environmental Sculpture Class. Numerous events are planned to educate the public about the various critters that have roamed the Coventry area.

The Coventry Library will kickoff the program, beginning April 13, with an informational exhibit providing easy and practical ways to promote sustainable living. On Friday, April 17 from 6 until 9 p.m., the public is invited to a reception for the exhibit “Imagining a Sustainable Life,” displaying the CIA students’ work, on the second floor of

Science Café Cleveland

Anita Kazarian

Ever wanted to ask a scientist your very own question and get an answer in plain English? How about speaking your mind? At Science Café you can, even while holding a pint of beer.

So, what is so unusual about the Science Café? Croft, who is the Science Café coordinator, calls it an “inverted talk.” Say what? A scientist gives a brief presentation, about five minutes, and the rest of the time is spent answering questions from you, the audience. There are only three guidelines: 1) raise your hand to speak 2) you may ask a question or make a statement 3) no jargon allowed, plain English please.

The March topic was “Intelligence Begins at Infancy” and the scientists who led the forum were Dr. Joseph Fagan from Case Western Reserve University and Dr. Cindy Holland from University Hospitals. The evening’s discussion included an hour’s worth of questions on expanded topics such as: “culture free, culture fair” testing, the role of genetics, different schools and methods of IQ testing, what intelligence means and whether men are smarter than women.

This free public forum receives financial support from Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society, and radio station WCQN 90.3 FM WCQN airs an audiotape of the Science Café at 9 a.m.

Anita Kazarian is a freelance writer and University Heights resident.

Help cleanup Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park

Joanne Campbell and Diane Mogren

Volunteers are needed to spruce up the Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park, located at the intersection of Euclid Heights Boulevard and Coventry Road, on Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Each spring and fall Coventry P.E.A.C.E. organizes a day to clean the grounds and repair the playground equipment at the park. The nonprofit organization stands for People Enhancing a Child’s (now a Community’s) Environment and evolved from a Coventry Elementary School PTA group charged with rebuilding the Coventry School playground in 1991.

The group raised the funds to build the playground and organized hundreds of parents, teachers and neighbors to construct it in 1993. They have continued to enhance the school grounds over the years, including subsidizing the playing field and building the P.E.A.C.E. Park in 2001. The P.E.A.C.E. Arch, installed in 2003, was Heights Arts’ first public art project.

“The park is a jewel of Cleveland Heights,” said Coventry P.E.A.C.E. President Erick Kauffman. “With help and it will continue to be for a long time.”

Tools, gloves, lunch and guidance are provided. RSVP’s not required. Come for an hour or the whole day.

E-mail pc32@roadrunner.com for more information.

Joanne Campbell has been a Coventry P.E.A.C.E. garden and playground participant for over 15 years. Diane Mogren is a supporter and former Coventry P.E.A.C.E. playground president.
Heights Arts features young artists

Peggy Spaeth

Some may find it hard to imagine that 16 years ago the public schools in artsy Cleveland Heights had only one art teacher at one of eight elementary schools. But during a perennial public school budget crisis, the arts had been cut from the district budget and each elementary school became a magnet for a specialty such as language, communications or art. Only one school, Roxboro Elementary, was the art one with an art teacher.

Parents at a Canterbury Elementary School PTA meeting decided to make art their cause, and in one year had worked through the issues that stood in the way of reinstituting art at their school. A year later, each of the elementary schools had an art teacher.

Heights Arts has been celebrating the work done in the classes of the certified art teachers in the public schools for the past eight years with an annual exhibition of more than 300 pieces from all of the district’s schools. For the first several years the work was shown at Cleveland Heights City Hall. In 2007 the show moved to Heights Arts Studio, the former YMCA purchased and renovated by the Heights Library.

The 9th Annual Heights Arts Young Artists Exhibition kicks off with an opening reception Saturday, April 18, 2-5 p.m., and runs through May 16. The show will feature art by children from kindergarten through 12th grade grouped by school. Some of the work will be displayed in the library lobby on the east side of the street, and some in Heights Arts Studio on the west side.

