Storefront vacancies challenge Cleveland Heights

Jeremy Hebrbrand

A drive around any of the 12 commercial districts in Cleveland Heights will reveal a growing inventory of vacant storefronts and office space above them. All of the busiest districts in the Heights have vacancies (see box at right). Coventry Road, for example, is home to a variety of stores and restaurants and still has about six notable vacant storefronts. The same goes for the Severance Town Center, which has 10 vacant units.

There is no entity that tracks vacancy rates at this level, so reliable percentages of commercial occupancy don’t exist. But for anyone who knows the area well, it’s apparent that the number of empty storefronts and available space has been rising rather than falling.

There is no organized effort to turn this around.

Future Heights

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

‘Step It Up’ sketches ideal candidate

Jeremy Hebrbrand

What does it take to be an effective leader in Heights government?

A group of concerned citizens calling itself Step It Up Cleveland Heights has some ideas. The group, formed in early spring, is setting goals for city council candidates with an eye toward the election coming up in November.

At a July 16 public meeting, citizens were encouraged to come and share their thoughts on what candidates need to address in the upcoming election. “We did not want to be passive about this election,” said Sheldon Glave, a member of Step It Up. The group plans to use ideas presented at the meeting to create questions for a team formed to interview candidates and report back to the public. Step It Up members Russell Berusch and Mark Chupp led most of the discussion as candidates in attendance were asked to refrain from input and merely observe.

Some not aware of CH commercial recycling

Kaitlin Bushinski

Eco-conscious businesses in Cleveland Heights may be unaware that the city’s division of refuse and recycling offers free recycling services to commercial properties as part of its recycling initiatives.

Sam Bell is the owner of the Lusty Wrench, a mechanic shop on Lee Road that is committed to eco-conscious car care.

Bell said he paid for a private contractor to collect his recycling until he noticed city recycling bins in the lot behind Seitz-Agin hardware store. “Not only do we use [the bins], them about every three weeks. “Not only do we use [the bins], them about every three weeks.

“Not only do we use them about every three weeks.

“The city has great character, but it is energy inefficient,” Berusch said. Some of the citizens made comments about working collaboratively with businesses to promote entrepreneurship in the city. All were in agreement that the city

Best of the Heights Awards, Sept. 14

Heights Observer Staff

FutureHeights will recognize winning merchants of the 5th Annual Best of the Heights Awards at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 14 at Nighttown, 12383 Cedar Road in Cleveland Heights. Everyone is welcome to attend.

UnitedStates' highest achieving community service volunteers will also be honored at the event.

Submit a ballot automatically earns you a chance to win a Heights gift package.

For more information e-mail jane@futureheights.org or call 216-320-1423.


Eight lightedc tips for working moms: how to not lose your mind while you care for those you love

Mary Courtwright

For working moms who need suggestions for juggling responsibilities (or maybe just a good laugh), this list may be just what you’re looking for. Note: Follow these tips at your own risk.

1. It is OK if the sink is rarely clear of dishes during the work week, as long as they are rinsed and there is a scheduled rotation.

2. The dining room table makes a great staging area for laundry. I mean, who has time for dinner parties anyway?

3. To avoid complaints when packing lunches for the family, simply tell them they will either be responsible for packing their own or they will gladly accept what you pack. Nine times out of ten, complaints will cease.

4. Create a standard shopping list organized in the order of the stores you frequent.

5. For artistically driven little ones, in a vest of “washable, non-toxic” markers. Keep them occupied will enable you to cook dinner in peace.

6. There is something to be said for the "pick your battles" strategy, especially when parenting an adolescent. Remember that striped hair is trivial compared to some things.

7. Yelling is to be expected with your teenager, at least once in a while. Remember that the result is communication and, after all, that is the goal.

8. If you get the urge to have more kids, try getting a dog first. They look just as cute in clothes and you can leave them alone while you head home alone. (Shopping, anyone?)

Finally, remember that laughter is an essential element of maintaining sanity while working and caring for loved ones.

Tip 5 contributed by Becky Suersey, mom extraordinary.

Mary Carroll Courtwright is a teacher and writer. Her novel “Song of the Messiah”, which is set in Cleveland Heights, was published in 2007. For more information, visit www.marycourtwright.com.
Seed of Community Campaign is a success

Thank you all! Thanks to each and every one of you who rose to the challenge and donated generously to the FutureHeights Seed of Community Campaign.

FutureHeights raised $15,102.17 and the $5,000 challenge grant has been awarded for a grand total of $30,102.17.

Thanks for supporting FutureHeights’ efforts to build strong citizens and promote community collaboration through the Heights Observer, volunteer activities and a host of issues-oriented public events and forums.

Your thoughtful investment enables us to continue our work. And for that we are most grateful. Didn’t contribute yet? It’s not too late. FutureHeights accepts tax-deductible donations all year long. Visit our website www.futureheights.org to make your contribution.

Community commitment to important especially in these challenging times—and the community has voted its confidence in FutureHeights!

Thanks again,

Deanna Bremer Fisher
Executive Director, FutureHeights
Library offers courses to make homework easier

Tonya Gibson

Summer is flying by and soon school will begin. Get a jumpstart on your school year with the library’s new series about quick and easy ways to do your homework. These amazing classes are designed for students age 13 and up.

Referee Tool:
Thursday, August 6, 7 p.m.

Learning Express:
Tuesday, August 11, 7 p.m.

Searching Databases:
Thursday, August 13, 7 p.m.

Finding Research Articles:
Tuesday, August 18, 7 p.m.

