Government collaboration unlikely this time around

Bob Rosenbaum
University Heights Councilman Kevin Murphy's attempt to get in on $300,000 in grant money for municipal collaboration was probably too little too late. But municipal leaders who showed up at a town hall-style meeting April 30 gave him credit for starting an important conversation.

Murphy called the public meeting, inviting officials from University Heights, Cleveland Heights, South Euclid, Shaker Heights, Beachwood and Lyndhurst. His goal was to get buy-in from at least two cities for a 250-word abstract that he submitted to the EfficientGovNow program.

That program, according to Laura Scharf, its hired spokesperson, will provide a total of $500,000 for up to three projects that demonstrate collaboration between governments, delivering cost savings and increased competitiveness.

While EfficientGovNow will select grant finalists, the ultimate recipients will be determined in July by a public vote via phone, online and paper ballots, Scharf said.

Murphy's abstract outlines a three-point collaboration: 1) align planning for capital expenditures; 2) align contract negotiations for supplies, services and perhaps even union agreements; and 3) align accounting systems among participating cities. He said he couldn't yet estimate the cost savings of the plan—which is unrelated to the recently broached topic of a merger between CH and UH (see pages 2-3).

A more detailed grant application is due May 31. It must meet a list of conditions, including firm commitment from at least two governments to participate. That commitment is unlikely. It would require planning, budgeting and council votes by multiple cities within a 30-day window. In fact, Scharf implied that the program was extending a courtesy by allowing Murphy to master support that should have been in place when the abstract was turned in. She said 65 other proposals have been received from across the country and in the 16-county region of Northeast Ohio.

In trying to meet a short deadline, Murphy may have skipped some important political niceties, for which he paid at the thinly attended meeting. Other elected leaders didn't know about his proposal until he had already turned it in.

Beachwood officials didn't bother to attend the meeting—and have said publicly that they aren't interested in collaborating. Officials from South Euclid and Lyndhurst didn't attend but told Murphy to report back and they would consider joining the plan. Cleveland Heights and University Heights were both well represented at the meeting, and their officials were the most vocal about encouraging more discussion.

"Even if nothing comes of this," Murphy said, "at least we met. At least we're started talking."

Bob Rosenbaum is a Cleveland Heights resident.

International journalist to speak at FutureHeights annual meeting

Charles Michener, a former senior editor at Newsweek and The New Yorker magazines, will present the keynote address at FutureHeights' annual meeting on Wednesday, June 10, at the Heights Rockefeller Building.

Michener's talk, "Can Cleveland Heights Save Cleveland? Lessons for other city leaders," will focus on civic engagement.

Michener is a prominent cultural journalist who has contributed profiles and criticism to leading American and British journals, and is a former classical music columnist at The New York Observer. A native of Cleveland and a graduate of University School, Yale College and Columbia School of Journalism, he recently returned to Cleveland to write a book on the city's efforts to re-invent itself in the 21st century. He lives in Cleveland Heights.

The event is free and begins at 7 p.m. Current and prospective FutureHeights members are encouraged to attend. Call 216-357-1423 or visit www.futureheights.org for more information.

Fall election brings big decisions for UH voters

University Heights voters will make some big decisions in the November election. They will choose new city council members, choose a new mayor for the first time in more than 30 years, and vote on changes to their city's charter.

Three city council seats are up for election. Vice Mayor Adele Zucker has served three consecutive four-year terms and, because of term limits for all elected officials that took effect in 1996, cannot run in the fall. Councilman Peter Bernardo was appointed Dec. 4, 2007 to take the place of R. Patrick Kelley.

University Heights Councilman Kevin Murphy listens as Laura Scharf, spokesman for the EfficientGovNow program, explains rules for collaborative grant applications.

Dietrich finalizes decision not to run for re-election in CH

Cleveland Heights Council Member Nancy Dietrich has announced that she will not run for re-election this fall.

"I think it would be good for the group to have somebody new," she said, "I love the group of people we have. We have the benefit of long-term relationships with each other and with staff. We get a lot done. But we are less challenging to each other than we were. We question less."

Four council seats are up for election this fall. Incumbents Ed Kelley, Mark Tumco and Bonnie Caplan have announced they will not run for re-election.
A Dickensian take on a municipal merger

Mark Tumeo

As Dickens said: It is “the worst of times.” We all know we are in an economic downturn like the likes of which has not been seen since the Great Depression, and every community across Ohio is feeling the pain. As a city councilman in Cleveland Heights and Chilcote Foundation and co-founder and colleague I have worked to stem the impact of falling income tax revenues so we can continue to provide the type of services and quality of life our residents expect and deserve.

In Cleveland Heights, over the past two years, we have cut our budget by over $2 million, and we will probably have to cut more as income tax receipts continue to fall. Like cities all around, we have frozen wages, cut services and programming, increased fees and laid off employees. More cuts will further reduce our ability to serve our citizens.

Sadly, these hard times are not new to our region, and for several years there has been a concerted effort to “regionalize” as a way of making government more efficient and effective. However, since my election to council in 2013, I have wondered aloud to my colleagues how regionalization, as currently conceptualized, could really go. We already work closely with surrounding communities in purchasing and fire dispatch.

The real question is overall economy of scale. Governments in cities with shrinking populations – like almost every jurisdiction in Cuyahoga County – are facing an uphill battle. Our citizens deserve and expect quality services – but the population base being served, and hence the income base supporting those services, is shrinking while the cost of services and personnel continues to rise.

In business, such situations are met by consolidating core services and working to increase the customer base. For a local government in Northeast Ohio this has traditionally meant working on “economic development” – bringing in new businesses to provide jobs and building new housing units to draw residents. But when the overall population of the region is shrinking, and state and federal policies continue to promote urban sprawl and our migration from the inner core, these efforts are insufficient.

However, I believe that as a leader, despair and resignation are not options. Instead, desperate times call for new ideas and bold visions. I have thought for several years that the economics of government in our fractious region would be greatly improved if cities moved beyond the “sharing of purchasing and services” that our current model of regionalism represents to true consolidation – or in business terms – merger.

This is where the politics of local government gets tricky. I have mentioned this idea for years, and as a new councilman, I got the distinct impression that fear of the potential emotional backlash from even mentioning the idea kept council members and mayors across the region from speaking the idea out loud. But to me, leadership means more than maintaining the status quo and working for re-election. I think leadership requires willingness to take risks, especially in times as serious as these. Therefore, I am stepping forward and publicly advocating that we discuss the idea of merging Cleveland Heights and University Heights.

Why these two cities? First, we already have long and proud mutual histories; we are already joined through our school district and library system. Second, the idea seems obvious. The merged city would be well over 60,000, and economies of scale in police, fire, sanitary services, snow plowing and the like would make that the overall cost of operation per resident would decrease, potentially allowing a decrease in income tax, or at a minimum, no need to consider any increases for a very long time. Recently, the idea of merging the fire departments of Shaker Heights, Cleveland Heights and University Heights was proposed. It was estimated that this merger could save between $5 and $5 million. Imagine the size of all the services of two cities could save through economy of scale.

Discussion of the idea by political leaders does not mean the idea will or even can move forward. Merger can only be initiated by the actions of citizens. Neither a city council nor a mayor can begin the process. The only way cities can merge under Ohio law is for the citizens of each city to ask their mayor and council to begin the process. The only way cities can merge under Ohio law is for the citizens of each city to ask their mayor and council to begin the process. There is no other way. I am convinced that it is only through moving beyond our fear of risk that we can move from “the worst of times” to “the best of times.”

