Mike Graynar

Home in the Heights, a recently created subsidiary of the Home Repair Resource Center, has sold its first renovated property: a formerly vacant, foreclosed home on Westover Drive in Cleveland Heights.

Publicity about the project brought inquiries from many interested buyers. The final purchasers, Mark Finkenbine and Nadelane Joseph of University Heights, say they loved the potential they saw in the home when they first visited, shortly after renovations began in March.

“We came in just as the house was being gutted and were able to pick and choose colors and tiles and floor coverings. It’s a big, collaborative effort, and we’re really looking forward to getting it finished,” said Joseph.

Purchasing and renovating vacant homes in Cleveland Heights has been an important part of the center’s mission. In the organization’s 37-year history, it has completed and sold seven renovated homes. Home in the Heights plans to acquire and renovate several vacant homes in Cleveland Heights this year and sell them to owners who will occupy these houses and be responsible neighbors.

Currently there are more than 1,000 vacant houses in Cleveland Heights. Home in the Heights was formed in response to this crisis.

“Last year, our board decided to establish Home in the Heights as a way to address the vacant houses in Cleveland Heights,” explained Cheryl LaBrecque, executive director of the center. “Community support is tremendous, and people are excited about our plan to turn empty rooms into beautiful family homes that strengthen our neighborhoods.”

Home in the Heights was poised to begin renovations last September on three vacant foreclosed homes, but the national lending crisis resulted in the withdrawal of committed financing for construction costs. Subsequently, Home in the Heights and the center secured private funding to renovate the Westover Drive house, which is in the Forest Hill neighborhood.

“The many beautiful and historic homes in Cleveland Heights and its proximity to Cleveland’s University Circle attract homeowners. The design of a new Red Line rail station at University Circle will be the topic of a community meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9 at the Cleveland Heights Community Center.

The design of a new Red Line rail station at University Circle will be the topic of a community meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9 at the Cleveland Heights Community Center.

In October 2007, the RTA board of trustees awarded a contract to URS Corp. to design a new rapid transit station. The design process includes a detailed traffic study; land use and development plan; new design of the bus loop area; and a station entrance building and platform. RTA staff and the architectural design team have been working through the complicated tasks of building a rail station in a confined space, all on a busy city street adjacent to active rail tracks.

The station is intended to be a signature piece of architecture serving as a gateway to University Circle, Cleveland and Cleveland Heights. The 1.25 million-dollar design process will end in spring 2010, with contracts awarded in the fall.
The recent budget tightening in local government has rekindled a critical issue in Cleveland Heights: the need for a comprehensive master plan and economic strategy for our community. Nearly 10 years ago, residents created a vision report that described what Cleveland Heights aspired to be. It was a valiant effort, but it omitted one important element—a road map for how Cleveland Heights hopes to achieve these goals. There was nothing about implementing strategy, no specifics about resource allocation, no strategic development focus and no project prioritization. Nor did it provide development plans for the major commercial thoroughfares of Mayfield, Cedar, Taylor, and Coventry roads.

The city has a zoning ordinance that designates approved land uses. But a zoning ordinance is not a master plan and does not provide direction in crafting the future of land development and economic growth in the community.

Why are a master plan and development strategy important?

Master plans and economic development strategies direct public resources toward economic growth, business investment, job creation, home development and transportation. Communities with master plans and development strategies prosper and are more socially and economically diverse because of such long-range thinking.

Central Ohio cities, such as Dublin, New Albany, Westerville, Worthington, Gahanna, Grove City, and Columbus have master plans and development strategies. These communities continue to grow and have witnessed fewer challenges during the recent economic downturn.

Cleveland Heights has certainly felt the pinch of the tight economy. Our community is struggling to spur new economic development, our home values have fallen, and foreclosures are all too real. We are also limited to short-term capital improvements because of the lack of resources for investment in our roads and infrastructure. Had long-term planning been put in place years ago, the current crisis might have been easier for the city to absorb.

Economic development, in particular, must be a focused and targeted effort. Cleveland Heights should design a development finance toolbox that addresses the entire spectrum of economic development opportunities, including business investment, real estate development and the catalyzing of entrepreneurship.

What do we do now?

The economic downturn presents a perfect opportunity for a new direction—one focused on long-range planning and economic development. We have an opportunity to reframe our thinking by embracing innovation and cutting-edge planning techniques to make our community the strongest suburb of Cleveland.

Starting now, we should establish and implement a straightforward and comprehensive master plan and economic development strategy. This plan should encompass all residential neighborhood and commercial corridors and include specifics for physical and economic development, with benchmarks to measure the plan's success on a yearly basis. Resource allocation should be directly tied to the plan's action items.

Transportation strategy and home rehabilitation and modernization programs, and the creation of economic partnerships with surrounding communities should be baked in. Finally, our plan must be green. It should encourage and support green development, including developing green building codes, a homeowner program to reduce energy costs, a water conservation and rain barrel program, and a green business incubator.

While these may all seem like lofty goals, we can do it! Our diversity and economic climate enable us to build on our strengths in ways that will make us even stronger not only when times are good, but also when the next economic downturn comes around.

Toby Rittner is a member of the Future Heights board of trustees and is a candidate for Cleveland Heights City Council this fall.
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Community volunteers and FutureHeights are planting the seeds of community—and you can help them grow. Every dollar you donate to FutureHeights—by July 15—will be matched by an anonymous benefactor, dollar-for-dollar, up to $15,000! Your donation today cultivates healthy, sustainable neighborhoods in the Heights through:

• The Heights Observer—The East Side’s number one nonprofit citizen-written, neighborhood news source serves Cleveland Heights and University Heights and links citizens to resources, to information and to one another. Over 9,000 copies are distributed monthly by volunteers and heightsobserver.org provides online access to the local news you need to know.

• Town meetings and online forums like the annual Cleveland Heights State of the City address allow citizens to talk about important issues and exchange ideas.

• Volunteer opportunities—There are more than 400 citizens who give their time and talent as FutureHeights volunteers.

• The Best of the Heights Awards and Shop Local campaign—Supporting our vibrant, diverse independent business community helps strengthen the local economy.