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

Cassie debuts at the Lee Road Library

Judithe Soppel

A powerful, user-friendly software that automates the management of the library’s computers and printers is coming to the Lee Road Library the first week in August.

The installation of “Cassie” will be done in the mornings that week and is expected to take several hours, during which the computers will not be available. The installation schedule is as follows: second floor computers on Tuesday, August 4; first floor computers on Wednesday, August 5 and the Community Center on Monday, August 10.

Free printing will have a $2 per day limit: 10 cents each for black and white, and 50 cents each for color copies. A new sign-in screen offers clear and easy-to-follow prompts. Customers can reserve a computer from any sign-up station and may schedule up to 14 days ahead.

One word of caution: Once the computer shuts down at the end of a session, all work is gone and cannot be retrieved so users are urged to save their work often.

The Cassie system has many advantages over the previous one. It is faster and more reliable; customers don’t need a password or pin number to sign in—just their library card or a visitor’s pass; and customers can print documents at a time or bundle them all at once.

The migration to Cassie is being rolled out throughout the Heights system. The pilot installation was at Noble Library and has been well-received. It has since been installed at Coventry Village and University Heights libraries.

In addition to all the customer benefits of Cassie, the new technology is less expensive than the old one, so it is more cost effective for the library.

Judithe Soppel is the public relations coordinator for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library.
The city manager was authorized to contract awarded to the Camino Construction Company, water main work on Yellowstone Road was Infrastructure work awarded Agency and University Circle. They hope to traffic in the western part of Cleveland Heights Mayor Kelley reported that the city was studying requirements in line with HUD requirements and proved an amendment to make a minor alteration. The neighborhoods about the neighborhood. Response to parking concern Later in the meeting Council Member Nancy Dietrich reported that before approving the Benjamin Rose Properties request for a parking variance, the Board of Zoning Appeals had approved an amendment to make a minor alteration to the code that brought the city’s zoning requirements in line with HUD requirements and addressed the parking and traffic concerns of Kenilworth neighborhood residents.

Traffic study Mayor Kelley reported that the city was studying traffic in the western part of Cleveland Heights in partnership with Regional Transit Authority, Northeast Ohio Area-wide Coordinating Agency and University Circle. They hope to make it more bicycle-friendly. Infrastructure work awarded Water main work on Yellowstone Road was awarded to the Camin Construction Company, for $1,530,856.25 was accepted for street resurfacing work. Survey for water leaks The city manager was authorized to contract Consulting Engineering, Inc. for a waterline survey for not more than $40,000. The purpose of the work is to check for leaks.

More financial cuts announced The city continues to make adjustments in appropriations and other expenditures, mostly reductions of general fund expenses. Council Member Kenneth Morlack presented on first reading an ordinance with a long list of recommended cuts including 10 unpaid furlough days for public civilian personnel, all education programs, vehicle maintenance, the Cain Park wading pool and Community Relations staffing. Morlack was especially concerned about cuts in the latter, calling that department “the tripeiros” for alerting the city about council about problems. He urged citizens to call the police at 291-2323 about any neighborhood problems.

Nonprofits to receive CDBG funds Council agreed that the following three nonprofit corporations would receive Community Development Block Grant funds: 1) the Noble-Nela Merchants Association $5,000 2) The Center for Families and Children $27,810 3) The RapArt Center for assistance with its PINPOINT Program at $5,000. Nonprofits to receive CDBG funds: 1) the Noble-Nela Merchants Association $5,000 for assistance with the administrative costs of the Association and its activities. LWV observers: Carol Gibson, Lisa Peters.

Financial legislation Council passed an ordinance decreasing appropriations in several areas of the current city budget that Council Member Kenneth Morlack had presented on first reading and given details about at the preceding council meeting. Council member Mark Thomas noted that Council had worked hard to be forward looking as to finances, ensuring that the city will be able to prosper with the economic recovery. Mayor Kelley said that the budget showed fiscal responsibility at its best. The council authorized the city manager to amend the 2009 Community Development Block Grant Consolidation Plan to allot $140,000 to front-end renovation. The 2010 Tax Budget was presented on first reading.

LWV observers: Blanca Valencey, Lisa Peters.

City manager authorized to buy houses City manager was authorized to use Neighbor- hud’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to purchase, without prior council approval, properties in four designated areas: 1) Lee, between Mayfield and Cedar 2) Calabona 3) Monticello and 4) Randolph at a cost of up to $75,000 for a single family home and $125,000 for a double.

Promoting diversity It is no secret that the housing crisis has hit Cleveland Heights. Step It Up suggested that candidates work collaboratively with all sectors of the community to create effective responses to the housing crisis, to convert vacant and deteriorat- ing property into positive resources for the city.

There was a strong support for maintaining housing and attracting younger homeowners to the area. "What's important is we want to see the bad properties into good ones for the city," Chupp said, questioning both can- didates and citizens in the audience.

Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights MONDAY JUNE 15, 2009 All council members present.

Pricing variance in Kenilworth Elliot Pearlman of Kenilworth Road thanked council for delaying its decision, made at a June 1 meeting, on a pricing variance request by the Paramore House Estate located at 2373 Elyria Heights Blvd. Neighbors who had quickly organized into an association were concerned about the possibility of the narrow Kenilworth Lane turning into a "parking lot" due to the estate’s planned increase in residents. Kathy Browning, also of Kenilworth Road, brought up the same concerns and thanked the city for its quick response to neighborhood concerns. Foaler suggested that council include the new Kenilworth Road Association in future discus- sions about the neighborhood.