Heights Arts Studio and Heights Library are located at 2340-2346 Lee Road. Call 216-371-3344 for studio hours and 216-932-3600 for library hours.

Peggy Spaeth is the executive director of Heights Arts.

Heights Writes

Meredith Holmes

It’s April. We dare to look forward to spring and the first lettuce harvest. Gail Bellamy, the new Cleveland Heights Poet Laureate, considers the assertive Arugula, a salad green with a lot of personality.

Arugula

by Gail Bellamy

When I encounter arugula dressed in the company of tender leaves on a white salad plate in a restaurant, it reminds me of those street-tough, spiky greens that grow up along the railroad tracks and between pavement cracks on urban basketball courts, those prickly resilient greens that lurk behind condemned buildings, or jab their way up through gravel, refusing to be trampled, held back by chain link fences, smacked out, or otherwise suffocated.

By the time arugula arrives at the restaurant, it isn’t just a punk in a dinner jacket escorting the debutante: Arugula owns the place.

Gail Bellamy, a 20 year resident of Cleveland Heights, will be appointed the city’s 4th Poet Laureate by City Council on Monday, April 20, at 7:30 at Cleveland Heights City Hall.

Events celebrate preservation

Kara Hanley O’Donnell

May is Historic Preservation Month and three free events will celebrate and recognize Cleveland Heights as a special place.

Saturday, May 9, 10 a.m. to noon

“Lecture & Walking Tour of Grant W. Deming’s Forest Hill Allotment”

Led by Dr. Mark Souther, Associate Professor of History at Cleveland State University. Meet at Superior School House, 1439 Superior Road at Euclid Heights Boulevard.

Sunday, May 17, noon to 4 p.m.

“Sharing and Preserving Our Communities’ History: Memories and Photos”

Lee Road Library Meeting rooms A & B.

Thursday, May 21, 7:00 p.m.

“The Greenest Building is Already Built: Sustainability and Historic Preservation”

Jamie Bertram, historic preservation specialist with the Cleveland Restoration Society. Superior School House, 1439 Superior Road at Euclid Heights Boulevard.

These events are co-sponsored by the Cleveland Heights Landmark Commission, Future Heights, the Cleveland Heights Historical Society and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

Kara Hanley O’Donnell works in the Cleveland Heights Department of Planning & Development as the City’s historic preservation planner.
Great wine values from Spain available in the Heights!

Loren Sonkin

2007 Torres Sangre de Toro White Wine

From Catalonia along the Mediterranean in the extreme northeast corner of Spain, comes this refreshing white wine made from the Parellada grape. I purchased it for $9.99 at Zagara’s on Lee Road. The name means “son of the Bull,” a reference to the Roman God of Wine, Bacchus, and the bottle has a tiny white plastic bull attached to it. I am not sure I get that, but the wine has lovely aromas of cantaloupe, lemons and even some crushed sea shells. Drinking it provides a crisp bite of refreshing lemons and minerals. This would be great as an aperitif or with seafood or rice dishes. I think you will find it an excellent value for a wine of this pedigree.

2005 Castillo de Fuendejalón Crianza

Don’t be fooled because this bottle is wrapped completely in paper; this wine is both serious and enjoyable. Another winner from the Aragonese winery, it is from the same winery that makes Mosen Cleto, recommended in the January edition. The winery is located in the Campo de Borja region of northeast Spain. It is a blend of Garnacha (what the Spaniards call Grenache) and Tempranillo (Spain’s indigenous star grape). This is a luscious wine with lovely flavors reminiscent of a softer cherry liqueur. It would be great to sip alone or served with a wide variety of food. It is available at Zagara’s, Heinen’s and Whole Foods for $9.99. I recommend opening the bottle an hour or two before serving to let it breathe.

Loren Sonkin lives in Cleveland Heights, where he is an attorney and contributor to Intowine.com.

Mad Greek continues updates with addition of new chef, menu nicely presented on a bed of Greek horta greens and potato puree ($18.95).

We finished our meal with a generous portion of chocolate-drizzled baklava ($4.95) and Greek Island Tea ($3.75), which gave me visions of patio dining as I enjoyed the curious licorice flavor from the drink’s ouzo.