• Creative collaborations—WJCU 88.7 FM, the Home Repair Resource Center, the CH-UH Public Library, Heights Youth Club, Heights Parent Center, Coventry Village, Cedar Fairmount, and Lee Road Special Improvement Districts; the cities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights and Cleveland Bridge Builders, among others, have joined with FutureHeights to strengthen our quality of life.

• Community tours and National Preservation Month events remind everyone of the unique and historic qualities of our area.

With only two staff in a small office above the Cedar Lee Theatre, this efficient, grassroots organization creates a lot of bang for the buck. FutureHeights relies heavily on individual contributions from people like you to stay afloat. Please don’t miss out on this chance to make a gift that will go twice as far in maintaining vital community programs.

Donate online at www.futureheights.org or www.heightsobserver.org. Call 216-327-1423 with your credit card today or fill out and send in the form below with your check.

Then, sit back and watch your investment grow—twice. Thank you!
Only trained professionals are capable of running the City of University Heights. Wrong.

Rick Adante

The Charter Review Commission has had several weeks to digest the questions presented to them, such as what they think are the specific issues the city faces, and how the charter would correct them. Still, the answers are elusive.

What do I do hear from some members of the commission are responses that prey on a fear—that we need to create a charter that provides flexibility to deal with changes in the many variables that affect our lives. Which is great if you accept vague and unspecific answers. However, what’s to say the current form of government doesn’t have that capacity? Please, members of the commission, make an argument.

Let there be no mistake, my mind was open to hearing both sides of the argument on the structure-of-government issue. However, as time passes and information comes out of the hearings, I am skeptical that simple questions—such as why a new form of government will be better than the current—remain unanswered.

CICERO continued from page 1

At the end of the May 7 public meeting, comments were made by a commission member that he did not know what lies ahead, and that is why he felt comfortable with the commission’s proposed city administrator form of government. What? How can a substantial change be recommended without having some understanding as to what the issues driving the change are or will be?

Others have indicated that the current economic crisis is one example of why the city needs to install a “trained professional” to manage day-to-day operations. In theory, I would be moved to agree. However, in practice, does that really alleviate the crisis? I look westward to Cleveland Heights and hear a resounding no. Cleveland Heights has a city manager, a “trained professional,” and has fallen prey to upside-down budgets and debt levels that University Heights has avoided. The solution does not lie in changing the city’s charter to a new form of government. The solution lies in the hands of the residents and those whom they elect to deal with the problems the city faces.

University Heights has had a federal (Mayor-Council) form of government since its inception and continues to have a constituency capable of undertaking the business of the people. Over half of the residents of this city have a bachelor of science or higher education, and those who don’t certainly have the life experiences that would make them equally qualified to represent the residents of University Heights.

I know the answers to new challenges will not come from an individual such as a city administrator, but rather the voices of residents through their elected council members and mayor. There have been plenty of changes over the last 30 years to our world, economy, and social climate. UH’s form of government has weathered them all. Change is inevitable and should be embraced. Our members of council have the opportunity through ordinance to bring on professionals to deal with changing circumstances.

A charter amendment which establishes a city administrator will be permanent until the next charter review (7 to 15 years from November 2009, if the new language passes) and really does not provide the flexibility to adapt to change. I believe a potential for lack of accountability exists if we allow changes to the charter that would effectively provide “political cover” to members of council, as was mentioned at the hearing on May 7. Residents’ problems and concerns would be deflected to a contracted administrator, rather than the mayor or council.

Bottom line, it’s not about the system of government; it’s about the people in government. I urge all residents to speak up now or forever hold your peace.... at least until Nov 3.

Rick Adante lives in University Heights on Fenwick Road and plans to run for city council in the November 2009 election.

Editors note: The Heights Observer will follow this story and post updates online. Visit www.heightsobserver.org for the latest information and join the conversation at www.heightsobserver.org/deck.

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www.heightsobserver.org
CH-UH Public Library Board
Meeting highlights

MONDAY, April 20, 2009
All board members present.

Finance
Financial statements for February and March were not available from the acting business manager, who is still learning the library’s financial records software. This caused some board members concern. The statements were to be in the board members’ hands within two weeks. No indication of impropriety had been found in the financial records.

Dobama
Owner’s representative Julie Criscione highlighted that only the carpeting and bathroom light fixtures remain unfinished in the library’s portion of the Dobama construction. The pool has been decked over, which immediately improved acoustics. The City of Cleveland Heights’s commercial loan fund will loan $50,000 to Dobama; sufficient pledges would be due to assure repayment in two years. The first production in the new location will be a play by Cleveland Heights resident Eric Cobic.

Employment positions
Applications were being received for a part-time young adult staff position. A full-time children’s position will remain unfilled at present.

Circulation statistics
Board President Eric Silverman reported that circulation statistics are the highest since the return to the renovated Lee Road Library.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS’ FISCAL OFFICER

Volunteers
Responding to Board Member Kevin Ottner’s inquiry about volunteers, Director Nancy Levin noted that the library had used RSVP volunteers in the past as well as teacher’s union volunteers in the Homework Center. However, such volunteers need professional training and supervision. A need for a volunteer grant writer has been identified.

WOV observer: Anna S. McFarland.
These meeting summaries are abstracted from WOV observers’ written reports. The summaries have been edited and prepared by Charlene Morse, Marilyn McCoughlin, and Maryann Barones. To receive email postings of full reports, send an email to mbarnes9515@gmail.com or join through google groups using “taw-chub observer reports” as a search phrase.

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

World Wide Knit in Public Day
JoAnn Vicarel
World Wide Knit in Public Day was started in 2005 by Danielle Landes. It began as a day for knitters to come together and enjoy each other’s company, exchange ideas about knitting, and just knit. By nature, knitting is usually a solitary craft. We knit in front of the television, sit in nature, knitting is usually a solitary craft. We knit in front of the television, sit in nature, knitting is usually a solitary craft. We knit in front of the television, sit in nature, knitting is usually a solitary craft. We knit in front of the television, sit in nature, knitting is usually a solitary craft.

