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CH-UH ‘C’ in state report belies gains in new metrics

Sarah Webster

When the annual State Report Card was released to the public in August 2009, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District didn’t make the honor role.

The results were a lot like last year; the district met or exceeded 10 out of 30 academic proficiency standards, receiving the designation of “Continuous Improvement” – the equivalent of a C letter grade.

But among districts classified by the state as “Large-Urban-Poor,” CH-UH schools received the second-highest ranking out of 15. The classification is based on student population – not that of the community.

“I think it’s really important for people to understand this issue,” says Heights PTA co-president Jim Posch. “It’s really not as simple as you would think.”

Also to be considered are specific elements of the community’s diversity. The CH-UH student body includes a high percentage of transient and special-needs students – the fourth-highest in Northeast Ohio. These students’ scores in effect reduce the district’s overall score.

Music Settlement has big plans for green building at Coventry

Angee Shaker

Enthusiasm has started building in the Coventry neighborhood and around the CH-UH City School District as the Music Settlement announced its plans for the reuse of the Coventry Elementary School property.

Under terms of a preliminary agreement with the district, the Music Settlement will purchase the Coventry School site to develop a state-of-the-art early-childhood learning center. The plan calls for investment by the Settlement of nearly \$20 million.

“Our current programs in University Circle are at capacity and we need to expand. After lengthy studies we have found the Coventry site to be the best location for current and future students,” said Charles D. Lawrence, president and CEO of the Music Settlement.

On Oct. 13, Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools, Cleveland Heights Mayor Ed Kelly, and the Music Settlement leadership hosted the first of many community dialogue sessions. During that session, Lawrence said the former Coventry Elementary building will be replaced by a new LEED-Certified (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design) building. “This is about re-energizing a vacant site and contributing to quality of life and identity in Coventry Vil-

Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District
District and Building Report Card Summary

	Report Card Rating	AYP ¹	Value-Added Growth (# years) ²
CH-UH District Overall	Continuous Improvement	Not Met	Below (2)
Bellefaire Academy	Continuous Improvement	Met	--
Boulevard Elementary	Academic Watch	Not Met	Met
Canterbury Elementary	Effective	Not Met	Above (1)
Fairfax Elementary	Continuous Improvement	Not Met	Above (1)
Gearity Elementary	Continuous Improvement	Met	Below (2)
Noble Elementary	Continuous Improvement	Met	Above (1)
Oxford Elementary	Continuous Improvement	Not Met	Met
Roxboro Elementary	Effective	Not Met	Above (1)
Wiley Middle	Academic Emergency	Not Met	Below (3)
Monticello Middle	Academic Watch	Not Met	Below (1)
Roxboro Middle	Continuous Improvement	Not Met	Below (1)
Cleveland Heights High School	Effective	Not Met	--
Small Schools ³			
Legacy	Continuous Improvement	Not Met	--
P.R.I.D.E.	Effective	Met	--
Mosaic	Effective	Met	--
R.E.A.L.	Effective	Met	--
Renaissance	Excellent	Not Met	--

¹ Adequate Yearly Progress is the federal measure used to determine building and district improvement status. In order to “meet” AYP, a district or building must reach a specified objective (percent proficient) for ALL rated subgroups.

While district officials want people to understand these nuances, they also express concern for the entire student body.

“We are committed to a vision of continued growth and excellence for all students,” emphasizes Assistant Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack.

“Therefore we are not satisfied with the rate of progress. The standards are set to increase next year. We can and will improve!”

Also relevant are so-called Value-Added figures, which, according to *continued on page 3*

Jump start holiday shopping at ‘Shop Around the Heights’ Nov. 21

Sarah Nunney, Virginia Rivera and Katie Stevenson

“We want everyone to think globally and shop locally to support the local economy this holiday season,” says Deanna Bremer Fisher. The executive director of FutureHeights is talking about Shop Around the Heights, a holiday shopping extravaganza presented by her organiza-

tion, so that Heights residents can take advantage of shopping where they live.

Consumers can pick up a passport and shopping bag at one of several starting locations on Nov. 21 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Locations include the Brew N Bistro at Fairmount Circle, Macs Backs in Coventry Village, BOOM Modern and Heights Arts Gallery in the Cedar-Lee area and Quintana’s Barber and Dream *continued on page 4*

Observer hosts photo workshop

Basic photo techniques for print and Web

Heights Observer Staff

The *Heights Observer* will hold a Photography Workshop Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m. in Room A of the Lee Road Library, 2345 Lee Road. It’s the third in a series of workshops for people interested in volunteering for the *Heights Observer* or any other citizen journalism project.

The workshop will be taught by Greg Donley. From his college days as photo editor of the *Oberlin Review*, to designing the Cleveland Museum of Art’s glossy color magazine, to working with the *Heights Observer*, Donley has worked with images created in just about every photographic medium, and has attempted to print them on just about every kind of paper.

This workshop begins by answering basic technical questions: What is the relationship between the resolution of a digital image and the size at which that image can be printed? How many times can I re-save a JPEG file before it turns into pixel pie? What the heck is “dot gain” and why should I care? How come the printed photo doesn’t look anything like what I saw when I took the picture? What kind of camera do I need to shoot pictures for the *Heights Observer* and how should I set the camera?

After that, the fun part: What makes a great journalistic photograph?

The workshop is free, but reservations are recommended. To make reservations, call FutureHeights at 216-320-1423. You can also sign up on Facebook.com, in the “events” box of the “FutureHeights” group.

Greg Donley is a longtime Cleveland

HEIGHTS OBSERVER

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Taking charge of our community with local currency

Greg Coleridge

“Money is like an iron ring we’ve put through our noses. We’ve forgotten that we designed it, and it’s now leading us around. I think it’s time to figure out where we want to go -- in my opinion toward sustainability and community -- and then design a money system that gets us there.”

– Bernard Lietaer in Beyond Greed and Scarcity

Cleveland Heights and University Heights are wonderful places to live. We possess tremendous physical and human assets and diversity. But an increasing number of residents and community-based businesses are hurting due, among other factors, to the current financial crisis. The worst may still not be over with more homeowners, businesses and banks facing loans that can’t be repaid.

Our state and federal tax dollars are going to the wrong places while many banks still refuse to increase lending after receiving billions of federal bailout dollars.

While the need to organize for more sane and humane federal budget priorities and fundamental change to our monetary and financial systems is urgent, so is developing ways to support ourselves and our communities. This should be done now, where we live, building on the assets we already possess.

A local or community currency is one way.

During the Great Depression, when credit was tight and too few dollars were available for trading for essential goods

and services, municipalities across the nation legally printed and circulated their own money. Among them were University Heights, Shaker Heights and 30 other Ohio cities, towns and villages. Money was reinvented to meet local needs.

Throughout history, money has been whatever people accept it to be – from tobacco, hides, gold, and silver to non-precious metals, sticks, and paper.

It’s time to reinvent money again – but this time to expand it locally to connect businesses and residents who are rich in available services, goods, skills and time but dollar poor. The mere absence of national dollars should not prevent local transactions from happening.

A local currency is money printed, circulated, and accepted by people within a designated community. It has boundaries and roots that communities can control. This differs from a dollar that can be in Cleveland Heights today and China tomorrow or in University Heights today and Uzbekistan tomorrow. Local currency is meant to be constantly circulating – not hoarded, gaining interest, or speculated. It’s backed by goods and services offered by participating individuals and businesses.

There are many economic advantages of using community currencies. They supplement the amount of scarce official money, enabling local businesses to sell more of their goods and services and consumers to buy them. They increase the ability of local businesses to compete with large corporate chains since only local businesses accept

them. They result in greater income, which protects jobs and reduces the need to borrow from banks and to use credit cards – thereby diminishing the risk of default. Finally, they serve as a partial “safe harbor,” a local economic breakwall to the national manipulation of interest rates and money supply.

Community currencies exist legally in more than 35 countries, local exchange programs number more than 4000 worldwide. Two of the most successful systems in the US are in Ithaca NY (www.ithacahours.com) and the Berkshire region of Western Massachusetts (www.berkshares.org), involving hundreds of businesses and community organizations and thousands of people who are circulating more than 1 million dollars worth of local money.

It’s time we take charge of creating and circulating our own money – interest free, democratically allocated, self-adjusting, stable and sustainable – that serves our needs.

FutureHeights would like to know what you think about the idea of creating a local currency. Respond to the Daily Question at www.heightsobserver.org. If you are interested to meet with other residents to explore this concept, send your name and phone number or e-mail address to info@futureheights.org or call 216-320-1423.

Greg Coleridge is director of the Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee and a Cleveland Heights resident.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Colorful knitting project is misplaced

Let me see if I’ve got this straight: The knitting of blue, yellow and pink booties and underwear for parking meters and tree trunks is going to give the great city of Cleveland Heights a sense of “community”?

Wouldn’t it have been more helpful for the project artists to have knitted sweaters and socks for actual people? Like those who might not be able to afford such things in tough economic times?

Of all the silly, misplaced notions of community “togetherness” this one takes the cake. The project is telling us that trees, in and of themselves, are not perfect or beautiful. That what they need is crocheting--diapers, as it were, for their trunks.

I see those diapers and doilies and, right away, the problems of the Heights schools, home burglaries and decreasing home values fly right out of mind.

You want to knit a real story? Try this one: how careless bookkeeping and a cavalier attitude on the part of Heights High school officials could destroy what started out to be Heights High’s most successful football season in many a moon.

I would think that a Heights High team making the state football playoffs – for the first time ever – just might unify a community a bit more than silly stockings and underwear on parking meters and tree trunks.

Doug Clarke
Cleveland Heights

University Heights finances are on track

Upon reading Councilman Sims’ letter in the online version of the *Heights Observer*, I would like to reply that if he refers back to the Council Minutes of Sept. 8, 2009, his Finance Committee report stated: “...There was a brief update from the Finance Director, in which he reported that the City is on track with revenue collection and is holding the line on expenditures. He does not foresee any real budgetary problems...”