I can’t wait to go back once the weather breaks.

Per her grandmother, Christina Klenotic is a “good eater” who never met a carb she didn’t like. She enjoys sampling eclectic restaurants, galleries and neighborhoods, which is why she loves Cleveland Heights.

Christina Klenotic

Highlights from the Heights Observer, April 7, 2009.

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The Heights Eats

www.heightsalumni.org
At Phoenix Coffee, the sweet smell of success

Bill Kushner

While national coffee chains continue to close stores, Phoenix Coffee, a Heights area gourmet coffee venue continues to grow by keeping things local. It’s a trend that has some retail experts scratching their heads. Even with the down economy, the store is really busy for a Sunday afternoon.

Jessie Mueller, a manager at the Lee Road store, is very enthusiastic about all things coffee, and tea for that matter. She notes that the company spends quite a bit of time and money training staff to insure that each customer has a great experience with Phoenix and its baristas. She feels the store itself is a “unique environment for the community” with its decidedly uncorporate feel.

Carl Jones is the founder of the company, his wife Sarah Wilson-Jones is the CEO. Over a cappuccino, Carl explains that the environment in the stores is by intention and is designed to foster Coffee Culture. That is, the idea of a coffee house where people come together to discuss everything under the sun. He strongly believes that the culture is “something that is good for human beings” and should be encouraged.

In fact, an eclectic group of local Heights professionals and erstwhile philosophers known as the Phoenix Fellows meet at the Lee Road store every morning and talk for hours.

However, the real key to the success of Phoenix, according to Carl, is in the back of the company facility on St. Clair Ave, where Phoenix roasts its own coffee. The roasting facility is somewhat akin to an industrial version of coffee heaven. Large bags of green coffee lay neatly stacked on pallets, each displaying its country of origin with colorful artwork. The green beans are fed into a large roasting machine and 10 minutes later out come the little dark beans we call coffee.

The aroma is amazing, think brewing coffee times 10. Coffee roasting is an art and a science, according to Carl, and an expertise that is gained through years, and in Carl’s case, decades of trial and error.

After rostering, the coffee is shipped and consumed in the company’s six locations in a matter of days, giving Phoenix a huge quality advantage over its bigger and slower rivals.

Carl strongly believes that it’s the premium quality of its many coffees that is the reason for the success of Phoenix. Without citing figures he says that the company’s growth over the past few years has been dramatic.

Randy and Angela Peters are regular customers at the Lee Road Phoenix. Randy says that he has come to appreciate the quality difference between Phoenix and the major chains. It’s clear that at a time when many retailers are struggling to keep customers, Phoenix Coffee is thriving by serving a truly premium product and experience.

The company has six retail locations with two stores in Cleveland Heights, one on Lee and another on Coventry. The main office and roastery is on St. Clair Ave and can be reached at 216-724-9744.

FutureHeights recalls gift certificates

Richard Cordray, Attorney General for the State of Ohio, has filed suit against CertifiChecks, Inc., the provider of gift certificates to thousands of organizations nationwide, including FutureHeights. The complaint was filed in Montgomery County Common Pleas Court and alleges violations of the Consumer Sales Practices Act, including unfair and deceptive practices.

CertifiChecks filed for bankruptcy in February 2009.

FutureHeights sold more than $11,000 in gift certificates in 2008. “Every dollar of gift certificate sales was reinvested in the community,” said Gina Cheverine, president of the FutureHeights board of directors.

“FutureHeights made no money on the operation of the program and we provided the service to spur support of the local economy and increase public awareness of the benefit of choosing local stores over chains. We are very disappointed that CertifiChecks has let our community down.”

Certificates had been sold since 2004 at the FutureHeights office, the Heights Arts Holiday Gallery store, Zona Marketplace and Mac’s Backs on Coventry and were redeemable at more than 100 independent businesses in Cleveland Heights.

FutureHeights will reimburse unredeemed FutureHeights gift certificates that were issued in 2008 and 2009 if they are returned to the FutureHeights office, located at 2161 Lee Road, Suite 103, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, by June 5, 2009. Consumers and merchants are urged to contact FutureHeights for more information at www.futureheights.org or 216-332-1423.