Mark Tumeo is a member of Cleveland Heights City Council and will run for re-election this fall.

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Nothing to gain in merger with Cleveland Heights

Beryl E. Rothschild

Why would a small city such as University Heights, which is doing well, want to be absorbed by its larger neighbor Cleveland Heights, which isn’t doing well at all in these economic times. What would we gain from it? Absolutely nothing.

Contrary to some of our other larger neighboring communities, we have a balanced budget, we live within our means, no employee has had to be laid off, all of our quality city services continue to be delivered. Our city has only been on the ballot once in the 12 years I have been mayor for an income tax increase, which passed easily several years ago. Also, our debt load is low.

Are UH Charter Review questions getting answered?

Rick Adante

On April 13 Concerned Citizens for University Heights convened a community dialogue to discuss and voice concerns with the city’s Charter Review Commission. Following that meeting, I presented an outline of the concerns expressed by the community to the Charter Review Commission.

University Heights residents are concerned about the reasons for a revised government structure. To date, the commission has focused on proposed changes to our government, while failing to explain why these changes are needed. Why rush changes to our government to the ballot this year? What is the dire predicament that has resulted in the proposed charter amendments?

Because the commission’s review efforts were at city council’s request, the commission may not be in a position to answer these questions, so on April 20, I presented the following questions to city council directly:

1. What are the specific issues that the city is facing that council believes only a restructured government is capable of dealing with, and how will a restructured government deal with those issues?

2. Why has council established a time frame that pushes for proposed changes to be voted on and implemented in 2010, rather than allowing more time for residents to understand the immediate issues and provide suggestions for alternatives?

3. If the city has specific issues that need to be dealt with, why not address them through ordinance rather than a charter amendment?

4. Could council provide an estimate as to the additional cost of a city administrator?

Cleveland Heights has a lot to gain from such a merger, mainly the needed population figures to assure Cleveland Heights that it will have the necessary population after the upcoming census to keep receiving direct community block grant money of $200,000 or better, whereas we have to compete to receive any Block Grant money. Also, they would get our tax income which certainly would help Cleveland Heights bail out of it’s recent economic dilemma.

University Heights has never been courted by Cleveland Heights before so why would we not be suspicious of their motives? Over the years the Cleveland Heights Council’s attitude has remained self-serving, so why would our city want to join with Cleveland Heights? We would get the short end of the stick. They have yet to fix up their blighted west side of Taylor Road where it comes together with our east side at Cedar Road, although they have promised to do so for their residents on Severn Road. What they don’t seem to want to understand about this request is that the Taylor/Cedar roads project leads right into their entertainment area on Lee Road and into their large shopping area via Taylor Road at Severance Circle. When suggested that they line both sides of Cedar Road with trees to offer a very nice approach to their own Lee Road area they turned it down. So much for cooperation.

We have gathered much data for over 30 years through our entry and exit surveys of residents. The makeup of our city remains mostly professional; people love the small town atmosphere, the neighborliness, feeling of safety of ease of walking to shopping areas, summer pool, band concerts, etc. What they don’t like is our high property taxes which many people attribute really due to the public school levies. The only solution to this is by the State of Ohio reforming school funding, beginning with doing something with HB56 which was made a part of Ohio’s constitution.

Collaboration is another thing. University Heights is in the Joint Fire Dispatch with Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights. This was made possible by Cleveland Heights’ very capable employee Kathleen Ruane. University Heights participates in many other collaborations, as do most cities. Perhaps an article on that topic would balance this sudden burst of merger mania.

Beryl E. Rothschild is mayor of University Heights.

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HCC mission still relevant

As a member of the Heights Community Congress board, I take issue with Fran Mentch's April letter to the editor. I believe in HCC's continuing mission to ensure access to housing for all groups, and to foster a community atmosphere in which diverse people live harmoniously together. These are not outdated goals, nor are they goals that have been fully achieved. In fact, they are very much in line with Ms. Mentch's admonition that HCC "should work to stop the resegregation of our city by race and class."

Organizing a City Fresh program or investing in green space are certainly worthy missions, but they are not HCC's. I am frankly surprised that Ms. Mentch would tell HCC where its office should be located or which houses should be showcased at its annual Heritage Home Tour. A recently updated strategic plan guides HCC's work, and we now provide programming such as our "honest conversations" about race and class to other Northeast Ohio cities where such dialogue is needed.

Nancy Dietrich
Delamere Drive
Cleveland Heights

Keep the humor coming

I enjoyed Greg Donley's witty Skunk-Fest '09 article in the April 7 Heights Observer, with its polygot puns Anna Roma, Witold Nostirle, Urs Treich, and Linnée Dégouté. "Now that's somebody clever enough to work at someplace like our supermarket," I told myself. His story may alert us to the many other puns in the news, including a V.P. who's Bidin' his time, a crook who Made Off with the money, and a president whom we overeducated liberals instinctively liked because his name backwards is amaba, Latin for 'I'll love 'im.'

I look forward to more reports from Mr. Donley on our Heights critters — our dear deer, ships of chipmunks, don't spar us the sparrows, maybe even a rabbit (German: Hasel).

Robert Haas
Carver Road
Cleveland Heights

HCC: A valuable community service

Part of the character that defines our community is the enthusiasm of our residents. The letter submitted in the April issue of the Heights Observer regarding Heights Community Congress ("HCC should direct its efforts towards urban renewal") is a good indication of that spirit, though perhaps somewhat misguided in its approach.

"There is a lot of work to be done in our city, and people who live here have reason to desire cooperative efforts to provide positive change."

That being said, the best means to achieve that goal is by working together, not by goading a community organization into submission via the press.

We at HCC are proud of our mission to protect fair housing by monitoring home sales and rentals, and to promote viable, inclusive neighborhoods through diversity-focused programming. These are not outdated goals.

"We work hard to provide a valuable service to our community, and welcome new ideas and insights to better serve our constituents. But working together should entail just that: working togeth-

Exploring possibilities through the thoughtful exchange of ideas will yield better results than staking agendas.

A key component of our work at HCC is finding ways to help all of us achieve that goal by working together, not by goading a community organization into submission via the press.

Respectfully submitted,
John Satola
President, Board of Directors
Heights Community Congress

Imagining the future

John Lents

It seems odd that I had to travel over 5,000 miles to get perspective on faith and politics in Northeast Ohio. But that is what happened. On a recent trip to the Middle East, I met with the Rev. Mitri Raheb, Pastor of the Christmas Church, an Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Bethlehem. Church members include teachers, doctors, lawyers, musicians, artists and business folk. There were many young families, children and teens – just like our congregation. Certainly there are vast differences between Pastor Raheb's context and mine. His is a world of security walls, occupation and minority status as a Palestinian Christian. My context is one of safety, majority identity and freedom. Yet what he said has application for our current reality in metro Cleveland.

Pastor Raheb reflected upon life in Bethlehem. He said there was "too much politics and not enough attention to the polis." Polis is the Greek word for city. The mission of his church is to rebuild Jerusalem from the inner city outward. He was a leader of "Bethlehem 2000," a campaign that raised money to rebuild the center of Bethlehem.