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Step It Up CH to hold council candidate forum Susie Kasser Step It Up Cleveland Heights will con- tinue to promote public discussion of its Citizen Agenda at a public forum to be held on Sept. 16 at Forest Hill Church. The 7:00 p.m. event will engage candi- dates for Cleveland Heights City Coun- cil in a discussion of key issues affecting the city’s future and how prospective city council members see themselves working for the community: A five-issue Citizen Agenda is avail- able at www.heightsobserver.org/step-it-up. Susie Kasser is a community volunteer and advocate for public education.

Cleveland Heights News MONDAY JULY 6, 2009 All council members present.

Nuisance property donated and sold Council requested the donation to the city of the property located at 1528 Cest Rd. and authorized the sale of that property. The owner did not wish to rehabilitate the property, which had sustained fire damage and been declared a nuisance, and offered to give it to the city. A neighboring property owner will purchase the property for $5,500 and demolish the house.

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LWV observers: Blanca Valencey, Lisa Peters.

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Step It Up continued from page 1...
University Heights City Council

Meeting highlights

MONDAY JUNE 15, 2009
All council members present

Improvements at Belleaire
Council approved the continuance of capital improvements at Belleaire Jewish Children’s Bureau, 22001 Fairmount Blvd., with new exterior lighting throughout the campus. Through funding from the state of Ohio, the lighting would be standardized and controlled by security. Light pollution into neighboring properties would be negligible.

Variance for a shed
Mr. and Mrs. Joel Libava of 14408 E. Carroll Avenue challenged the variance granted to Matthew and Jennifer Bauman of 14398 East Carroll Blvd. by the Board of Zoning Appeals on June 10. Due to a miscalculation, the structure exceeded the zoning requirements by 0.82 percent. The Libavas’ concern was that, at 12 feet tall, the structure would be the same size as a shed and be too large for the small yard. Council agreed that the structure was too big and the appeal to the zoning variance was approved. The Bauman’s would have to reduce the size of the structure’s footprint. The Bauman’s also planned to move it more toward the center of their yard, away from the Libava’s property line. They can appeal this decision with the Court of Common Pleas.

Update on 2603 Ashurst Road
Mr. and Mrs. Gus Frangos of the Cuyahoga County land bank had been hired to clean out 2603 Ashurst and found the house to be structurally sound and recommended rehabilitation for resale. Menn planned to meet with Gus Frangos to see the house and dispel their concerns. Menn also put it on the market.

Council addressed many issues involving the Senior Transportation Connection before they terminated on July 1, therefore inconveniencing or harming those who rely on this service. Councilman Frank Consolo stated that council should take a tour of the property. Councilman Kevin Murphy excused.

Senior Transportation Connection
Council has 60 days to approve this contract. Senior Transportation Connection was presented on first reading. The previous provider (TC3) will be out of business at the end of June. STC is run by a county agency and will be taking over the services provided by TC3.

University Parkway roadway reconstruction
The resolution to contract Mr. Evacura for University Parkway roadway reconstruction was tabled because the application for funding submitted to the state committee had not been approved yet. Council has 60 days to approve this contract.

Fingerprint system
The controller made a decision with the Court of Common Pleas.

Anthony Ianiro, director of finance
He was finance director for University Heights before Arman Oshio. Oshio has been on an unpaid leave of absence since the beginning of June due to an investigation by state auditors. CRC’s final report Council accepted the final report of the Charter Review Commission and approved submitting the proposed charter amendments to the electorate on Nov. 3. Vice-Mayor Adele Zucker abstained.

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Building Commissioner Menn reported that Farlow Group had been hired to clean out 2603 Ashurst Road for $1,372. Once cleaned, the engineers will determine if the house needed to be torn down. Menn planned to meet with Gus Frangos of the Cuyahoga County land bank regarding the disposition of this property. Councilman Steven Sims suggested that if the house was determined to be sound, there should be an open house for the neighbors to enable them to see the house and dispel their concerns. Menn was also seeking Neighborhood Stabilization Funds from the county for this property. The application deadline is June 30. It was suggested that a grant writer be hired to help.

Special council meeting
MONDAY JUNE 29, 2009
Councilman Kevin Murphy excused.

Update on 2603 Ashurst Road
City Engineer Joe Ciuni and Building Commissioner David Menn toured the vacant house at 2603 Ashurst and found the house to be structurally sound and recommended rehabilitation for resale. Menn suggested that the city hold an open house so that neighbors could see that the underlying structure was sound.

Law director Ken Fisher pointed out that although the house could be rehabilitated, council hadn’t decided whether to rehab or raze it and put it on the market.

Residents questioned the practicality of rehabbing the house in light of the current housing market and urged council to look into further options for the property.

Ashurst Road residents saw no need for an open house since they all had been in the house, but felt that council should take a tour of the property. Councilman Kevin Murphy expressed concern.

Senior Transportation Connection
Council addressed many issues involving the Senior Transportation Connection before they decided whether to contract this company. Councilman Peter Bernarda was concerned about the high cost of the service since his parents could take cab rides that cost about $10 per one-way trip. Councilman Frank Consolo was concerned because of the high cost of the service since his parents could take cab rides that cost about $10 per one-way trip. Councilman Frank Consolo was concerned because of his parents’ disability. Councilwoman Frankie Goldberg agreed and stated that she wished the STC representatives were at the meeting to answer questions. Vice Mayor Adele Zucker stated that both Shaker and Mayfield had had questions, investigated the service, and chose to contract with them.

Consolo requested two promises from the mayor: that she would continue to search for good options for this service, and that if other good options were found, she would execute a 90-day-out option in the contract to end the relationship with STC. Goldberg added that within 90 days, council should receive a report from Walter Simon, University Heights community coordinator, with details about other alternatives.