World Wide Knit in Public Day is the largest knitting event in the world. It is made up of a number of local happenings in cities, states, and countries throughout the world. It is a great way to show the community that people who knit are all ages and have all degrees of creativity and expertise.

Please make sure you join us at the Noble Neighborhood Library at 2800 Noble Road on June 13 at 1 p.m.

Jo-An Vicarel has been the branch manager at the Noble Neighborhood Library in Cleveland Heights since November 2000. She began teaching knitting to children after school, then added an adult knitting class, the current Noble Knitting Circle. The circle knits for the Noble Neighborhood Library at 2800 Noble Road on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Summer Reading has prizes for all ages
Tonya Gibson

Summer is here. That means the library’s Summer Reading Program is too! Children who register for the program will get a pass for signing up. Visit the library weekly for fun, exploration, stickers, and chances to win other prizes. Teens can win weekly prizes for reading manga, comic books, fiction, non-fiction, magazines, the school’s Summer Reading list or cereal boxes. Get registered to win food, books, and movies—and receive a prize just for signing up.

Students will discuss each day’s activities and adhere to a dress code. Schmidt and the library staff. Afternoons will prepare them for the job market by learning about library work and developing skills in reading to children, helping them for the job market by learning about library work and developing skills in reading to children, helping them for the job market by learning about library work and developing skills in reading to children, helping them understand what employers need and expect in their workforce. Students will adhere to a dress code. Schmidt and the students will discuss each day’s activities and experiences.

Each group will create a final project that will benefit their host library branch. Out of School Time: Starting Points is a lead agency of MyCom, one of six components of the Families and Children First Council. Its purpose is to connect kids to a network of caring and committed adults who offer guidance and encouragement in developing skills to compete in the global economy.

Judith Soppel is the public relations coordinator for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.

Hours change at the Heights Libraries
Beginning June 7, Coventry Village Library, Noble Neighborhood Library and University Heights Library will be closed on Sundays. Sunday Hours will resume on September 7. Please visit the Lee Road Library on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. all summer long!
Cleveland Heights City Council
Meeting highlights

MONE DAY, APRIL 20, 2009
All council members present.

New Property taxes
The final fourth quarter of Cleveland Heights is
Gail Bellamy. Bellamy, who was introduced by
her predecessor Mary E. Weems, read a poem
in praise of Cleveland Heights, titled “The Meat
in a History Sandwich.”

Storefront Renovation Program
Council Budget Committee heard a presentation
with the consulting team of Tim Barnett, Franklin
Ficurillo, Catherine Sabolick and Carolynn R. Smith
for design of a one-year grant program to the Cleveland Heights
Storefront Renovation Program. The positive
results of this program are visible, for
example, at Cleveland Village, 2197 Mayfield Road.
Later in the meeting, a resolution autho-
rising the programming and realization of Community
Development Block Grant funds to support
this program received its first reading.

Properties declared hazards
Two bank-owned properties, at 1528 Main
West at 295 Edgewood Road, were declared
hazard and safety hazards. These actions
are intended to put the banks on notice that
they must make an offer to sell the city
or the property to one of the city’s
to bring such properties up to code or to
raise them.

Stimulus funds sought for city projects
The city is aggressively pursuing federal stimulus
money to be allocated to Ohio cities. A list of
projects that Cleveland Heights has submitted
for consideration, and links to other relevant
programs, are on the city’s Web site, www.
clevelandheights.org, under “What’s New.”

Suburbs’ sharing/merger discussion
Councilman Mark Tumeo, who has been re-
ceiving media attention for his call to consider
a merger of Cleveland Heights and University
Heights, stated that response has been positive
in the idea of working together to explore shar-
ing resources and services.

The construction cost of the station is
budgeted at $10 million and is projected
to take about two years to complete.
The current University Circle sta-
tion is an important transit hub in RTA’s
territory. Built in 1953, it is a primary
transfer point on the East Side, with seven
RTA bus lines serving the station, as
well as the free Circle Link service,
operated by University Circle, Inc. The
station’s location on Case Western Re-
serve University, University Hospitals,
Cleveland Heights and the University
Circle institutions provides a constant
stream of traffic, among the highest in
the RTA system.

The architect’s presentation at the
June 9 meeting will show features of
the proposed station will contribute to
the existing environment. The new
station may incorporate some or all of
the following elements:
• Consolidation of bus loop and pas-
enger areas to the north side of Cedar
Hill/MLK
• Removal of the southern entrance and bus slip ramp
• Expansion of the pedestrian walkway from
the rapid station to the bus station
• Signature architecture symbolizing the
regional gateway of the station
• Station headhouse constructed to
maximize glass and visibility of passengers
• Park-like plaza entrance, maximizing
green space setting
• Public art
• Certification by the U.S. Green Build-
ing Council’s Leadership in Energy
and Environment Design (LEED) program
• Treatment of railroad underpasses
Cleveland Heights Mayor Edward J.
Kelley, who is also vice president of the
RTA board of trustees, urges residents
to attend the June 9 meeting. Mayor
Kelley noted that “the project is vital
to our city. It’s appropriate for residents
to view the proposed design and offer
feedback. We all have the same goals
- a world-class transit facility that is
user-friendly for the residents and for
people visiting the city.”

Residents who are unable to attend
the meeting can learn about the
project at www.sldRTA.com. Residents are also
encouraged to send comments regarding
the proposed station to info@ctraa.org,
or write to Maribeth Feke at RTA, 1420
W. Sixth St., Cleveland, OH 44113.

Jerry Masek is the media relations manager
for RTA.