We often forget how important the city is. The Bible begins in a garden (Genesis 2:8 but ends in a city. In the Hebrew scripture there is the exhortation to rebuild the city walls of Jerusalem after the exile (Nehemiah 2:7). The forward-looking leaders in our region are right: We must share the resources and invest in the city of Cleveland. It is the heart of the region.

Pastor Raheb said that there is "too much religion and not enough faith."

Pastor Raheb reaches across religious and denominational boundaries bringing Christian and Muslim together around issues of mutual concern. How often do we, the religious leaders, bury ourselves only with our own institutions, miss opportunities to come together around issues of common interest? We often focus on the "wedge" issues that divide. We often miss the "whole pie" issues that can unite.

Pastor Raheb made a distinction between optimism and hope. Optimism, he said, comes from the same root as the word optic – what you can see with your eyes. The outlook for Bethlehem is not good. Yet his hope is fueled by his faith and this gives him energy to press on. He focuses on the abundance rather than the scarcity of resources. There IS enough to go around.

We in Northeast Ohio see the problems that beset us. However, hope stirs the imagination and taps the power to work for that which is envisioned. We have all the resources and all the courage to imagine Cleveland a dynamic and wonderful city where our children and grandchildren safely play, go to school, work and become honorable citizens. If Cleveland thrives, so does Cleveland Heights.

The formula is clear: Focus on the city. Reach across the boundaries and celebrate the abundance. Have faith and cultivate hope so that we will reap the harvest of joy and prosperity for all in Northeast Ohio.
Aurora Martinez is the branch manager at the Heights Library.

CH-UH Public Library Board
Highlights of February meeting

Judithe Soppel

In a very 21st century manner, your Heights Library is extending its reach beyond the walls of the library’s buildings and out to the community and to the world. How? With blogs. And, what’s a blog, you might ask? A blog is a Web site designed to provide to the public observations and, together, we can carry on a conversation. The library’s blogs focus on aspects of customer service that we are not just one-way communication. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to its topic.

One of the nice aspects of blogs are blogs that are not just one-way communication. You can leave comments and observations and, together, we can carry on a conversation. The library’s blogs focus on aspects of customer service that we provide to the public.

Here are just some of the library’s blogs about books—these are the work of our Readers Advisory Team (RATs), staff members who will gladly help you find your next good book, written or recorded, based on your personal reading tastes. If you can access the blogs from our website www.heightslibrary.org in the What To Read Next section. Why don’t you check them out?

Death Becomes a Librarian – Lifetime of Page-Turning Mysteries and Intriguing Books http://heightslibrary.org/wordpress/headrat/

Lair of the Undead Rat – The Collected Literary Obsessions of a Living-Impaired Rodent http://heightslibrary.org/wordpress/undeadrat/

FutureHeights

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BeeF up @ the Pub

Tonya Gibson

Tai Chi/Qi Gong Saturdays at the Coventry Village Library

Saturdays, May 2-May 30, 10 a.m.-11 a.m.
Life is stressful. Wouldn’t it be nice to relax? You can! Stop in the Coventry Village Library and let teacher Ruth Butler teach you how to relax and focus through Tai Chi and Qi Gong. This is an excellent form of healing and meditative exercises for adults of all ages. You are welcome to attend some or all Saturdays. Please wear comfortable clothing.

Tonya Gibson is an employee of the Heights Libraries who enjoys writing and photography in her free time.
Cleveland Heights City Council Highlights of March/April meetings

MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2009

American Express Travel Related Services Co. to reduce processing fees charged to the city from 2.8 to 2 percent

Road salt savings
City manager was authorized to contract with the Ohio Department of Transportation for purchase of road salt. Council Member Bonnie Caplan pointed out that salting only main streets, intersec-
tions and NLR reduced use salt from 12,000 to 4,600 tons and saved more than $250,000.

Final remarks
Council member Dennis Wilcox reminded citizens to pay their taxes by April 15. Half of the city’s income depends on its income tax. Council Member Co-
er addressed the importance of spending money within Cleveland Heights to keep local businesses healthy. Mayor Edward Kelley congratulated the men’s and women’s high school basketball teams on a great season.

LVW observers: Carol Gibbons, Blanche Valency

MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2009

All Council members present.

Demolition bids
City manager was authorized to advertise for bids to demolish select city-owned HUD properties.

City salaries approved
On second reading the ordinance was approved establishing salary schedules, position classifi-
cations and compensation for city officers and employees.

Commitment to open housing reaffirmed
Council passed a resolution reaffirming the city’s commitment to open housing. Such a commit-
tment has been part of the city’s tradition of advocacy for fair housing since 1979.

Garage heater to be replaced
Council voted for emergency replacement, by Reader Roofing, of the industrial heating unit at the service garage. Council Member Wilcox abstained due to a conflict of interest.

Zoning variances
Council approved two requests for zoning variances. Geyhater’s Sporting Goods/logos on Lee was given permission to have a larger sign than allowed by commercial identification regulations, and MLS Properties Ltd. was al-
lowed to place a dumpster on its property but not in line with setback and site-development regulations.

Funds for East Derbyshire renovations
A change order was approved for the East Derbyshire renovation contracts with American Building and Kitchen Design Co. Community Block Grant (CBG) funds, not general funds, are to be used to cover the cost of the change. Earlier in the meeting the reparing-
gramming and reallocation of these funds had been approved.

Tumeo on CHUM merger
At a University Heights City Council meeting, Cleveland Heights City Council Member Mark Tumeo had suggested the citizens of Cleveland Heights and University Heights consider merging the two cities. Tumeo stated that he had made this suggestion as a citizen of Cleveland Heights, not as a council member.

LVW observers: Lisa Peters and Susan Kaiser

Space restrictions sometimes require the deletion of some proceedings. For more complete summaries view online postings at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 5.

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He ran for office in 2008, as required, for the remainder of Kelley’s unexpired term and must now run again. Council- woman Frankie Goldberg is also up for re-election this fall. This will be her third term.

University Heights council members are elected at large in a nonpartisan elec-
tion. The annual salary currently stands at $8,500, but goes up by ordinance to $8,700 in 2010 and $8,900 in 2011. The vice mayor gets an extra $600 a year.

The mayor’s race will be the first since 1977 in which there is no incum-ent. Mayor Beryl Rothschild, mayor since 1978, is term limited and cannot run for re-election. The mayor is elected at large for a four-year term. The posi-
tion is part-time and the salary in 2009 is $13,750. The current council will have to approve a new salary this fall prior to a new mayor taking office in May.

The powers of the mayor may change depending on what voters ut-
imately say about changes to the city charter, which will be decided in the same election. According to Council-
man Kevin Murphy, council decided it would have been too expen-
sive to have a special election on the charter issue in May, so the decision will be made on the November ballot at the same time that voters are electing a new mayor and new council members.

While all this change may seem daunting, it gives the Charter Review Commission some extra time to gather citizen input and make a final recom-
mendation. The CRC will hold a town hall meeting May 19 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Wiley Middle School, 2185 Miramar Blvd. at which it will present recom-
mandations and take questions from the audience. On June 5 the CRC will make its final recommendation to council.

“Council would have to have a strong reason not to accept it at that point,” says Councilman Murphy.

He will be running for his sec-
term. Kelley will have served on council for 16 years. He has been mayor, which carries a slightly higher salary, $11,840, for the last 10.