Council passed a motion for a one-year contract with STC with a 90-day out clause where the mayor must provide options to council or terminate the contract.

Purvis Park tennis courts
Council authorized submission of an application for stimulus funds through the Community Block Grant Development program to rehabilitate the Purvis Park tennis courts.

LWV observer: Susan D. Pardee.
**CH-UH Board of Education Meeting highlights**

TUESDAY JUNE 16, 2009
All board members present.

**Superintendent vote**
Board President Kal Zucker explained to dissenters protesting the vote on the new superintendent that public addresses were reserved for regular meetings and that this meeting was a work session.

The board voted, four to one, to appoint Douglas Heuer superintendent of the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school system. Ron Register placed the one negative vote. He had previously moved to table the vote to hear public opinion, but no board member seconded the motion. Heuer was hired for $140,000 with a three-year contract as of August 2009.

**Board comments on Heuer**
Zucker described Heuer as a strong financial leader, similarly, Board Member Nancy Peppler Zucker described Heuer as a strong financial leader.

**Superintendent vote**
All board members present.

**Administrators travel to China**
Joseph Micheller, director of educational services, presented an update of administrators’ trip to China.

**Roxboro Middle School**
Board Member Michael Cicero commented on the decision regarding student eligibility to participate in end-of-year activities at Roxboro Middle School. He stated that the board had not told the superintendent to take any action, and that the superintendent had told the principal to make the decision regarding student eligibility.

**LWV Observer: Adele Cohn.**

**LWV Observer: Lillian Houser.**

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August 15th • 7:30am-6:00pm
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Aug. 15 9:30-10 Expert Gardener Q&A
Aug. 29 9:30-10 Nip-Tuck — A beginner’s guide to deadheading
Sept. 12 9:30-10 Getting Your Garden Ready for Fall

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Pacific Pottery – Scott’s Fertilizer – Sweet Pea

**LWV Observer: Adalee Cohn.**

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Heights Youth Club offers summer fun for area kids

Jeff Haynes

The Heights Youth Club is now halfway through its third annual summer program. The club kicked off the summer with its first annual “Taste of Heights” fundraiser where members of City Council and residents came out to enjoy food from over 20 area restaurants and support the club. Special thanks to food from over 20 area restaurants and fundraiser where members of City with its first annual “Taste of Heights”

The Heights Youth Club is now halfway

dedication to making the evening an

In one of the letters, he suggested romance telepathy was serendipitous. My mom had died in 1995 and I was cleaning out her attic. I opened an old shoebox to discover over 100 letters my dad had written to her during World War II. In one of the letters, he suggested romance telepathy as a way to stay connected to her. Here is an excerpt from that letter:

Elena Barrett is a Cleveland Heights

Kathy Dawson is a Cleveland Heights

Ivan Gelfand: America’s Money Man™

Learn from America’s Money Man™

Hello, my name is Kathy Dawson, and I am a career relationship coach. I work with couples in the areas of romance, travel, health, and nutrition. I help couples create a more loving and passionate relationship and to help them achieve their goals.

Kathy Dawson: America’s Money Man™

Ivan Gelfand has been named after the good Samaritan who called PAWS to rescue a mother and kittens that were in danger at a construction site. The mother was finally able to find her way back home with her kittens. Kathy Dawson: America’s Money Man™

PAWS has been named

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PAWS has been named
Felice

a renovation of good eats and warming hospitality

Jeremy Hebebrand

Margaret Mueller was 78, in great health, spending most of her days in front of the computer playing spider solitaire. She wanted a change. Then one day, on a drive down Larchmere Boulevard, she noticed an abandoned house with tires and other junk scattered across the yard.

“Someone should buy that house and do something with it,” Mueller said to a friend. Three days later the house was hers. At first she had the idea of turning the place into a basic apartment for people. No, too boring. She decided to turn it into a restaurant and Felice was born.

Having little to no experience in running a restaurant, she needed help. Ricardo Sandoval, owner and chef of Fat Cats Restaurant in Tremont, heard of the place, “someone should buy that house and turn it into a restaurant.” Mueller moved in.

Felice, 12502 Larchmere Blvd., is open for brunch Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and for dinner Tuesday through Thursday 4-10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 4 p.m. to midnight.

Felice has a peaceful ambiance—no TVs, no radios, just a relaxing atmosphere to enjoy a meal or a drink. There is a built-in bar and a patio outside, and Mueller says she may open a bar in the small garage near the patio, hoping to attract younger adults. There is also a garden outside that one of her employees takes care of during the summer.

she said she takes pride in her project and has enjoyed every minute of making it come to life, and she loves meeting different people who come through her doors every day. “I am really not in this for the money. I think the best thing is that I have created jobs for people by turning this place into a restaurant. They could go anywhere else, but they don’t. They work hard here and it is really nice to see that kind of dedication,” Mueller said.

Jeremy Hebebrand is a summer intern at the Heights Observer and a senior magazine journalism major at Kent State University.

After 32 years, there’s still plenty of kid stuff at Mac’s garage

Bob Rosenbaum

When Stephon Smith completed the auto repair program at Baran Institute of Technology in Connecticut, he came home to the Heights to look for a job. But first, he had to survive a welcome-to-the-real-world internship at Mac’s Marathon on Taylor Road.

“They’re not too tough on me,” he said of the guys at Mac’s—a close-knit team of pros who have been helping kids get into the auto repair business for 32 years.

Mac’s is a Cleveland Heights institution, owned by brothers Scott Berman and Ken Block, and others shuttle between the cars on the racks, while squeezing in a bunch of good deeds—fixing a tire for a mom in a hurry or filling the tank for an older driver—while Berman shaves his beard and acts grumpy.