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University Heights City Council
Meeting highlights
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2009
Commissioner David F. Menne introduced.
Charter review concerns
Rick Adsata, a member of Concerned Citizens for University Heights who has attended the charter review meetings, challenged the need and cost of the proposed city administrator. Commissioner Frank Consolo responded that he felt a skilled administrator shouldn’t be left to electoral chance. He wanted the change to be made in the charter, rather than through an ordinance, so that the mayor wouldn’t have control over the administrator. The cost would be lower than a comparable position in Shaker Heights or Cleveland Heights because University Heights is smaller. Commissioner Frank Goldberg also responded and noted that he had been 30 years since the last charter review and that Mayor Rothschild would be stepping down this year.
University Parkway
Jeff Socialf told council that the deteriorating condition of University Parkway was unacceptable. He thanked council for the water line repairs that had eliminated the repeated flooding, but more work was needed to join the parkway and Old Cleveland Road. City Engineer Joseph Cour explained that the cost to replace the street had risen to $1 million [earlier quotes were for only a portion of the street] and that the bad had to be completely replaced to avoid damage from the repeated flooding. Congresswoman Marcia Fudge was trying to have this project covered by stimulus funding. Also, the mayor would see if any additional federal funds were available. If neither of these options were available, the city would have to secure a loan. Commissioner Frank Consolo noted that he had voted against street repairs on Slidelity and Edgerton in March because University Parkway was not in urgent need of repair.
Request for additional funding
Council allocated an additional $897 for the winterization program and $260 for the street lights.

Charter Review Commission chair says it’s all over until November
Anita Kazarian
University Heights residents packed Wiley Middle School on May 19 at a public hearing to comment and ask questions about the draft charter revision. This would reduce the role of the mayor in UH government. The Charter Review Commission chair, John Dicks, who currently is appointed by City Council, op

UH Charter Review Commission chair says it’s all over until November
Anita Kazarian
University Heights residents packed Wiley Middle School on May 19 at a public hearing to comment and ask questions about the draft charter revision, which would reduce the role of the mayor in UH government. The Charter Review Commission voted 10-1 in favor of the draft.

For some members of the commission, the evening seemed to be a formality required by Council. “I didn’t hear concrete suggestions for changing the document,” said Harvey Morrison, who chaired the CRC. When asked if he would consider any further revisions to the draft based on the comments he had heard at the meeting, he said, “Probably not…. It’s an up or down vote.”

If voters approve the recommendation in November’s election, the mayor’s position would lose much of its authority. A political figurehead, a professional administrator would be appointed by City Council—at an estimated annual salary of about $120,000—to manage day-to-day operations of the city with final oversight by council.

The administrator would appoint department directors (fire, police, finance, etc) who currently are appointed by the mayor. If the mayor disagreed with the administrator’s choice, the decision would move to council for a majority vote. Because the administrator is an appointee of council, opponents of the plan assume that such an appointment would be accepted over removing the mayor from the equation.

One commission member disagrees. Paul Miller cast the sole dissenting vote on the draft. “No one has shown me a reason for change,” he said, to applause from the audience. “A city of 11,000 square miles with a population of about 14,000 people and only about three parcels of land left for development does not need a politician is what keeps you honest,” he said. “(You) are demoting the mayor,” said Boyle. “You are going to start a new job and will be responsible for completing the job correctly.”

If your contractor says he is too busy to get the job done and asks you to get one, he is telling you he is not going to take the responsibility. If you walk away from the job or damages your property then you, the homeowner, may have recourse. But not if you get the permit yourself.

With about 4,800 houses, UH pro

Anita Kazarian is a freelance writer and University Heights resident.

Anita Kazarian

UH requires permits to keep residents safe

Anita Kazarian

Painting the exterior of your house? Adding exterior lighting? Planting a Victory garden? You may need a permit for this without a permit from the building department. But, if you want to put in a new driveway, replace the hot water tank, or upgrade the electrical service so you can run a hairdryer and the toaster at the same time, then you need a permit.

In order to understand this permit stuff, I went to the UH Division of Building and asked Building Commissioner David S. Menn, “Why?”

“Why?” I asked. “We want to make sure you and your family are safe, we want to make sure the contractors do what they say” said Menn. Permits have gotten a bad rap. So here is the lowdown.

Bad stuff about permits

• you have to pay a fee to get one
• the inspector will not approve the job if it does not meet code
• make your springtime projects candid

Good stuff about permits

• the price you pay for a permit is low, considering…

What’s an uncle who is an expert in all of this stuff living right down the block

• you’ll be able to sell without hassle over code violations
• you have a professional contractor is bonded

Who pulls a permit? Anyone can get a residential permit, not just professionals. When you pull a permit, you are telling the city you know how to do the job and will be responsible for completing the job correctly.

If your contractor says he is too busy to get the job done and asks you to get one, he is telling you he is not going to take the responsibility. If you walk away from the job or damages your property then you, the homeowner, may have recourse. But not if you get the permit yourself.

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With about 4,800 houses, UH pro

Anita Kazarian

UH requires permits to keep residents safe
Middle schoolers receive laptops

Simone Quartell

This year, Monticello Middle School students didn’t need to carry books and papers to school. All they needed were their MacBook laptops.

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights middle schools began a laptop pilot project this year. All Monticello students were given laptops in October. In March, Roxboro and Wiley eighth graders received theirs.

“The laptops have made everything more convenient,” says Monticello seventh grade English teacher Daisy Tims. Students brought their laptops to school daily, used them to take notes in class and complete school projects. All textbooks were available on them. The laptops also had a turn-in folder so students could send their homework automatically to their teachers.

At the beginning of the year, a meeting was held for parents to discuss laptop policies and sign consent forms. All student activity on laptops is tracked while at school, and inappropriate sites are blocked by the district’s filtering program, Welsense. If students are surfing the Web when they are supposed to be doing their assignments, the teacher threatens to take the laptops away and the students usually stop visiting the inappropriate sites after that, says Tims.

“The laptops have made learning easier,” says Monticello seventh grade Ilona Ele. “We can just type words in an online dictionary rather than flipping through a big book. It also makes for a less heavy load to take home.”

“Typing is much less stressful than writing out a paper,” says seventh grader James Hockey. “I like the special effects available on the laptops to make our work more appealing.”

Simone Quartell is a 2009 graduate of Cleveland Heights High School. She plans to study journalism at Kent State University.

New Gearity Learning Garden unites school and community

Hugh Williams and Simone Quartell

A new community garden has taken root in University Heights. It’s the Gearity Learning Garden, planted at the Gearity Professional Development School on May 2 by more than 140 students, parents, teachers and University Heights residents with an interest in “going green.”

Brainchild of University Heights residents Josh and Cheryl Hunter, the garden is intended to build community spirit, engage students in the idea of sustainability, and provide them with opportunities to experience natural habitats in the community. The garden, which has 13 framed planting areas, will automatically produce a small cornfield, compost and worm bins, and several related art projects.