Caplan will also have served on council for 16 years. She says she likes the job but candidates should under-
stand that “it’s a real commitment. Council meets every Monday. There are lots of e-mails and phone calls.”

Several citizens have declared their interest to run for council, but they will not be official candidates until they gather signatures and submit petitions to the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections in August.

Dietrich encourages citizens to run but caution, “Know that it’s going to be real hard. There will be days when you will question yourself. But you will be welcomed by staff and your colleagues on council, they’ll help you learn the ropes.”

Now that she’ll have her Monday evenings free, Dietrich says she will spend more time with her three — soon to be four — grandchildren and will travel more.

Diana Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights.

WORKSHOP continued from page 1

with all the basics for reporting a news story accurately and fairly, and they’ll have a few tools to help them write that story quickly and easily — without any of the anxiety that many people have when faced with a blank computer screen.”

Information will include who to interview and what to ask; which facts to include in the article; how to start the article and how to assure its readability.

“Newswriting doesn’t have to be difficult. In fact, there’s a lot of formula involved,” Rosebaum said. “Our goal is to provide that formula so everyone can feel confident to make their contribution.”

The workshop will include hands-on exercises with guidance from other work-
ing journalists who are involved with the Heights Observer project. It will conclude with ample open time for additional ques-
tions and one-on-one guidance.

The workshop is free, but reserva-

tion are highly recommended. Call The Heights Observer/FutureHeights at 216-300-1425. You can also sign up on Facebook.com, in the “events” box of the “FutureHeights” group.

said they will run for re-election. Council members are elected at large, in a non-
partisan election, for a four-year term. Annual salary is $5,370. The top four vote-getters win the four open slots.

Tumeo will be running for his sec-
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Diana Bremer Fisher is executive director of FutureHeights.
University Heights City Council
Highlights of March/April meetings

MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2009
All council members present

For rent and vacancy signs
Council approved an ordinance to move rental signs out of windows and onto lawns with stipulations regarding the design of the signs. Councilman Sims passed on this vote saying he was opposed to having more lawn signs.

Budget 2009
Council made permanent appropriations for current expenses and other expenditures of the city for 2009. The budget’s $26,411,807, with $12.6 million of that amount for the general fund. The surplus is projected to be $340,000. Councilman Consolo voted against the budget because he wanted a 15 percent reduction in costs. During the discussion of the 2009 budget, Councilman Sims had looked into the possibility of reducing the council members’ pay, but found they couldn’t do it. The acting law director explained that the charter stipulates council pay cannot be changed once it has been set. Councilman Consolo said Finance Director Ochoa that he would be willing to take a 10 percent reduction in pay and asked Ochoa to find a way to make that change for him.

Directors’ compensations
Council approved rates of compensation for the eight city directors. A 3 percent raise will cost the city $17,000. Councilman Bernardo and Consolo voted nay.

2009 road improvement
Council amended the 2009 road improvement program to Delta Feing in partnership with Shaker Heights. Portions of Shley and Edgerton roads would be paved at a cost of $118,511. Councilman Consolo voted nay.

Emergency sewer repairs
Council approved the emergency sewer repairs contract to Thomas Hall Excavating. This company will be used for jobs the city can’t handle with its own crew.

Tree planting contract
Council awarded the 2009 tree-planting contract to Creekside Landscaping for a cost of $23,170. This is a $12 per-tree savings from last year.

Purvis Park concession
Only one bid, from the current contractor, was received for the 2009 Purvis Park concession operation. The bid reduced the percentage of sales paid to the city from 15 percent to 12 percent and also reduced the hours. The vote was tabled for further research.

Stimulus project applications
The federal government has received all of the city’s stimulus project applications. Details regarding the approval process are still being worked out.

Highlights of March/April meetings
University Heights City Council
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Stimulus project applications
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Council approved the bid from Snacks N Stuff for a cost of $23,170. This is a $12-per-tree savings from last year.

Mayor Rothschild reported that Luke Frazier, director of the First Suburbs Consortium, had resigned to take the position of director for the Cuyahoga County Port Authority.

Grant for police equipment
Mayor Rothschild congratulated Police Chief Gary Stehlik who received a $100,000 grant for police equipment from the Cuyahoga County Treasurer. Jim Rakas’ Land Bank program is in operation.

Home recreation book
Community Coordinator Walker Stinson reported that the summer recreation book was being printed and should be mailed by the April 11 weekend, and received in residents’ homes by the middle of the week.

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Healthy Flowers & Healthy Lawn
Page 7
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Parking behind Cedar Lee Theatre
* Kitchen closes at 11 p.m. on Sunday
### CH-UH Board of Education

**Highlights of March/April meetings**

**Tuesday, March 17, 2009**

- All board members present.

**Contracts awarded:**
- The following bids and contracts were awarded:
  - Unit ventilator replacement at the high school.
  - Taylor Network Operations Center installation project.
  - District wide TC panel improvement.
  - Quality chimney restoration.
  - Oxford waterproofing, wall restoration, sidewalk, masonry and window replacement.

**Budget reduction timeline**
- Interim Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack, Chief Financial Officer Scott Gainer and other administrators presented ideas on budget reduction.
- **March 17:** Presentation of options.
- **April 7:** Board reaction to options.
- **April 21:** Board action.
- **April 28:** Additional meeting if needed.

**Budget options and board reaction:**
- Two options were presented; both cut $696,000 in non-personnel items. Option 1 also reduced the equivalent of 29 full-time employees, whereas Option 2 reduced the equivalent of 37.5 full-time employees. Many of the cut teachers and programs would be reinstated if grants could be found.

- Board member Eric Coble asked that theers and programs would be reinstated if grants were awarded.

**Board members present:**
- President Zuckler said the board’s top priority was student success.

- LWV observer: Adele Cohen.
- LWV observer: Lillian Houser.

**C-Span Video production Honorable Mention**

- Heights High Third Place Ohio Economics Teacher.

**Science and Social Studies Professional Development Project**

- Interim Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack and Treasurer Scott Gainer updated the board on the budget. The board will soon vote to reduce the budget in anticipation of putting a levy on the 2010 ballot. The board was waiting on data from Gainer on tax collection that supplied $900,000 more than projected. This may have been due to delinquent taxes paid by banks on properties. Questions dealt with property values and the possible reductions in value, although taxes were to stay the same.

- The board is considering two budget reduction options: Option 1 would reduce the budget by $2,275,000; Option 2 would reduce the budget by $2,624,000 and would have additional cuts of middle school guidance counselors, the ninth grade transition program and teacher leaders. Both options would cut administrators, secretarial staff, instructional coach, program specialists and media, security, non-personal items and a copy center.

- Fowler-Mack said there would be more deep digging to find cuts.

**Plumbing / Heating / Air Conditioning**

- Take advantage of this great opportunity.

- SAVE UP TO $1,500


- Inlet Dance Theatre

- Canterbury partners with Inlet Dance Theatre

- Canterbury Elementary School students perform at the Winter Dance Performance, an after school enrichment partnership with Inlet Dance Theatre.