If that is true, how can Mr. Sims state that our city needs to reverse deficits and negative financial trends? University Heights has been and is fiscally responsible and is fortunate not to have the problems of some surrounding cities.

Adele H. Zucker, Vice Mayor
City of University Heights

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Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2009
Council Member Bonnie Caplan excused.

Gas aggregation supply agreement amended

An amendment of the city's gas aggregation supply agreement with Intergrys Energy Services was approved to reduce the "adder" and guarantee that the Variable Price Program rate will be at least ten cents less than the Dominion East Ohio-Energy Choice Program. Council Member Kenneth Montlack thanked Law Director John Gibbon for his work in negotiating this change to be in effect from November 2009 through October 2010.

Tree lawn trash penalized

An amended version of an ordinance enacting civil monetary penalties for violation of the city code specifying when trash may be put out on tree lawns was passed with one "no" vote. Council Member Montlack voted no because he believed that landlords who in good faith made sure their tenants were aware of the law should not be fined. Other citizens were concerned about being cited if someone else put trash on their tree lawns. Council members noted that this is a quality of life issue for residents. It is not meant to raise money but to change behavior and to encourage residents to be more accountable.

'Health point of dispensing' at Community Center

Council authorized the city manager to enter into an agreement with Cuyahoga County Board of Health to use the Community Center as a point of dispensing for mass clinics to conduct disease prevention and control activities.

UH training at Coventry School

Coventry School will be used by University

Hospitals as a computer training center from January to June 2010. This use will not interfere with the planned use of the building by the Music Settlement.

Favorable FBI report

According to the FBI, Cleveland Heights is one of the safest cities in its size category, reported Mayor Ed Kelley.

Indoor swimming pool

Mayor Kelley noted that several options were being explored to give city residents access to an indoor swimming pool, possibly the indoor pool at the high school.

LWV observers: Lisa Peters and Katherine Solender.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2009

All council members present.

Bids and a public auction

Council authorized City Manager Robert Downey to advertise for bids for the purchase of fire hydrants, a solid waste disposal contract and a public auction for the disposal of obsolete city equipment and vehicles.

Stimulus funds for demolition

The city manager reported the use of stimulus funds to pay for the demolition of the house at 3655 Randolph Road and the purchase of the property at 3228-30 Sycamore Road, also to be demolished.

HOME Program contract extended

Council amended an agreement with the Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners for funding through the Cuyahoga Housing Consortiums' HOME Program for the city's Deferred and No-Interest Loan Programs. The amendment extends the contract through December 31, 2010.

Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Study to be updated

An agreement was approved with Mull & Lonergan Associates for an updated Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Study, which is required every five years by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a condition of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, which will pay for the study. Council Member Kenneth Montlack later offered some thoughts about ways impediments to fair housing could be addressed, such as "exclusionary" suburbs and exurbs becoming more integrated with more affordable housing or the state adequately funding education.

Targeted traffic enforcement grant

The city will enter into an agreement with the Ohio Department of Public Safety to participate in the High Visibility Enforcement Grant Program, which will provide targeted law enforcement to decrease the number of traffic accidents and increase the wearing of seatbelts. A grant of \$41,485.99, distributed through University Hospitals, will enable the city to pay overtime to police officers who will enforce seatbelt, DUI and speeding laws at six intersections throughout the city.

Arts grant accepted

Council accepted a grant of \$25,749 from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture to support the Cain Park Arts Festival.

CDBG application, plan

Council approved submission of the city's CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) entitlement application for 2010 and the city's five-year CDBG plan for the years 2010-2014. The target amount for this year is \$1,757,000 to be divided among administrative, public

service, housing, and economic development activities. The application closely reflects the recommendations of the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), which meets with all the prospective recipients of CDBG funds and then makes recommendations that meet federal guidelines.

Leaf pick-up

Leaves will be picked up from tree lawns Nov. 2 through Dec. 4. Before and after this period, leaves will be collected only when placed in paper bags.

LWV observer: Katherine Solender.

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

These meeting summaries are abstracted from LWV observers' written reports. The summaries have been edited and prepared by Anne McFarland, Marilyn McLaughlin and Maryann Barnes. To receive e-mail postings of full reports, send an email to mbarnes9515@gmail.com or join through google groups using "lwv-chuh observer reports" as a search phrase.

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

CHUH State Results continued from page 1

Communications Coordinator Angee Shaker, are a new measure of progress rather than performance. "In the past, students and schools have been ranked solely according to achievement," says Shaker. "The problem with this method is that achievement is highly linked to the socioeconomic status of a student's family."

"We're dealing with a student body that has seen its poverty rate double in the past 20 years," notes Joy Henderson, assistant director of Reaching Heights. "That means we are consistently facing an uphill battle."

So at what rate is the district progressing?

"This year's state test scores show steady progress and remaining challenges," said Shaker. "There are a lot of bright spots. Canterbury and Roxboro elementary schools and Cleveland Heights High School were again rated Effective, which is the state's second-highest rating."

Shaker also notes that six out of seven elementary schools have met or exceeded Value-Added growth measures; two elementary schools met the AYP (adequate yearly progress) standard in all areas; and African-Americans in the CH-UH district continue to outpace state averages in progress.

Last May, Heights High had a graduation rate of 92 percent, which is considered impressive for a school district with such demographics. Graduating seniors accumulated more than \$8 million in scholarships.

Despite this good news, the administration is focused on the shortcomings.

"Our team has an overall plan for improvement in place, designed specifically for teachers and students in lower

performing buildings," says Shaker. "New programs like Instructional Rounds, the Infinite Campus system, and a reworked elementary math and science curriculum will show results."

Administrative staff is being re-

Six out of seven elementary schools have met or exceeded Value-Added growth measures.

structured to focus on the priority issues as well. But even that won't be enough, according to Fowler-Mack: "Our schools need the unwavering support and involvement of our community," she says. "If time is an issue, simply communicating to our young people through words that convey our confidence in their po-

tential, and/or words of encouragement to give his/her best, would add value to the efforts of the system."

"Community members can help by volunteering with the Many Villages Tutoring Program," says Reaching Heights' Henderson. "Because having strong after-school support is often crucial to a student's achievement in the classroom."

"Cleveland Heights and University Heights are tremendous communities with great aspiration for the future," says Fowler-Mack. "The schools understand [their] role in this vision and welcome those who desire to partner with us."

Find the list of 15 "large-urban poor" districts and other information at www.heightsobserver.org/read/

Sarah Webster is a Heights alumna and a recent graduate of Kent State University with a degree in journalism.

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University Heights City Council Meeting highlights



MONDAY, SEPT. 21, 2009
Council member Steven D. Bullock excused.

Removal of debris

Linda Johnson of Ashurst Road asked for the city's plan to remove debris after the planned demolition of a house in her neighborhood, and for notification to neighbors before the demolition is scheduled to occur. Although such notification is not normally done, the council agreed to honor the request. Johnson also advocated the development of an ongoing way of engaging residents in neighborhood revitalization.

Committee of the Whole meeting

Mayor Rothschild reported her plans to schedule a Committee of the Whole meeting to consider the rubbish report presented Sept. 18. She also announced completion of the exception study.

Report from the superintendent of schools

Superintendent Douglas Heuer reported that 94 percent of the 2009 Heights High class graduated. Other student achievements included four National Merit semifinalists and \$8 million awarded in scholarships. Also, five Heights High students, plus two alternates, were chosen for the Ohio State Choir.

To be fiscally responsible, the district has cut \$2.4 million from its budget, aggressively sought and removed students who are not legal residents, and implemented a thorough

study of facilities with the goal of developing a ten-year plan for improvement and maintenance.

Compensation for the mayor and council

Council approved compensation of \$43,750 for the mayor for the term beginning Jan. 1, 2010 and ending Dec. 31, 2013.

Council approved compensation for council members for the term beginning Jan. 1, 2010 at \$8,700 and \$8,900 for years 2011-2013.

Storage and towing

Council approved two ordinances increasing storage and towing charges, one for private tow-away zones and the second for all other areas.

Firemen's pension fund

Council authorized the transfer of money from the general fund to the firemen's pension fund.

Workers Compensation Group Rating Program

Council authorized participation in the Ohio Association of Public Treasurers Workers Compensation Group Rating Program recommended by Finance Director Anthony Ianiro. Ianiro explained that the city saves \$44,000 in premium payments through this plan.

LWV observer: Carol Gibson.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2009
Councilman Kevin Patrick Murphy excused

Lack of African-American firefighters

Stanley Bagley of Traymore asked the council why there has not been a single African-American firefighter over the last 40 years during which he has been a resident, and when would there be some. He asked council to set a time limit for this to occur.

In response, Mayor Rothschild noted that this was a civil service issue, and the next exam would be in about two years. Currently, there is a list of qualified applicants to draw from. All applicants must already have a paramedic degree. Law Director Ken Fisher promised to examine the city's rulings to see what affirmative action rulings have been recorded.

Council member Steven Sims stated that the Mayor had asked him two years ago to try to bring in qualified African-American individuals for job openings, but that nobody has been hired in that time. Sims also said he had previously worked with the Urban League and promised to continue to follow-up with Bagley. Bagley said he knew of one man who was eligible. He also said that he had ties to a clergy group that was addressing issues of employment and discrimination, which would help locate candidates.

Patrol car video system

Council approved the purchase, through the State Purchasing Program, of an in-car patrol vehicle video system with wireless server. The federal stimulus grant money would pay the \$55,000 cost. The city departments came

together to decide their most pressing needs and received \$100,000 to upgrade safety forces. The money, kept in a separate interest-bearing account, must be spent in full by a given date. Police Chief Gary Stehlik has and continues to evaluate what upgrades are needed but would be too expensive for the city's budget.

Jail video surveillance system

Council approved advertising for bids for a police station and jail video surveillance system. Stehlik would like to use the remaining \$45,000 of the stimulus money for this, but bids are needed since this option isn't available in the State Purchasing Program. The current system of a hodge-podge of equipment was created 18 years ago. Since the city continues to house prisoners, the new equipment would provide visual surveillance of the prisoners, the door, and public areas.