There’s a constant parade of people, all of whom are treated like friends who’ve been coming around forever. It’s a full-service shop where you can get everything from a tire change to a new transmission. On a new car, they’ll give you the best parts money can buy. On an old car, if you’re looking to save money, they’ll offer to locate rebuilt parts and will give you some straight talk about what to fix just to keep the car running.

“We’re pretty old-fashioned,” Berman says. “We’ll do what you want us to do, as long as it’s going to fix the problem.”

The common theme of the place, however, is the steady procession of young trainees who move through the garage. At least one former apprentice has opened his own service station in another part of the region. Others have stayed in the auto trade or, like Edmonds, moved on to other jobs. For the last two summers, John Borden, son of a prominent neurosurgeon, has worked in the shop.

Outside of the garage, Block serves on the advisory board for the automotive Career Prep curriculum at Heights High.

“When we first took over the place, Berman says, “a day didn’t go by that some kid wouldn’t stop by on his way home from school and ask for a job. We’ve hired a lot of kids over the years.”

Bob Rosenbaum is a Cleveland Heights resident.

Jimmy O’Neill’s Tavern

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Come dine with us after the show!
Chef Ngo takes innovative approach to Japanese and Malaysian cuisine

Kathleen Fairweather

Looking for ocean-fresh sushi and a taste of exotic Malaysia? It’s right here on Coventry Road in Cleveland Heights. Chef/owner Freeman Ngo, spent 13 years in New York as a sushi chef before opening Pacific East. With more than 360 items on the menu, there truly is “something for everyone.”

Winner of the 2008 Silver Spoon Award, Cleveland Magazine’s 2008 Best Japanese Award, and Best of City Search 2008, Pacific East has been serving up fresh, flavorful sushi in Cleveland Heights for more than seven years. Sushi fans across the U.S. would be wise to add this gem of a restaurant to their “things to do” in Cleveland list.

Pacific East’s sushi and sashimi plates, include miso soup, rice and salad, and start at $16.95 for the regular dinner and go up from there. Each one features delectable presentations of ocean-fresh slices of fish and shellfish. Ask for the Chef’s Choice (market price) and Chef Ngo will custom select a variety pieces that may include the freshest melt-in-your-mouth toro (fatty bluefin tuna belly), hamachi (yellowtail), oysters, tai (red snapper), and sea urchin, and shaka (salmon)—just to name a few of the many items to choose from.

I also tasted the tempura and found it to be flavorful and crunchy and not too oily or over-battered. Selections include, shrimp, chicken and a variety of vegetables.

Pacific East also boasts a Malaysian menu of more than 100 menu items including curries, satays, clay pots, and noodle and rice specialties flavored with exotic combinations of coconut, chili, peanut, lime and mango.

I sampled roci chaap ($8.95) a favorite Malaysian appetizer featuring a griddle-fried, unleavened ghee pancake served with a curry chicken dipping sauce. It is now my personal favorite—like the warm, crisp pancake blends nicely with tender chunks of curried chicken.

The casual dining area and sushi bar quickly filled with locals and lucky tourists enjoying aromatic meals and lively conversation. The friendly wait staff was attentive to detail, offering the most pleasurable dining experience.

Unfortunately, I was stuffed and unable to report on other dishes. But now I have an excuse to return and try the other items on the menu. I recommend you do the same.

Kathleen Fairweather is a Hollywood refugee, documentary filmmaker, journalist, turned Cleveland Heights resident. She has never lived in snow, but has seen it on TV.

La Cave du Vin, a local treat for wine lovers

Loren Sonkin

The Heights wine scene is fortunate to have several wine bars. The oldest is La Cave du Vin on the corner of Coventry and Euclid Heights. It offers an assortment of wine and beer from around the world, and a limited food menu. Many wines are available by the taste, glass or bottle; others only by the bottle.

I began with a glass of 2005 l aunrein Gruner Veltliner from Austria. The wine was crisp and delicious with flavors of minerals, lime and a pinch of white pepper. I tasted three wines from Portugal, each a healthy 2 ounce pour. The 2008 Urban, made from a Spanish Tempranillo grape, was luscious and full bodied with complex cherry fruit. The Irreverante, made from Touriga Nacional grapes grown by a copop in Portugal, is light and easy to drink. Its bright acidity goes well with food. The last, Aliança Terra Boa Old Vines, unfortunately, came from an off bottle, but I was not charged for it.

Erich La Cave’s proprietor, recommended one more wine to taste. Chateau L8 o’Escalle from Bordeaux (2005), at $12 a bottle, is a serious wine with lots of cassis, cherry, vanilla and even cocoa nuances—rich, ripe and very good.

Two great things about wine bars—tasting wines in a pleasant setting without buying the whole bottle, and the bartender has actually tasted most of the wines and can give you reliable recommendations. Find a wine you like and buy a bottle to go, or have your local vintner order one for you.

Walking down the stairs into La Cave is like walking into a cellar in Europe—a metaphorical trip to a place where you can taste wines and enjoy lively conversation. Cleveland Heights is lucky to have this one close by.
There are lots of diseases to worry about these days, but this poem describes an illness that’s done more damage than all the pandemics in human history combined.

**Devis’ Plague**

*by Corana Faithwalker*

When the plague is present others feel the fear at arms length they keep you.

There is a stench it turns their heads downwind.

They lock their car doors when you walk by.

Women’s hands and arms grab

with an involuntary pinch at purrs as they huddle and hug your young.

Men put pockets and quicken their steps.