FutureHeights is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to civic engagement and quality of life in the Heights.
Linen Consultants is now Heights Home Collection

Kaye Lowe

You don’t have to travel to Europe, New York or San Francisco to discover fine linens; smashing bedding collections with lively prints, artful florals or geometric prints, or French linen tea towels. Just step into Heights Home Collection in the historic Cedar Fairmount Business District.

Heights Home Collection is the new name for the Linen Consultants, located in the Heights Center Building at 1427 Cedar Road. The store has a new Web site and has expanded its offerings to include even more fine linens for the bed, bath, and table, as well as collections of luxurious and unusual home decor products.

In 2002, Sally Schulze dreamed of owning a retail business that would enable her to share her passion for all things linen with others. She founded Linen Consultants, which grew from the former Potter and Mellen store on Carnegie Avenue.

From the beginning her store has focused on personal service by offering consultations, hard-to-fit sizes and custom work. The store now offers online gift and bridal registries, gift certificates and free gift boxing. Bedding, baby pillows, bibs, soft toys, blankets and towels can be monogrammed with names and dates to make any gift a personal one.

Schulze’s staff chooses merchandise by constantly searching for new vendors, items, and ideas. Schulze travels internationally seeking special items for her store.

“Sally and other staff members attend the markets in Atlanta and New York two to three times a year purchasing items that will add whimsy, class, or elegance to any room,” says store manager, Dave Richards. Customers will discover well-known brands as Serra, Matouk, Home Source International, Traditions by Pamela Kline, Swans Island, Banji Volpe Noemi, Mane Lion Ceramics, Vance, Kitras Candles, Elekund, Le Jacquard Français and Analì.

Visitors will also admire local offerings such as Cincinnati artist Charley Harper’s classic images of nature, on the Tag of Tabletop items including placemats, napkins, serving pieces and giftware.

“Our continued passion and commitment to give you to your personal world shows through with both our classic, keepsake genre of fine linens as well as stylish, everyday solutions,” says Schulze. She adds that the store’s goal is to make gift giving simple, easy and personal.

Her friendly and experienced staff makes the Heights Home Collection the ideal place to find beautiful gifts or an affordable indulgence for yourself.

Kaye Lowe is executive director of the Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District.

Liquid Planet to open

Heights Observer Staff

Liquid Planet, a restaurant known for its smoothies and specialty pitas, will open in the former Vixseboxse space at the Heights Center Building in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood. According to building owner Michael Occhio, the restaurant has signed a lease, has completed demolition and plans to open the summer of 2009. Bob Blatchford Architects are completing the storefront renovation. Plans include restoring historical details, including reopening the arched clerestory windows, which had been covered over in a previous renovation; making the entryway handicapped accessible and adding a projecting sign like those seen in historic photographs.

The Heights location is the third in Northeast Ohio for the firm. Others are at 11002 Clifton Blvd. in Cleveland and 224 Crocker Park Blvd. in Westlake. Visit www.liquidplanet.com for more information.

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Choose-up-sides adult baseball: Rediscovering the game you love

Bob Rink

When the Cleveland Indians go to spring training, do thoughts of the halowed game of baseball still bring fond memories of those pick-up games you played, back when wooden bats were all you had and every kid knew how to screw a broken bat back together and tape it with black electrical tape? Or if you’re from a younger generation and your baseball career consisted of organized teams with metal bats, statistics and playoffs and then suddenly vanished after you graduated from high school, do you ever wish you could re-visit that time of your life, just to play a little baseball? If you answered yes, you’re not alone.