LWV observer: Wendy Deuring.

Space restrictions sometimes require

the deletion of some proceedings. For more complete summaries view online postings at www.heightsobserver.org.

See disclaimer on page 3.

Music settlement continued from page 1

lage," Lawrence said.

CH-UH Superintendent Douglas Heuer is enthusiastic about the project. "This is an opportunity to ensure that the site of the former Coventry Elementary School continues to serve the community as a place of educational opportunities, in line with its original mission. The Music Settlement will offer new and exciting programs for our students, and all of our community's students. We look forward to a successful ongoing partnership that benefits our students and the community."

The Music Settlement is gathering community input and expects to have an architectural design completed in Spring 2010. Maureen Ischay, director of development for the Music Settlement, said the goal is for the facility to be operational by August 2013.

The next community forum is planned for January 2010. Details about location and time will be forthcoming, but you can e-mail questions or comments about the project to Maureen Ischay at mischay@themusicsettlement.org.

Angee Shaker is coordinator of communications and community engagement for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

"This is about re-energizing a vacant site and contributing to quality of life and identity in Coventry Village," Lawrence said.

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I Buy NEO Program offers incentive to shop local

Heights Observer Staff

FutureHeights has formed a partnership with the Council for Smaller Enterprises (COSE) to encourage consumers and business owners to support locally owned businesses and keep dollars within the Heights community. FutureHeights has promoted shopping at local businesses through its Heights Shops program since 2003.

"One-of-a-kind independent businesses are what give the Heights its unique character," says Deanna Bremer Fisher, executive director of FutureHeights. "Research shows that for every \$100 spent at a locally owned business, \$45 goes back into the community, strengthening the tax base. For every \$100 spent at a chain store, only \$14 comes back. And, nonprofits receive an average of 350% more support from local business owners than they do from non-locally owned businesses."

The I Buy NEO Program consists of a Web site that lists participating businesses and a community loyalty card that rewards customers for shopping locally. Businesses set their own rebate amounts. Consumers purchase a card for \$10. Then, each time a cardholder makes a purchase from a participating business, the cardholder and up to four nonprofits or schools of the cardholder's choice receives a cash back rebate.

While the I Buy NEO Program is available throughout Northeast Ohio, FutureHeights is distributing a uniquely branded Heights Shops I Buy NEO card. The organization plans to give the cards away at their Shop Around the Heights event on Nov. 1.

To purchase a Heights Shops I Buy NEO card visit www.ibuyneo.com and specify FutureHeights as your primary beneficiary. For more information, call FutureHeights at 216-320-1423.

Holiday shopping continued from page 1

Spa in the Cedar-Taylor district.

The passport will help guide consumers as they travel through the Heights to discover the area's many unique retail shops. Retailers will have special promotions and treats for holiday shoppers and consumers can have their passports "stamped" along the way.

Consumers can turn in their passports from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Shop Around the Heights celebration in the Heights Rockefeller Building, 3099 Mayfield Road. Local merchants have donated prizes for a raffle, and the more "stamps" a passport contains, the more

tickets a consumer can fill out. No purchase is necessary.

Sponsors for the event include the Cedar Fairmount SID, Cedar Lee SID, City of Cleveland Heights, Council for Smaller Enterprises, Coventry Village SID, Great Lakes Independent Booksellers Association, Genie Repros, Inc. and Heights Rockefeller Building.

Sarah Nunney, Virginia Rivera and Katie Stevenson are senior marketing students at John Carroll University.

CH-UH Public Library Board

Meeting highlights

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2009
All board members present.

Tax budget and state funding

In June the school board approved the 2010 Alternative Tax Budget provided by the library. Fiscal Officer Mollie Riffle will present a five-year financial forecast at the November meeting. Board Member Glenn Billington called attention to the Ohio Supreme Court ruling that put slot machines on hold, which will affect the state budget. The September Public Library Fund (state support) was down 21.5 percent.

Activity Center

The board accepted Studio Techne's plans and a projected budget figure of \$1,249,968.73 for the reconfiguration of the Activity Center. The board authorized the director to hire an outside consultant to conduct a feasibility study for a capital campaign.

Exterior panels peeling

The colored panels on the exterior walls have been peeling off a layer of clear coating for over a year. The cost of replacing the panels is covered by the manufacturer's warranty.



Personnel and payroll costs

Holding part-time employees to 16 hours per week has reduced payroll costs. However, costs will rise because branches reopened on Sundays beginning Sept. 13. An ad in the Sun Press for a guard position garnered over 50 applications.

Acquisitions and local authors criteria

The board received copies of the revisions to the Materials Evaluation and Selection Policy. One change will expand the local authors criteria to include regional authors. This policy is posted on the library's website. There has been only one challenge to the policy in the last year.

Library endowment fund

The board authorized the director to establish an endowment fund for the library through the Cleveland Foundation, which would manage the fund. The minimum for such a fund is \$10,000. The endowment will comprise donations from library supporters and include no public money.

Noble Library flood

On Sept. 8 a storm sewer backed up and flooded the Noble Library. The library's new disaster plan was effective, and Noble staff and Buildings Department staff responded immediately to remove wet carpet. Most of the damage will be covered by insurance.

Public library merger

The Plain Dealer has been working on an article about merging public library systems and is said to favor merger. Former director Steve Wood had prepared a document outlining the benefits of the independent status for the Heights Library. Board Member Jim Posch recommended using that as a basis for preparing the library's response, if required.

LWV observer: Anne S. McFarland.

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

See disclaimer on page 3.

Food for Fines at Heights Libraries

Tonya Gibson

Beginning Nov. 2, library patrons will be able to wipe away overdue library fines at any of the Heights Libraries by donating nonperishable food items such as canned and boxed goods.

For every nonperishable food item brought in, the library will take \$1 off of a patron's fines. Donations will be accepted until Nov. 21 at all four of the libraries and given to the Heights Emergency Food Bank.

The library brought the Food for Fines Program back after an overwhelming response to last year's program.

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

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Children's Programs at the Lee Road Library

Constance Dickerson

Don't miss these exciting children's programs at the Lee Road Library:

No Registration for Storytimes

It's easier than ever to attend storytimes at the library. Just drop in. There is no registration for any storytimes at Heights Libraries beginning this fall. So if your little one sleeps through the Thursday Waddlers program at Lee Road Library, you can attend the Friday program at the University Heights branch.

Family storytimes for all ages run through the end of November. Board the train for Story Stops on Mondays at 11:30 a.m. at Lee Road Library, Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at Coventry, or Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. at University Heights. If it's a wild rumpus you're after, then let the Reading Rumpus begin every Friday

at 10:30 a.m. at Noble Library. If you're not afraid to roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty, then Explorstory is the program for you and your two-to-five year old on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. at Lee Road Library and on Fridays at 10 a.m. at Coventry. Check www.heightslibrary.org for more information on times, locations, and age ranges. Don't be afraid to just drop in.

GASP! After School

The Great After School Program (GASP!) takes place every day after school at the Lee Road Library. Join us Monday through Thursday from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. for Games, Art, Surprises, and Performances or Play. Kids can visit Mexico, get puzzled, or howl at the moon with a new theme each week. Participants will earn letters for each session they attend. When they collect all of the letters to spell the word

"GASP," they will receive a coupon for a tasty snack.

Hands-On Art Series

Our partners in the arts are never far from our hearts. The library is proud to announce our Hands-On Art Series with Cleveland Art Glass on Wednesday, Oct. 14 at 7 p.m. at the Lee Road Library. Children will create "fusion tiles." Classes are free and intended for children in grades K-3. Seating is limited, so register online at www.heightslibrary.org or by phone at 216.932.3600.

Constance Dickerson is the Children's Services Coordinator for CHUH Libraries.

**Library annual report
is online from last month.**

Lee Road Library Hosts 10th Annual Poetry Slam

Tonya Gibson

The Lee Road Library plans to host its 10th Annual Poetry Slam on at 6 p.m. on Nov. 12.

A poetry slam is a lyrical boxing match that pits poet against poet in the spirit of fun and creativity. At the Lee Road Library, members of the community are invited to see middle and high school students "spit" their rhymes.

The Poetry Slam is judged and prizes are awarded for first, second and third place winners. Every poet who participates will receive a journal and every person who attends will receive a chipotle gift card.

Poets interested in reciting their original works in the competition can register by calling the Lee Road Library: 216-932-3600.

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



Coventry librarian Henry Drak prepares for the poetry slam.



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CH-UH Board of Education Meeting highlights



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2009

All board members present.

Renhill Temporary Staffing Services

Rachel Wixey of Renhill Temporary Staffing Services from Toledo, Ohio, presented her company's full service program that would include the recruitment and hiring of educational aides and teacher substitutes. The service would handle all paper work, calling, and payment. Renhill would retain current certified substitutes already in the system. She presented a cost effective program that could be set up in three to four weeks time. The board decided to consider this proposal after more data was collected.

House Bill 1

This work session examined budget concerns with state funding. House Bill 1 included the annual budget allocation to schools and met the constitutionality of the Ohio Supreme Court, where 59 percent of a school's budget would come from the state and 41 percent from the local district. It is part of the education reform package with national and international standards.

The CH-UH City School District will see a one percent reduction in state funds in 2010. A new funding formula is based on funding units instead of student numbers. The districts must submit plans for spending state dollars, which may come with more state level controls. The state also caps teachers' salaries at \$57,000 in the funding units, which would limit state allocations for salaries above this amount.

The board was concerned that House Bill 1's affect on the district's budget might require further reductions. The district has already cut \$2,000,000 from the budget.

LWV observer: Lillian Houser.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2009

All board members present.

Early local partnership program

Jeffery Tuckerman of the Ohio School Facilities Commission explained how the board could apply for the Early Local Partnership Program from the state. The state would conduct a facility assessment of all buildings free of charge. If the board decided to remodel or build new

buildings, they could get a partial reimbursement from the state.