“Those minds are predisposed to violent thoughts, you know steal and rape and kill” they think.

Eyes follow you and threat doggers deep into your flesh. If you are blessed, you are alive one more day.

From whence comes their contagion that affects you so deeply who is to say?

Cecilana Faithwalker lives in Cleveland Heights and works at the Cleveland Museum of Art. He is a poet, the father of a nine-year-old, and a visual and performance artist.

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**Cleveland School of Dance leaps into the future**

Kathleen Fairweather

Stepping inside the Cleveland School of Dance is like being transported to a New York dance studio, complete with live music, hard-working young dancers, and dedicated teachers.

Founding directors Gladisa Guadalupe and husband Lawrence Minadeo opened the doors in November of 2009, and the Cleveland School of Dance is now home to more than 150 students ranging in age from 4 to 18.

Guadalupe began her dance career at age 13 with Ballet de San Juan in Puerto Rico. At age 15, she moved with her family to New York City to accept a scholarship to train with the prestigious School of American Ballet. She has since toured South America, Europe and Asia, and was principal dancer with the Cleveland Ballet before retiring from the stage to become active in the Cleveland community teaching dance.

Guadalupe describes what is unique about her dance studio: “Cleveland School of Dance has a prestigious faculty, comprehensive curriculum and quality training in dance and its related arts. We are the only pre-professional dance school in the city annually performing at the Playhouse Square Center, the second-largest arts complex in the nation.”

Guadalupe finds educating the community about the need for funding to keep the Cleveland community teaching dance.

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**CROSS-NUMBER PUZZLE**

*by Robert Haas*

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“Micro-Festival” at Cain Park celebrates spirit of Woodstock

David Budin

Forty years ago this summer, I was a young singer-songwriter living in New York City and recording for a then-small (now-big) label, Sire Records. I had a ticket for the Woodstock Festival, but for the last minute I decided not to go (that’s another story) and gave my ticket to a friend.

I spent that weekend listening to radio news reports of what was happening at the festival and wandering around a nearly deserted Greenwich Village, seemingly the only one my age still in town.

On Aug. 14, which is technically the 40th anniversary of the beginning of Woodstock (it’s not the same date, but it’s the same Friday in August), I’ll be performing in a “micro-festival” on the stage of Cain Park’s Evans Amphitheater, that will, in some ways, celebrate the spirit of Woodstock.

“Soul and Heart: A Two-Hour Festival of Folk, Blues & Pop-Gospel” will feature four musical artists performing individually and in various combinations with each other. Long Road, a ‘60s-style folk group, pop-influenced gospel group the Prayer Warriors; contemporary blues singer and guitarist Kristine Jackson; and singer-songwriter Noah Budin will perform a wide variety of songs—many from the ‘60s—seamlessly blending from one artist to another.

It is a unique event that promises to be entertaining and at times moving. For tickets ($20), call Cain Park at 216-371-3000, or visit www.cainpark.com for more information.

David Budin is a freelance writer living in Cleveland Heights.

Historian to lecture on the Rockefeller’s local legacy at Cedar Fairmount Festival

Kaitlin Bushinski

Cedar Fairmount goers can learn how the richest man in the world at the turn of the 20th century, John D. Rockefeller, and his family made their mark on Cleveland Heights.

Local historian, activist and author Sharon Gregor will give a lecture about the Rockefeller’s legacy at the festival based on the research for her first book, Forest Hill: The Rockefeller Estate.

What is now Forest Hills Park was once a sprawling, 300-acre estate with its own golf course and a 40-room Victorian mansion, a summer home to the Rockefellers during the first quarter of the 20th century.

Gregor hopes to “reintroduce the Rockefeller legacy in the Greater Cleveland area,” because, she said, “no one has written about this legacy in over 30 years.”

For her presentation, Gregor will discuss little known stories about John D. Rockefeller, including a surprise opening at the festival and wandering around a nearly deserted Greenwich Village, seemingly the only one my age still in town.

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David Budin is a freelance writer living in Cleveland Heights.

Knitscape

Peggy Spoth

What is tall, striped and fuzzy and keeps time? A knitscaped parking meter.

Heights Arts, in partnership with businesses and nimble-fingered helpers throughout the area, is presenting Knitscape, a temporary community public art project under the creative oversight of artist Carol Hummel, in residence at Heights Arts Gallery in August 2009.

Knitscape will create a visual line of color and pattern in the Cedar Lee and Larchmere business districts, with parking meter poles and selected trees being covered by colorful knitted and crocheted cozies.

The purpose of the project is four-fold:
• to demonstrate on a temporary basis how art can visually unify the streetscape
• to create a community around an art project
• to enliven daily life with unexpected art
• to support local businesses

For a one-time $5 registration fee to help defray materials costs, attend a Knitscape gathering and be part of creating a public art project. No experience is necessary! Meet the artist and get to work. Lessons, patterns, refreshments and friendship will be at the following Knitscape gatherings:

• Wednesday, August 5, 1-3 p.m.
  Loganberry Books, 13015 Larchmere Blvd. 216.765.9000
• Friday, August 7, 6-8 p.m.
  FinePoints, 12620 Larchmere Blvd., 216.229.6644
• Saturday, August 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
  Wool & Willow Needlepoint, 13002 Larchmere Blvd., 216.795.9802
• Saturday, August 15, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
  Alcazar from 2 to 3 p.m. Aug. 9. For more information please call 216-791-3712 or visit www.cedarfairmount.org
• Friday, August 14, 6-8 p.m.
  Boombox, 2278 Lee Road, 216.320.1794
• Wednesday, August 19, 1-3 p.m.
  West & Willow Needlepoint, 13002 Larchmere Blvd. 216.791.7962
• Thursday, August 20, 6-8 p.m.
  Akron, 2150 Lee Road, 216.320.9300
• Saturday, August 29, noon-3 p.m.
  Knitscope Finale Party! 1 p.m. Knitscape Slide Show Heights Arts Gallery, 2373 Lee Road, 216.371.3457

For additional events and a list of generous business sponsors, please visit www.heightsarts.org/publicart/#knitscape. Support your local businesses—they support the arts!