So I decided to do something about that four years ago. After playing in an “age-bracketed” league in Akron, and attending the Cleveland Indians Fantasy Camp to celebrate my lifetime love of the sport, I started the Saturday Senior Baseball Program in 2005 for adults 50 and older. The program’s primary goal is to give players the chance to play baseball once a week and let the fun of game time remain. No bench-warmers in this program, if you come, you play. In 2007, several of the participants indicated interest in continuing to play as long as the weather held, so the group found Brainard Park’s baseball field (in Lyndhurst) available, as summer youth baseball programs finished, and they started to use Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons for game times. As they arrived one Sunday to play at Brainard Park, they found another small, informal group of ball players, mostly ages 25 to 35, playing on the field. Since neither group had enough for two full teams they joined forces and played a true full-team game. A great camaraderie developed among the players. A few games even had a father playing on the same team with his adult son. Games played through October when Mother Nature finally said, “enough.”

George Cappotto, a fellow team-mate and program assistant, and I made three changes to the program: We offered players the choice of a weeknight and a weekend game; lowered the age limit to 21; and, since it wasn’t night and a weekend game; lowered the cost. A special single-game contract and waiver is available at the field each game for sign up of the “single game” player. Registrations for the 2009 summer season will be limited to a maximum of 50 players. While the program is an equal-opportunity adventure, some previous baseball or fast-pitch softball experience is recommended for safety purposes. You can register for the 2009 summer by e-mailing me at r_rink@sbcglobal.net or George Cappotto at gcappotto@sbcglobal.net for a registration form and additional information.

Bob Rink is a 50+ year resident and former finance director of Cleveland Heights and is now semi-retired from the practice of law.

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29 Scan this at Anatolia Cafe
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41 Fox baby
42 Belonging to
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47 Contradict
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51 Official canine registry (abbr.)
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53 Unfortunate
56 Tickled (slang)
59 Part of A.M.A.
62 Stone - Pilots
63 Explosive
66 Bosc is one variety
68 Winter Bombeck
69 British liquid measurement
70 Group defending rights
71 Young CH
73 Read superficially
74 yaa! (Attention getter)
75 "Way Out"
76 Secure with cables
77 Sun salutations done here on Lee
78 Vet Hospital on S. Taylor
92 mode
99 Give temporarily
110 "...you got some ‘splarin’ to do!"
112 Sebaceous gland infection in eye
113 Destiny
114 Vane direction
22 3rd of Beads on Lee Blvd
26 Ridge
50 To court; woo
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57 Opera solo
58 Tax on imports
59 Sanctuary and Dream
61 Kiss with passion
62 Interlock
65 He plays for pay
67 US prizelighter
18 years of big fun softball

Tom Woodworth

In the late ’80s, Dave Kolb and his wife Alice, both professors in organizational behavior at Case Western Reserve University, were playing softball in a league made up of various university departments. They eventually became uncomfortable with the level of competitiveness in the league. Dave and Alice believed softball was “too much fun to be left to those who do it well.” So, in 1991 they took their department team out of the league and started a Sunday morning pick-up sides softball game for a group of diverse individuals to play free from an emphasis on skills but with a focus on having fun.

Today, 18 years after its formation, this group is called the Free Play Softball League. Dave and Alice continue to facilitate the league but they are quick to acknowledge “the contributions of long term members including Ken Koles, Francis Chiappa, Steve Calhoun, and others to nurture and grow the softball league.”

The Sunday after tax day marks opening day for a season that continues until it snows sometime in November. Each Sunday, play begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends at noon. Dave arrives 30 minutes early to unload the bats, balls, extra gloves and water, and to set up the playing field with bases and orange cones to mark the foul lines. There are no fees or commitments to play every week. The games are played at Forest Hill Park on field #8, a beautiful expanse of grass with enough imperfections to be consistent with the informality of play. Friendly rules include no strike-outs and substitute runners if needed. Steve Calhoun, who makes up the sides, says “Every Sunday I show up because I really love experiencing the incredible novel events that animate each game.”

Mark Bass, a former rugby player, speaks for many when he says, “Where else can an almost 60-year-old guy with two bad knees and a chronic hamstring condition play the ‘hot corner’ third base position?” Ken Koles, a charter member, feels that “Sunday morning softball is the most fun (other than with my wife) I have all week; two hours of playing and smiling.”

Thanks to longtime Cleveland Heights residents Dave and Alice Kolb (and many others), Free Play Softball is a community tradition that can be enjoyed by all because it is free in every sense of the word. Stop by some Sunday!