Renhill contract for substitute teachers

Substitute teachers in attendance had many questions about the Renhill contract. Rachel Wixey from Renhill replied to their concerns and said that procedures would be tailored to the district and that salaries would be the same. The board approved the contract with the stipulation that it could be terminated with 30 days notice if there was a problem.

Field trips

The board approved field trips for Gearity fourth and fifth grade students, the high school basketball teams and middle school French classes.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

The board approved an ARRA grant application to the Ohio Department of Education for \$3,264,494.82.

Small schools

Superintendent Douglas Heuer reported that the district had looked at the state report card for each of the small schools at Heights High. It found that Renaissance School qualified for an Excellent rating, Legacy School was rated Continuous Improvement and the other schools were rated Effective.

Rentals at Coventry School

Stephen Shergalis, director of business services, reported that University Hospitals would rent 12 classrooms at the former Coventry School from January to June. This is in the agreement with the Music Settlement. A forum to discuss the Music Settlement's use of Coventry would be held at Coventry on Oct. 13 at 6:30 p.m.

LWV observer: Adele Cohn.

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

See disclaimer on page 3.

CH-UH soccer coach recognized by Cleveland Scene

Angee Shaker

Congratulations to Sean Sullivan on being named Best Soccer Sensei by Cleveland Scene magazine. Sullivan, a fifth-grade teacher at Oxford Elementary, has been sharing his lifelong passion for soccer for over a decade.

He is the head coach of men's varsity soccer at Heights High and also owner of the Heights United Soccer Academy. Sullivan has inspired countless kids to play and love the game, and he's currently bringing soccer moms onto the field with a program designed just for them. Way to go, Sensei Sullivan!



Coach Sean Sullivan connects with kids through soccer.

Angee Shaker is the coordinator of communications and community engagement for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District.

Discover your CH-UH elementary school Nov. 13

Angee Shaker

Kindernet invites preschool families to visit kindergarten teachers and classrooms, meet the principal, tour the building, and learn more about their neighborhood school. All elementary schools are open Friday, Nov. 13 from 10 to 11:15 a.m.

Kindernet is a joint project of the PTA, CH-UH Early Childhood Department, the Cities of Cleveland Heights and University Heights, Reaching Heights and the Heights Parent Center. Kindernet offers free programs and

events for preschool children living in the CH-UH City School District.

While the children enjoy themselves, adults have the opportunity to connect with other families, exchange ideas and learn about community resources and their local elementary schools from the inside.

If you would like to be placed on the Kindernet mailing list and receive pertinent information, particularly about Kindergarten, please call the Department of Early Childhood at 216-371-7356.

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Harvard professors bring “medical rounds” model to the classroom

Angee Shaker

At teaching hospitals, doctors have long been in the practice of circulating through the hospital and reviewing each other's cases, discussing best practices, collaborating on challenges, and constantly searching for the best techniques. Now that same technique is helping teachers and administrators at the Cleveland Heights - University Heights City School District improve classroom education.

On Oct. 8, two Harvard University professors who helped develop the Instructional Rounds model met with a select group of CH-UH teachers and

administrators to begin training them in the process. This group is now spreading the model throughout the schools and is training other teachers and administrators in its practice.

“We believe that this collaborative and evidence-based process seamlessly aligns with our District's efforts to continuously improve teaching and learning,” Assistant Superintendent Christine Fowler-Mack said. “To date, the process has also been helpful in strengthening our understanding of effective support and working relationships.”

Dr. Liz City and Dr. Richard Elmore are Harvard's lead facilitators for the Instructional Rounds in Education

program. In a paper published by the Harvard Graduate School of Education they wrote, “Our goal in doing instructional rounds work is to help schools and districts develop effective and powerful teaching and learning on a large scale. People often ask us, ‘Will doing rounds lead to an increase in student learning? Will it raise test scores?’ The short answer is: by itself, no. Although the rounds process is not a silver bullet that will single-handedly lead to better test scores or increased learning for students, it is a powerful accelerant of school and district improvement efforts. Its focus on what goes on in classrooms anchors improvement efforts in the instructional



District administrators begin training in the new Instructional Rounds model to classroom instruction. Photo:

core—the complex relationships among teachers, students, and content.”

CH-UH Middle School Students Receive New Laptops

Angee Shaker

Fifteen hundred Cleveland Heights-University Heights middle school students received Apple laptop computers in October and local high school students will be receiving laptops over the next two years. The laptops are part of the district's Teaching and Learning with Technology initiative which provides laptops and a digital wireless learning environment to all 3,600 students in grades 6-12 in an effort to open new opportunities for both students and teachers.

Monticello Middle School served as the pilot site last year. Students are responsible for the proper care of their laptop during the school year and will be assigned the same laptop each year when school begins. Graduating seniors will have the option to buy their laptop for one dollar.

The vision of the Cleveland Heights - University Heights City School District is to Prepare All Students for Success in A Global Economy (P.A.S.S.A.G.E.). The Teaching and Learning with Technology initiative was instituted to further this vision and help prepare students for their future, a world of digital technology, global information, and instant communication.

State funds required to be used to purchase curriculum materials are being reallocated to finance the leasing of the laptops. In addition, Federal E-Rate dol-



Wiley Middle School students receive new Apple laptops.

lars provided to the District are being used to add wireless capability at each Middle School. Increasing access to technology is essential for the future, and laptops, within a wireless learning environment, help students to learn at their full potential and to prepare for college and the workplace.

Dependent upon the lesson, teachers may utilize the instant access to videos, tutorials, news databases, and other curriculum materials. Web-based learning has become a way of life in college classes, and our students will become comfortable and confident in this area prior to even entering college.

CH-UH principal changes places with Argentine counterpart

Angee Shaker

As part of a continuing effort to draw on knowledge and experience from across the globe, the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District is participating in an unusual exchange program this year. The program will bring a principal from Argentina here and send a Monticello Middle School principal to Buenos Aires. The principal exchange will provide the opportunity to work collaboratively with administrators, teachers and students from different cultures and varying perspectives.

Monticello Middle School Assistant Principal Brian Williams is hosting Principal Cecilia Abellan from I.P.E.M., a school in Argentina, from Oct. 19 to Nov. 5. Abellan will shadow Williams, observe the policies and practices of our district, and share experiences from her school. In June 2010, Williams will travel to Buenos Aires to work with Abellan at I.P.E.M.

“I look forward to the opportunity to share and gain valuable knowledge in the area of effective instructional strategies as I engage in professional

dialogue with international counterparts,” said A. P. Brian Williams. “The exchange will provide the opportunity to learn about global issues while participating in joint projects and school partnerships. It gives us the chance to conduct presentations about the United States educational system before diverse

The exchange will provide the opportunity to learn about global issues while participating in joint projects.

audiences in Argentina. I anticipate that the Argentina Principal Exchange Program will be a vehicle for promoting and sustaining mutual understanding, genuine respect and a shared appreciation between our two countries.”



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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 so many parents! If you have questions you would like Ellen to respond to in this column, please e-mail her at ebarrett@heightsparent-center.org.

Q. My 14 month old is so busy these days! With his new walking skills and curious temperament he's a little tornado and I'm having trouble keeping up with him (and his mess!) It can get very frustrating to have to keep running after him and picking things up over and over again and it seems he is most interested in all of the things in the house that he can't have (outlets, electrical cords, etc.). Help!

A. Yes, those little guys do keep us on our toes now that they are walking around. But you can make your environment less stressful for you. First make sure that your house is toddler proofed. Things that truly are dangerous should be removed where possible. Then, find one area of your house where you can be assured that your little one is safe. That may be just one room, a playpen/port-a-crib or even your child's crib. Having a worry-free space allows you to answer the phone, switch the laundry or just go to the bathroom!

You can also add things to make a "toddler-friendly" space. Put children's books on low shelves, a few favorite toys in baskets and add child-sized furniture like a bean bag chair or small table and chairs. This will create an attractive area where your toddler will be free to do whatever he wants. And you will feel less like you need to follow him around and change or stop his behavior.

Even so, your day will be filled with times when you can't "fix" the space where your toddler plays. Try to re-direct and distract as much as possible. Using the word "no" and telling your son what not to do is less effective than telling him what to do. Instead of "don't touch that!" try "here, hold this (ball, block, cup, book)." Instead of "no, don't go up the stairs," try rolling a ball across the floor to encourage another action instead. Take advantage of his unending energy and curiosity by introducing new sights, sounds, songs and games.

Although it can be exhausting to repeat these strategies over and over, all day long, remember that your goal (in addition to keeping your toddler safe) is to help him to learn, in the most positive way, how to negotiate the world. He won't have the ability to self-monitor or control his impulses for quite awhile, so that's your job, for now. And remember, for better or worse, this too shall pass!

Fairmount Coop Preschool



The Pre-K Class of Fairmount Cooperative Preschool enjoys a beautiful fall day at Forest Hill Park. Beverly Dobrea teaches the four-day-a-week Pre-K class and field trips are a favorite way to enrich the curriculum.

CHRISTINA HIDEK

Saint Ann alumnae reads her latest book



LAURIE CREAMER

Tiffany Ann Laufer (Saint Ann School class of '87) reads her latest book, *The Porch Dream*, to an eager group of Saint Ann School Kindergartners (Class of '18). Laufer, who is both an author and filmmaker in Cleveland Heights, was invited by the class as part of its Secret Reader Program. The class was the first group of children to hear Laufer's new story. For more information about *The Porch Dream* or any of Laufer's other children's books, log on to www.bellabookbooks.com.



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I Come with Empty Hands

Heights Observer Staff

"I come to you with empty hands, I have not weapons, but should I be forced to defend myself, my principles or my honor, should it be a matter of life or death or right or wrong, then here are my weapons, karate, my empty hands."

These words appear on one of the many Hall of Fame plaques earned by Grandmaster Joel Dvorin, owner of Unified Martial Arts Academy on Lee Road in Cleveland Hts.