According to Josh Hunter, “The garden represents the beginning of a long-term project of not only protecting green space and local wildlife habitats, but also of encouraging a closer connection to nature. The project will enable all those involved to be more fully engaged with the natural world in our local community, and to experience local food production and nutrition through our edible schoolyard.”

The day started early as volunteers turned over the soil, filled wheelbarrows, spread topsoil and mulch, and dug holes for fence posts. Gearity students worked diligently in every area.

Second grader Zoe Lamborn said, “The event was a lot of fun. It should be an annual thing. I was happy that a lot of people showed up.” James Rivers, a fifth grader, added “this event made a lot of people care more about Gearity.”

School Principal Sherry Miller has been a big supporter of the project. She noted that this type of project can have a profound impact on our children’s education and their connection to their community. They also provide important experiences in living more sustainably and respectfully, and in reducing our footprint on the earth. Years from now, students can come back to this school and say, “I helped build this garden for this community!”

Hard work may be its own reward, but this workday ended with pizza and ice cream, accompanied by the soothing sounds of a parent-teacher orchestra.

Future green projects at Gearity are being discussed. Meanwhile, the call is out for volunteers to help with additional plantings, weeding and fundraising.

Interested residents should contact the school at 216-571-6125. Donations for supplies and future educational activities may be sent to the Gearity School at 2533 Wrenford Road, University Heights.

Hugh Williams is a resident of University Heights and a community volunteer. Simone Quartell is a 2009 graduate of Cleveland Heights High School who plans to study journalism at Kent State University this fall.
Parenting Q & A

Ellen Barrett

Ellen Barrett, a parent educator at Heights Parent Center for the last 12 years, fields questions from parents about the daily ups and downs of parenting. The same issues impact many parents. If you have questions you would like Ellen to respond to in this column, please e-mail her at echabretti@heightsparentcenter.org.

Q. My wife and I have always looked forward to meal time but now find that we dread it! We have such a hard time getting our two year old to eat the food that we have prepared for him that we now expect a battle at every meal. It makes us tense and cranky and is very unpleasant. What can we do to get him to eat and enjoy dinner so we can enjoy our family?

A. The first thing to remember is that a two year-old doesn't see meal time the same way that we do. In reality they are just as likely to wish they were playing with their toys or running around the block! So, for right now, you might have to change your expectations. That being said, dinner time can evolve into a pleasant, quality family experience if you remember a few small things:

- It is our responsibility as parents to provide the food; it's children's responsibility to eat it. Choose tasty, nutritionally balanced foods that are also reasonable choices for a toddler. Don't be afraid to offer flavored foods!
- Let your child explore the food. He may want to touch it, mash it and it may go in and out of his mouth a few times. Try to accept this behavior and understand that it is one more way that your toddler is exploring his world.
- Don't force food on your child. The "clean plate club" mentality from our own childhood is counterproductive to the goal of developing a child's ability to know when he is full.
- Be patient! Toddlers are very tuned into the mood around them. If you become exasperated he may focus on that instead of the meal.
- Set your child up for success. Set regular meal times and (healthy) snack times and resist the urge to let your child graze throughout the day. You want him to be hungry but not starving.
- Most importantly make mealtime pleasant. Share your day, enjoy each other's company -- and relax!

Q. My 18 month old used to sleep until 7 or 7:30 a.m. and has recently started waking earlier and earlier. Not only is it hard to wake up that early but it makes for a really long day! How can I get a little more shut eye in the morning?

A. Sleep! No parenting topic causes as much distress for so many parents (at both ends of the day and naps in between) at this time of year, however, there are some sleep problems that might be tied to lengthening of daylight, increased bedroom windows and overtired bedtime situations. As the days get longer and warmer, the sleep environment your child is used to may change enough to upset her sleep patterns.

A few simple changes may put things back in order:
- Try putting room darkening shades up in the child's room and using a white noise machine or fan. These strategies will reduce the amount of early daylight that seeps into the child's room and may block out the sound of birds singing or dogs barking outside. The temptation may be to keep your child up later at night so she sleeps longer in the morning. This may actually work against your goal. Overtired children tend to sleep less not more and their sleep patterns can be more disrupted. So make sure you stick to a reasonable and regular bedtime and/or that you retain consistent daily naps.
- Summer tempts you to stay outside but make a point of coming in to preserve sleep opportunities for your child. If your child continues to wake early make sure you are going to bed earlier yourself so you'll feel refreshed and ready to go even at the break of dawn!

Youth of Promise get a chance to live up to their potential by traveling to Detroit to learn about African American history

Simone Quartell

High-achieving males at Monticello Middle School have the opportunity to join a group called the "Mighty Males of Monticello" with other accomplished young men. Male students who have potential to become "Mighty Males," but do not meet the grade requirements, have their own program called the "Youth of Promise." They meet monthly and have guest speakers. NBA player Eric Riley and Cleveland Cavaliers announcer Cammy Russell came to speak to the students about making good choices. As a follow-up, students went to a Cavaliers game to watch Russell work, and then met team members. Former Cleveland Browns player Tim Roberts came to speak to the students about being a leader. According to Monticello literature teacher Cynthia Varlamos, who helps with the program, it "creates a pyramid of support and good citizenship.

"It's a good program," says seventh grader Kenneth Perdue. "It's made me a better student and I'm making better choices." Seventh grader James Powell says "it teaches me how to be a leader." And seventh grader David Steele adds, "The motivational speakers we hear and cool places we go teach us how to be responsible and be good citizens."

Simone Quartell is a 2009 graduate of Cleveland Heights High School. She plans to study journalism at Kent State University.

The Lisa & Milo Show visit Saint Ann School

As part of its celebration of "Right to Read Week," Heights Observer joined the conversation at www.heightsobserver.org
New Cheese on the Block
Melt adding Heights location for gourmet grilled cheese at Cedar and Taylor

Christina Klenotic

Melt Bar and Grilled owner Matt Fish needed a new challenge after racking up regulars and local and national foodie awards at his Lakewood restaurant. Since opening in September 2006, his gourmet grilled cheese concoctions, with names like The Parmageddon (pierogies) and The Lake Erie Monster (walleye), have packed the restaurant every night, even after two expansions.