Bob Rosenbaum lives in Cleveland Heights and is a member of the University Heights Speedskating Club (short-track) and Northeast Ohio’s only Olympic-size short-track venue. They are coached by Nicole Golembiewski, a certified coach and former member of the U.S. Olympic Training Program. The club still has many of the qualities I remember and enjoy. I love the creative outlet of writing a routine, seeing the routines the girls write, watching them develop and improve. I like helping the girls work out problems and conflicts, watching them grow as leaders, being there if they need some help or advice and helping them learn and improve their synchronized swimming skills. And I always enjoy seeing the show come together with all the costumes, lights, glitter and excitement.”

Bob Rosenbaum

Local speedskaters compete in national and state championships

Bob Rosenbaum

Nick Elia, a 17-year-old athlete from University Heights, became the first home-grown skater to represent the Cleveland Heights Speedskating Club (short-track) in a national championship.

The event was the 2009 Dow U.S. National Age Class Short Track Speedskating Championships held on March 14-15 in Midland, Mich.

Elia competed in four distances in the quarter finals, and advanced to the semi-finals in two of those. He ranked 17th in the 500-meter mid-distance; 11th in the 1000-meter sprint. Elia said his goal next year is to reach the finals.

Two weeks earlier, the Cleveland Heights Speedskating Club had several members with top finishes at the Ohio State Short Track Championships, held in Columbus.

Tess Connors took 1st in the Pee Wee division; Elia was 1st in the Pony A division; Billy Vidmar placed 1st in Pony B; and, Marc Kun was 1st in the Senior B division. Other members who skated at the event were Audrey Stainbrook and Jacob Stainbrook (Pee Wee), Ryan Kun (Midjet) and Al Marcones (Masters).

The speedskating championship was a coming out of sorts for the young club; this is the first generation of home-grown youth skaters to make a strong showing at regional and national events.

The skaters practice at the Cleveland Heights Recreation Center -- Northeast Ohio’s only Olympic-size short-track venue. They are coached by Nicole Golembiewski, a certified coach and former member of the U.S. Olympic Training Program.

The club is always accepting new members from ages 5 to 50-plus. Visit www.clevelandheightspeedskating.org for more information.

Heights High Swim Cadets dance the night away

Simone Quartell

The Cleveland Heights High School Swim Cadets synchronized swim club held their annual show, “Swim Cadets Dance the Night Away,” March 5-7. Twenty-two girls in pink swimsuits from all grades performed 13 routines set to songs with a theme of dance.

The routines were choreographed by Swim Cadet officers, seniors Sasha Emerman, Maura Logan, Megan McCoy and Emma Shumaker Chupp and junior Hannah Apple.

New members were selected by the officers after a week of clinics in November and the girls started practicing routines in December. In February, the officers selected swimsuits and costumes and put the program together.

“Swim Cadets is more than just a club”, said advisor Joan Bendix, it is a “group within the school of girls who wouldn’t be friends otherwise.” She was a member of the team in the 1970s.

The team bonds with traditions, such as singing special songs before the show and having cash made up from the proceeds.

Many of the girls are also sisters or cousins of former Swim Cadets, or even daughters or granddaughters.

Bendix said she likes being the advisor because, “I enjoy getting to know the girls and staying in touch with what’s happening at Heights High now that my kids have graduated. I enjoy the continuity of remembering my time as a Swim Cader, and seeing that the club still has many of the qualities I remember and enjoy. I love the creative outlet of writing a routine, seeing the routines the girls write, watching them develop and improve. I like helping the girls work out problems and conflicts, watching them grow as leaders, being there if they need some help or advice and helping them learn and improve their synchronized swimming skills. And I always enjoy seeing the show come together with all the costumes, lights, glitter and excitement.”

Hannah Apple.

Simone Quartell is a senior at Cleveland Heights High School and a member of The Black and Gold club student newspaper.

The Cleveland Heights High School Swim Cadets synchronized swim club performed the opening number in their synchronized swimming show, set to Whitney Houston’s “I Wanna Dance with Somebody” and choreographed by Heights senior Maura Logan.
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