- As part of its After School Enrichment Program, Canterbury Elementary School partnered with Inlet Dance Theatre to present a Winter Dance Performance at the school on March 19. Participating kindergartners through second graders explored the fundamentals of creative movement and modern dance for seven weeks with Leila Pelhan of Inlet Dance theatre. (From L to R): Molly vonk, Jesse Gross, Teiaunna Canter, Andrea Turner

- Superintendents search

- Search committee, Hudepohl & Associates, gave an update. The results of community engagement meetings and stakeholder interviews have indicated the public wants a strong, experienced, business leader who will honor the mission statement of the district. The job will be posted in education publications in large urban districts inside and outside of Ohio.

- Field trips

- The board approved the Roxboro Middle School eighth grade field trip to Washington, D.C., May 6-8, 2009 and the Cleveland Heights Gospel Choir Performance Tour field trip to Detroit, MI and Chicago, IL, June 13-17.

- Grant approvals

- The board approved the following:
  - Reaching Heights Community Connection Grant, to the Reaching Heights Public School Foundation, $500.
  - Science and Social Studies Professional Development Project, to the Meadows Jennings Foundation, $30,400.
  - Alternative Education Challenge Competitive Application grant, to the Ohio Department of Education, $163,513.

**Budget update**

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- Fowler-Mack said there would be more deep digging to find cuts.

**Owensboro chimney restoration**

- Director Nancy Regnier asked for a past history of instructional expenditures to the administration.

**District wide TC panel improvement**

- The public was asked to comment on the re-emergence of the district. The job will be posted in education publications in large urban districts inside and outside of Ohio.

**Alternative Education Challenge Competitive Application Grant**

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**Science and Social Studies Professional Development Project**

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- Fowler-Mack said there would be more deep digging to find cuts.

**Re-employment of Joan Hill**

- The search committee, Hudepohl & Associates, gave an update. The results of community engagement meetings and stakeholder interviews have indicated the public wants a strong, experienced, business leader who will honor the mission statement of the district. The job will be posted in education publications in large urban districts inside and outside of Ohio.

**Additional meeting if needed**

- April 28

**Board reaction to options**

- **April 7:** Board reaction to options.
- **April 21:** Board action.
- **April 28:** Additional meeting if needed.

**Board members present:**
- President Zuckler said the board’s top priority was student success.

- LWV observer: Adele Cohen.
- LWV observer: Lillian Houser.

**Space restrictions sometimes require the deletion of some proceedings. For more complete summaries view online postings at www.heightsobserver.org. See disclaimer on page 5.**

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**CH-UH Board of Education**

**Opinion**

**We need to honor teachers in more imaginative ways**

Susie Kaasser

May is the time for flowers and teacher appreciation. As supporters of public schools gear up for this, I’d like to propose some new ideas for honoring teachers.

This incredible work needs the glamour, glitz and attention that we give actors. We need our own version of the Academy Awards if we are going to come close to recognizing the importance of this profession and the demands of the work.

After a long history of elementary and secondary education designed to sort children into winners and losers, the role of schools has changed; in the 21st century everyone needs to be a winner.

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District has embraced this challenge with gusto. Dramatic changes are taking place in classrooms and buildings across the community as educators judge their own success by the success of their students.

Read the rest of the story online. Go to www.heightsobserver.org to see this and other stories.

Susie Kaasser is an advocate for public education.
Science Olympiad events are both challenging and fun. Yes, the team experienced some setbacks. In the Wright Stuff competition, the team’s rubber band-powered model airplane flew almost 2 minutes, but that was not long enough to place. The Elevated Bridge held 750 times its weight. But that was before it exploded. And during the Scrambler, well … the egg got scrambled.

For the Scrambler competition, students must build a model car with an internal breaking mechanism. The cars are then launched toward a wall. The breaking mechanism must kick in as close to the wall as possible. The fastest car that stops closest to the wall wins.

The Pentathlon was great fun. Held in the shadow of the Ohio State University stadium, this is a relay event in which team members complete a series of physical trials, but must first give the correct answer to a scientific question before moving ahead to the next leg of the event. Roxboro’s team was strong, fast and smart, and returned home winners!

The team had a great time and their exemplary behavior should make every Heights resident proud. The students received compliments from wait staff at restaurants and were praised for their exemplary behavior. The students were also called the Scrambler because an egg is scrambled. Not good!

The trip included several memorable highlights. Because of the stiff competition, the Roxboro students didn’t really expect to hear their names called out at the award ceremony. But they didn’t! Roxboro medal winners were: Stefanos Gazis, Cornelius Pewu and Bryan Kent.

Roxboro places in state finals

You don’t always have to win in order to come in first place. On April 18, the Roxboro Middle School Science Olympiad team competed against 38 other teams in the State Championships at Ohio State University, placing 27th. This is the first year the CH-UH school district participated in the Science Olympiad. At the middle school regional championships held earlier this year, Roxboro finished in eighth place, qualifying the team for the State Championships. About 175 teams participate in the Science Olympiad statewide, with not all teams make it to the State Championships. With a strong cadre of volunteer coaches, Ohio teams have been competing for the past 25 years and have consistently placed in the national science competition.

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An interview with Laura Taxel, epicure of Cleveland's ethnic eats

Jessica Schroeder

With the release of the eighth edition of Cleveland Ethnic Eats this spring, I sat down with Cleveland Heights food writer Laura Taxel to talk about her latest book.

How has Cleveland Ethnic Eats evolved over eight editions? It has been a fascinating journey. When I first wrote Cleveland Ethnic Eats, the subject was considered quaint. Fifteen years later, public interest in ethnic food has exploded. People are enthusiastic about trying new and exotic things. My neighborhood grocery has a sushi bar! A special feature of the eighth edition is a Web site at www.ClevelandEthnicEats.com. Readers can share their recommendations of ethnic restaurants or markets. If you are the first person to suggest one that I include, you will receive a free copy when it is published. My Web site also includes free updates (www.ClevelandEthnicEats.com).

Who is your audience? Anybody who enjoys food—retirees, college kids, vegetarians all like my book. It is a common gift for newcomers because it says, “Look at our fabulous community.” The book can be a vehicle for exploring new areas of the city. Travel sites like eGullet.org and Chowhound.com recommend my book for visitors to Cleveland. Some readers use it as a social tool. People have formed eating clubs around it.

Why do you connect ethnic food with healthful eating? Traditionally made foods do not rely on salt, sugar and chemical additives to stand in for flavor. When you cook with quality ingredients, you make everything from scratch, food is healthier and more satisfying. You don’t need to eat so much of it.

What are your thoughts on the slow food movement and community supported agriculture? These movements have a hugely important mission to focus attention on what we eat and where it comes from. I am an advocate of eating locally grown and produced food because it is better, contributes to the economic viability of the area and is a model that can work over the long term. I relish cooking with purveyors who say ethnic restaurants do not always use local ingredients. Ethnic restaurants prepare authentic dishes from scratch right here in Cleveland. They are local producers.

How will ethnic restaurants and markets survive in a depressed economy? I first learned about ethnic eats because we were poor and needed cheap places to eat. Many of the places were small and offered wonderful, personal experiences. The owners do all of the labor. Most of the restaurants featured in my book are reasonably priced. Ethnic markets offer the best values, especially Asian markets. We will continue to gravitate to them, even in a tough economy.