Unified Martial Arts teaches a combination of Tae Kwon Do, Kempo, and Judo, with students ranging in age from 5 to over 50. Grandmaster Dvorin has Black Belts in Tae Kwon Do and Kempo and an overall rank of 9th Dan Black Belt, with over 50 years in the arts. The other main instructors are Melissa Dvorin, a 3rd Dan Black Belt with over 20 years in the arts, and Master Harvey Fierman, a 5th Dan Black Belt in Judo with over 40 years. The academy teaches all three different styles because each concentrates on a specific discipline: Tae Kwon Do is made up with 60-70 percent of leg and foot techniques, Kempo is over 60 percent hand and arm techniques, and Judo consist of throws, takedowns, chocks, locks, falling and rolls. Since these forms complement each other, the academy can teach self defense reachable within in a short period of time (even though it takes years to become a Black Belt).

Levels of knowledge are indicated by belt ranking: from White Belt (Beginner) to Black Belt, there are 10 colored belts and 10 Black Belts each are reached by showing knowledge of the basic techniques for that belt racking, self defense techniques, breaking and katas (pre-arranged forms). Students can also learn how to use weapons such as the bow, sai, kama, and sword. The academy does not advocate fighting, but teaches students "streetwise martial arts" should a student find him or herself in a dangerous situation.

The biggest challenge in the martial arts for young people [ages 5-18] is that it takes dedication from not only the student but from the parents who have to make sure that the students can get to class. Therefore Unified Martial Arts offers many classes outside business hours. An additional class, combat Hapkido (self defense) is offered at the academy by Master Steve Fine. Please contact Master Fine directly at 216-374-7309 for information.

Unified Martial Arts Academy
1651 Lee Road
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
216.256.4298

Classes scheduled:
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Unified martial arts students, Alex Ritchey and Gene Ashly, sparring at the 2009 Coventry Village Street Arts Fair.

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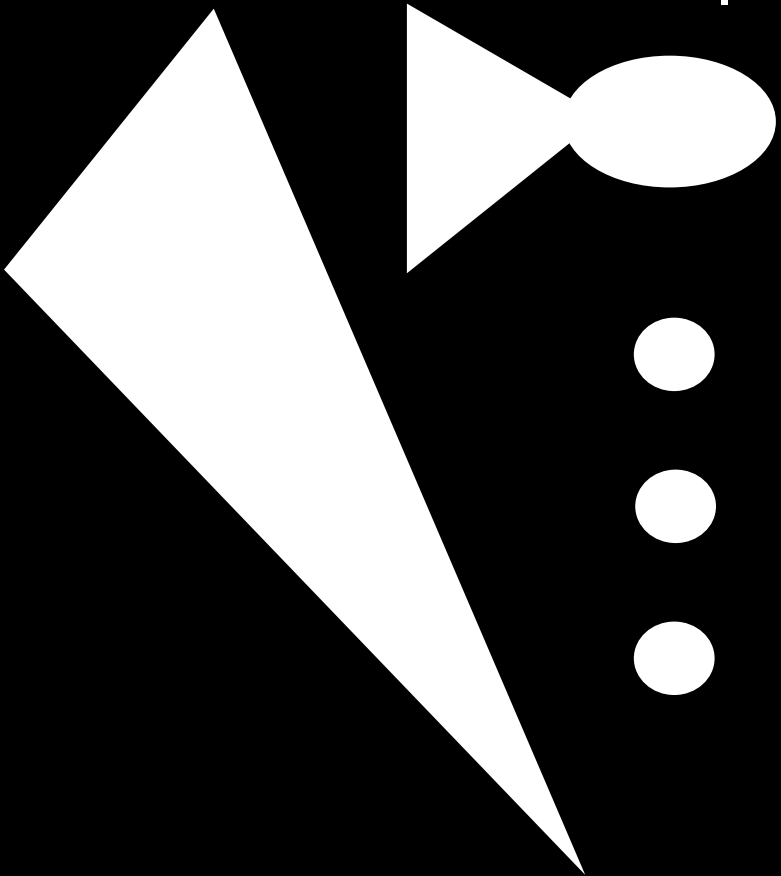
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International wine dinners in the Heights

Loren Sonkin

Taste on Lee Road has one of the most ambitious wine and food menus in the Heights area, combining the advantages of a wine bar with a full service restaurant. It also has a splendid program of events and wine tastings. Many of these are basic tastings of five wines for a nominal fee geared to a central theme (a Champagne tasting is scheduled for December). On occasion, they will also hold more elaborate wine dinners.

I recently attended one such meal that featured the wines of Domaine Trimbach, a winery founded in 1626 in Alsace, France, and a region famous for its dry white wines. The guest speaker of the evening was Anne Trimbach, a 13th generation family member who works at the winery (her father Pierre is the present winemaker). Anne provided great insights and a charming representation.

The cost of this dinner was a reasonable \$50. The five course meal included five wines designed to pair with each course.

My favorites were the 2007 Riesling and the surprisingly youthful 2002 Muscat. The food was excellent and showed great thought, both in its preparation and its design. Thanks to co-owner and wine director Larry Weider for organizing this event.

The regular wine menu at Taste is more than respectable. There is a decent menu featuring 8-10 wines by the glass, both red and white. The bottle selection is more complete with a nice mix of old standards and interesting wines to try. The service was excellent. If I had to find a complaint, it would be that I did not notice any Ohio wines on the list. In this era of supporting local food and local establishments, I encourage everyone to include the local wineries in that endeavor. Taste, a local gem celebrating its first anniversary this month, is now on both my food and my wine radar. Visit www.tastefoodwine.com for future tastings.

Loren Sonkin lives in Cleveland Heights, is the winemaker for SonkinCellars.com in California and writes for IntoWine.com.



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Liquid Planet opens on Cedar Road



Liquid Planet, a restaurant known for its smoothies and specialty pitas, opened last month at 12413 Cedar Road in the former Vixseboxe space at the Heights Center Building in the Cedar Fairmount neighborhood. Liquid Planet is open seven days a week, Monday through Saturday, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. The Heights location is the restaurant’s third in Northeast Ohio. Others are at 11002 Clifton Blvd. in Cleveland and 224 Crocker Park Blvd. in Westlake. Visit www.liquid-planet.com for more information.

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Love is a choice

Mary Courtwright

It may be easy to throw yourself into a romance, but that is not all love is, and marriage is one relationship that exemplifies this truth. Physical beauty, a sharp wit, and a fondness for the little things in life may have attracted you at first. Hopefully they remain in the years ahead of you, but will be joined by aspects of your partner of which you are less fond. Jealousy and possessiveness may emerge, along with fear, anger, and in the worst of times, deceit. In these moments you must remember that love is more than a feeling—it is also a choice.

When you choose to love someone, particularly in the context of marriage, you accept them as they are. Make no mistake, you will see your spouse more deeply and clearly every day, and you will opt whether or not to choose love. It will require compassion, patience, and at other times, forgiveness. Keep in mind that as you begin to see the flaws in your spouse, some will also be seen in you.

My wish is that you choose to love your spouse, even when you are distracted by fear or anger. This does not mean that you allow another to harm or control you. Sometimes the most loving choice means you walk away.

Choose to love yourself as well, for there are times when your spouse will be preoccupied by negative emotions. Find the balance among your true needs, those of your spouse, and the responsibilities you juggle together and apart. Choose to love your role in the world, as spouse, parent, worker, teacher or healer. If you know your choices are based in love, you will have fewer regrets. Even when you make mistakes, you can always choose again. In this case, “I’m sorry” is the harmonizing phrase for “I love you.”

Most important, when you find yourself in an argument that seems to have no end, in a circumstance that seems too big to overcome, in a moment when you are caught in the shadow of fear or anger, remember: Love is only a choice away.

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

Heights Arts Annual Holiday Store

Peggy Spaeth

Heights Arts will be celebrating its 10th anniversary next year, and it’s fascinating to look back and remember how various projects began. For example, the idea of a Holiday Store featuring local artists was brought up in a lunch-time conversation at Stone Oven Bakery in 2002. The next step was asking landlord Jon Forman if we could temporarily use an empty storefront for the shop (yes, you can!). Then we had a meeting, rounded up our husbands and friends, scraped the carpet off the floor, cleaned up and painted, contacted artists, and opened the doors.

The arty store began as a partnership among the Cedar Lee Merchant Association (Joan Costello), FutureHeights (Sarah Wean and Lita Gonzalez), Fairfax Neighborhood Network (Elaine Mosbrook), Heights Arts (Sharon Grossman, Jan Kious and Peggy Spaeth), and the cooperation of the City of Cleveland Heights (Nancy McLaughlin).

Today, thanks to the imagination and generosity of these instigators, Heights Arts Gallery is a rent-paying art destination for people from all over the region and beyond. We shine a light on creativity in our own neighborhood, and make sure that our community knows its artists and their work. Save that airfare to New York, or shipping charges online, and buy art locally! You don’t have to travel beyond Lee Road to find high-quality art work.

The Gallery presents six shows a year and is staffed primarily by volunteers. Heights Arts staff supports a Gallery Committee that reviews and seeks art to show. An artist does not have to live in Cleveland Heights to be included, although we think local first.

Once a year, the Gallery is transformed into a Holiday Store with work by more than 80 regional artists. You can find paintings, prints, ceramics, glass, cards, books, CDs and more.

The 8th-annual Holiday Store opens Friday, Nov. 6, from 6 to 9 p.m., with a reception for members of Heights Arts. Membership requires no initiation ceremony, simply a minimum \$35 tax-deductible donation for individuals.

Peggy Spaeth is the executive director of Heights Arts.



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Lecture and screening of 'Les Amants' film

Chris Roy

Nov. 13, marks the 50th anniversary of the infamous “bust” in Cleveland Heights history: Cleveland Heights Police raided the Heights Art Theater (later the Centrum), shut down an evening showing of “Les Amants” (The Lovers), and arrested manager Nico Jacobellis—all because of a three-minute love scene that would seem tame by today’s standards.