Peggy Spoth is the executive director of HeightsArts.
Heights-area lawns crave organics

Douglas Freer

Gardeners and farmers alike know that regularly adding organic matter builds healthy soil allowing plants to flourish. In the natural environment, plants die and decompose, returning nutrients and organic material to the soil. We interrupt this natural cycle in our urban landscapes because in most cases it’s necessary to clean our yards of landscape debris, piling leaves, sticks and grass clippings on the tree lawn for the city to haul away to a nearby compost facility.

A few gardeners compost yard and kitchen waste, but rarely generate enough compost to impact more than a small garden area. In most cases the bulk of our yard waste is composted at some facility and is returned only when we buy composted products and spread them in our landscapes. However, homeowners often do not return enough compost to replace the material that has been removed or that is necessary to sustain healthy soil.

The lack of organic material is easy to spot. Try sticking a pencil or pen into the lawn and see how far it penetrates. It’s rarely, if ever, replaced, as opposed to your gardens and beds, which have much better soil.

Soil consists of three basic minerals (sand, silt and clay), organic matter, air and water. In the Heights area, of the three mineral components, clay is found in the largest concentration. Clay is also the smallest of the three minerals, commonly leaving little room for air. And when compacted, the soil has less air space, making root development even more challenging. A healthier lawn begins with building better soil.

Top dressing with bulk organic materials like compost, leaf humus or SweetPeet will improve the composition of the soil, making the existing clay more hospitable to growing grass, just as it does for your garden beds. For existing lawns, the challenge has been making a meaningful difference requires adding a large amount of organic material. To spread approximately one-fourth-inch of compost requires about one cubic yard for every 1,000 square feet of area. This is enough to help the lawn without smothering it. Applying half again as much or double will not hurt the lawn, but it will become a little more noticeable. Larger volumes can be applied more frequently, but in smaller amounts to avoid smothering the lawn.

When starting over with a new lawn add one-fourth-inch to three-fourths-inch of compost per 1,000 square feet and incorporate it into the existing soil with a rototiller. Spreading a large volume of material by hand is labor intensive. Professional lawn care companies may have specialized equipment to reduce the labor and, therefore, the cost for top-dressing your lawn. Depending on the type of compost material that is being used, spreading by hand requires placing small piles throughout the yard and then raking it out, so the material is very thin, then using a power backpack blower to further disperse and scatter the compost, which prevents smothering. A consistent and thin application is more difficult with this hand method particularly when the compost is dense or wet.

Applying the compost at any time of year is fine, but prior to or during the fall or spring growing season is preferable. Scheduling your spring and/or fall lawn aeration at the same time as the top-dressing helps to further incorporate the compost into the lawn, improving the effectiveness of your efforts. Beyond basic fertilizing (traditional or organic), the next-best thing you can do for your lawn is to add organic material to improve the soil. You will be rewarded with a greener, healthier and lower-maintenance lawn.

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

Allison Urbanek

In the current economic climate, many homeowners are choosing to fix up their homes, rather than considering a move. Home Repair Resource Center, a nonprofit organization right here in Cleveland Heights, offers a variety of loan and grant programs to help make home repairs more affordable and less of a worry, as these two recent examples demonstrate:

Last winter was very tough on roofs and gutters, with the heavy snow and ice buildup. This spring, a young woman with two small children met with one of our counselors to obtain a loan to fix her roof. She was very worried about taking on an additional loan payment because she was already on a tight budget. She was pleased to find that she could qualify for several grant programs that reduced her payment by half. Furthermore, she was able to fix her eavestrough and still have an affordable monthly payment.

Another gentleman came into center recently with a list of violations from the city inspector. He had been at his job for over 25 years and earned a good income, but because of some credit debt he was unable to get a loan through the bank. He wanted to fix his violations and was delighted to learn that the center offers a special loan program called the Challenge Fund, for people with credit issues. Not only was he able to get financing to fix his violations, he also received free credit counseling to help him get back on track with his budget!

All of the center’s services are offered at no cost so make it your first stop when exploring financing options. For more information call 216-381-6100 or visit www.hrrc.org

Allison Urbanek works for the Home Repair Resource Center.

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HRRC offers financial assistance for home repairs

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Compared to spreading by hand, specialized top-dressing equipment allows for large volumes of organic material to be applied consistently and cost effectively.

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Mental health innovator celebrates 20 year anniversary

Tom Woodworth

When Ray Gonzalez started the nonprofit Planned Lifetime Assistance of Northeast Ohio in 1989, the conventional service model was for individuals needing mental health care to visit a mental health care clinic. PLAN was founded as a grassroots organization, developed by families and staff who wanted something different.

“PLAN’s holistic home-based approach,” Gonzalez says, “provides the tools necessary to allow hundreds of our members [PLAN’s term for clients] living with mental challenges, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression, to achieve enduring emotional and cognitive recovery.”

Gonzalez says that during his 39 years of working with people with disabilities, he became convinced that doing therapy with members in their homes enabled him to see them in their natural environment, understand their daily lifestyle and provide more focused services. PLAN’s service model places high value on the family and includes them whenever possible in the recovery planning, “The family knows the member best,” he said.