"Lakewood exceeded my expectations by leaps and bounds," Fish said. "We have won the ‘Academy Awards’ of Cleveland restaurants, so the natural progression is to translate our West Side success to the East Side. Mindset—wise, progression is to join the conversation at www.heightsobserver.org

We’ll be joining an existing family of good restaurants and residents, and we’ll have a chance to make an impact on the city by building up the corner of Cedar and Taylor," Fish said.

The new Cleveland Heights spot will mirror the personality of the Lakewood location by including hardwood floors, eclectic art, backlit glass pieces and high tin ceilings. Fortunately, the 4,500-square-foot space will accommodate more guests (170) than the Lakewood location, with a much larger kitchen, a secluded patio, and a horseshoe bar that seats 35 and serves 30 beers on tap.

Construction is scheduled to start the first week of June. Fish said he expects the gutting, rebuilding, and rehabbing of the 1920s old Peabody’s building to last six to seven months.

Melt has already formed a Cleveland Heights connection via a partnership with the Grog Shop. At the restaurant, Melt diners can score tickets to select shows hosted by the club.

Fans of the restaurant can join the Big Cheese Club for updates on the new location, employment opportunities and monthly sandwich specials.

For 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.

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Red and white at Dave’s Market complement summer dining

Loren Sonkin

Last week, while shopping at Severance Town Center, I walked into Dave’s Market to meander through the wine department. They have a large variety of wines at very affordable prices. The store is cool and the wine display is well maintained. Always on the lookout for new wine finds, I bought these two bottles. Both were very good.

2007 Jekel Vineyards Riesling Monterey $11.79

This dry Riesling is very easy to drink. Warm California temperatures, moderated by the cooling ocean breezes, make Monterey a great place for growing grapes. These climate contrasts add a nice complexity to the wine, which has lovely aromas and flavors of orange and tangerine. This Monterey Riesling will go well with lighter summer fare, such as salads, seafood and poultry.

2005 Columbia Crest Two Vines Shiraz $8.29

Columbia Crest is known for its very drinkable and reasonably priced wines. Two Vines Shiraz, made from the syrah grape of Washington State, represents a successful attempt at making an Australian-style wine. “Shiraz” is what the Aussies call syrah. This is a fruit-forward wine with aromas of plums and black raspberries, along with a dollop of cedar and oak. It’s easy to drink and will go nicely with your summer parties and barbecues. On sale at Dave’s for less than $8 a bottle, this is a fantastic bargain!

Now that the weather has settled into a more pleasing realm, try these wines at your next cookout. Thanks to many of you for the positive feedback on this column. Perhaps we can share a glass of wine somewhere in the Heights this summer!

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Eddie Maddox, owner of Fast Eddie’s Chop Shop and Crazy Mullets on Coventry, is expanding again – this time to Lee Road. He will open Super Deluxe, a high-end salon at 2207 Lee Rd., in the former Salon DM in June.

The salon will display the work of local artists and offer manicures and pedicures. Nancy Duncan, formerly of Salon DM, will stay on.

This is the fifth location for Maddox and his business partner. They have a Crazy Mullets in Lakewood and one on High Street in Columbus, Ohio. Maddox began his career at Dino Palmeri and David Scott.

Maddox says the recession brings opportunity to negotiate better leases.

“Hair, done right, is recession proof,” he says, “When people feel bad, they get their hair done and buy shoes to make them feel better. And you have them get their hair done and buy shoes to make them feel better. And you have to have your hair looking good for a job interview.”

Brittany Gatto

Have you ever wished on a Tuesday night you could go to the farmers market? How about Thursday or Friday or any day except the day of the market? Would you have any reason not to shop on a Tuesday night, a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year?

Fresh Fork, a startup founded last week by four Case Western students, has a unique perspective. Join the chamber of commerce on Wednesday, June 24, for a special speaker and economic summit with South Euclid Mayor Georgine Welo, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission Director Paul Asenas, and Director of the Cleveland Regional Office of the Ohio Secretary of State Christopher B. Nance.

The chamber of commerce’s strategic planning team captain Ken Kovach, president of The Kovach Company and executive director of the International Community Council, will moderate.

The chamber’s stellar networking vibe will make this a day to remember. “This is a remarkable opportunity for us each to learn from the dors – including HRCC and our fellow business owners – what’s working now and what’s in the works,” says Nathan Wills, captain of the chamber’s programming and young professionals team. Indeed, creating this kind of dialogue for the community is one of the chief goals of the chamber’s YP programming. As with all chamber of commerce events, the luncheon/summit is open to all members and guests of any generation – these issues affect all of us.

The June 24 event will be held from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Maggiano’s Little Italy at Beachwood Place. Tickets are $25 for chamber of commerce members, $55 for non-member guests. To RSVP, please call 977-7322 or register online at hrcc.org.

Halle Barnett is board president and captain of the marketing team for Heights-Hillcrest Regional Chamber of Commerce. A writer and marketing specialist, she co-owns the creative marketing and design company media schmedia LLC with her husband Benjamin.
Richard Kogan to perform at CIM

Heights Observer Staff

Renowned psychiatrist and concert pianist, Dr. Richard Kogan, is returning to Cleveland on Saturday, June 6, to give a lecture and concert in Mixon Hall at the Cleveland Institute of Music. The program—titled “The Mind and Music of George Gershwin”—will explore the stylistic period of Gershwin’s music and the psychological forces that influenced the composer’s human and artistic development. The event is presented by the Cleveland Psychoanalytic Center. Proceeds support the center’s programs.

Peter Chakerian

The Cleveland area has long been known as a bastion for musical talent. Despite ever-changing musical tastes and trends, the talent that has launched (and taken root) here over the past 50 years is impressive beyond measure.