The Cleveland Heights Historical Society announces a free screening of “Les Amants” at the Lee Road Library, along with the opportunity to hear an accompanying lecture, enjoy free popcorn and not worry about getting arrested and having your case taken all the way to the Supreme Court, which is what happened to Jacobellis.

The event takes place Nov. 13 in the Brody/Nelson meeting room at the Lee Road Library. The lecture is at 6:30 p.m.; the movie begins at 7 p.m. The event is free, though donations or membership applications to the Cleveland Heights Historical Society are welcome.

E-mail kodonnell@clvhts.com or call 216-291-4878 ASAP. Only 60 seats are available, and reservations are required. Include your name and the number in your party.

Perhaps you’ll agree with Justice



The original promotional materials for the film captioned this photo as follows: In a sequence of great sensual beauty, the lovers wander through an idyllic countryside, stopping for moments of passionate lovemaking.

Potter Stewart regarding pornography: “I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that.” *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184, 197 (1964).

Chris Roy is president of the Cleveland Heights Historical Society.

Yes!

(Book Preview)

Robert Haas

Old media like *The New York Times* impress everyone by reviewing books as quickly as they’re published. The *Heights Observer* does them one better by previewing here a book even before it’s been written. The tentative title is *Yes!*, or else *Maybe!*, which experts in romance say often means the same thing. An IPO (Initial Plot Outline, below) establishes the concept, and once important matters are settled—buzz, movie rights, and merchandise tie-ins—the “book-writing phase” could commence. Until then, people should visit the Web site, join the fan clubs, set up Friendster links, and buy stuff. One of the hero’s stunningly beautiful friends is Ramona, who likes shoes. The Web site shows 85 of her current styles, averaging \$189 a pair, without fur trim or jewels. The hope is that people will want to collect the whole set.

Section 1 is the hero’s childhood. Beginning “For a long time I used to stay in bed late,” it shows how his many neuroses originated when his mother once left for her 6 a.m. yogurt class (= yogurt making + yoga + art) without kissing him good morning. His pitiful sobs of abandonment, and the sour smell of yogurt, linger in memory through the rest of the book.

Section 2 is his bittersweet coming-of-age story, titled “The Pitcher in

the Pumpnickel.”

Section 3 tells of his many loves in adulthood: A) a stunningly beautiful blonde; B) a stunningly beautiful brunette; C) a stunningly beautiful redhead; D) another stunningly beautiful blonde (16 episodes in all).

Section 4, a Thomas Pynchonesque time warp digression takes place in the Victorian era. Titled “Moby Dickens,” it features a plucky little orphan white whale cruising the waters around Victorian England, pursued by wicked Captain Rehab. Mesmerism, phrenology, seances in which Arthur Conan Doyle raises the ghost of Sherlock Holmes, and more, are needed to contact 21st-century Greenpeace and rescue the little beastie. Adorable stuffed white whale toys, some of which can cry real salty tears, are available for purchase on the Web site.

In the concluding Section 5, the hero realizes with a shock that his entire life has been stupid and meaningless. His only salvation can be through writing a book telling his stupid, meaningless life story in excruciating detail. The final scene shows his stunningly beautiful wife, B’Golly, bopping away and chanting “Yes!” to the disco beat on her headphones. Beside her, and totally oblivious, sits the hero-now-writer, hunched over his laptop, Google searching for *le mot juste* to evoke that yogurt smell from his childhood.

If you see this book coming, run!

Robert Haas, a Cleveland Heights resident for over fifty years, hasn’t decided yet what he wants to be when he grows up.

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HeightsWrites Boyagian to conduct St. Ann Chamber Orchestra

Meredith Holmes

This is a month of great change. Nothing is certain, the poet says; we can take nothing for granted.

November

By Linda Goodman Robiner

White light triangles on the back lawn
and there is shadow.

Yellow leaves scatter over grass
like men and women on an elevator,
no two touching.

Traveling up and down
with strangers,
we have faith in the solidity,
the protection
of the cage we're in.
We trust the world will hold us up.

Today the Cleveland sky
is soft and cloudless blue,
but, like passengers in the elevator,
on the brink of winter.

Linda Goodman Robiner is an editor, writing coach, and workshop facilitator, who has taught at six Ohio colleges. Her chapbook Reverse Fairy Tale was published by Pudding House. Her poems, short stories, and articles have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies.

Stephanie Applegate

On Dec. 11, 1918, the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra delivered a benefit performance at the historic Gray's Armory for Saint Ann Church. Some of you may know the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra eventually evolved into the world-famous Cleveland Orchestra. However, most of you probably do not know that it was Father John Powers, pastor of Saint Ann Church, to whom, as *Plain Dealer* music critic James Rogers wrote at the time, "[Clevelanders] are indebted for this opportunity." Father Powers, according to Donald Rosenberg's *The Cleveland Orchestra Story*, was instrumental (pun intended) in orchestrating (intended, again) this early version of our present-day Cleveland Orchestra.

In the tradition of Saint Ann Church's founding pastor, and as an homage to its early association with the Cleveland Orchestra, the parish announces the inauguration of its Powers Concert Series with two concerts. The first is scheduled for Dec. 12 at 8 p.m., and the second for a date to be

determined in May 2010. Both concerts will feature an evening of glorious music by the Saint Ann Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Domenico Boyagian of the Cleveland

In the tradition of Saint Ann Church's founding pastor, and as an homage to its early association with the Cleveland Orchestra, the parish announces the inauguration of its Powers Concert Series with two concerts.

Institute of Music. This professional 50-piece orchestra includes members of the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Cleveland Orchestra and Saint Ann Parish.

The December concert, "Angels in the Heights: A Celebration of Christmas," will be held in historic Saint Ann Church, and includes classical and contemporary holiday favorites and promises to be an exciting evening for the whole family. Reserved seats are \$50 for adults and \$25 for children under 18, and include a festive Christmas preconcert party with hors d'oeuvres, refreshments and a raffle. Organizers hope residents will add this concert to their holiday calendar and participate in the revival of Saint Ann Church's distinguished musical past. Like the original 1918 event, the Powers Concert Series will benefit the general operation of Saint Ann Parish and School.

For more information, or to order concert tickets, visit www.saintann.us/Music_Program.html or contact the parish rectory at 216-321-0024.

Stephanie Applegate is a lifelong resident of Cleveland Heights and the mother of two boys. She also serves on the board of Heights Community Congress.

Heights Arts house concert



Heights Arts will present To the Extreme, and Back, a house concert to benefit the organization on Nov. 22.

A Cleveland Orchestra String Quartet, Miho Hashizume, Isabel Trautwein, Sonya Braaten and Tanya Ell, will perform the music of Hungarian master Gyorgi Ligeti, who wrote his first string quartet, *Metamorphoses Nocturnes*, in 1953. This extremely demanding piece explores the limits of the players and combines Hungarian and Gypsy rhythms with the sounds of night to create a work that is irresistibly exciting. Yu Jin will join in to round off the evening with the masterful Quintet in A major by Felix Mendelssohn.

The concert takes place at the downtown penthouse of Rick Maron and Judy Eigenfeld, at 4 p.m. on Nov. 22. Tickets are \$40 per person/\$35 for members of Heights Arts. The concert will be followed by a dessert reception. Call 216-371-3457 or e-mail register@heightsarts.org for more information.

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Estate planning for young families

the job you don't want to do but must to protect your family

Rebecca Price

As the mother of a six-month-old daughter and an estate planning attorney, planning for the possibility you might die, become disabled or incompetent is a topic near to my heart. It's also one I often get questions about from people who have, or are expecting, children.

There are the bashful confessions that making a will is something they have thought about but haven't gotten around to; those who believe they are too young and healthy for anything to happen to them; and those who say they can't afford the expense or the time required. Some think they don't have enough property to make it worthwhile.

But while you may consider estate planning akin to getting a root canal, the task, once completed, can bring peace of mind.

Let's start with the basics: why do you need to have an estate plan? To ensure that your partner and minor children are taken care of in the event of your death or disability. Are you willing to take the chance that Ohio law and perhaps a judge, would distribute your estate and award guardianship of your minor children to the same people you would choose? That is a big gamble.

If you are legally married and do not have a will, under Ohio law your spouse will inherit your entire estate, provided your spouse is the natural or adoptive parent of all of your children. That may be fine with some people, but what if you have children from a previous relationship? Then your estate will be divided according to a formula: your spouse and children will each get a portion. Will that formula adequately distribute your assets to meet the needs of your spouse and children?

If you are not married, then your children would inherit everything and your significant other would get nothing.

In my opinion, the top reasons to have an estate plan in place when you have young children are to designate a physical guardian for them, and to make sure their financial needs are taken care of.

Then there is every parent's worst nightmare: you and your spouse both die in a tragic accident. Who is going to have custody of your children? Unlike distributing your assets without a will, there is no standard formula for determining who becomes guardian of your children. A judge, based on his or her opinion of the evidence presented, is responsible for deciding who would make the best guardian.

After losing both parents the last thing any child is going to want is a court hearing—or worse yet, a battle—over who is going to become their guardian. Imagine the scene if there is a fight between family members. Is a family member even the best person to assume custody?

If you have a will, you can designate who you want to have physical custody of your children, as well as a separate person to be in charge of the assets you have left for them. In some cases this may be the same person, however, you can also choose two separate people; sometimes the best caregiver may not be the best financial custodian.

In my opinion, the top reasons to have an estate plan in place when you have young children are to designate a physical guardian for them, and to make sure their financial needs are taken care of.

The unfortunate truth is that people die at all ages. You need a will unless you want to gamble that Ohio law and a probate court judge will carry out your wishes without instruction. Just think about the time you spend bundling them up in winter, buckling them up in the car, worrying about what they are eating—the list goes on. Shouldn't you also have a plan to take care of them if you are not around?

Rebecca Price is a Cleveland Heights resident and a member of the law firm of Gallup & Burns. If you have questions you can reach her at price@galluplaw.com or 216-621-4636.