What makes Cleveland Heights a special place for you? I adore Cleveland Heights. I would never live anywhere else. It offers the perfect combination of urban amenities, arts, culture, food and beautiful affordable homes. On a Saturday night, I walk from my Coventry home to the Cedar Lee for a movie and later go out for a meal or drink. Look at all the ethnic restaurants on Lee Road—Turkish, Italian, Thai, Japanese and Persian. As far as eating goes, both ethnic and non-ethnic, you could go to a different restaurant in Cleveland Heights every night for a month and still eat well.

Jessica Schroeder is a community volunteer.
Heights Garden Center has a new name! Local businesses move, expand

Maureen Jane Carey

Heights Garden Center has been a popular destination since 1995, when Cleveland Heights residents and community volunteers transformed an old parking lot into a garden center. With roots that have grown deeply in our community, Heights Garden Center will thrive under the careful hand of its new owner, Bob Bremec.

Bob Bremec, owner of Bremec’s Greenhouses and Nursery in Canfield for some time, and this year he felt that the new owner, Bob Bremec. “Our passion is plants.” Bremec’s on the Heights is a place where gardeners can go with all of their lawn and garden care products. Bremec’s on the Heights is a place that people purchase products from Bremec’s, they are buying directly from the growers and therefore will get the best value for their money. “We really thrive on good quality and the quality of our plant material,” said Bremec. “Our passion is plants.”

Maureen Jane Carey is an aspiring writer who enjoys writing poetry and plays and has lived in Cleveland Heights since 1982. The money raised will help fund the Local businesses move, expand

Maureen Jane Carey

Phoenix Coffee raffle raises funds for law enforcement scholarship

Lisa Gonzalez

The two Phoenix Coffee Shops in Cleveland Heights are raising money for the Officer Jason D. West Memorial Scholarship Fund. The shops, on Lee and Coventry roads, are selling $2 raffle tickets until the end of May, at which time a drawing will be held at each store. Winners will receive a Phoenix Coffe travel mug and three months of free coffee. The prize is valued at $150.

The money raised will help fund a scholarship to honor the memory of West, a Cleveland Heights Police Officer killed in the line of duty on May 26, 2007. The scholarship, first given last year, will be awarded on May 27 at the Senior Scholarship Awards night.

Contributions can also be mailed to: The Officer Jason D. West Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o The Treasurer’s Office, The CH-UH City School District, 2151 Miramar Boulevard, University Heights, OH, 44118.

Lisa Gonzalez is a long-time Cleveland Heights resident and community volunteer.

May 13 at noon, Phoenix will host a free cooking class with local food to plate advocate Chef Jonathan Sawyer of The Greenhouse Tavern, 2038 East 4th Street, Cleveland. Prior registration is required. From 11 to 11:30 a.m., Paysage will introduce new housewares collections, Metheryd Weir Painted Finishes, 12910 Larchmere Blvd., will demonstrate faux finishing techniques and Mira will present her custom jewelry designs.

For more information, contact Fred Unwin at 216-370-8700.

Paysage hosts ‘Week of WOW’ events

Heights Observer Staff

Paysage, 3475 Fairmount Blvd., will host a noon luncheon with interior designer Bunny Williams on May 12. Williams will introduce her BeeLine Home collection, speak about design and sign copies of her book, An Affair With a House. Tickets are $35. Paysage will also host a cocktail party with Williams from 6 to 8 p.m. featuring live jazz, wine tasting by Grotto Wine Bar, 13011 Shaker Square, and an informal fashion show by You Too, 3475 Fairmount Blvd.

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Keep it local

Support Northeast Ohio Businesses

Use your I Buy NEO Community Card at these participating businesses:

- Cleveland Heights
- Abrahe
- All Makes Vacuum
- Anzola Cafe
- Arby’s Red Square
- Asador
- Alma Center
- Big Fun, Inc.
- Bussey’s Upholstery
- Foam of Fabric Inc.
- Catch A Critter
- Cedar Lee Pool and Grill
- Central Health
- Chris Kelley Sharing
- Clothing Brigade
- Cut Hair Studio
- Diamond’s Men’s Store
- Everything By Face
- Fashions by Foster
- Fast Eddy’s Chop Shop
- Gary’s Pizza
- Hang It Up
- Healthy Alternatives
- Heart and Soul
- Heights Floral Shoppe
- Huntington Learning Center
- Integrity Heights
- Island of Beads Inc.
- J’s Fine Rugs
- Mac’s Backs Paperbacks
- Medicos Honda Inc.
- Motorcars Toyota Inc.
- On-Call Baby
- Paul Hamlin Interiors
- Payoff Furniture
- Payoff Resale
- Phoenix Coffee
- Simply Charming
- The Above Boutique
- The Stone Oven Bakery
- A Cafe
- Washington & Lee Service Wood Trade

New merchants are being added daily! Purchase your I Buy NEO Community Card at www.futureheights.org

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Cleveland Heights
Abrahe
All Makes Vacuum
Anzola Cafe
Arby’s Red Square
Asador
Alma Center
Big Fun, Inc.
Bussey’s Upholstery
Foam of Fabric Inc.
Catch A Critter
Cedar Lee Pool and Grill
Central Health
Chris Kelley Sharing
Clothing Brigade
Cut Hair Studio
Diamond’s Men’s Store
Everything By Face
Fashions by Foster
Fast Eddy’s Chop Shop
Gary’s Pizza
Hang It Up
Healthy Alternatives
Heart and Soul
Heights Floral Shoppe
Huntington Learning Center
Integrity Heights
Island of Beads Inc.
J’s Fine Rugs
Mac’s Backs Paperbacks
Medicos Honda Inc.
Motorcars Toyota Inc.
on Call Baby
Paul Hamlin Interiors
Payoff Furniture
Payoff Resale
Phoenix Coffee
Simply Charming
The Above Boutique
The Stone Oven Bakery
A Cafe
Washington & Lee Service Wood Trade

New merchants are being added daily! Purchase your I Buy NEO Community Card at www.futureheights.org

Nancy Taylor says that while she would have preferred to make the move when the economy was in better shape, she needed to do so when the opportunity was available. “We have faith in our community and our clients and we wanted to make things more comfortable for them. We plan to move our spa services into the new space and give our stylists more elbow room. She hopes to have the new space open by mid- to late-July.”

While many might say entrepreneurs are the eternal optimists, small businesses are the economic engines that make our economy strong.
Heights Observer journalists win awards

Simone Quartell, a senior at Cleveland Heights High School and a regular reporter for the Heights Observer, is the recipient of this year’s Philip W. Porter Scholarship from the Cleveland Pro-Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

The chapter also selected Simone Quartell as its Distinctive Service Award recipient. Quartell is a long-time SPJ member and former chapter president who is an associate professor at John Carroll University.

An awards luncheon will be held May 7 at the City Club of Cleveland, 850 Euclid Ave. beginning at 11:45 a.m. For more information, contact Tom Moore at tmoore96@msn.com or 440-454-3282. Prices are $15 for students, $20 for members and $25 for nonmembers.

Each year the chapter acknowledges the contributions of a journalist and/or journalism educator to the SPJ. And each year the chapter awards a $4,000 scholarship to a graduating senior from the Cleveland area. Students from six counties can apply and are required to submit six clippings of articles and a letter of recommendation.

Quartell was one of three finalists to submit six clippings of articles and a letter of recommendation, which were chosen by the judges. Each year the chapter acknowledges five chapter members or journalism educators. Quartell is a long-time SPJ member and former chapter president who is an associate professor at John Carroll University.