The first annual Big Cool Cats Music Festival shines the spotlight on Cleveland’s venerable music scene with an all-day music showcase and festival concert Saturday, June 20, from noon to 11 p.m. at Cain Park’s Evans Amphitheatre. Offering a dynamite, mainstage lineup, plus “unplugged” acoustic performances in the Colonnade, this inaugural event, created by Cleveland Heights resident Steve Presser (owner of Big Fun Toy Store) and Lakewood residents Thomas Mulready (founder of the CoolCleveland.com online network) and Denis Devito (leader of the Cats on Holiday band), is sure to give music fans a thrill or two.

The idea was born over a cup of coffee between Presser and Devito. Presser had longed to attend a music festival showcasing some of the region’s hottest talent, but no one had stepped up to create such a thing. They phoned Mulready, who created Cleveland’s Performance Art Festival and co-founded the Ingenuity Festival of Art and Technology, and quickly hatched a plan for the day-long concert. The event is co-presented with the City of Cleveland Heights, which operates Cain Park.

In addition to the "swamp-pop" style of Cats on Holiday, the festival features a diverse range of multicultural sounds: legendary Cleveland reggae outfit I-Tal, polyrhythmic world band Muffin, Americana-rocker’s the Maggies, “zydecajun” group Mr. Mojo, and alt-pop band 70 Lewis all comprise the mainstage entertainment.

Acoustic artists Jessie Barnes, Jack DiAlesandro and Jon Mosey will be featured on a special stage assembled by the Cleveland Heights nonprofit arts education organization Roots of American Music.

A Joan Jett Signature Melody Maker guitar will be raffled off at the festival. Proceeds benefit Heights Arts, the nonprofit community arts organization. Raffle tickets can be purchased at the festival. Gates open at 6 p.m.

Yiddishe Cup celebrates 20 years at Cain Park

Bart Stratton

Get ready for an evening of high-octane klezmer, kvetching and comedy. The nationally renowned, Cleveland-based klezmer band, Yiddishe Cup, celebrates its 20th season and the release of its new CD, Klezmer Guy. Expect everything from mambo and Borscht Belt to, well, schmalzy violin and clarinet solos.

The free concert is 7 p.m. Sunday, June 28, in the Evans Amphitheater. Co-sponsored by CoolCleveland.com and Big Fun, the festival’s partners also include Gibson Guitar, Jak’s Prints, Positively Cleveland, COSE Arts Network and IbuyNEO.com.

For tickets and information, visit www.YiddisheCup.com. For ticket discounts and special offers, please visit www.CoolCleveland.com.

Peter Chakerian is a correspondent for CoolCleveland.com.

Big Cool Cats Music Fest set for June 20 at Cain Park

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Peter Chakerian is a correspondent for CoolCleveland.com.
**Heights runners shine at Boston**

Tom Woodworth

The 2009 running of the 113th Boston Marathon on April 15 massed together 23,163 dedicated runners, each meeting stringent qualifying times by age and gender, for the privilege of running an historic course covering suburban Bos-
ton towns each with its own cheering section and personality.

The 2009 race posted an amazing 98.6 percent finish rate, a tribute to the qualifying system. Just to qualify for this prestigious race is the dream of every serious runner. Lisa Robertson and Mark Bellini were among 14 Cleveland Heights residents to qualify for the 26.2 mile race.

Lisa, 39, is a graduate of Case Western Reserve University with an MA in art history. She is a professor of art history, teaching part time at Cleveland State and John Carroll universities. Lisa is a veteran of 10 marathons and qualified for Boston with a 3:19:35 at the Columbus Marathon.

Recalling best moment at Bos-
ton she remembers a time in Natick at about mile 10, “I felt really good, there was music playing, I was laughing, soak-
ing up the cheers and encouragement from the crowd lining the street and the companionship of my fellow runners, it was a perfect moment.”

Later in the race things got a little crazy with encouraging cheers so loud you could hear them from a mile and a half away as you approached the campus. For Mark, Boston was an experi-
ence of a lifetime, “just qualifying is special and running it is even better. No marathon in the world has its history.” He finished with a time of 3:21:44 and a smile on his face.

Congratulations to Lisa, Mark and the other 12 runners from our commu-
nity that trained so hard and ran so well at Boston.

Tom Woodworth is a retired advertising and public relations professional and cur-
rently volunteers as a business counselor with SCORE. In 1981 at age 44 he ran the Revco, his only marathon, with a time of 3:35:57.

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**Seamstress leaves kids in stitches**

Becca Keating

It’s been 15 years since Barb Seidel opened the doors to her home sewing studio in Cleveland Heights and began teaching local kids a unique set of skills. An accomplished seamstress with a background in art education, Seidel combined her passions for teaching and sewing to create a successful series of after-school and summer classes for kids from ages 8 to 18.

Today, her simple studio is equipped with modern machines and a variety of supplies, giving students everything they need to learn to sew. Ever-committed to personal attention and fun, Seidel’s classes are small, encouraging a warm, close-knit learning environment.

In the days of the Internet, video games, and instant gratification, learn-
ing to sew in such a setting provides kids with a refreshing dose of one-on-
one interaction. Seidel starts slowly and simply, helping her students build their skills step-by-step. They learn the basics of pattern-reading, measuring, and both hand- and machine-stitching. Beyond spools and stitches though, stu-
dents develop coordination and foster patience—ultimately giving each stu-
dent the satisfaction of saying “I made it myself.”

Seidel’s students learn to make simple accessories, stuffed animals and, most importantly, wearable garments. If you have a fan of Project Runway or Fashion Show at home, these classes offer kids a unique introduction to the world of sewing and design, and allow them to try the skills they see on television first-hand.

Give your kids the gift of creative independence! Summer classes are forming now. For more information on Seidel and her classes, call 216.371.3333 or e-mail baseidel@gmail.com.

Barb Seidel teaches kids the art of sewing.

Becca Keating is a Cleveland Heights na-
tive and a third-year English major at Case Western Reserve University.

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**Community News**

**Heights Observer** June 2, 2009

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT WWW.HEIGHTSOBSERVER.ORG
The value of the inner gremlin

Mary Courtwright

While school breaks offer a much needed respite from the hectic life in academia, they also bring out the laziest parts of me. Type A personalities like me tend to smother that gremlin-like, do-nothing part of ourselves and stuff it in a closet somewhere. After all, the inner gremlin is a nuisance: she gets in the way of working, doing and accomplishing.