Don't be left in the cold

Allison Urbanek

It is getting cold outside and many people may find that when they turn their furnace or boiler on for the first time, it isn't working properly. Home Repair Resource Center offers several programs for people who are in need of assistance. If you find yourself in need of a new heating system or repair, make HRRC your first stop.

The HRRC library is full of helpful resources. There are handouts that explain the different types of heating systems as well as the different efficiency models. There are also contractor books that offer evaluations from community members about local contractors, which can always be a big help if you are not sure who to contact.

Home Repair Resource Center also has a financial assistance program which can help to make the repair more affordable. HRRC is introducing a new program, the Senior Grant, for those residents who are 62 and older. The Senior Grant is \$1,500 and works with the organization's loan programs. The money can be applied toward a heating system or roof replacement. There are some income restrictions, so call Allison at 216-381-6100 for more information about the Senior Grant and other financial assistance programs.

Don't get stuck in the cold this winter, be sure to test out your heating system early. Don't forget about Home Repair Resources Center's helpful resources when considering a repair this winter.

Call or stop in for more information. Home Repair Resource Center is located at 2520 Noble Road, 216-381-6100 or www.hrhc-ch.org.

Allison Urbanek is the Financial Programs Counselor at Home Repair Resource Center.



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Making room for wildlife in the suburbs

Kaitlin Bushinski

University Heights, “City of Beautiful Homes,” could also be called the “City of Neatly Landscaped Lawns.” But one resident, bucking conventions, has turned her property into a certified wildlife habitat site, providing an oasis for the furry and winged residents of University Heights.

Liz (who requested that her full name be withheld to maintain her family’s privacy) and her husband are 12-year residents of Glendon Road. They heard about the National Wildlife Federation program on HGTV. The program’s goal is to foster local wildlife. The species that find refuge in Liz’s back yard are not exotic; in fact, some would consider the squirrels and chipmunks pests, but Liz says these animals were here first and the point of the refuge is to provide a haven for wildlife in an increasingly developed world.

Applicants must provide four basic necessities to foster local wildlife: food sources, water sources, places for cover and places to raise young. Additionally, applicants must practice sustainable gardening practices such as composting and eliminating chemical pesticides. Liz completed an application, paid the \$20 fee and submitted photos to prove wildlife lived on the property and that she provided the required elements to obtain certification. Soon after she submitted her application, Liz received official certification, along with yard signs that read “Certified Wildlife Habitat.”

Liz placed one of the signs by her garbage can so the service workers wouldn’t report her for having long grass in the backyard. “I would never

do this in the front yard,” she says. “It would bring property values down and disturb the neighbors.”

Three years into the program, Liz and her husband, who were already dedicated organic gardeners, are still happily committed to the refuge. They have cultivated a unique, vibrant backyard reminiscent of a wildflower garden. They’ve planted native flowers, butterfly bushes and an elderberry tree, and have allowed clover and natural grasses to grow tall. The result is a wonderful equilibrium between nature and human space. Long grasses and wildflowers separate the brick patio from the yard, pleasantly defining the space. Rabbits build their warrens in the thick patches of clover and birds flitter between the elderberry tree and the bird feeder.

Liz’s own trees as well as the neighbor’s pines and weeping willow complete the natural atmosphere by blocking views of other homes. In Liz’s backyard you truly feel that you’re no longer in a densely populated suburb; rather, it invokes the soothing sensation of a rural retreat. Liz’s backyard, however, is hardly a jungle. Its growth, though uninhibited, is artfully maintained. “It’s not like it’s growing wild,” she says. “It’s very meditated on; there’s definitely a purpose.”

Letting your backyard go without a mowing is not everyone’s ideal, which Liz readily admits. But, she says, the benefits are many. She seldom needs to water the yard and when she does she gets water from the discrete rain barrels she and her husband installed. “We’ve never had an issue with rabbits eating our garden,” she says, because the clover she planted attracts their in-



University Heights resident Liz has let her backyard go unmanicured as part of her effort to provide a safe haven for local wildlife.

terest more.

Liz and her husband are extremely happy with hosting a wildlife habitat, however unconventional it may be, in their own backyard. “There’s this sense of release that comes with it,” she says. “You don’t have to obsess; you don’t have to feel like you failed. You don’t have to think ‘The grass isn’t perfect. This flower is failing,’ or ‘Oh, my God, there’s a dandelion out there.’ You don’t fight against any challenge, you work with it.”

Kaitlin Bushinski is a recent graduate of Oberlin College and was a 2009 summer intern at the Heights Observer.



Liz placed yard signs to inform neighbors and workers that her backyard is a certified wildlife habitat.

Coventry 2009 Fall Playground Cleanup Day



Cleveland Heights residents Scott Jackson (left), Coventry P.E.A.C.E. President Erick Kaufman (center) and Ray Gonzalez (right), replace handrails on apparatus at the top of the hill, during Playground Cleanup Day, Oct. 10. The twice-yearly maintenance of the playground is managed and funded entirely by volunteers, and attracted about 50 workers this year, including students from Case Western Reserve and John Carroll universities.

Forest Hill Church garden brings fresh hope

Laura Steiner

If you drove on Monticello Road this summer, you might have noticed surprising new growth at Forest Hill Church in the form of tomatoes, peppers, cabbages, and dozens of vegetables and herbs.

Church members and friends planted and tended a vegetable garden in the churchyard near the intersection of Lee Road and Monticello Boulevard. The volunteers harvested more than 300 pounds of fresh produce from the garden for visitors of the church’s food pantry and the Heights Emergency Food Center.

With the economic crisis hitting the Cleveland area hard in early 2009, the timing was right for the church to engage in a sustainable project that creatively connects participants to each other, their neighbors, and the earth. More than 20 members volunteered to tend the garden regularly, and dozens more helped in periodic workdays throughout the season.

Local businesses, including Bremec on the Heights, also supported the effort. The volunteers named the garden “Abundance Acres,” inspired by their pastors’ encouragement to focus on the abundance of joy, beauty and gen-



Debbie Adrine and Ron Register display buckets full of delicious bounty for the community.

erosity that are present in the community, rather than fearing scarcity in tough times. Recipients of the food were grateful for the chance to have a fresh addition to the canned food typically available in food pantries.

The idea grew out of a small group experience offered at Forest Hill where participants identify their spiritual gifts and passions, then develop ways to use them to meet needs in the community.

Gardens have the power to bring people together to work, appreciate beauty and share in abundance.

Laura Steiner is a member of Forest Hill Church.

Losing my father: Look for the warning signs

Lita Gonzalez

"Dad, who is this," I asked pointing to a recent photo. "That's you," my father answered. "Who am I," I asked. "You're my daughter." After what seemed like an eternity, my father looked at me with sheer sadness and pain. "I don't know your name." I took his hand. "It's OK, Pop."

As we age, our body and brain change. We may have problems with eyesight and hearing, take longer to do things, and begin experiencing occasional memory lapses. Alzheimer's disease (AD), however, is not normal aging. It is a type of dementia—a progressive, irreversible neurological disease that affects brain functions including language, intellect and spatial orientation.

In the early stages, Alzheimer's disease develops gradually and is hard to notice. As ordinary, easily excused memory lapses become more frequent, the person with AD loses the ability to learn and remember anything new. They begin forgetting things from week to week, then day to day, and gradually, minute to minute.

To help people recognize the difference between typical age-related changes and what may be early stage AD, the Alzheimer's Association Cleveland Area Chapter has put together a list of the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's disease. Go to www.alz.org/cleveland/ for a more detailed explanation of the warning signs, which include:

- Memory changes that disrupt daily life and appear to be growing more frequent;
- Challenges in planning or solving problems, working with numbers or keeping track of monthly bills;
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, work or leisure;
- Confusion with time, place, dates, seasons, and the passage of time;
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships;
- Problems with spoken or written words;
- Misplacing or putting things in unusual places and losing the ability to retrace one's steps;
- Decreased or poor judgment when dealing with money, grooming or personal hygiene;
- Withdrawal from work, hobbies or social activities; and
- Changes in mood and personality such as uncharacteristic fears,

confusion, suspicion, depression or periods of anxiety.

Sarah Parran, LISW, a professional geriatric care manager with over 20 years experience in geriatric and health care social work, and founder of Senior Care Connections, LLC stresses the need to talk to a doctor as soon as there are concerns about memory loss, thinking skills or behavior in ourselves or a loved-one. For more information,

visit www.seniorcareconnections.net.

"Early diagnosis can help a person with dementia and their loved ones determine if the problem really is Alzheimer's disease," said Parran.

Geriatric assessments are covered by Medicare and can determine if some of the symptoms are reversible and are being caused by treatable conditions such as drug interaction, metabolic imbalance, thyroid problems, excess use

of alcohol, vitamin deficiencies or depression.

"Talking to a physician about your concerns and requesting that a geriatric assessment be done early has many advantages," said Parran. "It allows the person and their family to seek appropriate treatments and plan for future care."

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

Side by Side

Kathy Dawson

Q: I consider myself to be a pretty good listener, but whenever my girlfriend is upset and starts to cry, she gets mad whenever I try to help her. I don't get it. What does she want from me?

A: If your "help" comes in the form of advice, no wonder your girlfriend is crying. Most of the time, when a woman is upset to the point of tears, she needs to vent. Feelings have become bottlenecked somewhere in her body and she just needs to purge.

What does this mean for you? It means that unless you hear, "I don't know what to do. What do you think I should do?" you'll want to back off on any advice giving.

In other words, take off your fix-it hat. If you say things like "Why don't you do A, B, or C," or "You really shouldn't feel that way," or the real no-no, "Don't you think you're making a mountain out of a molehill?" you might as well wear a neon sign on your head that flashes, "I'm not listening!"

To truly listen to your girlfriend, you'll need to learn to pay close attention to what she is telling you with her face, posture, and overall energy. Listen with your heart and throw in a few "I can see how upset you are" or "This must be so difficult for you," and then end it with "Would you like a hug?" Trust me, if your girlfriend wants advice, she'll ask for it.