Western Reserve Chorale to perform Dvorak’s Mass in D

Western Reserve Chorale performs the Mass in D by Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904) at Grace Lutheran Church, 1300 Cedar Road, Cleveland Heights, on Sunday, May 17 at 7:30 p.m. Guest organist Daniel Hathaway is joined by soloists Amanda Joyce Abbott, soprano; Joanne Uniatowski, alto; Timothy Culver, tenor; and Michael Parry, bass; and choir. Other works to be performed by the chorale will be The Dove and the Maple Tree and Tu Trinitas Unita by Dvorak and Tarn Back-O Man, by Gustav Holst. The concert and parking are free and wheelchair accessible. An artist’s reception follows.

Dvorak’s Mass in D, one of the most beautiful pieces of choral music, was originally written for choir (with small solo parts) and organ, to dedicate a small chapel. The spiritual impulse behind the piece is personal tragedy. Dvorak’s wife Josefina died at just two days old, and not long after, in 1875, his 11-month-old daughter Ruzena accidentally drank a phosphorous solution and died. Less than a month later, tragedy struck yet again with the death of Dvorak’s son Otakar. A household that had been filled with the sounds of children crying and laughing was empty – Antonin and his wife Anna were suddenly left completely defenseless. The poet had been feeling, tens of thousands of goofy smiles and dreams. In the course of clearing out the base- ment, the poet witnesses an unexpected disappearance.

Dr. J.D. Goddard is the artistic director of the Western Reserve Chorale.
Murderous mulch

Douglas Freer

As a longtime landscaping professional, I am often asked “What’s the best way to kill my plants?” Well, there are a lot of answers to that, but few techniques offer more paths to certain plant death than extreme mulching. Just follow these mulching tips. Don’t be disappointed if you don’t kill them right away. Your stunted and unhealthy plants may just be exerting their will to survive—by evading your best efforts, you may actually succeed.

Be cheap and indiscriminating.

Anything labeled “mulch” should do the trick, no matter where it comes from. Look for the least expensive mulches. Raw mulch, which has not been aged or begun to decompose is best. Raw mulch readily draws nitrogen from the soil and will do a swell job of “burning” tender plants. Fully composted and aged hard wood or bark is much more expensive. Not a bad thing, for it provides that extra little protection against weeds, these “burial” cloths, I mean barrier cloths, also contribute to periodic water table problems. As I say, there are other are other means of undermining your garden’s health, but mulching has the advantage of being very popular, so you can even kill your plants while appearing to take care of them.

The most important thing to remember is that everything in your yard—trees, shrubs, and ground cover—is a great way to trap soil moisture and reduce oxygen to the root system.

Use weed cloth. Either plastic or fabric weed barrier cloth not only offers that extra little protection against weeds, these “burial” cloths, I mean barrier cloths, also contribute to periodic water table problems. As I say, there are other are other means of undermining your garden’s health, but mulching has the advantage of being very popular, so you can even kill your plants while appearing to take care of them.

Douglas Freer is a Cleveland Heights native and the owner of Lawn Lad, Inc. Lawn Lad provides residential landscaping services in the Heights area. Call 216-371-1933 or visit www.lawnlad.com.
Miracles Happen 5K Run/Walk set for May 31

Mary Patton

The first annual Miracles Happen 5K Run/Walk is set for Sunday, May 31 through the scenic streets of Cleveland Heights.

The event will benefit the Diana Hyland Miracle Fund, whose mission is to advance research for recurrent breast cancer – focusing on new theories, trials and treatments aimed at managing the cancer and extending lives. The fund was created in memory of Diana Hyland of Shaker Heights, who after recovering from her first bout with breast cancer more than 13 years ago, sadly lost her battle with the devastating disease of metastatic breast cancer on October 27, 2008.

The goal is to raise $31 million to partially establish an Endowed Chair for Metastatic Breast Cancer Research at University Hospitals Ireland Cancer Center under the direction of Dr. Paula Silverman. There is an urgent need for better, safer and more successful treatments.

Registration for the race will take place at noon at Beaumont School, 3301 North Park Blvd. The race will begin promptly at 1 p.m. (rain or shine), and runners and walkers will follow the route through Cleveland Heights ending up at the post-event gathering at Nighttown. Awards will be presented at 2:15 p.m. followed by brief remarks and a light lunch. Lob- ley the Trolley will transport participants back to Beaumont School until 4 p.m.

The entry fee is $20 in advance or $25 the day of the event. Participants under the age of 14 pay $10, and age 2 and under get in free. The fee includes the lunch and a water bottle donated by University Hospitals. The first 300 registrants will receive a t-shirt.

Awards will be given to the top three male and female participants overall and top three in the following age groups: 12 and under, 13-15, 16-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and over.

Participants are encouraged to gather pledges from friends, family and co-workers. Those participants who raise $250 or more will receive a Miracles Happen lapel pin.

For more information, call 216-752-9551 or visit www.hmactechnologies.com or www.dianahylandmiraclefund.org, or e-mail hma@hac.net.

Cleveland Heights resident Karen Johnson achieved her personal best time of 3 hours 34 minutes and 40 seconds at the Boston Marathon on April 20. Ms. Johnson had her fifth marathon and first Boston Marathon. Karen is a registered dietitian, part-time personal chef and fulltime mother of three.

Forest Hill Church invests in "The Big Give"

John Lentz

Yes, we have the Cavaliers to brighten up these soggy days, but let’s face it, times are not the easiest. The economic situation makes us want to withdraw, hunker down and hold on to our things tightly. There is a tendency to focus on the lack of resources.

So sometimes you just need to shake things up a bit. At the Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian (3031 Monticello Blvd), the Ministry of Justice and Mission handed out sealed red envelopes with $50 bills in them to everyone who attended worship on Sunday, March 29. When Pastor John Lentz, during his sermon, instructed everyone to open their envelope, the gaps were audible.

The Big Give had begun …

Read the rest of the story online. Go to www.heightsyouthclub.org to see this and other stories.

The Rev. John C. Lentz, Jr, is pastor of Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian, in Cleveland Heights.

Ohio House Speaker to be at Nighttown

Bruce Hennes

For the first time in more than 75 years, the person heading up the Ohio House of Representatives hails from Greater Cleveland. Last January, state representatives elected Armond Budish Speaker of the Ohio State House. In one of his first public events in this area, Speaker Budish will be honored at a luncheon sponsored by The Press Club of Cleveland and extending June 1 to be held at Nighttown, home of the club.

Armond Budish represents the 8th House District, which includes parts of Cuyahoga, Summit and Medina counties. An attorney by profession, he is a founding partner of the law firm of Budish, Solomon, Steiner & Peck, in Beachwood. Budish also hosts “Golden Opportunities,” an informational television program for seniors and their families.

He is the author of several books, including most recently Why Will Win & Work: Budish also writes a column for The Cleveland Plain Dealer, titled “You and the Law.”

The Press Club event honoring Budish begins with a reception at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch at noon and ending at 1:30 p.m. The cost for Press Club members is $22 and $30 for non-members. For registration and more information, go to pressclubcleveland.com. The event is open to members of the working press, public relations professionals, corporate communicators and, as the club’s by-laws indicate, “anyone with an interest in the media.” For more information call 216-705-2001 or e-mail rojolewis@roadrunner.com.