The word “break” can unleash that nasty little ankle-biter, who seizes control of my mind, body and soul. Set free, she makes me sleep in until 11 a.m., read mindless romance novels, and eat chocolate chip cookies before going to bed. But when the new semester arrives, I must rein her in. The clock is ticking. It’s time to pull out the gremlin-catching kit. Its contents are mini Hershey’s Special Dark chocolates, Marie Claire magazine, self-tanner, a recorded episode of Saturday Night Live with Justin Timberlake, a pedometer and, finally, dog treats for a trusty sidekick.

Bear with me while I provide my Legally Blonde-inspired rationale. The first and most important item in the kit is the mini Hershey’s Special Dark chocolate: a piece will pacify the creature in moments of panic. Next, a casual read is essential. Digesting too many textbooks and peer-reviewed journals is the notorious mini Hershey’s Special Dark chocolates I have consumed. And finally, when all else fails, a puppy is the best medicine; dog treats will ensure the presence of my trusty sidekick during a sudden gremlin assault.

Once the gremlin is reined in, the key to maintaining control lies not in a padlocked room. Rather, I must remember the evolutionary value in this inner demon. Frustrating as she may be, she represents the playful side of human nature that adults often forget.

I must remember that the gremlin, in all her apparent foolishness, is in fact wise. She reminds me to laugh until my sides hurt, dance dizzily into the wind and sing in the car at the top of my lungs. If I forsake the gremlin, I lose the very part of myself that makes life worth living.

Thus, I pledge to use the gremlin-catching kit only in emergencies and to make room for her in my daily life.

I will dance to greatest hits of the 80s and 90s at least once a week, engage in fits of giggles for no apparent reason, and make grass angels in the backyard. I urge you to do the same. But for the love of all things holy, always keep a mini Hershey’s Special Dark chocolate on hand. Just in case.

Mary Carroll Courtwright teaches at Bryant & Stratton College. Her novel “Song of the Messenger,” set in Cleveland Heights, was published in 2007 and her writing has been featured on National Public Radio. Learn more at www.marycourtwright.com.
Ro Eugene’s children honor her memory

The Eugene Family

Cleveland Heights lost a real gem. Roslyn “Ro” Eugene died suddenly on May 7 after celebrating every day of her 79 years. Ro’s children remember her as an activist. When her two eldest children came home from Coventry School, after a hearing delivered by two kids who lived around the corner, Ro sprang into action. She rounded up her husband and five children and visited the home of the culprits. There, bond suits shook hands, sang songs and created “Covenant Kids for Peace,” which may have inspired the culprits. There, both families shook into action. She rounded up her husband Ro sprang after a beating delivered by two kids. Eugene was committed to “try Kids for Peace,” which may have inspired the culprits. There, both families shook into action. She rounded up her husband who lived around the corner, Ro sprang after a beating delivered by two kids -

life experience became the fabric of her support to scores of friends and those she sponsored. She touched many lives and will be remembered for “Ro-isms” that guided her, such as “Do the next right thing” and “That was then, this is now.” Ro Eugene’s life was celebrated recently by a full house at St. Cecilia’s in Cleveland. A banner hung from the rafters, reminding all in attendance of Ro’s mantra, “Luv U All,” which she had on her license plates – and she meant it!

Written by the Eugene family, a wonderfully diverse bunch of kids who, in celebration of their mom’s passing, are learning to love more and more.

Andrea Turner

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes will hold its 2009 Summer Benefit on Saturday, June 20 at the center in Shaker Heights. This year’s theme, “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil,” challenges partgoers to adopt “good” earth-friendly practices instead of clinging to “evil” unsustainable environmental habits.

Based on John Berendt’s best-selling book, the evening is designed to evoke the charm of Savannah, Georgia—Southern hospitality with a touch of cheeky fun. The parking lot will be transformed into the perfect setting for a garden gala. The event begins at 6 p.m. with cocktails and a silent auction, followed by dinner (catered by Sammy’s), a live and dance under the stars to music provided by the Special Request band.

The center, founded in 1966 as a grassroots community effort to preserve the Shaker Parklands from becoming the new freeway, has been a leader in natural history and environmental education for children and adults for more than 40 years.

To reserve tickets, call 216-321-9395 or visit www.shakeralakes.org for more information.

Andrea C. Turner is a Cleveland Heights resident and a member of the center’s board of directors.

Elaine Coburn wins 2009 Paulus Award

Mary Patton

The Gesu Women’s Guild presented its 2009 Alice Paulus Award to longtime parish volunteer, Elaine K. Coburn, of University Heights. Coburn received the honor on May 7 at the guild’s “Celebrate Spring!” dinner at Shaker Heights Country Club.

Named in honor of long-standing parishioner and dedicated volunteer, Alice Paulus, the award recognizes a woman who exemplifies Paulus’s willingness to serve Gesu Parish and reflects her spirit of faith and volunteerism.

Coburn and her husband, Don, have been members of Gesu for more than 50 years. They raised five sons and two daughters in the church.

“Gesu Parish truly values Elaine’s continual involvement and leadership,” said Reverend Lon Snow, pastor of Gesu.

“Elaine never complained about the workload, nor did she ever brag about her achievements. Her truly Christian attitude has been an inspiration to her family, friends, and to all who have noticed her quiet, modest dedication to the parish.”

Coburn began volunteering when their children were in school. She served on the Gesu School Board and the PTO. She was one of the original organizers of the school’s Junior Great Books program.

Coburn served as committee chair and vice president for the Women’s Guild and Parish Council. She was a founding member of many committees and groups, such as the Gesu Christian Life Community and the first Gesu Endowment Board. Coburn represented Gesu as a board member of Catholic Charities and was one of Gesu’s first women lectors and Eucharistic Ministers.

In addition to her Gesu volunteer activities, Coburn served as president of the Cleveland Chapter of Sacred Heart Alumni, president of the Glen Oak School, and a member of the Gilmore Academy Board of Trustees.

Mary Patton is a public relations consultant and University Heights resident.

Nature Center hosts “Midnight in the Garden”
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