In addition to individual psychotherapy and casework services staffed by Licensed Independent Social Workers, PLAN offers a menu of 60 to 70 hours per month of social and recreational activities, operates a National Alliance for Mental Illness award-winning program for members to perform volunteer work for other nonprofits, sponsors a one-of-a-kind anti-stigma public education program, and operates a state-of-the-art psychiatric rehabilitation program called Cognitive Enhancement Therapy.

In the early years, PLAN was a home-based business operating out of Gonzalez’s third floor. He started serving four families and ended the first year with 24 families. Today PLAN serves 134 families from its ultramodern facility. As a long-time Cleveland Heights resident, Gonzalez is proud to claim that the first 20 years of PLAN’s existence and growth was based in his community.

Gonzalez is married to Pam Bertrand, an art therapist, and has two sons, Lucas and Noah.

On Sept. 12, PLAN will mark its 20th anniversary with a gala, “Celebrating the Art of Recovery,” at the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage. Milton and Tamar Maltz will host the event. For more information, go to www.planneohto.org or call 216-321-3611.

Tom Woodworth is a retired advertising and public relations professional and currently volunteers as a business counselor with SCORE.

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Lawn Lad joins Project Green Care to provide free service to military families

Christine McBurney

On a humid Tuesday afternoon in July, Doug Freer, owner of Lawn Lad, and his crew are mowing a client’s lawn, fertilizing, and cleaning up some of the landscaping. It’s a typical day on the job except this University Heights client won’t be paying for her lawn care services.

Freer and his company are enrolled in a program called “Green Care,” an initiative of Project Evergreen, a non-profit organization whose mission is “to preserve and enhance green space in our communities for today and future generations.”

Green Care goes beyond creating tidy lawns. It connects families of service members and women with lawn contractors, like Freer, who agree to provide free lawn care while their spouses are deployed.

Project Evergreen also seeks donations to support this service to the community.

Even in this economy, Freer feels he is doing the right thing. “We’re in business to be in business, to make a profit. But giving back to the community that supports us feels good. Some of my crew live in the Heights and they feel good about helping their neighbors. And I feel strongly about supporting our troops.”

Today’s client, who requested that her identity remain anonymous, is married to a National Guardsman on her second tour of duty in Iraq. Freer believes donating his company’s services is the least he can do. “We put her husband’s mind at ease; he knows he’s shoulders while he’s gone so he can do his second tour of duty in Iraq. Freer and his company are enrolled in a program called “Green Care,” an initiative of Project Evergreen, a non-profit organization whose mission is “to preserve and enhance green space in our communities for today and future generations.”

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Although the Cleveland Heights-University Heights area does not, according to Freer, have a large military population, any support can reach families outside of our area. If you are interested in becoming involved with Green Care you can contact Doug Freer at www.lawnlad.com/ or visit www.projectevergreen.com/gift/

Christine McBurney is the theatre arts department chair at Shaker Heights High School, a performer, writer, and proud Heights High soccer mom.

HCC aims for broader audience in conversations on race and society

Dawn Rucker

Heights Community Congress continues its dialogue series with two upcoming programs focusing on “Re-engaging the American Dream.” These community discussions are part of HCC’s broader series “Perception vs. Reality: How do we talk about race, class and in diversity in our community?”

“Reengaging the American Dream” examines our country’s vision for itself and the different ways in which that vision is defined in the nation’s past, present and future.

The programs, hosted by the Cuyahoga County Public Library, will be held on Thursday, Aug. 20 at the Parma Heights Branch and on Thursday, Aug. 27 at the Brook Park Branch. Both programs begin at 6:30 p.m.

“Reengaging the American Dream” developed in response to an HCC forum held at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in January 2009. The forum focused on differing perspectives of the “American Dream,” and the intersection of race, class, ethnicity and other diversity issues.

For more information about the Heights Community Congress and its upcoming programs, call 216-321-6775, or visit www.heightscongress.org.

Christine McBurney

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Today’s client, who requested that her identity remain anonymous, is married to a National Guardsman on her second tour of duty in Iraq. Freer believes donating his company’s services is the least he can do. “We put her husband’s mind at ease; he knows he’s shoulders while he’s gone so he can do his job more effectively. It’s a minor way to give back for his service.”

Although the Cleveland Heights-University Heights area does not, according to Freer, have a large military population, any support can reach families outside of our area. If you are interested in becoming involved with Green Care you can contact Doug Freer at www.lawnlad.com/ or visit www.projectionevergreen.com/gift/

Christine McBurney is the theatre arts department chair at Shaker Heights High School, a performer, writer, and proud Heights High soccer mom.

HCC aims for broader audience in conversations on race and society

Dawn Rucker

Heights Community Congress continues its dialogue series with two upcoming programs focusing on “Re-engaging the American Dream.” These community discussions are part of HCC’s broader series “Perception vs. Reality: How do we talk about race, class and in diversity in our community?”

“Reengaging the American Dream” examines our country’s vision for itself and the different ways in which that vision is defined in the nation’s past, present and future.

The programs, hosted by the Cuyahoga County Public Library, will be held on Thursday, Aug. 20 at the Parma Heights Branch and on Thursday, Aug. 27 at the Brook Park Branch. Both programs begin at 6:30 p.m.

“Reengaging the American Dream” developed in response to an HCC forum held at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History in January 2009. The forum focused on differing perspectives of the “American Dream,” and the intersection of race, class, ethnicity and other diversity issues.

For more information about the Heights Community Congress and its upcoming programs, call 216-321-6775, or visit www.heightscongress.org.
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