Diane Schwartz is a member of Women Connect for Change, a diverse group of Northeast Ohio women working together to achieve change through education about emerging policy issues. Learn more at womenconnectforchange@gmail.com.

Let me call you “tweakthear”

Kathy Dawson

Technology – you’ve got to love it. Or hate it. When it comes to relationships, technology is a double-edged sword. Yes, it’s great to be able to connect with your mate using a quick text: “Meet me at 6.” Sure, it’s fun to send a link of interest. It’s even a kick to follow him or her on Twitter now and then.

But what happens when technology disconnects rather than connects you? You know what I mean. I’m talking about when night after night you go to bed and your partner stays up late surfing the net or TV. Or the times your mate responds to a comment by grunt- ing, “Uh, huh,” as his or her eyes are glued to a Blackberry or iPod screen.

Don’t get me wrong. Technology is great. But when it is used at the expense of your relationship, you’ve got a problem. If you and your mate don’t set IT boundaries, over time your relationship will suffer. One of the best ways for you to strike a balance between face-to-face technological communication is to agree to have a minimum of two “techno-free” nights per week.

Yes, turn off the blackberries, cell phones, TVs and computers. What you do during that time is up to you. I’m sure you’ll think of something.

Kathy Dawson is a Cleveland Heights-based relationship coach, see www.kathythecoach.com.

Will Obama’s Stimulus Package Help Our Schools?

Diane Schwartz

WomenConnect for Change will hold its first public education forum on Wednesday May 13 at Grace Lutheran Church, 15001 Cedar Road, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Former State Senator C.J. Prentiss, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland’s special representative for closing the achievement gap, will speak on educational priorities at the state and local levels. The group hopes the talk will foster community conversations about how citizens can get involved in engaging communities and schools to provide high-quality education, including advanced 21st century skills.

Prentiss will answer questions, refreshments will be served and informative handouts will be available. The forum is free and open to the public. For more information call 216-705-2001 or e-mail rojolewis@roadrunner.com.

Diane Schwartz is a member of Women Connect for Change, a diverse group of Northeast Ohio women working together to achieve change through education about emerging policy issues. Learn more at womenconnectforchange@gmail.com.

Benefit season is upon us

Heights Observer Staff

A Night Under the Stars, May 29

Support parent education and support programs at Heights Parent Center by attending this annual benefit on Friday, May 29 at 7 p.m. at the Great Lakes Science Center. Drinks, heavy hors d’oeuvres, live music by Jam Session, and a silent and live auction hosted by Steve Presser, owner of Big Fun. The center will present the 2009 Carolyn Grossman Award. Tickets are $50 or $125 each, or two for $90. Call 216-321-0079.

Taste of the Heights, June 3

Help provide a positive and safe environment for youth to learn and develop skills related to education, interpersonal growth and community involvement at the Heights Youth Club. Join the club at its newly renovated headed quarters, 2065 Lee Road, on Wednesday, June 3 from 6 to 9 p.m. to taste your favorite restaurant’s food prepared by the area’s finest chefs, as well as entertain ment and raffle prizes. Over 20 Heights restaurants are participating. Tickets are $20 and $40 at the door. Call 216-321-2581 or purchase online at www.heightsyouthclub.org.

Cleveland Heights resident Karen Johnson achieved her personal best time of 3 hours 34 minutes and 40 seconds at the Boston Marathon on April 20. Ms. Johnson had her fifth marathon and first Boston Marathon.

Mary Patton is a public relations consultant and a longtime resident of the Heights. She currently lives in University Heights with her husband and daughter.

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Genealogy is good for the soul

Allan Kuntz

Genealogy is a recorded history of a person or family’s descent from an ancestor or ancestors. Soul is spiritual or emotional warmth, fortitude, or evidence. These combine well: knowing your roots and connecting with family are good for the soul.

Genealogy is also a great hobby for people of all ages, one you can stop and restart at any time. The experience can be as simple or as complicated as you want it to be, and as fulfilling or frustrating. Research choices include concentrating on one surname from a specific area, collecting old pictures, joining a local and/or national genealogy society, and collecting documents to place in a binder. You can travel to do research at a library, cemetery or birth place of an ancestor. You can use the Internet to place surname queries or create a Web site.

How do you start? Here’s a trade secret: if possible, contact the oldest female sibling on either side of the family - she usually receives family memorabilia when parents pass away. She will also be able to distinguish fact from fiction. Record or write down as much as possible of the conversation.

In the mid-’80s, I had dinner with my dad’s oldest sister. She pulled out the family Bible. Notes were transcribed of the names of the villages in Hungary the grandparents had come from, and the maiden names of my grandmother, and my grandfather’s mother.

Years later, I joined a local genealogy club to learn to do overseas research. The Western Reserve Historical Society Library became a destination along with the Mormon Library in Kirtland, Ohio. A national genealogy club, with membership specializing in Eastern European countries, was next. I joined two local ethnic genealogy societies specializing in Hungarian and Polish research.

I later started on my spouse’s family. One of her parents was of Hungarian descent; that was easy. Her German ancestors were more difficult because her grandfather was illegitimate. But, we had his birth record and it listed the village. Initially, we hired the wrong person to do our research, but we later found a good one.

Now, 15 years and 2,000-plus names later, information is stored on a computer program and in binders containing historical documents. The family tree is public on Ancestry.com.

One project I loved was collecting wedding pictures and family group pictures of my ancestors and mounting them on the wall like a family tree. But some of the pictures were missing. Remember the trade secret? I wrote to my wife’s cousin – the daughter of the oldest female sibling in that line. A surprising reward soon arrived: a great wedding photo from 1899.

Memories and exciting stories were shared back then, and may be shared now. Publishing them in a book format can be encouraged by family and friends.

Allan Kuntz is a 57-year resident of Cleveland Heights, who is enjoying retirement.

Picture This

Look familiar? The cars may have changed, but much that makes this intersection at Fairfax and Larchmont roads so beautiful remains. Developers and home-buyers in the early 20th century were attracted to the trees, wide-open spaces and lovely architecture that helped make Cleveland Heights a great place to live (then and now).

Find out more at www.chhistory.org. The Cleveland Heights Historical Society promotes the history of our community through public programs, an informative Web site and fast-filled newsletters. Join today!

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HEIGHTS HISTORY

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 10 p.m.
“Lecture & Walking Tour of Great W. Dennis’s Forest Allotment” led by Dr. Mark Souther, Associate Professor of History at Cleveland State University. Meet at Superior School House, 14391 Superior Road at Euclid Heights Boulevard.

Sunday, May 17, noon to 4 p.m.
“Heights History Day” Civil histories and photographs will be collected and scanned, Lee Road Library. Meet 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Thursday, May 21, 2 p.m.

The events are free and open to the public, but attendance is limited and reservations are required for the walking tour and lectures. For more information and reservations, call 216-242-2423 or email jane@futureshrooms.org. These events are co-sponsored by the City of Cleveland Heights Landmarks Commission, Futureshrooms, the Cleveland Heights Historical Society and the Cleveland Heights-University High School Public Library.

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Peter and Antonette Marekowskie 1913.

Be prepared to spend money to hit dead ends, and to be disappointed by relatives who don’t care about family history. You will be rewarded when you least expect it. Other researchers enjoy helping beginners. Genealogy has become an industry, so be careful when hiring someone to do research. Use referrals and check references.

Happy researching as you reward yourself!
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