Kathy Dawson is a Cleveland Heights author and relationship coach. To learn more, visit www.kathythecoach.com. If you would like your anonymous relationship question answered in a future column, send it to Kathy at Kathy@kathythecoach.com

Lost boys need home together



Jack and Milo arrived at PAWS after their owner became ill and needed full-time medical care. Jack and Milo have been together since they were kittens and because we want them to stay together, we are offering a special adoption fee. Jack is a food nut! He is mischievous, lovable and sweet. He loves to have his face rubbed and rolls on his back from attention. Milo is a sweet, gentle curious boy who loves to observe the day's goings on from a perch. He, too, loves belly rubs. These boys do everything together: eat, play, sleep and groom. Could your home be their real forever home? Both have been neutered, tested negative, litter box trained and ready to go home! If interested, please contact PAWS at 440-442-PAWS or visit www.pawsohio.org.

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Fairmount Presbyterian Church comes to aid of church in Cleveland

Patricia Wren

At a time when many urban churches are closing, Fairmount Presbyterian Church in Cleveland Heights is joining with 11 other Presbyterian churches to help a sister congregation, North Presbyterian Church.

Opened in 1870 at East 40th and Superior Ave. in the City of Cleveland, North Presbyterian Church is committed to serving the community that surrounds it.

“Many homeless men who stay at a nearby shelter are active in the congregation,” says Martha Shiverick, parish associate of Fairmount Church. “North Church’s efforts have helped many of these men work through issues of substance abuse and move on to lead lives that are meaningful and whole.”

Unable to meet the costs of running its programs and maintaining the church’s deteriorating physical plant, North Church sought partners to keep its ministry going. Fairmount Church is one of 12 congregations that have committed to help support North Church’s ministry.

“For the five Sundays in November, Fairmounters will cook hot meals and serve them after the 11 a.m. worship service at North Church,” says Shiverick. “Members of Fairmount will also prepare and serve hot meals at North

Church on the last two Thursday evenings of the month.”

Fairmount’s members who do not participate in the partnership meals are asked to bring desserts to Fairmount that can be shared with North Church’s congregation. “We want our members to feel the connection,” says Shiverick.

“It is sometimes hard for individual congregations to realize that we don’t just look after ourselves but we are very much connected to other congregations,” says North Church Pastor Charlie Hurst. “This partnership is a living example of our connectedness in Christ. It is not just what suburban congregations can give to a poor, urban congregation but what suburban con-

gregations can receive from a congregation like North.”

The Presbyterian churches—all members of the 50-congregation Presbytery of the Western Reserve—participating in this urban ministry are:

- Church of the Western Reserve, Pepper Pike
- Fairmount Presbyterian, Cleveland Heights
- Faith Presbyterian, Lakewood
- First Presbyterian, Willoughby
- Independence Presbyterian
- John Knox Presbyterian, North Olmsted
- Lakewood Presbyterian
- Lyndhurst Community Presbyterian
- Old Stone Presbyterian, Cleveland

- Parma-South Presbyterian, Parma Heights
- Rocky River Presbyterian
- Valley Presbyterian, Chagrin Falls

Fairmount Presbyterian Church is located at 2757 Fairmount Blvd. in Cleveland Heights. Fairmount Church is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church USA and opens its doors to all. Services are held on Sundays at 8:30 and 11 a.m. Evening prayer with Taizé music is held on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. For more information visit www.fairmountchurch.org or contact Martha Shiverick at Fairmount Church, 216-321-5800.

Patricia Wren is a long-time member of Fairmount Church.

JCU to host fair trade holiday sale

Virginia Rivera

The holidays are quickly approaching and what better way to show your holiday spirit than to purchase fair trade items? John Carroll University will host “Gifts That Give Twice,” an annual fair trade holiday sale on Tuesday, Dec. 2 and Wednesday, Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and on Sunday, Dec.

6 from 7 to 11:30 p.m in the Lombardo Student Center.

Fair trade gifts not only offer shoppers the chance to purchase beautiful handcrafted items and high quality food products, but also guarantee that artisans and farmers earn a fair wage and are treated with dignity and respect. Buying a fair trade gift is truly a way to “give twice.”

Vendors include Revive Fair Trade

Clothing, Ten Thousand Villages, Heartbeats and the InterReligious Task Force on Central America.

For more information visit www.jcu.edu/fairtrade.

Virginia Rivera is a senior at John Carroll University majoring in Communications and is involved with several volunteer activities, including Habitat for Humanity and Project Que.

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Contractor helps to save his city

Fran Mentch

Driving down my street, the yellow and white colonial may have looked like just another abandoned house—one of the 1,000 or so in our city. But to me, it was an eyesore and an unsettling reminder of how things had gone so wrong. How the forces that were supposed to keep our social fabric intact had performed the bureaucratic equivalent of Nero fiddling while Rome burned. The new owner purchased it under questionable circumstances and lived there briefly; the house had been empty for five years. Despite the barred front door, the house had been broken into, the copper plumbing stripped; the back door and windows now boarded up. I wanted it torn down—boy was I wrong.

Jason Gedeon, 35, owner of J.P. Development, LLC was raised in Cleveland Heights. He and his wife, Karen, still live here. He bought the house on my street and had his contracting teams move through the rehab project like swarms of bees. When I say they replaced everything but the frame, I mean it. One week the roof was replaced, the next the driveway, then the windows, and on and on until finally the landscaping crew put on the finishing touches. A “For Sale” sign was placed on the lawn, and a short time later our new neighbors moved in. Sounds easy, doesn’t it? Well, it’s not.

Gedeon describes his work as high risk/high reward. He says, “I’ve learned

to expect the unexpected,” from the houses, the people, and the processes he has to coordinate to finish the projects. In the past two years Gedeon has completed 10 such renovations in Cleveland Heights and has sold almost all of them to people moving here from out of state.

He spends a lot of time investigating properties to buy. “Before I decide, I spend time on the street looking at the overall neighborhood and observing what goes on,” he says. He has been concentrating his work in Cleveland Heights because, he says, “this city is what I know and really care about.”

That’s what makes him stand out—his knowledge of the area, and his ability to create a sellable product. He tears down walls to reconfigure the floor plans of older homes, adding the amenities that people now want, such as master bedroom suites, granite countertops, air conditioning and laundry rooms.

Gedeon’s reputation made him the go-to guy when the neighbors of 2929 Edgehill wanted to stop the city from demolishing a fire-damaged property. The residents, city hall and Gedeon talked together and the property is now his latest project.

Gedeon has only good things to say about the Cleveland Heights building inspectors, the building department, and the many people he meets renovating houses. Neighbors are always



Jason Gedeon stands in one of his renovated kitchens at 2998 Yorkshire Road.

interested and grateful. At one site, a neighbor baked cookies for everyone on the work crew.

He cautions about the second wave of the foreclosure crisis—people who are buying properties, applying superficial fixes and quickly putting them back on the market, or renting them. Residents should be aware that this is going on and the problems this can create.

The words *house* and *home* mean different things. Because of his energies, talents and hard work, the house on my block was transformed from an abandoned structure into a home. Everyone in this community is better off because of it. Thank you, Jason.

Currently Jason Gedeon has three renovated houses for sale in Cleveland Heights; 2998 Yorkshire, 3884 Parkdale and 3554 Radcliffe. And 3046 Lincoln and 2929 Edgehill are next in line for a full renovation.

Contact realtor Chris Jurcisin at 216-554-0401 or chrisjurcisin@howard-hanna.com for further information.

If you think there is a house in your neighborhood worthy of the Jason Gedeon treatment contact him at jpg619@gmail.com.

Fran Mentch is a 20 year resident of Lynn Park Drive, a civic activist, and president of Severance Neighborhood Organization.

New book discusses challenges of elder care

Harriet Tramer

Increasingly more families are assuming caregiving responsibilities as they keep their aging relatives at home. Although this experience can prove stressful, it definitely has its positive aspects. How could it not when it offers people a chance to develop talents they never thought they had?

Perhaps you thought boiling water was more than you could manage, but as a caregiver, you learn to cook nutritious meals. Housekeeping might never have been your thing. But as you work to make your elder comfortable in her home, you might discover that you can be more fastidious than you thought. In addition, you might even find you are feeling better about yourself.

Possibly, the greatest challenge caregivers face is one that has nothing to do with housekeeping or other mundane matters. They must learn how to wear a “mask.”

Often, a caregiver must learn not to look even the least bit askance as an elder chirps, “I know you are my sister” when she is actually her daughter. Because comments, such as “That’s ridiculous” or “You know that’s not true,” could set off an eruption or at the very least turn a meal into an unpleasant experience.

Caregivers must also wear a mask while on the job. The stress they might be feeling should be hidden behind a smile and a can-do attitude. Employers expect nothing less than unwavering loyalty from their workers. They might not be particularly patient, for example, with somebody who arrives at work late because an elder was having a rough time that morning. Nor, are they inclined

to be understanding if a worker makes phone calls while on the job to look after an elder’s medical needs.

Although it hurts to say this, caregivers must, likewise, keep much to themselves as they interact with friends. Sure, their buddies might be genuinely interested in how an elder is progressing. They might frequently ask, “How is mom?” But those questions should not be interpreted as meaning they want a detailed account of her latest nausea episode.

Possibly they have too much else on their mind to be concerned about this minutiae. Or, they might feel uncomfortable having you share this information, considering it a violation of privacy.

I gained renewed respect for the challenges caregivers face as I began writing my book, *Rounding the Circle of Love: Growing up as She Grows Old* (Sonora, CA: Ladybug Press). They often enjoy precious little support, and I became anxious to provide guidelines that might help people as they carry out these responsibilities.

Learn more on Tuesday, Nov. 10, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Joseph-Beth Booksellers in Legacy Village. The Atma Center and other groups will demonstrate ways in which caregivers can interact with their elders in creative ways, helping to keep them mentally alert.

Harriet Tramer is a journalist and teacher. She has long been a caregiver for her mother Frances, 96.

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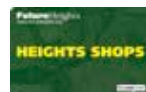
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